



FACULTY OF ECONOMICS
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COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN WINERIES

ABSTRACT

of a dissertation for the acquisition of the "PhD" degree in the scientific specialty "Organization and Management of Production (by industries and sub-industries)"

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Reviewers:

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I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION WORK

1. Relevance and reasons for choosing the topic

The wine business is one of the agricultural industries that still manages to offer products with high added value to the market. The wine products market in recent years has been defined as dynamic and highly competitive in terms of not only price, but also quality of the products offered. Consumers are increasingly demanding of the quality of the wine offered, they are increasingly informed about the advantages and disadvantages of different types of wines, which requires wine and wine enterprises to pay increasing attention to communications with their customers. While consumers can easily and quickly restructure their choice of wine, wine-producing enterprises perform this process more slowly due to a number of factors. The supply needs time to restructure its production process so that it meets market requirements. It takes time to attract investments, hire people with specific skills, as well as time to purchase and install the necessary new equipment to offer a product that fully reflects the needs of the customer (demand). The conversion of production and adaptation to market requirements is not only a time-consuming process, but also a costly one, the error in the management of which can liquidate the entrepreneur's business in the sector. That is why proper communication with the customer is one of the most important factors for achieving competitive behavior in the wine market. On the other hand, the communication process can also be considered as an internal factor, a process that takes place inside the organization, initiated by changes in the external environment. Perhaps this process is more important to control by managers, since it is a reflection of the processes taking place in the external environment.

Communications within the organization take place, with the goal of adapting the business organization to new challenges. Any change requires managers to be good and effective communicators to be able to involve company employees in the goal of adapting the company to new market requirements. Once the change has begun, it gives rise to two main phenomena in the business organization, namely the first is resistance "to change" on the part of the staff and the second is the emergence of numerous conflicts. These conditions require managers at all levels of management to possess and develop skills for effective communication, conflict management and negotiation.

All of these listed factors can be perceived as objective arguments for the relevance of the chosen topic in the current dissertation research.

2. Conceptual thesis of the dissertation work

The main thesis of the dissertation is that communications are an important element of the effective management of a wine-growing enterprise and their strategic management increases its competitiveness.

3. Object, subject and purpose of the study

Research object are the wine-growing enterprises located on the territory of the South Central Planning Region of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Subject of study is the environment in which the communication process takes place in winemaking enterprises.

The aim of the dissertation is to analyze the main factors of the business environment that determine the effectiveness of communications and to propose a model of a strategy for managing communications in the winemaking enterprise.

The goal of the dissertation is achieved through the implementation of the following research tasks:

- Revealing the main features of communications in wine-growing enterprises and their role in effective personnel management;
- Identifying the basic skills that a manager must possess in order to achieve effectiveness in the communication process;

- Development and testing of a methodological approach for analyzing and assessing the factors in the business environment that determine the effectiveness of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises;
- Performing an analysis and assessment of the factors in the business environment that determine the effectiveness of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises;
- Creating a strategy model for effective communication management in wine-growing enterprises.

The main methods used to carry out the dissertation research are: survey method, expert assessment method, chi-square analysis method, comparative method and the method of logical analysis and synthesis.

The study is being implemented in the period 2022-2024, with data and information collection mainly taking place in the field, through the conduct of numerous surveys and personal interviews with managers and support staff from wine-producing enterprises from the South Central Planning Region of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The dissertation is presented in an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, spread over 132 pages, references and appendices. The research is illustrated with 36 figures and 6 tables.

II. MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

INTRODUCTION

In a turbulent business environment, today's business enterprise is faced with many challenges that it must overcome. In order to achieve effective management of the enterprise, one of the main factors is to establish effective communications between the individual departments, teams and company associates in the business organization. Efficiency requires that managers have sufficient volume and quality of information to be able to make logically justified management decisions. This is only the first part of the "equation" called "effective communication". It is necessary for the manager to be able to communicate correctly with his colleagues in order to be able to delegate individual tasks and responsibilities to the other members of the work team in a timely and appropriate manner. The ability and skills of the manager to communicate also determine the degree of influence that he can exert on the other people in the organization. The accumulated experience in the communication process of the manager also determines his ability to manage conflicts and crises in the organization. In the current work, communication is considered as a continuous process in the business organization, as well as an element of the environment that generates conflicts and the need for negotiation skills to deal with these conflicts. Communication requires a number of skills such as - the ability to listen and filter important information; the ability to negotiate and reveal interests among hostile environments in the business organization; the ability to recognize both verbal and non-verbal gestures that people use in the organization when performing their daily tasks.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR ANALYZING AND EVALUATING COMMUNICATIONS IN WINE-GROWING ENTERPRISES AND IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY FOR THEIR MANAGEMENT

Methodology for testing the main hypothesis

As a result of the theoretical analysis, it can be summarized that communications in a business enterprise are a complex process, influenced by many factors, both from the internal and external management environment. In this context, it is necessary to analyze the factors of the internal management environment of the wine-growing enterprise, i.e. to carry out an internal audit of the communication process.

In this context, it is important to define the theoretical boundaries of the object of analysis, namely what is understood by a wine-growing enterprise within the framework of the scientific study. In this dissertation, it is assumed that such an enterprise is one in which the revenue from sales of wine and related products constitutes at least 50% of the total revenue for the relevant business year. In addition, these enterprises must keep accounting records in accordance with the Bulgarian Accounting Act and publish financial and accounting reports, available through the Registry Agency of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Register of the National Chamber of Vine and Wine in Sofia was used to define the sample, which contains all registered wine and wine enterprises as of 31.12.2021. The general population includes 11,231 enterprises. The sample was formed using the simple random sampling method with non-returnable selection, and its volume amounted to 52 wine and wine enterprises.

Table1. Statistical model for testing the main hypothesis of the dissertation research. Source: Own.

Factors - cause	Impact on sales revenue	Impact on sales profitability	Impact on market share
The type of communication channels	X	X	X
Disruptions in the communication process	X	X	X
The type of organizational and management structure	X	X	X
Leadership style	X	X	X
The sources of conflict	X	X	X
Customer communication channels	X	X	X
Communication message and effective feedback /clients/	X	X	X
Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders	X	X	X

The main indicators used to characterize the degree of competitiveness of the wine-growing enterprises under analysis are the following:

- (1) sales revenue in BGN;
- (2) profitability of sales in %;
- (3) market share in %.

The diagnosis of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises is carried out by looking for interaction between the factors - cause and the factors - result. The factors - cause are all those that determine the effectiveness of the communication process, and the factors - result are those that determine the competitiveness of the wine-growing enterprises.

The statistical model that describes the selected interactions between the studied factors is presented in Table 3. The analysis of the established dependencies was carried out by applying the statistical method chi-square analysis, which allows to assess the presence and significance of the relationships between the variables.

“The Chi-square method is suitable for studying correlation-type relationships, such as the majority in the socio-economic field. The method seeks an answer to the question of the extent to which a supposed dependence (or some other type of relationship) exists objectively, non-randomly and manifests itself as such among the studied set of units. The use of the method presupposes a simultaneous preliminary grouping of the units according to the meanings of those signs by which the studied phenomena are indicated, i.e. to have two-dimensional, three-dimensional or multidimensional empirical frequency distributions in the form of tables. The method is constructed

in such a way that it is based on a comparison of two distributions. One is empirical, such as is observed in reality, and the other is theoretical, such as we would have if there was no objective relationship between the studied phenomena. From the comparison of these two distributions, a criterion is built, on the basis of which the presence (or absence) of the studied supposed relationship is checked.”¹

The next stage of the analysis aims to determine the strength of the relationship, that is, how intensely the studied phenomena interact.

When using the chi-square method for this purpose, special measures are applied - coefficients, which can be divided into two groups:

1. **Meters based on the estimated χ^2 characteristic**– the most commonly used are:
 - Phi-squared coefficient (ϕ^2)
 - Chuprov coefficient (T^2)
 - Cramer's coefficient (V^2)
 - Pearson coefficient (C)
2. **Meters not based on χ^2 characteristic**– the most popular among them are:
 - Kendall coefficient (Q)
 - Pearson coefficient (A)
 - Joule coefficient (γ)

The choice of coefficient to assess the strength of the relationship between phenomena depends mainly on whether the number of rows is equal to the number of columns in the statistical tables. In the present analysis, since the number of rows does not match the number of columns, the strength of the relationship will be assessed using Cramer's coefficient (V^2).

Cramer's coefficient is based on the estimated χ^2 empirical characteristic and is recommended when the number of rows and columns in the table is different ($p \neq k$). It varies in the range $0 \leq V^2 \leq 1$. The main advantage of this coefficient is that it remains within the specified limits even with a different number of rows and columns.

The interpretation of the coefficient shows how much of the variation in one studied phenomenon is determined by the variation in the other. The closer V^2 is to 1, the stronger the relationship, and the closer it is to 0, the weaker it is.²The coefficient is estimated using the formula:

$$V^2 = \frac{\chi^2_{em}}{\sum \sum f_{ij} [\min(p-1) \text{ or } \min(k-1)]}$$

where:

$[\min(p-1) \text{ or } \min(k-1)]$ is the smaller of the two differences $(p-1)$ or $(k-1)$.³

Based on the constructed statistical model, the following statistical hypotheses are defined, through the verification of which the main hypothesis of the dissertation is sought to be proven or rejected:

Table2. Working hypotheses of the dissertation research – description and verification methods. Source: Own.

¹ Saykova, Iv. Statistical study of dependencies. Economy, 2002. p.113

² Saykova, Iv. Statistical study of dependencies. Economy, 2002. p.124

³ Saykova, Iv. Statistical study of dependencies. Economy, 2002. p.125

Working hypotheses	Relationship description	Method for testing the validity of the hypothesis
<p>H11<i>The choice of communication channel in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H10<i>The choice of communication channel in the organization does not determine the achieved competitiveness</i></p>	The assumption is that the type of communication channel that personnel use determines the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H21<i>Disruptions in the communication process impair competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H20<i>Disruptions in the communication process do not impair competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that disruptions in the communication process are the cause of deterioration in the efficiency and competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H31<i>The choice of communication network in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H30<i>The choice of communication network in the organization does not determine the achieved competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that the communication network determines the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H41<i>The leadership style in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H40<i>The leadership style in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that leadership style determines the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H51<i>The sources of conflicts determine the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H50<i>The sources of conflicts do not determine the achieved competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that sources of conflict impair efficiency and may be a prerequisite for reducing the competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H61<i>The channel for communication with customers determines the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H60<i>The customer communication channel does not determine the achieved competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that the communication channel determines the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organization	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H71<i>The communication message and effective feedback with customers determine the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H70<i>The communication message and effective customer feedback do not determine the achieved competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that the communication message and effective customer feedback determine the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators
<p>H81<i>Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders worsen the achieved competitiveness;</i></p> <p>H80<i>Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders do not impair the achieved competitiveness;</i></p>	The assumption is that the communication process determines the effectiveness and competitiveness of the organization.	Chi-square analysis with Cramer's coefficient to test the strength of the relationship between the studied indicators

Methodology for conducting an audit of the communication process

Internal audit. The main factors that a manager can control when implementing communications in the enterprise are the internal environment of the communication process. According to Borisov⁴ these factors are:

- The type of communication channels used in the enterprise;
- Disruptions in the communication process;
- The type of organizational and management structure of the enterprise;
- The management/leadership style that is required in managing work teams;
- Sources of conflicts and strategies for their management;
- Customer communication channels;
- Communication message and effective feedback.

These factors can be fully controlled by experienced managers, and are at the core of achieving efficiency in the communication process within the winemaking enterprise.

As a result of the internal audit, information is obtained regarding the strengths and weaknesses in the management of the communication process in the wine-growing enterprise. The disclosure of these sides allows the manager to determine various strategies for improving the effectiveness of the communication process in the organization.

External audit. The factors that managers cannot control fall into the so-called external environment for the implementation of the communication process. These factors are the following⁵:

- Type of communication channels that state regulatory authorities require wineries to use when implementing a communication process;
- Disruptions in the communication process with the main suppliers of raw materials, materials and services for organizing the activities of the enterprise;
- Type of communication channels that suppliers use when carrying out a communication process;
- Disruptions in the communication process with suppliers;
- Type of communication channels that owners require wineries to use when implementing a communication process;
- Disruptions in the communication process with the owners of the enterprise.

All these factors, managers cannot control or have partial control over them, which requires them to take into account and adapt the organization to their requirements in order to achieve efficiency in the communication process. As a result of the external audit, the main opportunities and barriers for increasing the efficiency of the communication process are formulated.

