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## Chapter

# Personal Leadership and Communication Abilities: Impacts on Organizational Performance

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to understand the importance of communication within the management of an organization as a way to promote creativity, innovation, employees' engagement and competitive advantages. Leadership success seems to be related to the level and style of communication, the innovation strategy, the level of efficiency, the ability to plan and be proactive and, ultimately, the performance of the business itself. Thus, the authors propose to carry out an exploratory study with six active managers in the Portuguese market. The research aims to understand if it is important for managers to be perceived as a mediator. It is also our objective to know if the leader needs to be perceived as someone who is capable of inspiring, by betting on creativity, a proactive attitude and, above all, a collective vision of the organization itself, assertively communicated. Data indicate a consensual opinion on the part of the surveyed managers regarding the impact of leaders' communication skills on the company's performance. They all agree that the success of any organization is directly related to the ability of its managers to communicate and manage daily procedures.

**Keywords:** communication, business efficiency, personal leadership, creativity, innovation

## 1. Introduction

The choice of this theme arose from the need to understand the communication management in small, medium-sized and big companies in terms of personal and business dynamics, learning process and the motivation to develop employees and managers' leadership competences.

The success of business leadership will be addressed. Creativity, innovation, communication, strategic thinking and business efficiency will also be included. These aspects will be studied in order to understand their impact on individual motivation, business general performance and continuous improvement.

The authors decided to use a qualitative study, based on a convenience sample composed of individuals currently working as managers in companies, seeking to

incorporate recent or new ideas and thoughts on business leadership. These individuals had specific and relevant responsibilities in communication and brand's management. Bearing this in mind, three small companies, one medium-sized company and two large companies were selected, so as to match the Portuguese business reality, essentially composed of a reduced group of large companies (with less weight but with good practices, nationally and internationally) and a considerable number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (99.9% in 2021).

The purpose of the interviews carried out is to understand which factors make global communication efficient, which are the most relevant aspects that promote this efficiency and, consequently, the relationship between managers' communication skills and employee's engagement and personal satisfaction. We also want to understand how leadership performance can impact on the organization's performance as a whole.

## **2. Personal leadership and communication**

It can be said that good leadership is directly related to the ability to communicate values, thoughts and skills to others; this communication must be done in a simple and clear way, allowing receivers to perceive senders as visionaries, entrepreneurs and builders of their own destiny (e.g., [1]).

Leadership is the art of creating action; it is also the ability to create a common vision or the art of developing abilities and skills, leading to an efficient management of change trying to do the right things at all times [2].

On the issue of construction of the leadership process, Sprea [3] defines leadership as "... the process of conducting the actions or influence the behaviour and mentality of other person." Leadership is therefore a driving process that influences the behavior and ability of people. So, one can say that leadership has to do with motivating, managing and bringing all elements of an organization together around common goals. The purpose is to achieve specific aims and objectives. In this sense, leadership presupposes communicating to all the involved people their full potential, all their skills and abilities so that, individually or together, energy and solutions are found to achieve predefined goals [2].

Leadership is the art of leading to action, training the employees involved and controlling procedures [4, 5], contributing to a positive appreciation of people and the organization itself. According to the author, leadership consists of the art of highlighting the individuals' capacity, of valuing them and recognizing their importance. In this way, capacities are maximized and common action is achieved. Each human being has his talent, his experience and his characteristics. This makes him unique. As each person is unique, they should be allowed and encouraged to listen to their inner voice, make choices and be able to act, influence and inspire others to do the same. There are certain moments in life when someone is asked to use his abilities; when this happens within the scope of work (organization), the individual may not feel prepared or qualified to develop a certain task. The weight of responsibility can negatively impact the action. That's when a leader must act. It requires people to be recognized as capable of creating knowledge, holding skills that allow them to focus on the collective. For this to happen, communication is a must. It is essential to guide, add meaning to the potential of each person and use sensitivity, intelligence and flexibility. This is the only way to pass on the needed responsibility and freedom for efficient people management (e.g., [6]).

Delegating authority, passing responsibility and granting the necessary freedom for decision-making are crucial aspects for the success of any company. It promotes lower absenteeism degree, higher job satisfaction, effective team work, reducing turnover and leading to better productivity and profitability (e.g., [7]).

