

# Case Studies on Implementation of Internal Marketing during Lockdown

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**Abstract-** Covid-19 has made an adverse impact on human life. Consequently, various measures were taken to reduce its impact: social distancing, lockdown, and sanitizing. Various organizations and companies started to work remotely. Thus, the pandemic changed the working conditions and lifestyle of the employees. Internal marketing is a process of exchange in the internal market to achieve an organizational goal through internal customer satisfaction. During the lockdown period market, there is no physical interaction and working in the organizations. In such conditions, there are various means adopted by organizations to implement internal marketing successfully to achieve their goals.

This paper discusses various case studies for implementing internal marketing during the lockdown period. Dimensions used to study are change implementation, motivation, the interaction between employees and managers, top management involvement, employee satisfaction, and problems to implement change.

**Keywords:** Internal Marketing, Covid- 19, change implementation, lockdown, employee motivation and satisfaction

## Introduction

Business has brought several changes in the workplace and market. There is a need to reconsider the goals and to handle a situation with new ways of working. The COVID pandemic has drastically changed the workplace, market situation, and environment. Covid-19 is a crisis that extraordinarily impacts public health and the global economy. Internal communications professionals play a critical role in their organization as they are the ones who, with other teams, safeguard that business runs as smoothly. Internal communication permits effective cross-departmental collaboration, and sound communications engage and empower employees.

Internal communication is one of the critical elements of internal marketing. There are also other elements of internal marketing: motivation, customer satisfaction, customer orientation, service quality, job products, marketing-like activities, etc.

During the pandemic, employees need to cope with the new ways of working and collaborating, which may lead to fear in the workplace. Some of the workers were used to remote work. All employees need a better internet connection or a suitable workplace at home. Parents working at home are happy to keep an eye on their children while working, and other employees may feel lonely (Mishra challenges )

Team leaders manage remote teams scattered worldwide and ensure smooth partnerships with other departments. In these unprecedented times, Internal communication efforts increased to keep business running smoothly. During the pandemic, new strategies to ensure collaboration, cross-functional, and employee engagement to maintain workplace productivity during the crisis ("6 Experts Explain How COVID-19 Is Changing Internal Communications," n.d.)

## Implementation of Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is one of the strategies to achieve organizational goals. Implementation of internal marketing is one of the debated topics due to various views and perceptions of this concept. Various studies revealed that there were two groups of internal marketing processes. Satisfying the Employee's needs and making them satisfied come under the first group (Lings 2000). The second group is focused on improving service quality and inter-functional coordination. (Ballantyne 2000). Based on this idea, there may be five simple steps of the internal marketing process which are;

- 1) To identify the needs of employees
- 2) Motivate and satisfy employees
- 3) Implement internal marketing strategies
- 4) Enhancing Service Quality
- 5) External customer satisfaction

One of the studies conducted in the Republic of Croatia found that Croatian companies are accepting a high level of internal marketing implementation (Strunje). According to Strunje, internal marketing is the process through which employees are motivated and satisfied, interact with external customers, and improve the overall service quality of the organization. There are four phases of internal marketing implementation suggested by Strunje. Top management support is necessary for internal marketing implementation in the first phase. In the second phase, training, educating, supporting employees, and preparing to service customers. When an organization supports employees, they become motivated and satisfied. In the third phase, internal marketing strategies are implemented. In the fourth phase, employees interact with external customers and improve the quality of service. They make external customers satisfied. It leads to business profitability.

There needs to be a unified concept of internal marketing, which is the main reason behind poor internal marketing implementation (Panigyrakis and Theodoridis). Internal marketing plays an important role in attracting, retaining, and promoting employees, and thus, it develops trust in management and builds loyalty and job satisfaction, which was proved empirically (Esmaeel Ramazan).

Internal marketing activities are to attract, retain, and make loyal customers (Esmaeel). Martensen is based on the factors that are affecting employee loyalty. The COVID pandemic brought various changes in the life of human beings. The professional and personal lives of people changed. Due to current changes in the work environment, customers are not interested in purchasing core products, but with this, they also buy attitudes, values, and experiences. Due to the pandemic, a lot of changes occurred in the work environment, leading to the changing demand of customers and professionals. Organizations utilize their employees to achieve their individual as well as organizational goals.