By implementing internal and external audits, managers have the opportunity to collect reliable information through which to diagnose the communication process in the winemaking enterprise and take the necessary steps, measures and actions to improve the efficiency of this important business process.

Methodology for organizing the survey

Once the main parameters of the environment in which the communication process takes place have been determined, it is necessary to plan and adapt an approach to collecting data on the state of these parameters. The main method used in the dissertation research is the questionnaire survey. The main persons surveyed are the managers and company employees in the wine-growing enterprises.

Structure of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is structured in two modules as follows:

⁴Borisov, P., A. Behluli (2020). Strategic orientation of business organization - step by step. Journal of Bio-Based Marketing, vol.2, 2020, 5-20, ISSN 2683-0825

⁵There again.

- *Module A.* The purpose of this module of questions is to collect information about the main characteristics of the surveyed enterprise. These questions collect information about the ownership of the enterprise, the legal form of the enterprise, the main activities it performs as a market unit.
- *Module B.* The purpose of this module of questions is to collect information about the state of the internal factors determining the communication process. The collected data aims to identify the critical factors and carry out an objective internal audit and formulate reasoned findings and conclusions that are used in validating the strengths and weaknesses in the communication process.
- *Module C.* The purpose of this module of questions is to collect information about the status of the external factors in which the communication process takes place. The collected data aims to define the main opportunities and obstacles for the effective conduct of the communication process in the external environment.

To form the general population of surveyed wine-growing enterprises, the register of the Viticulture and Winemaking Chamber of Sofia, updated as of 21.07.2023, is used. All registered enterprises at this time form the general population. When forming the statistical sample, the method of the pre-selected principle is used. This principle is the following - the representative sample includes all enterprises that fall as a location in the South Central Planning Region of the Republic of Bulgaria. These enterprises must have their own vineyards and produce and offer wine on the domestic market.

Organization of the survey. The survey will be conducted in the period 21.07.2023 – 21.07.2024. The survey of individuals will be conducted on-site, and in case of force majeure circumstances, by interviewing by telephone and/or e-mail. The priority method for data collection will be the personal interview.

Sources of information. The main source of information is the completed questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaires, other sources of information are the reporting reports of the enterprises, which are visible in the Commercial Register of the Republic of Bulgaria, other related surveys or expert analyses; publications of results of other analyses on the selected topic.

Risk assessment and response plan. Any field study is carried out under conditions of restrictions and various risks. The main restrictions arise from the financial framework in which the scientific research is carried out. Therefore, the choice of a method for collecting information is determined by funding and the need for a reliable method for collecting up-to-date and reliable information. In the presence of force majeure circumstances, the conduct of the survey will be ensured by other relatively reliable methods for remote information collection, as well as by more frequent consultation and verification of the data obtained with experts in the field. Another approach that will be used is the validation of the collected data by comparing them with other similar data in world-famous scientific databases, such as the Zenodo platform.

Methodology for validating the results of the audit of the environment in which the communication process takes place

The main method for validating the results of the analysis of the factors of the communication environment is the focus group method. By forming groups of communication experts, a discussion and validation of the results of the dissertation research is sought. By preparing previously formulated findings and conclusions from the analysis and presenting them among groups of experts, validation and public support are sought. Through this process, the foundations of the main guidelines are laid, which are formulated in the last part of the dissertation, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises. Basic profiles of strategies for effective communication management are being developed, which are based on the results of the field analysis. It is planned to conduct 2 focus groups in the period 2023-2024. Each discussion in the focus groups is led by a moderator, whose goal is to guide the audience towards a critical analysis of the formulated findings and conclusions and to screen out the most important and objectively significant ones. The defined conclusions are the subject of discussions by managers in focus groups organized specifically for this purpose. Scheme 1 presents the

methodological approach (Borisov, Radev, Nikolov, 2014) for identifying the problems and potential solutions for the development of the competitiveness of wine-growing enterprises.

Chapter II. Analysis of business communications in wine-growing enterprises

A specially developed and tested questionnaire collects and analyzes information about the status of business communications in 52 wine-growing enterprises. This part of the dissertation research presents the results of the survey conducted.

SURVEY RESULTS

Characteristics of the surveyed enterprises

The wine-growing enterprises that are the subject of the analysis are located in the South Central region of the Republic of Bulgaria. These enterprises are defined as business structures with a clearly expressed specialization in the management and business processes. Due to the complex nature of the activities performed, departments and teams that are closely specialized in the performance of various tasks and functions can be clearly identified in the organizational structure of the enterprises studied. Behind the thus organized structure of the enterprises, significant investments are visible, which require significant capital. This is also proven by the data presented in Figure 1. According to these data, almost 98% of the enterprises studied have the legal status of a company. Of all of them, 38.5% are companies that are registered as joint-stock companies. These enterprises dominate the studied set of enterprises. The next preferred form of organizing the activity is a limited liability company, 28.8% of the enterprises studied have this legal form.

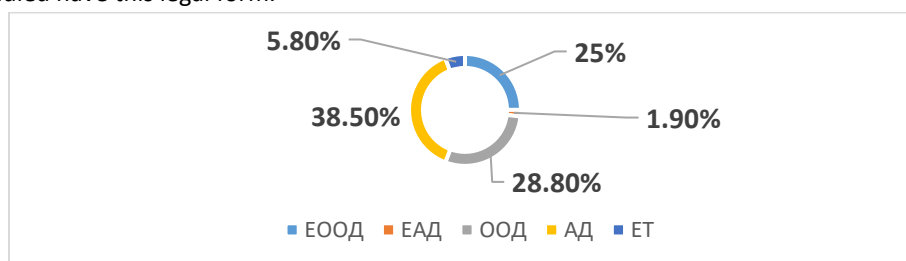


Figure 1. Structure of the surveyed enterprises according to their legal status. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Another widely popular form of legal business organization is the LLC; out of all 52 enterprises, 25% preferred this legal form to develop their business model.

Another aspect that I am exploring in terms of organizing the business of wine-growing structures is their age. The age of enterprises is an indicator that shows which phase of the life cycle the enterprise is in. According to data from the National Wine and Spirits Association, the average duration of an enterprise's activity in the industry is 12 years. During such a period of time, the enterprise reaches a consolidation phase, which is characterized by a clearly expressed specialization of the individual units in the organizational and management structure of the enterprises. At this stage of organizational development, the enterprise has managed to achieve maximum management efficiency in the conditions in which it develops. According to the data presented in the following figure, it can be seen that the majority of the surveyed enterprises (82.7% of the total surveyed enterprises) are over 10 years old, i.e. these are business structures that we can consider to have reached the consolidation phase in their activities. The share of the so-called "new players" is only 1.9%.

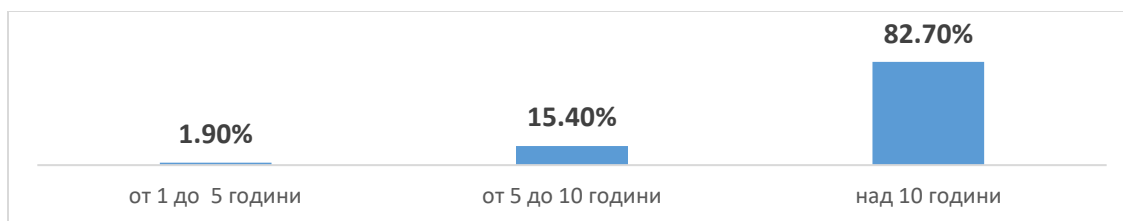


Figure2. Age of wine-growing enterprises. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The information collected from the survey on the duration of the existence of the businesses of the enterprises shows that, other things being equal, business communications must proceed effectively and the conditions for this process are present due to the clearly defined management units, relationships and hierarchy of subordination in these structures.

The next question in the survey aims to collect information about the specialization of wine-growing enterprises during the research period under consideration.

The obtained data are presented in Figure 3. The data indicate that for the most part, the enterprises are specialized in the production of bottled wine. This is explained by the fact that this type of product has high added value and allows for a faster return on the investments made in production. The share of enterprises that offer bulk wine on the market is significantly smaller – only 7.7% of all respondents.

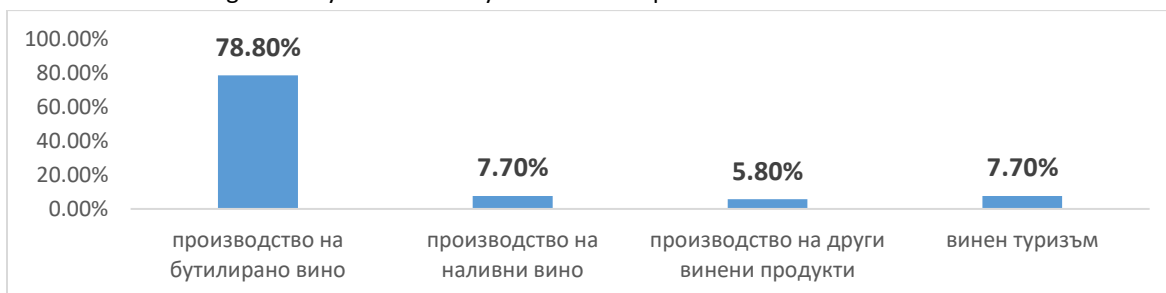


Figure3. Specialization of enterprises. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Bulgaria is a country with good conditions for the development of tourism, including wine tourism. However, this potential is not fully utilized, considering the data obtained - 7.7% of the surveyed enterprises develop wine tourism and this is the activity that generates more than 50% of sales revenue.

The data from the field study conducted proves that the wine sector in our country has a classic appearance and relies on the production and marketing of bottled wines on the market.

Another important aspect in the management of business communications in the enterprise is its market orientation. From the data presented in Figure 4, it is clear that the majority of the surveyed enterprises operate on the domestic market – 67.3% of all enterprises. This also determines their flexibility in terms of the requirements of local consumers. The surveyed managers share that they prefer the domestic market for the following reasons:

- This market is predictable and there are currently no sudden changes in demand and supply;
- Consumers have conservative views on how to consume wine;
- It is easier to control market share due to the already established partnership relationships along the value chain.

All these features of the local market determine and create good conditions for the conduct of external business communications. It should be noted that other critical factors have also played a decisive role in the choice of the domestic market by domestic wine producers, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. These factors have created and continue to create conditions of instability in the international wine market.

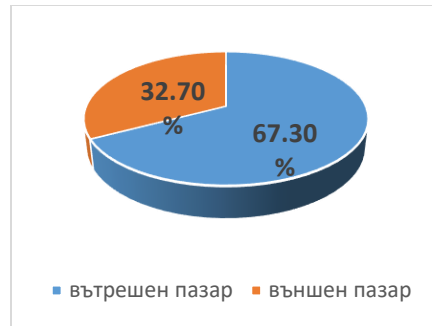


Figure4. Market orientation of the surveyed enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Analysis of the factors determining the way business communications are organized in enterprises

Based on the adopted methodological approach for analyzing the critical factors determining the organization of business processes in enterprises in the sector, as well as the effects achieved from these processes, wine-growing enterprises are analyzed.

Analysis of the organizational and management structure of enterprises

The organizational and management structure (OMS) is one of the elements that determines the effectiveness of communications in a business organization. As a structure that represents a set of units, departments, connections, hierarchy and a system for delegating tasks, it largely determines the way communications flow in the enterprise. The choice of the OMS by the enterprise management is extremely important, because it determines the future development of relationships between people in the organization, as well as their motivation to participate in the communication process without distorting it.

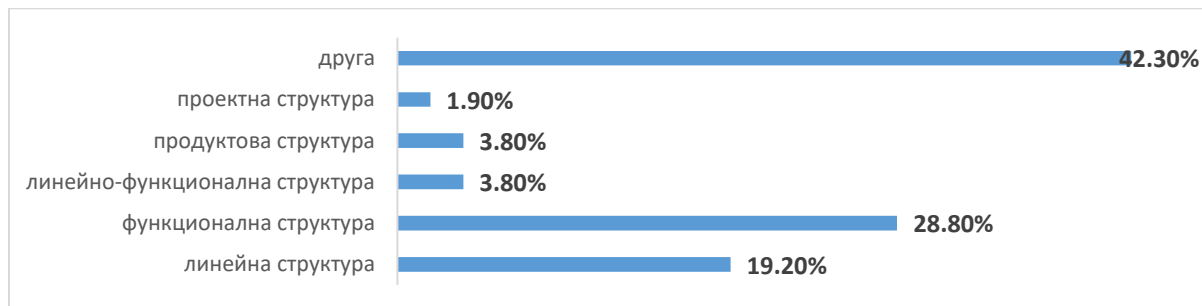


Figure5. Structure of the surveyed enterprises, according to their choice of OSH. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The data in Figure 5 presents information on the preferences of enterprises with regard to the management system. The information collected from the responses received in the questionnaire shows that the owners of wine-growing enterprises most often choose a hybrid form of management system, which allows them to be flexible in relation to changes in the business environment (this is proven by the figure above, 42.3% of the surveyed enterprises state that they use another form that is not mentioned as an option in the questionnaire). The data indicate that the functional structure is also preferred among wine-growing enterprises - 28.8% of the surveyed enterprises state that they use exactly such a management system. These are mainly enterprises that are joint-stock companies and as such have the opportunity to specialize management work in departments and units directly responsible for the implementation of delegated tasks.