However, this requires the development of individual skills [8]. Developing human capital means developing individual skills. But it is not enough to have more training; it is essential to change the overall attitude, ask for responsibility, guide and encourage people to meet the organization's objectives. It is also crucial to give more autonomy and freedom of action, so that each person develops his own skills and competencies. To do all this, leaders need to be able to speak and hear attentively [9].

To be able to be a leader, one needs to clearly understand (1) company's goals and objectives and (2) the organization as a whole. It is also important to be able to communicate in an assertive way, be preservative, enthusiastic and proactive. Motivated individuals stay optimistic even through difficult times; socially skilled people, capable of entering into dialog and interact, develop empathy. These are key issues for a good leader and to manage teams (**Figure 1**) [8, 9].

According to Rego [10], there are specific factors that can help organizations achieve success. Shared leadership, well-defined vision and goals, focus on excellence, clear rules, financial incentives, ability to build trust, capacity to overcome individual interests and learn from mistakes are essential aspects that a leader must be able to deal with. And for successful leadership, Lowney [11] considers important to review the ideas about leadership and how to help leaders to shape up themselves. The author highlights that any leader must be aware of his strengths and weaknesses and adapt his personal characteristics to changes and challenges, both in personal and business terms.

Strong leadership depends on determination, initiative, honesty, a positive and constructive approach toward market challenges and the ability to communicate.



**Figure 1.**  
Personal leadership. Source: Adapted from Santos [8].

Companies also depend on the same factors to achieve the desired success. Rego [10] stated that an organization managed with a feeling of positivity ends up positively influencing their workers' productivity and the overall performance. This, in turn, seems to improve interpersonal skills, team spirit and confidence levels. In other words, according to the author, proper communication can lead to the projection of positivity in organizations. This visibly influences the level of satisfaction, personal development, interpersonal relationships and overall performance. On the contrary, negative environment and lack of communication lead to apathy, depression, low interest in sharing information and experiences and high turnover intention. A leader's ability to communicate may or may not leverage the performance of the company as a whole. Leaders need to choose the most effective communication practices in order to achieve and positively influence organization's performance (e.g., [12, 13]).

### **3. Corporate strategic thinking**

Strategic planning has become a growing need. It is the only way for a company to meet the new requirements of technological innovation, trends, customers' needs and to achieve productivity and sustainability, while meeting other organization's goals. Strategy leads to competitive advantages (e.g.: [14–16]). Corporate strategic thinking depends on managers' communication skills. Managers and entrepreneurs need to monitor the market carefully. They need to analyze the new market trends to then implement a business plan in line with the users or consumers' attitudes and needs as far as products or services.

Organizations need to define a set of strategic objectives, involving all employees, committing them in structural and sustainable change to achieve previously defined results. On the dynamics of strategic thinking, Gonzalez and Atencio stated [17] that managers need to previously know the different management tools, their basic features and interrelations so as to properly use them. They also need to be aware of market tendencies to adopt proper strategies. To implement the right strategies, leaders must be able to know internal strengths and weaknesses and, then, choose the ones who best suit the organization's vision, mission, values and daily activities [18]. So, to these authors, strategic success depends on the right choices, based on three dimensions: (1) customer focus, (2) activities undertaken and (3) market tendencies. These dimensions need to be analyzed in comparison to competitors' actions.

To implement strategic planning, companies need to involve all employees. Make them speak, trying to get new ideas, new solutions, developing skills and competencies. The business strategy also implies a dynamic transformational leadership [19]. This will be the result of the leader's ability to change the employees' basic values, beliefs and attitudes, stimulating their commitment to the company [20, 21]. Thus, the leader must be capable of providing a positive organizational environment, based on reciprocal communication. This will lead to a better understanding of desired behaviors and attitudes, impacting on the organization as a whole. According to Rego and Cunha [10], managing employees' motivation is a central concept in management and organizational behavior. It consists in using proper stimulus that provides action, movement and persistence, combined with a reward element.

The role of rewards in workers' motivation is complex. It involves different perspectives and needed actions, because every person is unique. Psychologists were the ones who most studied the issue of individual motivation. Dualistic theories split motivation into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic [22]. If we focus on managing



people and companies, intrinsic motivations are the ones related to promote job satisfaction, compliance with standards and the achievement of personal goals (e.g., [23]). Extrinsic motivations have the purpose to satisfy indirect or instrumental needs. That is why money is usually the means to an end. Understanding how to motivate the workforce is essential to promote a dynamic and pleasant work environment. Leaders need to identify which intrinsic and extrinsic factors play an important role in employees' motivation, use and communicate them assertively (e.g., [23, 24]).

