

The Contribution of Internal Marketing to Employee Motivation: A TMCEL Case Study

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Publication Date: 2026/04/28

Abstract: This article investigates the contribution of internal marketing to the motivation of employees at Telecomunicações de Moçambique, SA (TMCEL), through a qualitative case study. The research identified weaknesses in internal communication processes, professional recognition, and organizational climate. The results demonstrate that, despite the potential of internal marketing to promote greater integration and employee satisfaction, its application in the institution is limited. Strategies for professional development, continuous training, and strengthening internal communication are suggested as fundamental measures to boost motivation and organizational performance.

Keywords: *Internal Marketing, Motivation, Internal Communication, Organizational Climate, TMCEL.*

How to Cite: Hatima Abdala Luís; Ana Maria C. Sambo (2026) The Contribution of Internal Marketing to Employee Motivation: A TMCEL Case Study. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(4), 2201-2206. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26apr535>

I. INTRODUCTION

➤ Contextualization

In Mozambique, the practice of internal marketing still faces the challenge of being systematically integrated into human resource management. The national scenario is marked by difficulties in organizational communication and low levels of motivation, often caused by the absence of recognition programs and structured career plans. However, recent studies in the country reinforce that clear and bidirectional communication is fundamental to reducing uncertainty and promoting a sense of belonging in the Mozambican business context.

The telecommunications sector in Mozambique is highly competitive and demanding, comprising only three operators: Tmcel, Vodacom, and Movitel. In these companies, internal marketing plays a critical role, as demotivated employees directly translate into slower and lower-quality customer service. In the specific case of Tmcel, internal marketing is seen as a strategic tool for rebuilding motivation after mergers and restructuring processes, aiming to transform employees into "brand ambassadors" who promote the company's values and commitment.

Mozambique Telecom (Tmcel) was created in December 2018 from the merger of two large state-owned companies: Telecomunicações de Moçambique (TDM) and Moçambique Celular (Mcel). The decision to join forces sought to form a more competitive national operator, capable of facing the strong

competition in the sector and ensuring greater sustainability in the telecommunications market. However, this merger also brought enormous challenges in terms of cultural, technological, and administrative integration.

From its early years, Tmcel faced significant financial problems. Accumulated losses reached substantial amounts, exceeding four billion meticaís in some fiscal years. Despite some temporary reductions, losses increased again in subsequent years, revealing structural difficulties in the company's management. This scenario was aggravated by high debt, estimated at over 400 million dollars, which compromised its ability to invest, honor commitments, and even maintain the trust of its employees.

The need for budget cuts also led to a significant reduction in staff. From approximately two thousand employees at the beginning of the merger, the company has had just over thirteen hundred workers in recent years. This downsizing has created an environment of uncertainty, marked by insecurity about the professional future, delays in salary payments, and emotional strain on employees. The pressure on the remaining employees is even greater, as they have to guarantee results amidst a lack of resources.

In this context, the government approved a Revitalization Plan for Tmcel, foreseeing investments of over 130 million dollars for network modernization, service expansion, and reduction of operational costs. While this represents an important step, this restructuring process will only succeed if it

is accompanied by profound changes in how the company manages its human capital. This is where internal marketing assumes a strategic role.

Internal marketing, understood as "marketing from within," is essential for strengthening internal communication, valuing employees, and integrating organizational objectives with the needs of the team. By promoting an environment of trust, recognition, and participation, this strategy helps rebuild employee motivation, improves the organizational climate, and creates the necessary conditions for employees to act as true agents of change.

This research focuses on the Contribution of Internal Marketing to Employee Motivation – A Case Study of Telecomunicações de Moçambique, SA and mcel-Moçambique Celular SA . It aims to understand the extent to which internal marketing establishes relationships between the institution under study and its employees. This is a highly relevant topic given the current situation in institutions, particularly at TMCEL, regarding the weak attention paid to aspects such as motivation and organizational climate.

➤ *Motivation*

According to Maximiano (2000), the word motivation can be used in different situations, each with a different meaning. A person may be motivated to earn money, study at a university, or travel the world. Thus, motivation refers to the motives or stimuli that affect people's behavior, causing them to pursue what they desire.

Bekin (1995) defines motivation by stating that: "Motivation is a global process that ultimately aims to engage the employee with the company's causes and objectives in order to integrate them into the organizational culture."

Therefore, it can be observed that motivation is the determination an individual has to achieve a goal or accomplishment. It has been the subject of studies within organizations, which seek ways to satisfy their employees in a way that has an effect on their routine work in the company.

With a high level of employee satisfaction, the activities performed by employees are carried out in a much more efficient and satisfying way, both for the individual and for the organization itself, as it tends to increase production and profitability.