Next is the share of enterprises that have chosen the linear structure for managing their activities – 19.2% of the total surveyed enterprises. These are mainly small wine-growing enterprises that do not have a large number

of employed personnel. In their case, narrow specialization of management is not possible and necessary, and they strive to take advantage of the advantages of the linear management system.

The choice of a management system also implies a subsequent communication strategy in the studied enterprises. The principles according to which a management system is designed and organized determine at a later stage the way of organizing communications in the organization, as well as their effectiveness. Therefore, the next element of analysis is the leading principle for forming a management system in wine-growing enterprises.

Figure 6 presents information on the preferences of wine-growing enterprises when choosing a principle for organizing communications in their departments. It should be noted that only the leading principle is indicated in the graph below.

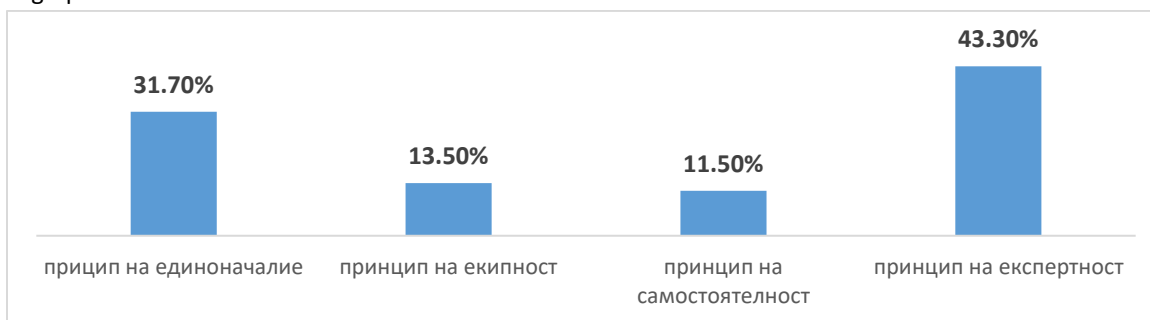


Figure 6. Guiding principle in organizing communications in wine-growing enterprises. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The data show that in the majority of the surveyed enterprises, managers have chosen the principle of expertise when organizing communications among their subordinate colleagues in individual units, departments and teams – 43.3% of all respondents. The next most important principle according to the surveyed enterprises is the principle of single leadership – 31.7% of all respondents indicated this answer in the questionnaire. It can be summarized that communications are organized in a way that allows experts to be involved to the maximum extent in business communications in enterprises by following the “top-down” approach. In this way, efficiency is achieved both in terms of participation in the communication process and in terms of control over the communication process in order to avoid communication distortion and the appearance of noise.

When organizing communications in the principle of independence is also important for wine-growing enterprises – 11.5% of all surveyed enterprises, and the principle of teamwork – 13.5% of all.

The data collected from the field study prove that managers use and apply appropriate principles for organizing communication processes in their enterprises. These principles create conditions for communications to reach the addressees, as well as to reduce noise in the communication process.

Analysis of leadership style and leadership type

Another important factor determining the way communications flow in a business organization is the leadership style. Leadership style is defined as a set of personal qualities of the leader that determine the way of communicating with him, as well as the way of communicating with his other colleagues.

The survey collected information on the characteristics of the leadership style in wine-growing enterprises. The data presented in Figure 7 show that the most preferred leadership style is the authoritarian style – 42.3% of all respondents indicated this style as being practically imposed in their organizations.

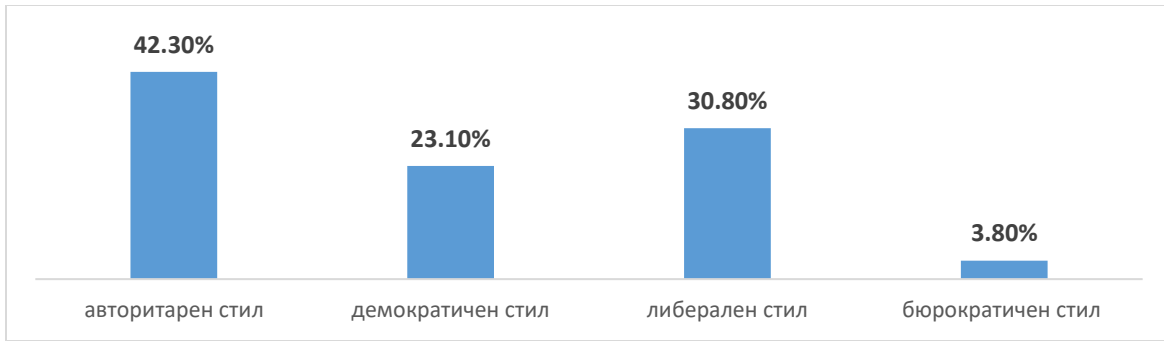


Figure 7. Preferred leadership style in the surveyed enterprises. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The authoritarian leadership style has its advantages, which are highly appreciated in the industry, as evidenced by the fact that almost half of the companies surveyed rely on this style to organize their communications. The main advantages of this style are:

- Decisions are made quickly and easily delegated along the hierarchical ladder of power;
- Costs are saved by not duplicating management functions by different functional managers;
- Control over the communication process is easily formalized, mainly using the principle of single command, which states that the communication process proceeds from top to bottom, i.e. without requesting or exerting communication pressure from the direct superior, the subordinate does not participate in the internal communication flow.

The main disadvantages of implementing the communication process within the authoritarian style are:

- Not all colleagues participate in communications within the organization, which does not provide an opportunity for discussion and obtaining good ideas when solving routine problems;
- Communication can be easily manipulated, especially if there is a "mirror image" effect, namely the company employee shares an opinion and reports only results that will please his direct supervisor, who is a supporter of the authoritarian style;
- Feedback is not effective and does not reflect fully if there is a problem in the communication flow.

The next preferred style of communication management is the liberal style. This is evidenced by the graph presented in Figure 7. Of all surveyed enterprises, 30.8% stated that the liberal style is the preferred style for organizing and managing communications in their enterprises. The liberal style was chosen (according to the surveyed managers) because of the advantages it provides when organizing communications in the enterprise, namely:

- Freedom of choice - whether the company employee should join the communication flow. This freedom provides good conditions for motivated participation in communications only if the person considers it important and necessary in performing his routine tasks;
- Ability to share the communication flow with individuals the manager considers important for completing daily tasks.

The lowest share is observed in enterprises that prefer the bureaucratic style of managing communications in the enterprise – 3.8% of the total surveyed enterprises indicate this style as de facto imposed in their structures. The main advantage of this style is that it allows the manager to impose formal control and easily track the information flow in their organization.

Leadership is another factor that has a systematic impact on the communication process in a business organization. Unlike management, which is formalized within the management hierarchy of a business organization, leadership is a phenomenon that is more closely related to the social element in a business organization. Leadership

is perceived more as an emotion, a socio-psychological interaction of people in the organization. That is why I believe that leadership is of crucial importance in shaping the communication process in a wine-growing enterprise.

The following figure reflects information about the nature of leadership observed in the studied set of wine-growing enterprises.

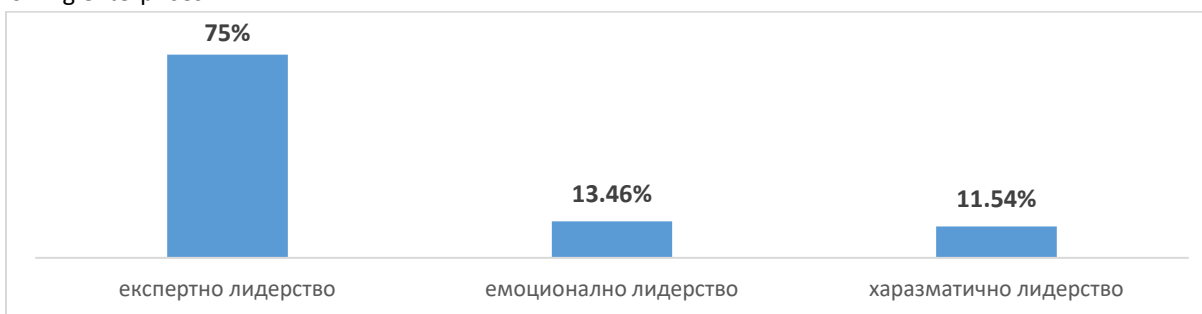


Figure8. Type of leadership in the surveyed enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The data show that expert leadership is present and valued in wine-growing enterprises. Of all surveyed enterprises, 75% point out that expert leadership is the factor that determines the motivation of the staff. In 13.46% of the surveyed enterprises, the presence of emotional leadership is observed as a tool for motivating company employees and in 11.54% charismatic leadership is present. These data prove that company employees and managers who are experts in their field enjoy the greatest trust and they directly create and participate in the communication process in order to achieve efficiency in pursuing company goals. Winemaking is an activity that requires in-depth and complex knowledge, which also determines the leading role of expert leadership in organizing communications in the wine-growing enterprise.

Leadership, unlike management, is based on the trust and sympathy that the company employee feels and they are the main motivational factors determining the follow-up of the leader's behavior. That is why it is important for the formal leader, who is the manager, to have leadership qualities and skills that guarantee him full motivation to pursue the company's goals by his colleagues. The assessment of the leader's effectiveness is determined by how much he cares about the people in the organization. Of course, leaders who fully focus their attention and efforts on being in good relations with their colleagues can easily lose the trust of the company's owners, since the latter are interested in the profits and returns that the leader can achieve in his management. This requires the leader to also focus on the production and financial results of the company's activities. Very often, in practice, the leader is between a rock and a hard place and must balance the interests of the company's owners and those of the company's employees as well as loyal customers. This creates conditions to distort the communication process and again create conditions for noise in the communication environment. The next question in the questionnaire aims to collect information about the leader's concern for the staff and for achieving the organization's goals.

Figure 9 presents information on the concern of managers for people in the organization. The trend is clearly outlined that managers are very concerned about the personnel in the enterprise. According to them, experienced and qualified personnel are the most valuable asset of the company and the future development of the business model depends on it. According to 86.5% of the surveyed managers, their concern for personnel is very pronounced and they use a wide range of means to satisfy the needs of their subordinates. Only 7.7% of the surveyed managers show little concern for personnel. Managers emphasize that it is not people who are the most important in the production process, but the wishes of the company's owners, as well as the ability to demonstrate good management of personnel costs.

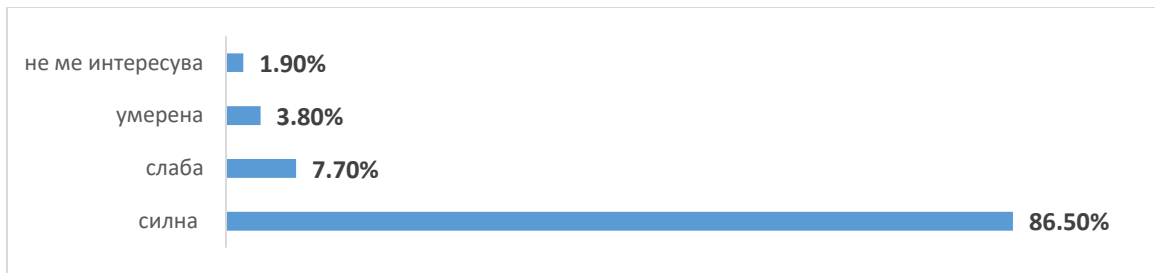


Figure9. Managers' concern about their relationships with other colleagues in the company. Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

1.9% of the surveyed managers show a lack of attention to the condition and needs of the staff. These managers point out that the staff is one of the least important priorities for the development of the company's business. They are mainly concerned about the overall development of the business, relying on an external company to monitor and systematically exercise concern for the staff in the enterprise.