#### **4. Innovation, creativity and business efficiency**

Innovation is one of the most important aspects in terms of business management, therefore impacting on financial results, human resource management and the capacity to think strategically and adapt to market tendencies [25, 26]. However, true innovations occur, in general, slowly and over time. It can result in (1) creative combination of different forms of production; (2) marketing or communication strategies; and (3) new ways of doing things (processes). Ferreira [27] and Neely et al. [28] highlighted the need for management practices that encourage and support the innovation, through the integration of information, knowledge and expertise and the proper understanding of the external and competitive environment, competition, technology and consumer behavior.

Nowadays, companies act in mature and complex markets, with very demanding consumers [6, 25]. This requires individual and collective capacity to absorb and transform knowledge into truly differentiated products and services, good marketing practices and human resources management policies [29, 30].

Cota and Mark [31] related creativity to innovation, referring to the fact that creativity is a soft skill that must be shared by all managers of a company; more, it should be part of the organization's values.

One of the aspects inherent to creativity is to provide all employees increased motivation to make a contribution, with new or reused ideas [32]. To Frade ([33], p. 5) "... while creativity is the generation of new ideas, innovation is the translation of these ideas into new products or processes." This perspective considers individuals and groups' creativity as a starting point for innovation ([34, 35]; Anderson et al., 2004).

This creativity will always be objectively oriented in its application or implementation, because this is the only way to prove the innovative performance and their acceptance or relevance [36]. Sousa and Monteiro [37] consider creativity as an ongoing process that guides the individual and group initiative, leading to constant innovation and building profitable organizations.

In Porter's perspective [38], innovation is primarily responsible for the creation and maintenance of benefits, therefore ensuring organizations' continuity and sustainability. Kaufmann and Tödtling [39] add that a successful innovation contributes to improve the company's competitive position in the market segment. This is in line with Bateman and Snell [40]: innovation is a key source of competitive advantage, next to competitiveness in cost, quality and speed. The authors consider innovation as a factor that leads to the creation and maintenance of competitive advantage, therefore, the guarantee of continuity and profitability of any organization. Thus, innovation serves as the structural lever that ensures the company's future: (1) achievement of initial objectives; (2) stable economic and financial resources; and (3) company growth and capacity to reinvest.

According to Braga [36], the implementation of innovative projects should value aspects such as delegation, empowerment, trust and support of thinking and creative work. Consequently, innovation goes against routine and improves the perceived leadership quality. This happens when the top management values the individual and collective work, as well as the ideas presented by employees.

In this context, the more engaged employees are in tasks and activities, constantly helping to find solutions to the organization's problems, the more satisfied and motivated they will feel. Creative organizational environments are collective work structures, where all employees have access to the same information and share a common corporate culture. This leads to individual initiative, promotes innovation and adds value to the business dynamics, in a perspective of growth and sustainability [10]. It also promotes a favorable environment.

## **5. Methodology**

This study aims to analyze the impact of personal leadership and communication abilities on organizational performance. A semi-structured interview was developed as a way to understand how does a manager's personal communication style affect the overall company communication. Other questions were included to relate the leader's quality of communication to the employees' satisfaction, their engagement and willingness to actively give ideas, look for alternative solutions and strive to achieve organizational goals.

According to Albarello et al. [41], an interview is the most appropriate instrument that allows the researcher to identify different cultural patterns present in the speech. More than mere words, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice everything can be analyzed in detail when compared to a written questionnaire. It is, therefore, a more complete and detailed method of obtaining information.

Six people with communication and management responsibilities were selected by convenience [42] from among the authors' contacts: (1) Paula Arriscado, the Human Resources Director at Salvador Caetano; (2) Paulo Vilhena, CEO & Founder at Paulo Vilhena, Lda; (3) Jorge Sequeira, Human Resources and Communication Responsible at Team Building; (4) Salvato Trigo, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fundação Ensino e Cultura Fernando Pessoa (Fernando Pessoa University (UFP)); (5) Adelino Cunha, CEO & Founder at I have the Power; and (6) José Albuquerque, Communication Responsible at Nors, Auto Swedish. Salvador Caetano is a Portuguese company with more than 7000 employees, now present in 41 countries with more than 20 brands, car sales and distribution company. Paulo Vilhena Lda is a small company with 15 employees, providing consulting services. Team Building is a small company in the area of training and behavioral management. UFP and/or Fernando Pessoa Teaching and Culture Foundation (FFP) is an organization that aims to develop activities to promote education: culture, scientific research, professional and corporate training and public health. I have the Power is a small company with 18 employees, coaching specialist. Nors represents the Volvo brand at the Portuguese market and is also involved in some other economic activities, mainly in the industry; it completes 90 years in 2023.