Various researchers (Gummesson, Grootenboer, and Christopher et al.) admitted that internal marketing is to create customer value (cited in Mishra, 2014). It increases the relationship between internal customers, internal suppliers, and employers. It leads to the organization's long-term success by providing value to all stakeholders. Dimensions of internal marketing activities in Malaysia's small and medium industries were wages, formal interaction, flexibility, collegial interaction, job flexibility, and external environment. Malaysian organizations must recognize the right way of internal marketing implementation (Munir). Currently, customers cannot visit any store due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Organizations need to rediscover the needs of the customers and employees. Various organizations offered job opportunities remotely. Human resource policies need to reinvent and reconstruct the employee management system. Organizations are focusing on training and developing employees for the new work culture, which has more flexibility to work.

### **Hurdles in Implementation of Internal Marketing During Lockdown**

Marketers everywhere face challenges due to changes. There are some solutions to do marketing in unusual times so that they stay connected with their customers. Firstly, businesses must reconsider the products and services they offer their customers. A marketer is responsible for providing offers and promotions to influence customers. Next is brand building. Brand building campaign is to support, educate, or entertain them. Creating brand building is also important during a pandemic. It is also necessary to understand the Employee's or internal customers' interests. Due to the complex work environment, effective communication with the entire workforce plays a vital role (Mishra, 2022). The Coronavirus pandemic is one of the serious issues; therefore, to face such an issue, employer support is very significant. Employees should develop in the changing circumstances and adapt to the complex work environment.

The pandemic is the time to focus on internal communication. Internal communication is essential to deal with internal and external customers. Various events were canceled due to the pandemic. Various events can be conducted virtually during the pandemic to engage customers and employees. Trade shows, demos, conferences, tours, and other events can be conducted virtually. Online talks and interactive virtual communication develop an interest of employees and customers. Organizations should check the morale and enthusiasm of the sales team. The employer should develop a strong relationship with the sales team and understand their problems. Various strategic activities like search engine optimization, website tracking, nurture programs, Customer relationship management integration, and content marketing strategies increase interaction in the market (Wolfe, 2020). Global business cannot succeed by adopting one thing. Business practices should be reinvented today and in the future.

### **Effect of Lockdown and social distancing on the organizational culture**

Qentelli is more employee-focused than a customer. Free to work in remote locations. Marketing, human resources, IT, and management reinvent all the communication channels. Motivation, collaboration, and information events are the focus points. Always motivate a team. Social life is essential for all—reliable updates about the pandemic. Keep office premises disinfected. Qentelli events organize webinars. Digitally arranged (Thota, 2020). Non-essential stores closed due to the pandemic. Fashion brands are reassessing their digital marketing strategies and communicating with their customers. Software Company Hub Spot's various clients were not focused on marketing projects intended to produce revenue during an uncertain time. Business leaders were doing financial planning for immediate or long-term tactics. Farla Efros, president of North America's retail consulting firm, decreased advertising spend.

It is a critical time for the brands. Various businesses struggle to survive in the Corona Pandemic, 19, depicted by Nick Stickland, founder and executive creative director of Odd, an integrated creative agency dedicated to fashion and lifestyle brands (Chitrakorn, Kati. 2020).

### **Create Space to Connect Amid Social Distancing**

Due to COVID 19, consumers are devoting more time online. How to engage audiences is a significant challenge. Various brands like Alexander, Chanel, Marc Jacobs, and McQueen have been getting creative with their online presence. Due to the pandemic, social distancing has increased, and people stay at home. During the lockdown period, people increased their usage of the internet. An investigation by Kantar found that 92% of the population did not think about stopping advertising and promotion; there are various examples;

1. Crocs provide free Clogs to the health workers.
2. Gymshark campaigns to increase funds for freelance PTs.
3. JBL follows the logo to motivate people while they stay at home.

The audience is the first and most important for the organization. Understanding what they want to see from the branded content is essential, and not one size fits. Most of the content made by humans on social media needs to be polished. Approach social content creation regardless of a global pandemic. The approach should be real. It should be interactive. Using various game platforms is the time of interaction with the audiences. Various platforms are Live on Instagram, YouTube, or Twitch.