Of course, the answers to the question reflect the managers' opinions very subjectively. The doctoral student is perceived as an external factor, whose presence distorts the results obtained from the survey. Therefore, the next question aims to control the opportunism displayed by the respondents by measuring their concern for the goals and development of the organization.

Figure 10 presents information on managers' concern for the development of the organization. From the information presented in this way, it is clear that the majority of managers (78.8% of all surveyed managers) are highly concerned about the development of the organization. The high share of responses received here proves that the respondents are either "cheating" or have not properly understood the question included in the survey. Nevertheless, it can be summarized and concluded that managers make an effort and diligence in their daily work to be concerned both about the people in the organization and about the results of the functioning of the organization itself.

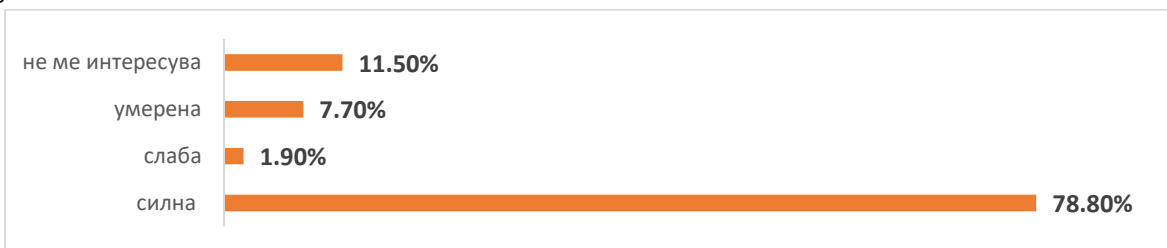


Figure10. Managers' concern for the development of the organization. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

A higher proportion of responses marked as "not interested" is noted – 11.5% of the total responses received to the survey question. This may be a good indicator of honesty and directness in sharing opinions on the researched problem in the survey.

The survey itself can be considered an experiment that proves how effective communications are within and outside the researched wine-growing enterprises. From the personal interviews with managers and company associates, as well as discussions, the following conclusions are drawn regarding the barriers to effective communication:

- Very often, managers find themselves in situations that do not allow them to be very concerned about their company employees, which is why they prefer not to enter into direct communication with other colleagues very often. This is explained by the fact that these individuals prefer to avoid conflict by postponing a business meeting or avoiding the problematic topic;

- The communication flow is filtered (or prioritized) by different individuals who are placed in a position to be responsible for incoming and outgoing communication in order to save the manager's time in the communication process or to completely relieve him of it in order to perform other more important tasks;
- The communication flow is deliberately distorted by interested parties in order to achieve their personal goals - different from those of the company.

Analysis of communication tools and barriers to overcome

The next series of questions in the questionnaire aims to collect information about the preferred type of communication tools used in wine-growing enterprises, as well as to analyze the main barriers to achieving effective communication.

Information on the means of communication used in the 52 surveyed wine-growing enterprises is shown in the figure below. The data show that the most frequent and preferred means of official communication in enterprises is email correspondence – 32.6% of respondents indicate this means of communication.

Next comes personal conversation as the preferred communication tool in the surveyed companies – 28.9% of total respondents.



Figure 11. Means of communication in the surveyed enterprises. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

In third place is the telephone conversation as the preferred means of communication - 23.7% of all respondents.

The internet-based communication platform is next, as the preferred means of business communication – 13.3% of the total managers surveyed stated that they prefer it. After the end of the Covid pandemic, these platforms became established and continue to be used, saving both costs and time for communication. Very often, the surveyed managers stated that these platforms and their use enable them to communicate without going on long business trips and wasting time when conducting business transactions with international partners. Of all the respondents, several stated that they use a different means than those mentioned in the questionnaire – 1.5% of the total respondents.

Providing feedback to colleagues who are included in a team for the performance of a specific assigned task is the subject of analysis with the next question included in the survey. The following figure presents the information received regarding the method of providing feedback.

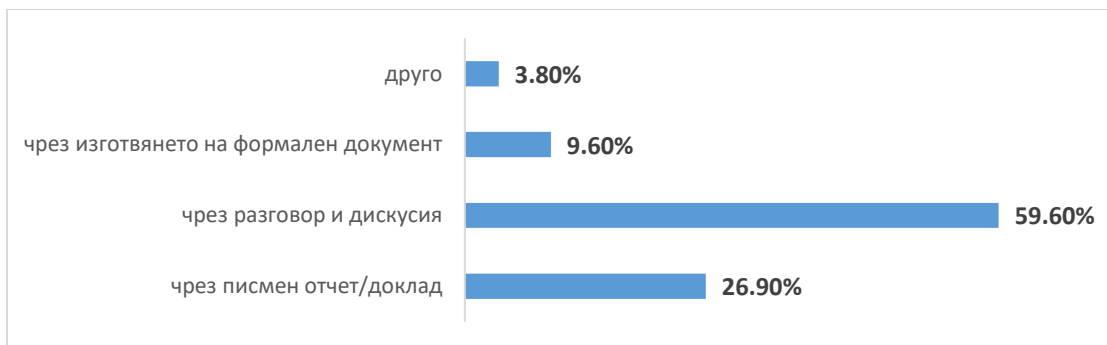


Figure12. Ways to provide feedback to others on the team. Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

The data show that most often feedback is provided through a conversation or inclusion in a certain discussion (operation, meeting, council, etc.), more than half of the respondents share this opinion - 59.6%. Next in preference is the preparation of a written report/account as a means of receiving feedback - 26.9% of the total respondents use this means in their daily work.

Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that live contact is important in communicating in wine-growing enterprises!

The assessment of the effectiveness of feedback was measured with the next question included in the survey. Figure 13 presents a graphical analysis of the responses received to this question. According to the data, managers are satisfied with the way feedback is implemented and they believe that it is effective – 61.5% of the total respondents indicate this as a fact. Next is the group of managers who do not agree that the effectiveness of feedback is a fact in their organization – 34.6% indicate this.

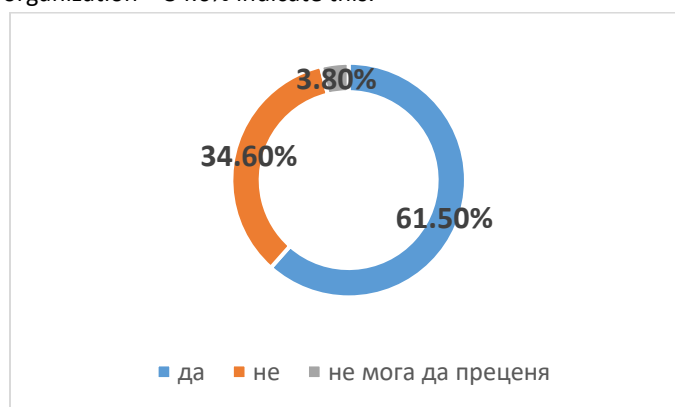


Figure13. Managers' assessment of the effectiveness of feedback. Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

And only 3.8% of surveyed managers declare that they cannot assess whether feedback in their companies is effective.

The next question in the survey aims to collect information about the reasons in the organization that underlie the filtering of information in the communication process from the perspective of executive staff.

According to the data presented in Figure 14, the main reasons for information filtering and feedback distortion in the wine-growing enterprises are:

- Feelings of irritation and fear of punishment from their immediate supervisor. Of all 52 company employees interviewed, 36.5% stated that fear was a primary motivator for filtering information or presenting it incorrectly to their immediate supervisor;

- The fear of conflicts is also one of the significant factors that causes company employees to filter information in the process of communication with other colleagues – 23.1% of total respondents;
- The fear of failure in performing delegated tasks is also a tangible factor causing information filtering in enterprises – 19.2% of respondents share this as a reason;
- Avoiding conflicts, as well as pressure from colleagues, are also factors that prompt employees to filter information and distort the feedback that the manager receives in the winemaking enterprise, respectively, according to the data obtained, 9.6% of respondents indicated these reasons.

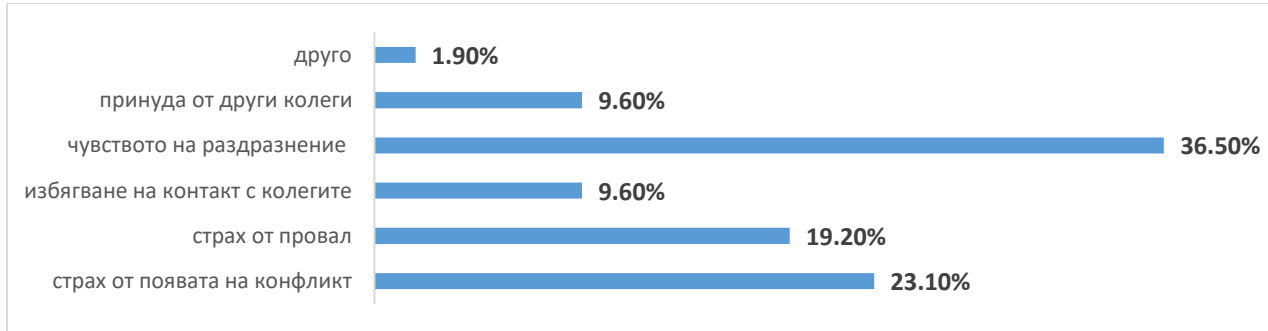


Figure14. Reasons for filtering information in the communication process. Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

Many factors can prevent the communication process in an organization from being effective. The following question aims to gather information on what exactly these are when wine-growing enterprises.



Figure15. Factors that are barriers to effectiveness in the communication process. Source: Own study among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

Figure 15 provides information on the main factors that are barriers to the communication process in the 52 companies surveyed. The data show that the main reason for inefficiency in the communication process is the factor - "information overload" - 36.4% of all surveyed managers stated that they suffer from this factor, it is the main reason for inefficiency. The next most important factor is the factor - "leadership style" - 18.2% of all surveyed identified this factor as a reason for inefficiency in the communication process. If we return to the results of the analysis of managers' preferences regarding the imposed leadership style, we will see that the most preferred was the one based on the authoritarian principle. Therefore, it can be concluded that **Authoritarianism in management and information overload are the main obstacles to the effectiveness of communications in winemaking enterprises.**

Considering the above finding, the attitude and assessment of the staff regarding the information overload to which they are exposed in the wine-growing enterprise was studied.

Information regarding the studied element is presented in Figure 16. The data show that staff assess that information overload is highly pronounced and significantly affects the communication process and its effectiveness – 28.8% of all respondents state this as a fact in their organizations.

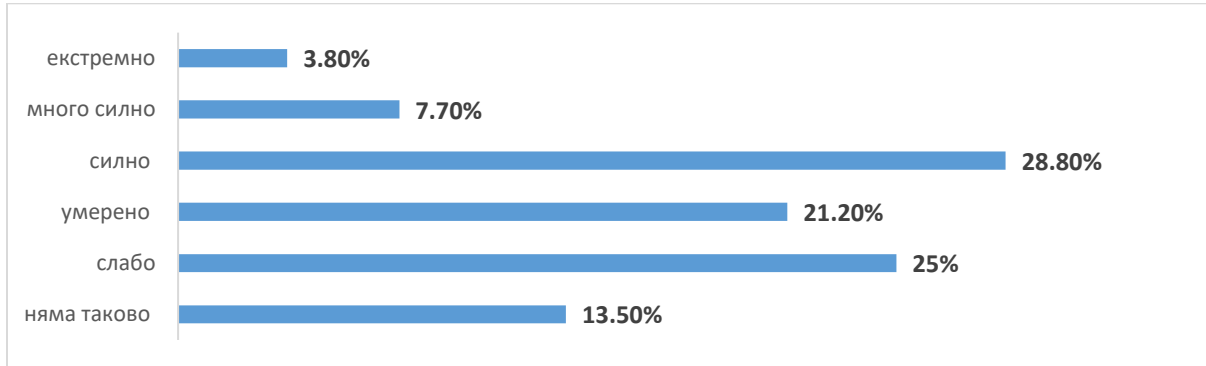


Figure16. Assessment of staff regarding their exposure to information overload. Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

There is also a significant proportion of those who say that information overload is a mild phenomenon in their organizations – 25% of the total respondents. Of all respondents, 21.2% indicate that information overload is moderate, another 3.8% indicate that the overload is extreme. Another 13.5% state that there is no information overload in their organizations.