The interviews were carried out in person, around five main topics: (1) Leader's personal communication skills and impact on the overall company communication; (2) the need to involve all employees in effective communication, creative thinking, innovation and company's performance; (3) the importance of having satisfied employees and the impact of their satisfaction in terms of communication; (4) managers' communication skills as an important soft skill to promote a company's success; and (5) what

characteristics should a leader have so that he can develop fluid and capable communication. In each of these five topics, the main ideas given by each participant will be presented. Subsequently, answers were analyzed using the Content Analysis technique: inferences based on the text material obtained and its objective contextualization [43]. A phased content analysis was carried out, according to Bardin [44]: organization of the responses obtained; exploration of the gathered material (coding and categorization) followed by treatment of the results (inference and interpretation).

## 6. Findings and discussion

Trying to understand what is the impact of communication on the total performance of a company and what shapes trust, motivation, satisfaction and positive attitudes and understanding among employees, main trends in existing literature indicate that good leadership seems to be directly related to the ability to communicate, therefore, impacting on a company's success (e.g., [12]). This study is based on the approach of the communication capacity of a leader and managers in the results of the company as a whole. Thus, this relationship was assessed, through the exchange of ideas in the form of individual interviews with top managers of some Portuguese companies.

### 6.1 How do leaders' personal communication skills influence the overall company communication?

Participants revealed consensus views on this topic. Paula Arriscado, from Salvador Caetano (large company), stated that the success of a company is related to its managers' ability to communicate and manage the daily routines. This in turn requires managers to be aware of the ability of the company, as a whole, to perform the necessary functions, with the needed energy and within the stipulated time-frames to allow it to achieve its objectives as an organization. In this sense and according to this manager, the efficiency of personal communication is the ability to lead men and women in pursuit of a common goal. This is essential to keep the company's profitability. This is a prerequisite for the company to subsist in the market, therefore, a prerequisite to have reasons to communicate to the market. It confirms the importance that efficient internal communication has for the efficiency and effectiveness of the company and for its enlightening communication to the market and stakeholders. Paulo Vilhena, from Paulo Vilhena, Lda (small company), believes that companies reflect the leaders who run them. He thinks that a leader tends to attract people like him. "We tend to attract people similar to ourselves and tend to select people like us." By acting in this way, managers try to surround themselves with people who speak "the same language." That is, who will understand the logic of the speech they will have. For this reason, and from the outset, there is a relationship between a manager's communication style and his or her leadership style. This will be reflected in the day-to-day activities of the company and also in the way employees identify themselves in it. An enthusiastic leader exudes enthusiasm. Collaborators who absorb enthusiasm become enthusiasts. This ends up being reflected in the performance of the company. Also, in line with these two opinions, Jorge Sequeira, from Team Building (small company), thinks that leadership happens through example. An example is given by the way he works, the way he reacts to everyday situations and the way he deals with and informs other employees of what is being done and what needs to be done. This component of knowing how to communicate, of setting an example, is essential for



employees to replicate. They understand the way forward, imitate good practices and end up working as a team in pursuit of a common goal. A manager is practically always communicating, whether in what he says, writes or through data analysis and decision-making. This has a direct impact on the company's performance that, in turn, also impacts the company's overall communication (internal and external).

Salvador Trigo, from UFP (Fernando Pessoa University, a medium-sized company), said that managers need to always take care to comply in their relationship with others: appropriate treatment, appropriate words and appropriate examples. In this perspective, respect and consideration are two essential variables to use in any form of communication, regardless of being internal (to employees) or external (to the market). He also believes that a leader has to be extremely inspiring and have to give utmost confidence. Like in the army, do the best for his/her team. The way a manager speaks must encourage initiative. The speech needs to be adapted to the receptors; however, in order to lead others to do what the company needs them to do, the way of speaking must be convincing. And one can only convince another person when words are directly related to actions. Therefore, a manager who knows how to use the right words and adopt the right actions will be contributing to a successful company, since he will have in his workers someone who understands him/her and identifies with him/her.