For example, vogue NL daily stays home with Vogue.

Nike's call to action for the UGC content plays inside play for the world (Adams Chris, 2020).

### Research Methodology

The research aims to find case studies on internal marketing implementation during the lockdown period. To achieve the objective of the research, data was collected from private banks, electronic companies, electronic retail stores, air plaza retail holdings, and forever living products.

A total of 25 samples were collected from a private bank, electronic company, electronics retail store, Air Plaza, and forever-living products.

Private banks(2 male 3 female) manager

electronic co. (4 male, 1 female)

Electronics retail store (4 males, 1 female)

Air Plaza retail holdings (3 male, 2 female)

Forever living products (4 male, 1 female)

To study the implementation process of internal marketing during the lockdown period, the following 6 dimensions were used:

- 1) Change Implementation
- 2) Motivation
- 3) Interaction between employees and managers
- 4) Involvement of top management
- 5) Employee satisfaction
- 6) Problems to implement change

### Mailed Survey Questionnaire

Note: Write about your organization (Write your view)

- a) Name of the organization:
- b) How long have you been working in the organization:
- c) Designation:

Q1. What is the process followed by the organization to implement change during the lockdown period?

Q.2 How did the organization motivate you during the lockdown?

Q.3 How does your organization create interaction among the employees and managers during lockdown?

Q.4 Are top management involved in all organization activities during lockdown time?

Q5. Are you satisfied with the change the organization implemented?

Q.6 What does the organization face the obstacles to implementing change? If yes, then mention it.

### Please answer the questions and send me back.

For the study, data was collected from five reputed organizations. The first organization was Forever Living product products, the second org was banking, the third was electronics retail store, and the fourth was the electronic company.

The total sample collected was 20 top management personnel. They have all been working for more than three years.

Data collection: Data collection in 2021

### Findings

#### Demographic Findings

##### (Appendix 1.1)

##### Total respondents = 25 respondents

Samples were collected from a private bank, electronic company, electronics retail store, Air Plaza, and Forever Living products.

To study the implementation process of internal marketing during the lockdown period, the following 6 dimensions were used:

- 1) Change implementation
- 2) Motivation
- 3) Interaction between employees and managers
- 4) Involvement of top management
- 1) Employee satisfaction
- 2) Problems to implement change

#### Responses to the survey questionnaire (Appendix 1.2)

Question: 1: What is the process followed by the organization to implement change during the lockdown period?

The first research question asked about the change implementation during the lockdown period. It was found that private banks focus on digitalization for the development of business. It started the online services for all internal as well as external customers. No physical interaction took place between employees and customers, and all the work of banks was started in digital mode.

The electronic company stopped physical meetings and started video call meetings. They depended on mobile phones, email, and other online methods for communication.

Electronic retail stores were calling and convincing their customers on calls. Whenever there was a need for a meeting, they conducted it on Google Meet, WebEx, etc.

Air Plaza increased its working hours and logistics in charge. Due to the lockdown, no physical activities took place. Forever living products were also focused on digital methods.

Q.2 How did the organization motivate you during the lockdown?

The second research question asked to know how an organization is motivated at the time of lockdown. The electronic company responded that they motivated their employees by providing training and interaction on a daily basis. Electronic retail stores respond to calls when they are motivated—forever Living products provided live sessions on Facebook and training.

Q.3. How does your organization create interaction among the employees and managers during lockdown?

The third question is to identify how an organization creates interaction among the employees and managers at the time of lockdown. The electronic company responded to phone calls, and video conferencing was used to interact with employees. The electronic retail store responded through Zoom meetings. Forever living products with the aid of Zoom meetings.

Q.4 Are top management involved in all organization activities during lockdown time?

The fourth question asked to find out if top management is involved in all organizational activities during lockdown time. The electronic company, retail store, Air Plaza retail holdings, and Forever Living products all responded with a positive answer.

Q.5. Are you satisfied with the change the organization implemented?

The fifth question asked whether they were satisfied with the change organization implementation. Private banks, electronic companies, electronic retail stores, air plazas, and forever-living products responded positively.

Q.6 What does the organization face the obstacles to implementing change? If yes, then mention it.