Analysis of the effectiveness of the communication process

The effectiveness of the ongoing communication process needs to be measured through the effectiveness of the outcome of this process. Of course, it should be noted that the communication process is primarily a socio-psychological interaction between company employees, and as such a process it is necessary to measure the assessment of the staff, to what extent they are satisfied with the communications in the enterprise. This assessment should be integrated with the assessment of the effectiveness of the communication process in the enterprise.

This approach was used in the development of the next series of questions included in the questionnaire. Through them, we aim to assess the effects that arise from the communication process as well as to subjectively measure the degree of communication satisfaction of the staff.

The effectiveness expressed as staff satisfaction in the communication process is primarily determined by the type of communication network that is implemented in the organization, which is why the following graph presents information about the types of communication networks in the surveyed enterprises. According to the data presented in Figure 17, enterprises mainly prefer to use a hybrid communication network in their departments and structures – 55.8% of respondents indicated this type.

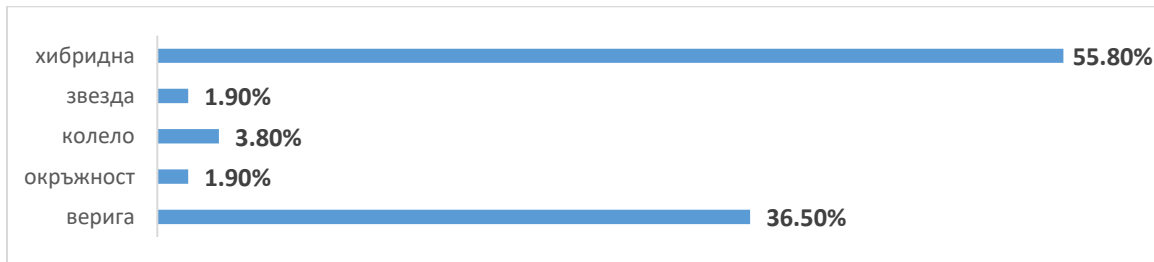


Figure17. Types of communication networks in wine-growing enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The next most preferred type is the chain communication network – 36.5% of all surveyed managers stated that it is available in their companies. With these two types of communication networks, there is an opportunity to involve a larger part of the available staff in the communication process. This allows for broad involvement in the performance of daily tasks, as well as the pursuit of company goals. The main disadvantage is that this type of communication network can easily expose staff to information overload, as was found in the course of the analysis.

The next question in the survey reflected the opinion of the staff on how effective the chosen communication network is in their company. The figure below presents the answers received, **The data indicate that the majority of respondents are of the opinion that the communication network is effective – 63.5% of the total respondents.**

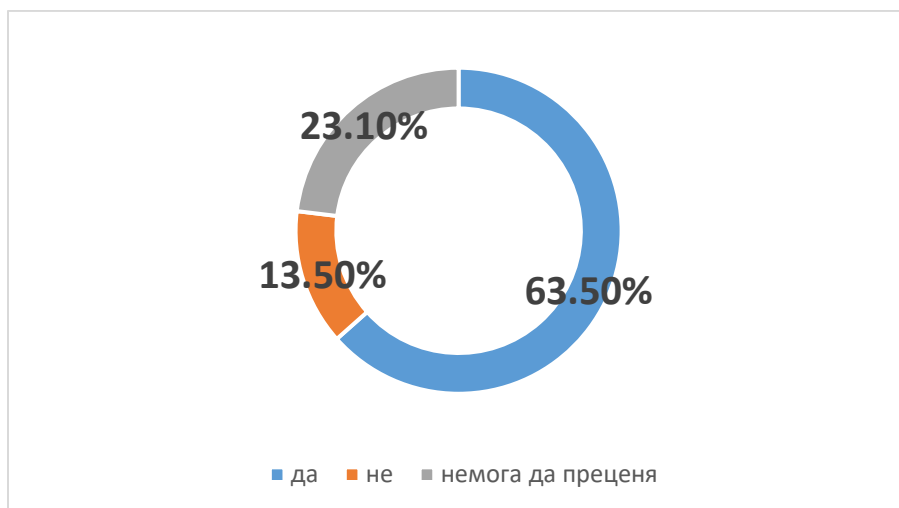


Figure 18. Staff assessment of the effectiveness of the communication network. Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

There is a significant proportion of those who cannot assess how effective the network is – 23.10%.

Communications in wine-growing enterprises directly affect both the effectiveness of delegation and the motivational process. That is why the study of the basic principles underlying the organization of the communication process is the subject of analysis in the next stage of the dissertation research. According to the data obtained, the following principles are most widely used in the studied enterprises:

- **Clarity** According to the information received, more than half of the enterprises strive to comply with this principle of organization (see Fig. 19);
- **Brevity** of the communication message sent, managers in the surveyed companies follow this principle in order to achieve efficiency in the communication flow;
- **Correctness** of the submitted message/message in the communication channel. The majority of enterprises observe this principle.

The following principles for organizing communications in the surveyed enterprises are the least popular:

- Showing respect /confidentiality/ when employees participate in the communication process;
- Courtesy when participating in company communications.

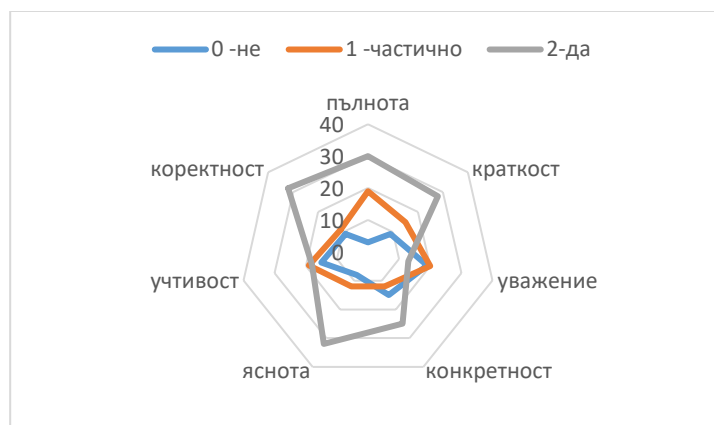


Figure19. Principles governing the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The next element, subject to analysis, is the influence of managers in enterprises and the ways they use to include staff in the communication process. The following figure presents the data from the conducted study.

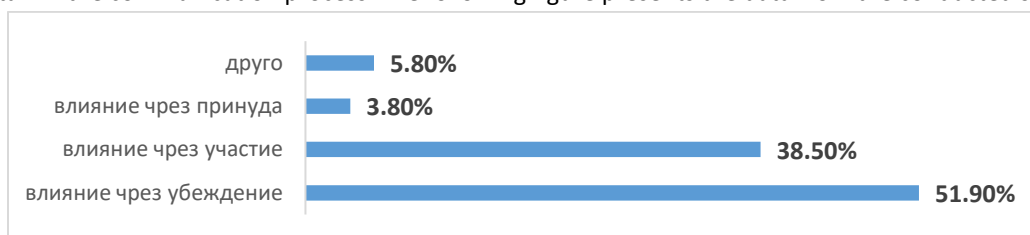


Figure20. Influence of managers on staff to be included in the communication process. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

From the data shown in Figure 20, it is clear that more than half of the respondents – 51.9% – are included in the communication process as a result of a conversation with their immediate supervisor, who has convinced them that it is vital for them to be included in the communication process and to follow the information received in order to perform their daily tasks. Another 38.5% state that their inclusion in the communication process is achieved through direct participation, since they are in positions whose job descriptions require them to communicate with their colleagues at all times.

1. Analysis of the environment for organizing communications in wine-growing enterprises

The communications of the studied enterprises are defined as a continuous cyclical process, the analyzed effects of which are determined by the internal and external environment in which the communication process takes place. The internal environment is all the elements that management should control and use to its advantage in implementing the various tactics and strategies to achieve the set business goals. This environment includes the following elements:

- The objectives of the enterprise;
- The resource availability of the enterprise to achieve the set goals;
- Tactics and strategies used for organizational development;
- Company plans and the tasks that are delegated in their implementation;
- Staff motivation to communicate effectively;
- Leadership style;
- Group dynamics;

- The presence of conflicts;
- Staff communication skills.

The external environment in which the communication process takes place encompasses all the elements that management should not be able to control. These elements objectively exist in the environment and managers, since they cannot control them, need to identify, study and prioritize them. After these critical steps, managers need to organize communications in the enterprise so that it meets the challenges arising from the external environment. Adapting the communication process to these challenges is a critical factor for the success of the communication process!

Elements of the external environment are:

- The communication policy of the state structures that regulate the activities of the industry;
- The communication policy of the contractors who supply the key resources for the development of the business model of the winemaking enterprise;
- The communication policy of competitors who directly compete with the activities of the winemaking enterprise.

This part of the dissertation research presents the results of audits of both the internal and external environments for the implementation of the communication process in the studied wine-growing enterprises. The analysis is based on a questionnaire survey and personal interviews with company associates/managers from 52 wine-growing enterprises.

Analysis of the internal environment for implementing the communication process in wine-growing enterprises

The goals of the enterprise are the leading element in organizing communications in the wine-growing enterprise, according to theoretical analysis of the problem. The goals must reflect the interests of all stakeholders, otherwise conditions will be created for a breakdown in communications in the business enterprise. Stakeholders for the owners of the enterprise, managers who manage the enterprise, workers (company associates) who organize business processes in the wine-growing enterprise and customers who buy the products and services produced by the enterprise.

According to the analysis of the coherence of the company's goals with all the stakeholders described above, the trend clearly stands out that the owners of the company are the main persons with whom the goals are coordinated. According to the data in Chart 21, it can be seen that 44.1% of the surveyed managers are of the opinion that the owners are a factor with whom it is necessary to coordinate the company's goals. The workers are the ones to whom tasks arising from the specifically set goals will be delegated, which is why managers also coordinate the company's goals with them - 28% of the surveyed managers do this. Only 18.6% of the surveyed managers believe that it is necessary to coordinate the goals with their other colleagues. According to them, the highest echelon of management is obliged to design the goals - strategic and long-term, which should reflect the interests of the owners of the company, and the remaining levels of management only need to follow them, without contributing to the goal-setting process in the company.

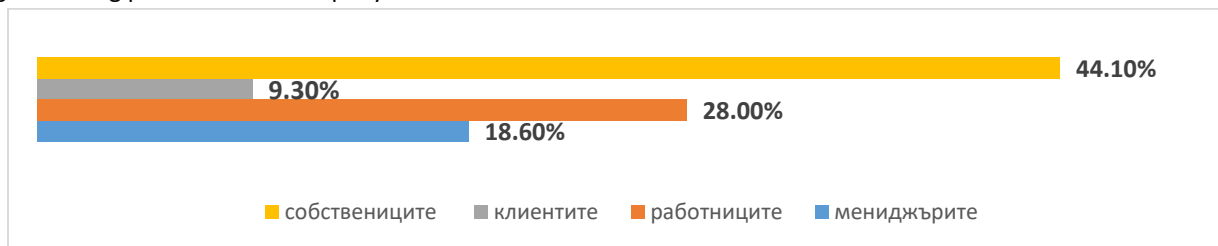


Figure 21. Consistency of objectives with stakeholders in wine-growing enterprises. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

It is surprising that only 9.3% of the surveyed managers agree on goals with customers. These are mainly enterprises that work with a limited number of customers, such as large food hypermarkets, and all their requirements are reflected in the goal-setting process.

With these results, it can be concluded that the organization of the communication process in terms of goal setting and delegation of tasks and the implementation of various strategies, tactics, and policies in the management of wine-growing enterprises is carried out primarily respecting the interests of the owners of the enterprise and the workers. Neglecting the interests of customers in the goal-setting process is a prerequisite for low efficiency in communications with them.

Managers from the middle and operational levels of management are also not involved in goal setting and their interests are not taken into account, which also creates conditions for ineffective communication within the enterprise with them!

The resource availability of the processes in the enterprise is the next element subject to analysis. Resources and their objective scarcity are often a source of conflicts and a reason for distortion of the communication process according to researchers of the communication process. According to the survey, more than half of the managers are of the opinion that the resources in the enterprise are available and do not suffer from resource scarcity – 55.8% of the total surveyed managers are of this opinion. Another 32.7% are of the opinion that the resources are scarce and this can create conditions for deterioration of internal communications in the enterprise.