Adelino Cunha, from I Have the Power (a small company), started by saying that the relationship between leaders' capacity to communicate and the company's overall communication and performance is undeniable. To this manager, the internal communication reflects the leadership style. Any manager needs to be aware of how to communicate since this will be reflected in the company's general perception. Leaders should be inspiring. They need to reassure employees and make them feel comfortable at work. Managers also need to learn from other workers and adapt their speech. A company is made by the people who work for it. There is no need for managers or leaders if there is not a sufficient number of work teams to carry out all the activities required by the Organization. From top managers to employees at the bottom of the hierarchy, everyone matters. They are a whole. A company only exists if everyone makes an effort. A company only exists when all their elements manage to understand each other and it is the managers who must promote this general understanding. Then there is what it communicates to the market: a reflection of what happens internally. It is essential that a manager knows how to communicate and adapt his speech to the internal and external reality for the company to continue to exist. Read "in and out" information and prepare an adequate answer.

José Albuquerque, from Auto Swedish (large company), agrees that individuals' communication skills impact on organizations' communication quality. According to this participant, a leader is someone who is empathetic. Individuals tend to follow those who tell them what they expect to hear. They follow those who set an example, in actions and words. But mostly in actions. Thus, everything a manager does turn out to be communication.

The manager identifies situations and informs; he must listen, ask for suggestions. He makes decisions and informs. And in this continuous process, he is communicating. If he communicates assertively, he will have an aligned team. An aligned team adequately performs its functions. Faced with this, the company fulfills its promises and, therefore, is also automatically communicating. For everything to work and for the company to remain competitive and profitable, there is an unequivocal relationship between the leader's and/or managers' communication skills, the positive perception of the company's communication in general and its success. **Table 1** summarizes main ideas and compares with already existing literature:

Topic	Main parts of the interviewee's speech	Content vs literature
Personal Leadership and Communication vs. Overall performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "... good leadership is directly related to the ability to communicate values, thoughts and skills to others";</li><li>• "...Leadership is therefore a driving process that influences the behavior and ability of people";</li><li>• "...This, visibly influences the level of satisfaction, personal development, interpersonal relationships and overall performance</li></ul>	<b>P. Arriscado:</b> "the success of a company is related to its managers' ability to communicate and manage the daily routines"; "This is essential to keep the company's profitability. This is a pre-requisite for the company to subsist in the market, therefore, a pre-requisite to have reasons to communicate to the market."	Agrees
	<b>Paulo Vilhena:</b> "...companies reflect the leaders who run them. He thinks that a leader tends to attract people like him... By acting in this way, managers try to surround themselves with people who speak "the same language"; "... This ends up being reflected in the performance of the company."	
	<b>Jorge Sequeira:</b> "...This component of knowing how to communicate, of setting an example is essential for employees to replicate"; "...This has a direct impact on the company's performance."	Agrees
	<b>Salvador Trigo:</b> "...a manager who knows how to use the right words and adopt the right actions will be contributing to a successful company."	Agrees
	<b>Adelino Cunha:</b> "... the relationship between leaders' capacity to communicate and the company's overall communication and performance is undeniable."	Agrees
	<b>José Albuquerque:</b> "...individuals' communication skills impact on organizations' communication quality. According to this participant, a leader is someone empathetic. Individuals tend to follow those who tell them what they expect to hear"; "...For everything to work and for the company to remain competitive and profitable, there is an unequivocal relationship between the leader's and/or managers' communication skills, the positive perception of the company's communication in general and its success."	Agrees

Table 1.  
Topic 1, answers and literature.

6.2 The involvement of employees for effective communication and consequent creativity thinking, innovation and business performance

All the participants agree that employees' involvement is essential. And employees are only involved if they are well informed. This topic was understood as a reinforcement of the previous one. Comments from all the participants stated that involving employees in the decision and communication process can positively increase the overall communication and performance strategies. Workers will proactively share ideas and concerns, actively listen to their managers and leaders and, therefore, feel more connected and engaged with the company's objectives. By encouraging them to listen and to speak, managers will for sure be able to develop effective internal and external communication. At the same time, involved employees give ideas, suggestions and this leads to creative approaches to the market (products and services) and company needs (procedures). This will have a positive impact on creativity and innovation that, in turn, leads to better business performance.