The sixth question asked what the obstacle faced by the organization to implement change was. Electronic retail responded to no obstacle faced by the organization. According to Air Plaza, customers need to respond to the new system.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Internal marketing is a process of exchange in the internal market to achieve an organizational goal through internal customer satisfaction. During the lockdown period market, there is no physical interaction and working in the organizations. In such conditions, various organizations and companies started working remotely during the pandemic. Thus, the pandemic changed the working conditions and lifestyle of the employees.

This study was conducted on five organizations to identify the implementation of internal marketing during the lockdown period. For the study, data was collected from five reputed organizations. The first organization was forever living product products, the second org was banking, the third was an electronics retail store, and the fourth was an electronic company. This study used six dimensions: change implementation, motivation, the interaction between employees and managers, involvement of top management, employee satisfaction, and problems to implement change. The study's findings revealed that private banks focussing on digitalization for business development and started online services for all internal and external customers. The electronic company conducted online meetings for communication. They replied on mobile phones and other online methods. Electronic retail stores were convincing their customers on calls and conducting meetings on Webex, Google Meet, etc. Due to the lockdown and covid 19 spread, very limited physical activities have occurred. Forever was also directed on digital methods. The electronic company is motivated by its employees through training and interaction on online methods. Electronic retail stores responded to calls. Forever conducted live sessions on Facebook and performed training programs. The electronic company responded to phone calls and video conferencing to interact with employees. Electronic stores and forever-living products used Zoom meetings. All organizations responded that their top management is involved in all activities during a pandemic. All organizations also responded positively to change implementation. They all agreed that they were satisfied with the change implementation. The organization found no obstacle to implementing change except Air Plaza. According to Air Plaza, it is not easy to convince customers, and they are not interested in the new system.

Lockdown and covid 19 taught organizations how to cope with such a difficult time and the various alternative ways for organizational functioning. This study concluded that online methods and working from home are the best way for continuous organizational operations and functioning. It also saves time for the people and the cost of the organization.

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#### APPENDIX-1.1

S.No	Company/organization	Designation	Years of Service in the Organisation	Gender	Total
1	Private Bank	Manager	Three years	2 males, 3 female	5
2	Electronic company	Marketing Manager	5 y	4 male 1 female	5
3	Electronics Retail Store	Manager	7 years	4 male, 1 female	5
4	Air Plaza retail holdings	Manager	5 years	3 male, 2 female	5
5	Forever Living Products	Marketing Manager	5 years	4 male, 1 female	5

#### APPENDIX 1.2

S.No.	Question 1	Organization	Open-ended responses
1	What is the process followed by the organization to implement change during the lockdown period?	Private Bank	Private banks are focusing on digitalization for business development.
		Electronic company	Calling and video call meeting
		Electronics Retail store	Calling and convincing customers on calls and video call meetings like Google Meetings, Webex, etc.
		Air plaza	Working hours increased, and logistics charge
		Forever living products	Organisation is focusing on global digitalization
2	Q.2 How did the organization motivate you during the lockdown?	Private Bank	TRAINING AND INTERACTION daily
		Electronic company	ONLINE TRAINING FIT EMPLOYEES DURING LOCKDOWN
			YOGA, INTERACTION
		Electronics retail store	Calls
		Air plaza	
		Forever living products	Live sessions on Facebook and training
3		Private bank	Video conferencing

	How does your organization create interaction among the employees and managers during lockdown?	Electronic company	Phone calls and live video conferencing
		Electronics retail store	Zoom meetings
		Air plaza	
		Forever living products	Zoom meetings
4	Are top management involved in all activities of the organization during lockdown time?	Private bank	Yes
		Electronic company	Yes
		Electronics retail store	Yes
		Air Plaza retail holdings	Yes
		Forever living products	Yes, highly involved
5	Are you satisfied with the change the organization implemented?	Private bank	yes
		Electronic company	Yes
		Electronics retail store	No
		Air Plaza retail holdings	Yes
		Forever living products	Yes
6	What are the obstacles faced by the organization to implement change? If yes, then mention it.	Private bank	No obstacle
		Electronic company	
		Electronic retail store	Yes
		Air Plaza retail holding	Customers have yet to respond to the new system.