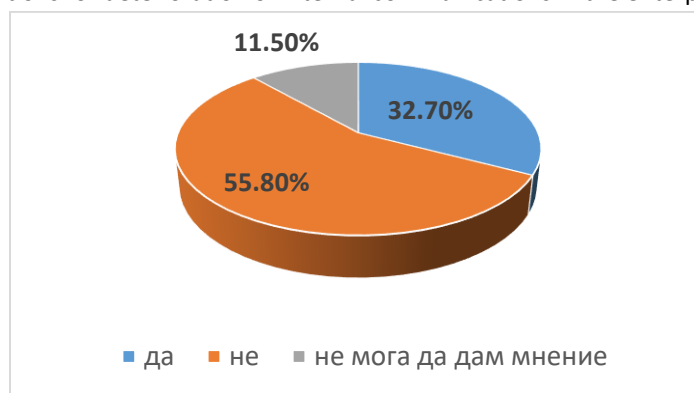


Figure22. Scarcity of resources. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The next question included in the questionnaire seeks a connection between resource availability and the effectiveness of the communication process in the surveyed wine-growing enterprises. According to the data in Figure 23, it can be concluded that the availability of resources determines the effectiveness of the communication process in 40.4% of the surveyed enterprises.

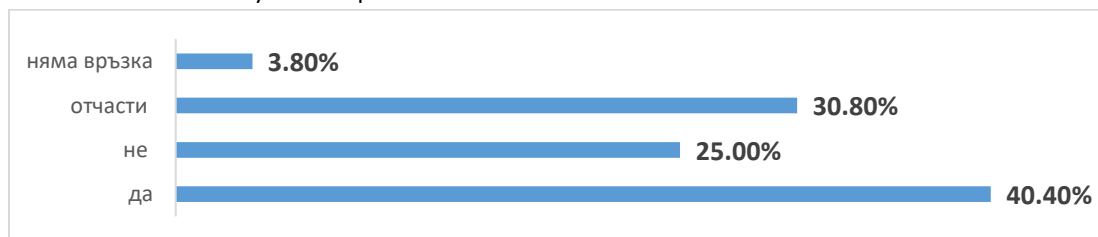


Figure23. Relationship between resource availability and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

In 25% of the surveyed enterprises, the effectiveness of the communication process is not determined by resource availability. In 30.8% of the surveyed managers, they are of the opinion that this factor partially affects the effectiveness of the communication process and only 3.8% are of the opinion that there is no connection (at least not a direct one) between the analyzed factors.

A common problem shared by managers is that resource scarcity leads to internal competition in resource allocation, which definitely worsens communications, as they are intentionally distorted. Often, rumors are spread to engage staff to spend resources more carefully, thus seeking to minimize costs.

Another important aspect is that, due to insufficient resources, some enterprises do not create an effective communication network within their structures, with the aim of saving money by neglecting the role of communications in achieving efficiency in enterprise management.

Another important element of the internal environment in which the communication process takes place are the tactics and strategies used to achieve company goals. The figure below presents the results of the survey conducted regarding the studied relationship.

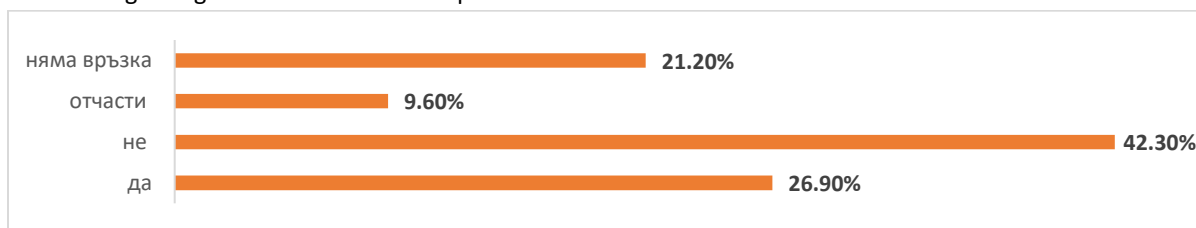


Figure 24. Relationship between the strategies/tactics followed and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

According to the data in Figure 24, 42.3% of the surveyed enterprise managers believe that the strategy or tactic followed does not worsen the communication process in the enterprise. Another 26.9% believe that the communication process worsens as a result of the business strategy/tactic followed. 9.6% share the opinion that this happens in part and it cannot be said that there is a systemic influence. The share of managers who believe that there is a connection between the studied factors is not small – 21.2% of the total respondents.

The next element of the internal environment that should determine and influence the effectiveness of the communication process are company plans. Figure 25 shows the assessment of the surveyed managers of the interrelationship between the studied factors. According to 42.3% of the respondents/managers, company plans do not create conditions for the deterioration of the communication process in their enterprises. Another 26.9% believe that company plans create conditions for the deterioration of the communication process in the enterprise. Among all respondents, 21.2% believe that there is no connection between the studied factors. Another 9.6% are of the opinion that conditions are partly created for the deterioration of the conditions for the communication process.

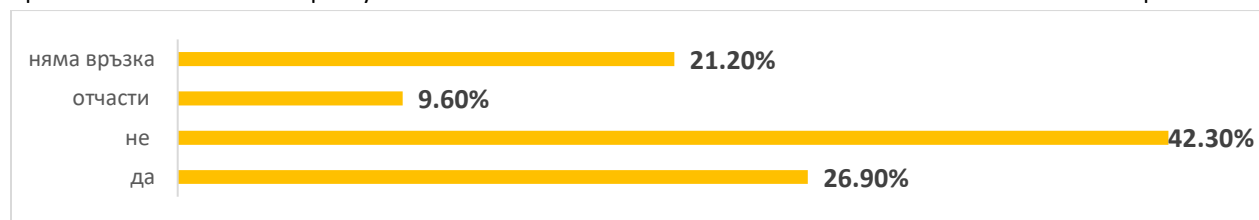


Figure 25. Relationship between company plans and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The motivation of the staff to actively participate in the communication process is another important factor in the internal environment. The following graph shows the results of the survey on the relationship between staff motivation and the communication process in the enterprise. According to the literature review of the problem,

lowly motivated staff are unwilling and find it difficult to engage in the communication process. In order to achieve effective communication, it is necessary for people in the organization to actively participate in it. This problem is analyzed with the next question included in the survey, namely "does staff motivation create conditions for deteriorating the effectiveness of the communication process?"

The evaluation of the responses received is presented in the graph below. According to the results obtained, it is clear that the motivation of the staff does not create conditions for the deterioration of the environment in which the communication process takes place. According to 78.8% of the surveyed managers, this is a fact. Only 9.6% of the surveyed managers are of the opinion that the staff is poorly motivated and does not want to actively participate in the communication process.

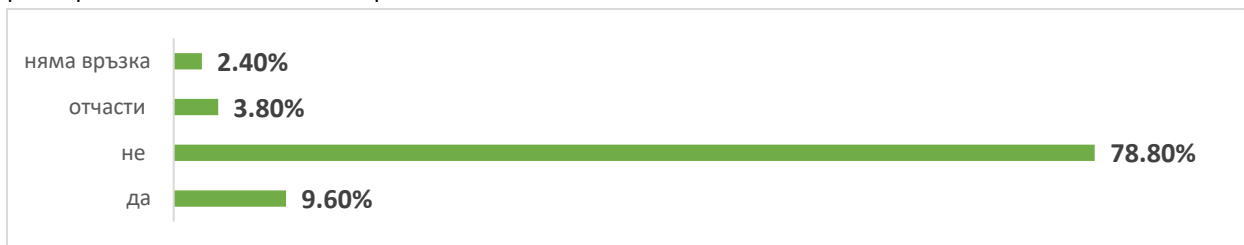


Figure 26. Relationship between staff motivation and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises.

Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Leadership style is another element of the internal environment that influences the communication process and its effectiveness. This factor was extensively analyzed above and in summary of this analysis it can be concluded that leadership style largely determines good conditions for the communication process in the studied organizations. wine-growing enterprises.

Group dynamics are also subject to analysis as part of the internal environment in which the communication process takes place. Figure 27 presents information on the influence of group dynamics on the effectiveness of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises. According to the data, group dynamics are good and do not worsen the conditions for the communication process in wine-growing enterprises, 65.4% of the surveyed managers share this opinion. Of all the surveyed managers, 17.3% believe that the deteriorated group dynamics are a factor limiting the effectiveness of communications in the wine-growing enterprise. Another 11.5% believe that group dynamics play a partial role in shaping the effectiveness of communications in the company.

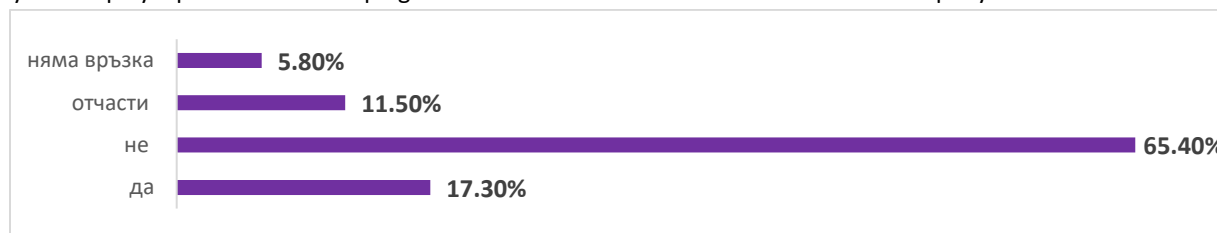


Figure 27. Relationship between group dynamics and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises.

Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Conflicts in the organization are also part of the internal environment in which the communication process takes place. Through the conducted survey, information was collected regarding the main sources of conflict in communication between people in the organization. The data are presented in Figure 28.



Figure28. Main sources of conflict in communication with other people in the organization. Source: Own study among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

According to these data, the most frequent conflicts are those resulting from the assignment of too many tasks and responsibilities among the personnel in the wine-growing enterprise, according to 23.9% of the surveyed managers, this fact is shared. In these enterprises, due to a lack of personnel, the assignment of too many tasks to an organic number of persons in the organization leads to conflicts and this is the reason for the deterioration of the conditions for an effective communication process. Another 17.4% of the surveyed managers stated that the deterioration of communications in the enterprise and the emergence of conflicts is due to the information overload that they and the personnel suffer.

The difference in goals as well as the inability to listen are the next most important factors determining the frequent occurrence of conflicts in an organization. – 12.3% of the surveyed managers share this opinion. Next are limited resources as a source of conflicts – 8.7% of the surveyed managers share this opinion.

The communication skills of the staff are also part of the internal environment in which the communication process takes place. Figure 29 shows the managers' assessment of the extent to which the communication skills of the staff create conditions for the deterioration of the environment for the communication process in wine-growing enterprises. According to the presented data, 42.3% of the surveyed managers are of the opinion that the communication skills of the staff are the cause of the deterioration of the communication process in the enterprise.

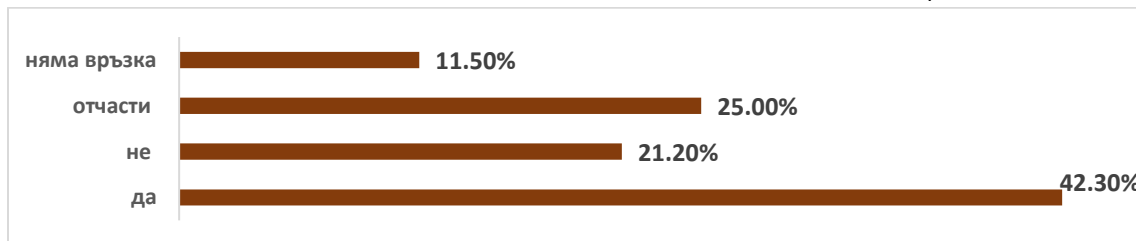


Figure29. Relationship between communication skills and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Another 25% are of the opinion that the deterioration of the communication process is partly caused by the communication skills of the staff and only 21.2% believe that the staff has good communication skills that contribute to the smooth flow of communications in the work environment.

Analysis of the external environment for the implementation of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises

The state is one of the main factors determining the external environment of the communication process of the wine-growing enterprise. The state institutions that mainly regulate the wine-growing sector are the National Wine-growing Chamber, in which some of the surveyed enterprises are members, the Executive Agency for Vineyards and Wine, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. These structures are often in communication with the wine-growing enterprises that are the subject of analysis. According to the surveyed managers, state institutions often create conditions for the deterioration of the communication process between them and the wine-growing enterprises, 63.5% of the surveyed are of this opinion.

Another 19.2% point out that the state, represented by its regulatory bodies, does not create conditions that would worsen the communication process, and 13.5% are of the opinion that this influence is partial in nature.