Topic	Main parts of the interviewee’s speech	Content vs literature
• Employees’ involvement for Effective communication and Business performance	<b>P. Arriscado:</b> “... only involved employees develop a serious commitment to the company, enjoying belonging to the staff and developing their activities with extra energy.”	Agrees
	<b>Paulo Vilhena:</b> “...Engaged employees are the first to communicate positively. They act proactively and are not afraid to give ideas and show their point of view. This promotes dialog and raises productivity levels.”	
	<b>Jorge Sequeira:</b> “... Involved employees are, usually, satisfied individuals; they will be part of an active communication, intern and externally.”	Agrees
	<b>Salvador Trigo:</b> “... involved and encouraged employees tend to talk and end up revealing many aspects that need improvement, thus impacting the company’s performance.”	Agrees
	<b>Adelino Cunha:</b> “...Engaged contributors are individuals who identify themselves. They know that they are indispensable to the success of the company. Therefore, knowing how to listen, let people talk and analyze their suggestions can indicate the path that the company needs to follow to remain competitive in the market.”	Agrees
	<b>José Albuquerque:</b> “...a successful company needs to control turnover. This can only be achieved by involving people. We have to let employees trust the company’s management and listen to them carefully. Often, they are the ones who contact customers and competitors. Their point of view should be the starting point for countless daily decisions.”	Agrees

**Table 2.**  
*Topic 2, answers and literature.*

The opinion of two of the participants is highlighted: Paula Arriscado believes that only involved employees develop a serious commitment to the company, enjoying belonging to the staff and developing their activities with extra energy. They will proactively give suggestions on products’ promotion and even procedures and this will provide important insights to the organization” in the sentence “They will proactively give suggestions on products’ promotion and even procedures and this will provide important insides to the organization. In line with this opinion, Jorge Sequeira believes that team spirit depends on two-way communication. And only united teams identify with the company’s objectives and promote ways to achieve them. Involved employees are, usually, satisfied individuals; they will be part of an active communication, internally and externally. **Table 2** summarizes main ideas:

6.3 The influence of employees’ satisfaction on communication

In general, all participants agreed that satisfied employees tend to communicate proactively.

Paulo Vilhena highlighted that individual’s happiness also depends on the quality of the relationships he/she establishes with other individuals. If someone has a good working environment, feels recognized and involved in the decision-making process he/she will feel happy, motivated to do the best. For example, when working at a commercial department, feeling good and in line with the company’s strategy and objectives, one will be capable of selling anything.

Topic	Main parts of the interviewee's speech	Content vs literature
• Employees' satisfaction impact in Communication	<b>P. Arriscado:</b> "...The daily concern of a human resources manager should be to promote a good working environment for its employees, regardless of the sector in which they work. Implementing employer branding strategies lead the company to be considered the best place to work. If an employee develops this perception, he will be an excellent asset with regard to communication (internal and external)."	Agrees
	<b>Paulo Vilhena:</b> "...Workers who do not feel professionally fulfilled develop a negative image of the company; and because a negative experience creates more buzz than a positive experience, the company risks facing negative (spontaneous) communication. So yes, employee satisfaction has a direct impact on a company's communication and image."	Agrees
	<b>Jorge Sequeira:</b> "... as I already said, satisfied individuals; will be part of an active communication, intern and externally."	Agrees
	<b>Salvador Trigo:</b> "...Anyone who feels integrated into a company, recognized and involved ends up developing satisfaction. Satisfied employees, like satisfied customers, are the first to talk about the company, the brand and recommend its products or services."	Agrees
	<b>Adelino Cunha:</b> "...Only satisfied employees develop positive communication. More: spread by word of mouth."	Agrees
	<b>José Albuquerque:</b> "...From my personal experience, satisfied employees speak convict and positively about the company: they believe in it and identify with it, recommending it to others, either as an employer or as a supplier of goods and/or services."	Agrees

**Table 3.**  
*Topic 3, answers and literature.*

José Albuquerque believes that employees are very proud to belong to and work in Auto Swedish (Volvo). Paula Arriscado said the same about Salvador Caetano's workers. So, to all the participants, it is essential to promote job satisfaction in order to have engaged workers. Engaged workers will be proud to be working in that company and, through their initiative, will be drivers of positive internal and external communication. **Table 3** states main contributions:

**6.4 How do managers' personal communication skills influence the overall company performance?**

To all participants, personal communication skills are directly related to any company's success. Managers who are good at communicating enable good teamwork, rapid problem-solving, and the capacity to promptly answer to market demands and tendencies. They will also build empathy with the other workers, therefore promoting a positive work environment and culture. Good communicators are also those who absorb information from the outside and synthetize it to the other company's workers. Creativity and Innovation are perceived by them as the only way to stay competitive in mature markets. So, by investing in communication skills and in a



Topic	Main parts of the interviewee’s speech	Content vs literature
• Managers’ personal communication skills vs. overall company performance	<b>P. Arriscado:</b> “...90% of a manager’s time is spent communicating: reading, analyzing data, writing reports and talking to different people. It is a soft skill that any manager must know how to use and improve.”	Agrees
	<b>Paulo Vilhena:</b> “...If a manager is not a good communicator, he will not be able to convince others to act in accordance with the organizational objectives. It will negatively impact the company’s results. The opposite is also true.”	Agrees
	<b>Jorge Sequeira:</b> “...Managers, at the top, intermediate level or line managers, need to know how to argue, how to listen and understand. Only then will they be able to have ideas aligned with the internal and external needs of the company.”	Agrees
	<b>Salvador Trigo:</b> “...an integral part of a manager’s training is the development of communication skills. A manager is always communicating. And the success of the organization depends on his/her communication competences.”	Agrees
	<b>Adelino Cunha:</b> “...Those who know how to act and communicate assertively lead others to believe and replicate attitudes. A manager who acts in this way will be contributing to the success of the company.”	Agrees
	<b>José Albuquerque:</b> “...Observe, listen, speak and listen again. It is from this continuous process of communication that a manager can assert himself and lead a team to achieve general objectives.”	Agrees

**Table 4.**  
*Topic 4, answers and literature.*

communication-friendly environment, managers will be working to improve the overall company performance and long-term success and profitability.

Paula Arriscado said that she started at the Marketing Department, responsible essentially for external communication. The company knew that she had a PhD in Communication. After some years, she was invited to embrace a new project: human resources management. The company bet on using her communication skills to develop a more friendly work environment, since they believe that satisfied and motivated workers are individuals with higher productivity and lower turnover intention. She is now having a huge challenge: develop proper communication to allow higher degrees of motivation and counteract a trend toward job abandonment. So, to her and to Salvador Caetano as a whole, personal communication skills do impact the overall company’s performance. **Table 4** has the key answers:

**6.5 Characteristics of a leader for communicating effectively**

To reinforce the relationship between a leader’s ability to communicate and a company’s performance level, participants were asked which main characteristics a leader should have.

Salvador Trigo said that a leader has to have the ability to properly identify his target and then communicate in an understandable way. So, any leader needs to be a simplifier. By this it is meant that an ideal characteristic for a leader is to be able to not complicate things; deal with simplicity and clarity with everyday situations.

Paulo Vilhena combines this ability to simplify with another characteristic: being able to listen.

To Jorge Sequeira, empathy is the prerequisite, followed by the capacity to story-telling: awaken feelings and tell good stories that serve as good examples.

Paula Arriscado said that leaders need to enjoy to share: getting people involved in their projects. Not being afraid to share: knowledge, information and ideas. This will encourage others to act in the same way.

José Albuquerque added the capacity to stay rational, objective and transparent. Be an empathic person, someone that people like to hear but also trust to talk with.

To Adelino Cunha, a leader must be an example, in words and actions. Set a good example. Leaders also need to hear and understand others' point of view. **Table 5** summarizes the main ideas:

Topic	Main parts of the interviewee's speech	Content vs literature
• Leader's characteristics for Efficient communication	<b>P. Arriscado:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Enjoy to share; involve workers in daily decisions;</li><li>• inform about good and not so good results;</li><li>• Involve employees in setting goals;</li><li>• Interact, tell stories and give examples."</li></ul>	Agrees
	<b>Paulo Vilhena:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Being able to listen;</li><li>• Capable to simplify;</li><li>• Pragmatic."</li></ul>	Agrees
	<b>Jorge Sequeira:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Empathy;</li><li>• Storyteller;</li><li>• Be exemplary."</li></ul>	Agrees
	<b>Salvador Trigo:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Good listener and speaker;</li><li>• Knowledge and experience;</li><li>• Adapt to change;</li><li>• Learn through benchmarking."</li></ul>	Agrees
	<b>Adelino Cunha:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-motivated;</li><li>• Experience and strong formation;</li><li>• Good speaker and listener;</li><li>• Exemplar.</li></ul>	Agrees
	<b>José Albuquerque:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Empathy";</li><li>• Curiosity;</li><li>• Capacity to listen;</li><li>• Capacity to adapt speech to different public.</li></ul>	Agrees