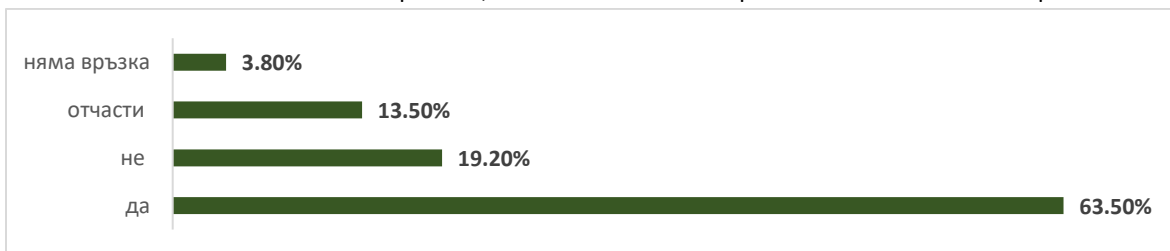


Figure30. Interrelationship between state institutions and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The following figure shows the managers' assessment of the communications of the enterprise entrusted to their management with the main regulatory state bodies. According to the surveyed managers, it is easiest to communicate with the NLVK, both in terms of incoming and outgoing communication with this structure.

The Bulgarian Food and Agriculture Organization (BAFSA) follows, with a relative share of the answers given - 19.2%. The MAF and the IALV have the lowest rating, respectively, these structures received a positive rating from 9.6% of the surveyed managers.

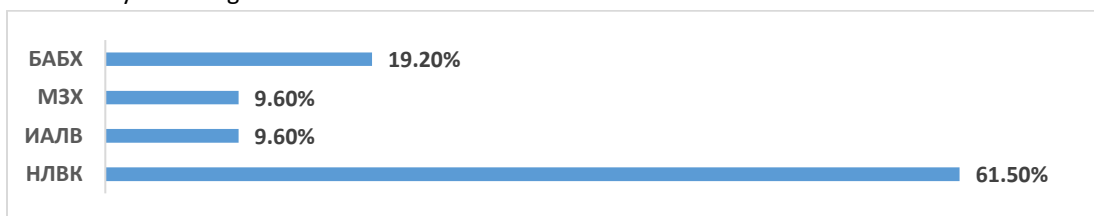


Figure31. Managers' satisfaction with communication with government structures. Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Another factor with a direct impact on the communication process, part of the external environment, are counterparties. Communications with business partners is a key factor for both competitiveness and effectiveness in the communication process of Very often, ineffective communication with business partners is the cause of conflicts and misunderstanding of the business strategies of players along the value chain.

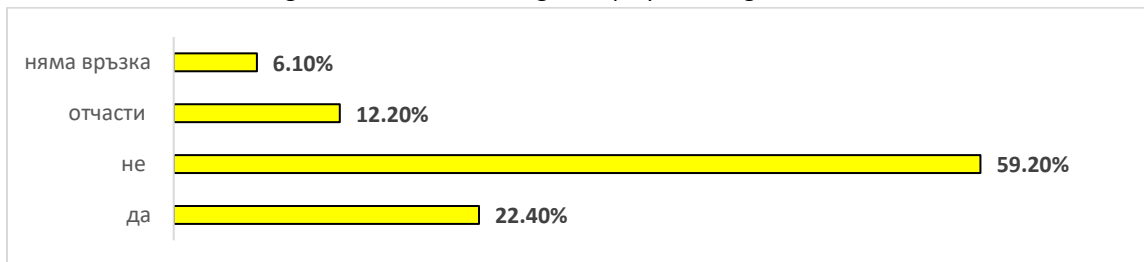


Figure32. Interconnection between counterparties and the effectiveness of the communication process in enterprises. Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Figure 32 provides information on the managers’ assessment of the relationship between counterparties and the effectiveness of the communication process in the external environment. The data clearly demonstrate that counterparties do not generally create conditions for the deterioration of the effectiveness of the communication process with them – 59.2% of the surveyed managers share this opinion. Only 22.4% of the surveyed managers believe that counterparties are the cause of the deterioration of communications with them. Another 12.2% are of the opinion that disruptions in the communication process are partly due to the actions of counterparties.

One of the factors of the external environment that has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the communication process in the wine-growing enterprise is malicious attacks from an external source. In conditions of fierce market competition, these phenomena are often a systemic factor that has a direct impact on communications in the enterprise. The source of the attacks can be competitors who implement an aggressive policy to occupy a larger market share. Valuable information regarding personal data of staff, customers and contractors can be found in the communication flow. One of the most important pieces of information is related to business transactions and the method of payment with customers and suppliers. This information is extremely “sensitive” and can be appropriated for the purpose of deception and the implementation of criminal practices such as extortion, deception and making threats. In recent years, the “phishing” approach has been applied extremely often, which aims to divert payments to customers, to other individuals and companies specializing in carrying out these vicious practices. Figure 33 provides information on how often such attacks are carried out on the communication process in wine-growing enterprises. The data shows that such attacks are often encountered - according to 59.2% of the surveyed managers, their enterprises were subject to frequent attacks. 12.2% of the surveyed managers showed that their enterprises were subject to very frequent attacks, and 6.10% - were constantly and systematically subjected to such attacks. The results show that managers need to take retaliatory actions to protect the communication process in enterprises.

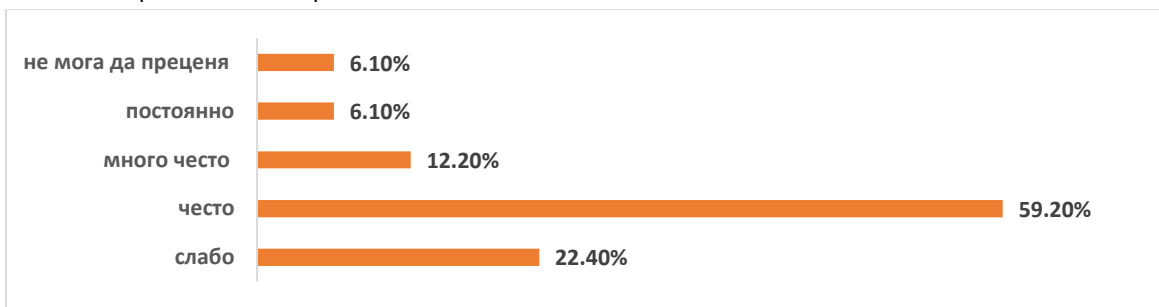


Figure33Frequency of attacks on the communication process: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

Conclusions

Regarding the analysis of the main factors determining the way of organizing business communications in wine-growing enterprises, the following conclusions can be formulated:

- Owners of wine-growing enterprises most often choose a hybrid form of management, which allows them to be flexible in relation to changes in the business environment. The data show that the functional structure is also preferred among wine-growing enterprises. These are mainly enterprises that are joint-stock companies and as such have the opportunity to specialize management work in departments and units directly responsible for the implementation of delegated tasks;
- In the majority of the surveyed companies, managers have chosen the principle of expertise when organizing communications among their subordinate colleagues in individual units, departments and

teams. The next most important principle according to the surveyed companies is the principle of unity of command.

- It can be summarized that communications are organized in a way that allows experts to be maximally involved in business communications in enterprises by following a "top-down" approach. In this way, efficiency is achieved both in terms of participation in the communication process and in terms of control over the communication process in order to avoid communication distortion and the appearance of noise.
- Managers use and apply appropriate principles to organize communication processes in their enterprises. These principles create conditions for communications to reach the addressees, as well as to reduce noise in the communication process.
- The most preferred leadership style is the authoritarian style. This leadership style has its advantages that are highly appreciated in the industry, as evidenced by the fact that almost half of the surveyed companies rely on this style to organize their communications.
- Expert leadership is present and valued in wine-growing enterprises. Of all surveyed enterprises, 75% point out that expert leadership is the factor that determines staff motivation.
- It can be summarized and concluded that managers make an effort and diligence in their daily work to be concerned both about the people in the organization and about the results of the functioning of the organization itself.

From the personal interviews conducted with managers and company associates, as well as discussions held, the following conclusions are drawn regarding the barriers to effective communication:

- Very often, managers find themselves in situations that do not allow them to be very concerned about their company employees, which is why they prefer not to enter into direct communication with other colleagues very often. This is explained by the fact that these individuals prefer to avoid conflict by postponing a business meeting or avoiding the problematic topic;
- **The communication flow is filtered**(or prioritization) by different individuals who are placed in a position to be responsible for incoming and outgoing communication in order to save the manager's time in the communication process or to completely relieve him of it in order to perform other more important tasks;
- **The communication flow is deliberately distorted by interested parties in order to achieve their own personal goals.**— different from those of the company.

The main reasons for information filtering and feedback distortion in wine-growing enterprises are:

- (1) feelings of irritation and (2) fear of punishment from the immediate supervisor. Fear is a major motivator for filtering information.
- The fear of conflicts is also one of the significant factors that causes company employees to filter information in the process of communicating with other colleagues;
- **Fear of failure in carrying out delegated tasks**, is also a tangible factor causing information filtering in enterprises;
- Conflict avoidance, as well as coercion from colleagues, are also factors that prompt employees to filter information and distort the feedback that the manager receives in the winemaking enterprise;
- **Authoritarianism in management and information overload are the main obstacles to effectiveness** of communications in wine-growing enterprises;
- Enterprises generally prefer to use a hybrid communication network in their departments and structures, as the communication network is believed to be effective;

Regarding the analysis of the environment for the communication process in the surveyed wine-growing enterprises, the following generalizations and conclusions can be made:

- Given these results, it can be concluded that the organization of the communication process in terms of goal setting and delegation of tasks and the implementation of various strategies, tactics, and policies in

wine-growing enterprises is carried out primarily respecting the interests of the owners of the enterprise and the workers;

- Neglecting the interests of customers in the goal-setting process is a prerequisite for low efficiency in communications with them.
- Managers from the middle and operational levels of management are also not involved in goal setting and their interests are not taken into account, which also creates conditions for ineffective communication within the enterprise with them;
- A common problem shared by managers is that resource scarcity leads to internal competition in resource allocation, which definitely worsens communications, as they are intentionally distorted. Often, rumors are spread to engage staff to spend resources more carefully, thus seeking to minimize costs;
- Another important aspect is that, due to insufficient resources, some enterprises do not create an effective communication network within their structures, with the aim of saving money by neglecting the role of communications in achieving efficiency in enterprise management.
- The most frequent occurrence is conflicts resulting from the assignment of too many tasks and responsibilities among the personnel in the winemaking enterprise;
- The communication skills of the staff are the cause of the deterioration of the communication process in the enterprise;
- **The communication process can be directly worsened by a malicious attack from major competitors** That is why this element should not be underestimated by managers when organizing and managing the communication process in the winemaking enterprise.

PROFILING A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In this part of the dissertation, the results of the audit of the communication environment are validated and the main hypothesis of the scientific research is checked for credibility. Through the focus group method and the method SWOT is used to validate the findings and conclusions resulting from the survey.

By applying the statistical method Chi-square analysis seeks a relationship between the studied factors, with the factors grouped into two groups – 1) cause factors and 2) result factors. Through the statistical assessment of the credibility of the main hypothesis, two main effects are sought, namely: (1) reliable verification of the hypothesis and (2) identification of the main factors that have a systematic influence on the occurrence of conflicts with a view to creating a sustainable model of strategy for their management.

Validation of environmental audit results

The conclusions formulated from the survey are validated by the managers of wine-growing enterprises. Within the framework of the dissertation research, 2 focus groups were organized, consisting of a total of 52 managers, part of the top management of the studied enterprises. The figure below shows the summarized matrix, through which it is possible to establish which are the critical factors for increasing the effectiveness of the communication process in the studied wine-growing enterprises. Each manager has completed and provided the moderator with his individual SWOT-matrix with a completed assessment regarding the presence and strength of the studied relationship between the individual factors in the matrix. By summing the assessments in all 52 matrices, the super-matrix given in Figure 37 is obtained.

According to the summarized matrix, the most significant strengths of the surveyed enterprises that can be used to improve communication efficiency are:

- (1) Managers' concern for both people and the results the organization achieves – (551 points)
- (2) The use of expert leadership in organizing communications in enterprises – (631 points).

The most significant weaknesses identified in the surveyed enterprises are:

- (1) Systemic gaps in organizing and managing communications in wine-growing enterprises – (536 points);

(2) The communication flow is filtered by different individuals in order to achieve personal goals – (527 points).

As a result of the discussions held in the two focus groups and the subsequent validation of the conclusions from the survey, managers defined the following two attractive opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of the communication process:

(1) Creating skills and competencies among both staff and managers for communications management – (687 points);

(2) Sharing resources to achieve better communication with customers – (572 points)

The following have been identified as the main threats:

(1) middle and operational level managers are not involved in the goal setting process, which creates a threat to the effective flow of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises – (653 points);

(2) frequent occurrence of conflicts due to the assignment of many tasks and responsibilities among staff – (523 points).

The expert assessment shows that overall the potential of the surveyed enterprises to increase the efficiency of the communication process is more tangible and significant than the existing challenges (the strengths - opportunity quadrant was assessed with 1467 points). According to the experts, there is a positive environment for improving the efficiency of the communication process in the surveyed enterprises.

Testing the main hypothesis of the scientific study

The main hypothesis being tested for validity is that communications are an important element of effective management of the winemaking enterprise and its strategic management is a source of competitive advantage in the market.

According to the results obtained from the statistical analysis, all causal factors included in the statistical model in Table 4 in the methodological part of the dissertation have a systematic impact on sales revenue.

According to the value of the Cramer coefficient, the influence is strong and it can be concluded that, other things being equal, the factorial indicators have an impact on the competitiveness of the studied enterprises, expressed through the indicator - sales revenue (see table 5). The following two factors systematically influence the profitability of sales - (1) channels for communication with customers and (2) disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders (see table 5).

Three factors influence market share, namely: (1) leadership style; (2) customer communication channels; and (3) communication message and effective feedback.

It can be concluded that the main hypothesis of the dissertation is partially proven, as in 13 out of 24 working hypotheses it is proven that a statistically significant relationship exists (see Table 6).

Table 3. Results of testing the relationship between the studied factors, through the application of the chi-square analysis method. Source: Own.

Factors - cause	Impact on sales revenue	Impact on sales profitability	Impact on market share
The type of communication channels	connection (0.515)*	no connection (0.105)*	no connection (0.111)*
Disruptions in the communication process	connection (0.465)*	no connection (0.109)*	no connection (0.123)*
The type of organizational and management structure	connection (0.489)	no connection (0.111)*	no connection (0.120)*
Leadership style	connection	no connection	connection

	(0.399)*	(0.133)*	(0.377)*
The sources of conflict	connection (0.251)*	no connection (0.155)*	no connection (0.125)*
Customer communication channels	connection (0.583)*	connection (0.454)*	connection (0.618)*
Communication message and effective feedback /clients/	connection (0.399)*	no connection (0.125)*	connection (0.759)*
Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders	connection (0.413)*	connection (0.257)*	no connection (0.0008)*

* value of Cramer's coefficient V2

Table4. Proven hypotheses in the course of the dissertation research. Results of applying the statistical method chi square analysis

Working hypotheses	Proven hypotheses
<p>H11The choice of communication channel in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H10The choice of communication channel in the organization does not determine the achieved competitiveness</p>	<p>H11The choice of communication channel in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness expressed through the sales revenue indicator.</p>
<p>H21Disruptions in the communication process impair competitiveness;</p> <p>H20Disruptions in the communication process do not impair competitiveness;</p>	<p>H21Disruptions in the communication process worsen competitiveness as expressed by the sales revenue indicator</p>
<p>H31The choice of communication network in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H30The choice of communication network in the organization does not determine the achieved competitiveness;</p>	<p>H31The choice of a communication network in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness expressed through the sales revenue indicator.</p>
<p>H41The leadership style in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H40The leadership style in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness;</p>	<p>H41The leadership style in the organization determines the achieved competitiveness expressed through the indicators of sales revenue and market share.</p>
<p>H51The sources of conflicts determine the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H50The sources of conflicts do not determine the achieved competitiveness;</p>	<p>H51The sources of conflicts determine the achieved competitiveness expressed through the sales revenue indicator</p>

<p>H61The channel for communication with customers determines the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H60The customer communication channel does not determine the achieved competitiveness;</p>	<p>H61The channel for communication with customers determines the achieved competitiveness expressed through the indicators of sales revenue, sales profitability and market share.</p>
<p>H71The communication message and effective feedback with customers determine the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H70The communication message and effective customer feedback do not determine the achieved competitiveness;</p>	<p>H71The communication message and effective feedback with customers determine the achieved competitiveness expressed through the indicators of sales revenue and market share.</p>
<p>H81Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders worsen the achieved competitiveness;</p> <p>H80Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders do not impair the achieved competitiveness;</p>	<p>H81Disruptions in the communication process with stakeholders worsen the achieved competitiveness expressed through the indicators of sales revenue and market share.</p>

Defining principles and parameters of a communications management strategy in wine-growing enterprises

Strategic management can be used as a reliable tool for effective communication management in wine-growing enterprises. The proposed model quantifies the main principles, stages and elements of a universal communication management strategy in the studied organizations.

Basic principles

An effective communications management strategy in an enterprise is essential for achieving success and maintaining good relations with customers, employees and other stakeholders. Based on the survey conducted, we establish the following key principles that can be included in such a strategy in order to achieve a higher effect in the management of the process:

Target audience analysis: Identification of key stakeholders (customers, employees, investors, media, etc.). Analysis of their needs, expectations and preferences regarding communication.

Definition of goals and values: Formulating clear communication objectives that reflect the business goals and strategy of the winemaking enterprise. Setting key values and messages that need to be presented in communications.

Building a brand and identity: Developing an integrated communication strategy through the branding approach. Creating a clear and recognizable corporate identity.

Using a multi-channel approach: Use of different communication channels (social media, website, email, press, etc.). Personalize messages according to the characteristics of the different channels.

Crisis management: Preparing for possible crises and developing a crisis management plan. Rapid and transparent communication during crises to manage possible negative consequences.

Staff training: Training employees on effective communication practices. Strengthening internal communication to strengthen teamwork.

Measuring results: Assessing the effectiveness of communications through key performance indicators (KPIs). Systematic measurement of feedback from customers and employees.

Continuous improvement: constantly reviewing and updating the strategy in accordance with changing needs and trends. Implementing a continuous process of improving communications. By respecting these principles, an enterprise can build a strong and effective communications management strategy that contributes to achieving business goals and strengthening its position in the market.

Strategy algorithm

Communication management in a wine-growing enterprise is a key element for its successful functioning, brand building and strengthening its position in the market. In this part of the dissertation, we propose the following strategy algorithm:

Identifying the target audience: This audience includes all wine enthusiasts. It is necessary to show them their importance as customers, providing them with information about the production process and tastings.

Identification of business partners and distributors: It is necessary to create frequent and clear communication about new products and marketing initiatives from the company.

Identifying and attracting media and bloggers in the wine field: It is necessary to plan a strategy for interaction and providing information about the company's products.

Building a brand and identity: Offering unique value: it is necessary to determine the unique qualities of the wines and their value to customers.

Effective internal communication: organizing regular meetings through internal platforms for information exchange.

Media campaigns: organizing events to attract media attention.

Communication in crisis situations: ensuring transparency, timeliness in informing stakeholders during crisis situations.

Measuring results through KPIs and data analysis: It is necessary to analyze the effectiveness of communications through KPIs, such as the number of new customers, ratings on social networks, etc.

Feedback: organizing systematic feedback from customers, employees and other stakeholders.

It is necessary to note that the strategy must be adapted to the specific requirements and characteristics of the winemaking enterprise, taking into account regional specificities and industry trends.

Identifying the target audience for wine advertising is a key step in creating effective marketing campaigns. Depending on the specifics of the wine brand and products, the target audience may include different groups. Here are some of them:

- Wine Enthusiasts: Characteristics: Wine lovers who appreciate high-quality and unique wines. Advertising Objectives: Highlighting the unique characteristics of your wines, emphasizing wine as an art and pleasure.
- Young professionals: early-career, high-income earners seeking luxury and style. Advertising objectives: highlighting the elegance and prestige of your wine, combined with fun and social value.
- Consumers with an interest in healthy living: consumers who value healthy food choices and include wine in their healthy lifestyle.
- Advertising objectives: Focusing on the health benefits of moderate wine consumption, emphasizing aesthetics and the pleasure of the experience.
- Culinary Enthusiasts: Characteristics: Gourmet food lovers and wine lovers who see wine as an integral part of the gourmet experience. Advertising objectives: Highlight the pairing of your wines with high-quality food, present wine as a complement to culinary pleasures
- Specialized audience: characteristics: consumers with interests in specific types of wines (e.g., lovers of red or white wines, champagne, dessert wines, etc.). Advertising objectives: highlighting the diversity in your product line, offering specific characteristics and qualities of the wines.

- Socially engaged shoppers: consumers who are interested in companies that have social responsibility and sustainable practices. Advertising objectives: emphasizing an ecological approach to wine production, supporting local communities, or sustainable practices.

Knowing your target audience will allow you to tailor your advertising strategy to effectively target their specific needs, style, and preferences. It is important to use the right media channels and language to create a meaningful connection with your target audience.

Building a strong brand and identity when selling wine is essential for attracting attention, establishing your position in the market, and increasing customer loyalty.

This general communication strategy plan can be adapted and customized depending on the specific characteristics and needs of the winery. It is important to emphasize a commitment to open and effective communication and to constantly work to improve processes and practices.

CONCLUSION

The wine-growing sector is defined as highly competitive, which places high demands on the management of wine-growing enterprises. Maintaining the effectiveness of both internal and external communications will determine to an even greater extent the competitiveness and adaptability of enterprises in the sector. That is why the strategic approach will be increasingly necessary in the overall management of communications in wine-growing enterprises. This factor is so critical that it is necessary, even when designing the business processes in the enterprise, to pay attention to how the established management and organizational structure will facilitate the flow of communications between the different teams in the enterprise. The proposed principles for achieving efficiency in the communication process in the studied enterprises can and should be used as a basic system, guaranteeing the achievement of maximum efficiency from the management of this process.

It is necessary to note that in the future, the role of artificial intelligence and the digitalization of information in the management of communication flows in the wine-growing enterprise. Ensuring the security of the ongoing communication and information flows both inside the enterprise and in the external environment requires significant investments. Phishing attacks and other malicious interventions in the communication process will increase both in frequency of occurrence and in complexity of recognition. All these factors require managers to keep staff training in the right direction, namely the development of appropriate communication skills to deal with these challenges.

Another important aspect in the future is the increase in information entropy. This phenomenon will manifest itself even more strongly due to a number of factors - the intervention of artificial intelligence in customer communications, the large amount of digital communication that will flood both customers and themselves wine-growing enterprises. Under these conditions, it will be increasingly difficult and effective to ensure the communication process and it will be difficult for managers to manage it in the direction they have chosen.

All these challenges require the imposition of an approach for continuous learning and improvement of the personnel of wine-growing enterprises in the field of effective communication and interaction. Crises and conflicts caused by the information overload of the communication process will occur even more often. That is why it is necessary to create and improve skills on the part of the staff for managing conflicts and crises.

III. PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Petrov, P. (2023). Communication in management – theoretical frameworks and paradigms. *Journal of Management Science and Applications*. Vol.1, 2023, 118 – 125. ISSN 2815-3030
extension://mjdgandcagmikhlbjnilkmfnjeamfikk/https://www.unwe.bg/doi/JOMSA/2023.1/JOMSA.2023.1.09.pdf

2. Petrov, P. (2025). Analysis of business communications in winemaking enterprises. Journal of Management Science and Applications. Vol.1, 2025, 121 – 133. ISSN 2815-3030<https://doi.org/10.37075/JOMSA.2025.1.11>
<https://jomsa.science/index.php/jomsa/article/view/110/90>
3. Petrov, P. (2025). Communication effectiveness as a determinant of competitiveness in wineries: evidence from Bulgaria. Journal of Bio-based Marketing, vol.3, 2025, 22 -29
[COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS AS A DETERMINANT OF COMPETITIVENESS IN WINERIES: EVIDENCE FROM BULGARIA – Journal of Biobased Marketing](#)

IV. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION WORK

In the dissertation work, the following contributions can be highlighted:

- The main features of communications in wine-growing enterprises and their role in effective personnel management are revealed;
- The basic skills that a manager must possess in order to achieve efficiency in the communication process have been identified;
- Developed and tested methodology for analysis and assessment of business environment factors that determine the effectiveness of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises;
- Conducted analysis and assessment of the factors in the business environment that determine the effectiveness of the communication process in wine-growing enterprises;
- A strategy model for effective communication management in wine-growing enterprises has been created and proposed for practice.