**Table 5.**  
*Topic 5, answers and literature.*

In general, the interviewees corroborate the existing literature, by consensually agreeing that the communication skills of leaders and managers in general have an impact on the performance of companies as a whole. Storytelling, directly or indirectly, was recognized as one of the most efficient ways to allow managers to explain ideas, share knowledge and deal with internal conflicts properly. This demands for good communication skills. Managers that invest in communication competences, being able to speak and listen, will for sure overcome possible barriers that individuals may build for their personal protection (e.g., [2]).

## **7. Conclusion**

According to the state of the art, leadership is the capacity to create action, build skills and control things (e.g., [3, 4]). Leaders must be able to gather all the available information, internal and external, treat it and put it at the disposal of their coworkers in an understandable way [1, 9]. By having communication skills and leading others by example (actions), they promote job satisfaction [10]. Satisfied workers tend to develop positive feelings and, when properly motivated with extrinsic and intrinsic stimuli, act proactively [22]. So, proper communication can lead to positive organizational environment. In turn, positivity impacts workers' satisfaction, promotes personal desire for improvement and overall performance. Manager's communication skills have a huge impact on employee engagement, personal satisfaction and organizational success [10]. Communication builds trust, empowers employees, promotes responsibility and puts everybody performing at their best (e.g., [23, 24]).

Organizations need to implement strategic thinking. For that, all employees must be involved and committed. Strategy leads to competitive advantages (e.g.: [14–16]). In mature and competitive markets, creativity and innovation are two essential aspects to be included in any company strategy [25, 26]. They are key issues to competitive advantage, ensuring any company's future, profitability, growth and capacity to reinvest [25, 36, 40].

After analyzing the interviews carried out and the content of all the responses, there seems to be a consensus regarding the impact of leaders' communication skills on the overall performance of companies. In fact, all participants agree that the success of a company is related to its managers' ability to communicate and manage the daily routines. It seems that companies reflect the leaders who run them. So, in other words and according to data obtained, a global and efficient communication depends on the leaders' communication skills, on one side, and on employees' involvement on the other side. All the participants also agreed that involving employees in the decision and communication process can positively increase the overall communication and performance strategies, leading to creativity, innovation and better business performance.

Managers identify situations and inform others about it. They ask for suggestions, then make decisions and communicate them. In this continuous process, managers are always communicating. If this communication is assertive, an aligned and motivated teamwork is achieved. This, in turn, leads everybody to adequately perform their functions. Facing an increase in productivity and quality, companies are able to respond in line with market needs, therefore increasing competitiveness. Leaders that are good at communicating enable good teamwork, rapid problem-solving and the capacity to promptly answer to market demands and tendencies. They will also build

empathy with the other workers, therefore promoting a positive work environment and culture. Employees will feel satisfied and engaged with the organization. The respondents' comments highlight the leaders' capacity to communicate as a drive for quality internal and external communication, capable of highlighting a company's strengths. If the leader communicates effectively, his team and the market are able to understand the brand's positioning and the bases of differentiation. Communicating implies strategic thinking. Define answers to internal and external questions; this presupposes a commitment to creativity and innovation. These are two crucial points for good internal and external performance.

To summarize, our study seems to prove that leaders with good communication skills promote understanding and team spirit. On the other hand, they perceive market issues and the need to create and innovate. Strategic thinking becomes part of the company's DNA and that of its employees. Everyone ends up being involved in this spirit of curiosity and proactivity. Thus, the good communication skills of a leader and his workers, the involvement of the company as a whole, strategic planning and commitment to creativity and innovative responses contribute to good levels of organizational performance. This is in line with previous literature and allowed answering the research questions. However, it presents a certain character of novelty by focusing on the Portuguese market, revealing a growing concern on the part of entrepreneurs with aspects related to (1) communication; (2) strategic thinking; and (3) the implementation of human resources policies aimed at employee satisfaction.

The authors recommend that this study should be replicated to a larger number of companies. To analyze, for example, two specific economic sectors—e.g.: textile and footwear industry, since they represent a large part of the Portuguese business fabric. This would allow, by comparison, a more comprehensive and enlightening understanding.

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## **Conflict of interest**

No conflict of interest.

## **Notes/thanks/other declarations**

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