➤ *Employee Motivation*

Regarding this subject, Robbins (1999) states:

- "Employees have different needs. Don't treat everyone the same. Also, spend the time necessary to understand what is important to each employee. This allows you to personalize goals, engagement levels, and rewards to align with individual needs." (p. 142)

- In Maximiano's view (2000):
- "In general terms, the word motivation encompasses the causes or motives that produce a certain behavior, whatever it may be. In the field of administration, a motivated person usually means someone who demonstrates a high degree of willingness to perform a task or activity of any kind." (p. 297)
- Analyzing the idea above, we can say that a motivated employee is willing to perform their tasks; however, this motivation has a specific cause or reasons, which may be internal or external.
- Internal Marketing (Endomarketing) emerged from Marketing, drawing its foundations from it and developing its own concepts, starting with the selection of its target audience.

The main difference between the two concepts is undoubtedly the target audience; Endomarketing works exclusively with the internal audience and understands that each individual has their specific needs and desires, and these are addressed through communication.

The concept of Endomarketing emerged in the 1990s, coined by author Saul Faingaus Bekin when he worked as a product manager at Johnson & Johnson. To define Endomarketing, in addition to understanding the concept of Marketing seen in the previous chapter, we need to understand the meaning of the word "endo".

- *According to Bekin (1995):*

"The sense of something turned inward, of internalization, is given by the very meaning of endo. There we have the Greek word éndon, which means "in, into, within", expressing the position or action inside something, the movement of something that moves inward toward itself." (p. 2)

The quote above makes it clear that Endomarketing is nothing more than marketing within the organization, across all sectors and departments.

Internal Marketing in Organizations Currently, several well-known organizations use internal marketing techniques to promote good relationships with their internal audience, improve communication, and boost employee motivation, such as Toyota and Google. The practices of these two organizations exemplify Cerqueira's (1994) definition:

(...) "projects and actions that an organization must undertake to consolidate the cultural basis of its employees' commitment to the proper development of its various technologies, aiming at: the practice of the values established as the basis of the new culture; the maintenance of an ideal climate of appreciation and recognition of people; the achievement of higher productivity and quality rates with the consequent reduction of costs; the establishment of adequate channels of interpersonal communication, which will allow the

elimination of conflicts and dissatisfactions that may affect the organizational system; the improvement of interpersonal relationships; the establishment of participatory management; the implementation of preventive management actions (p. 51).

Thus, when the organization forgets about the employee, it is forgetting one of the most important aspects in terms of group influence and involvement, as argued by Kempenich (1997, cited by Bohnenberger & Pinheiro, 2002). Therefore, as previously stated, it is necessary to motivate the employee and offer them the conditions needed to thrive, so that the organization can succeed.

➤ *Employee Motivation and Satisfaction*

Lisboa (2012) states that human resources are considered, in the current competitive context, the most important asset of any organization, being the only ones where companies can effectively differentiate yourself from your competitors, since all other variables are easily imitable.

Thus, it can be noted that human resources represent a sustainable competitive advantage for any organization. As can be seen, motivation is a very important element in the organization, since motivated employees will develop more positive work, achieving the proposed objectives efficiently, which may differentiate them from employees who do not have this type of motivation.

It is also important that managers take care to give the necessary feedback to their respective employees so that they feel motivated; otherwise, as Grimes (cited in Pereira, 2014) points out, the lack of communication between the organization and its employees is a factor that influences their performance.

➤ *Satisfaction*

The first studies on job satisfaction emerged around 1912, with Taylor and his research on scientific management, in which the concept of satisfaction was linked only to fatigue, remuneration, and their influence on worker productivity.

Later, this idea changed, and it was thought that worker satisfaction was more determined by social relationships than by the salary reward itself (Cura E Rodrigues Cit In. Faria, 2009).

Several studies have indicated that job satisfaction can influence the mental health, quality of life, and interpersonal relationships of workers, leading to consequences for both the individual and the organization (Cura; Locke; Pérez-Ramos; Zalewska cited in Dias, 2012).

According to Lima and Mesquitela (cited in Neto, 2016), a satisfied individual is better able to respond to the demands of their environment. This last quote supports what has already been mentioned, as a more satisfied person will have more positive attitudes, which will help in the performance of their work.

As the next statement indicates, job satisfaction can have several variables, ranging from working conditions, responsibility, task variety, type of leadership, and autonomy. These variables are important for determining satisfaction and can affect organizational results, as they lead to behaviors that improve the organization and, in themselves, reduce absenteeism, productivity inefficiency, and also counterproductive behaviors, such as sabotage (Dormann and Zapf cited in Freixo, 2010).

➤ *Survey Questions*

- What internal marketing initiatives are currently in place at Tmcel?
- How does internal communication contribute to employee motivation in a company?
- What is the level of employee motivation driven by internal marketing practices at Tmcel?

II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological procedures used to achieve the objectives proposed in this study.

Methodology is the analysis of the organization and routes to be followed to conduct research or a study, or to produce science. In other words, it is the analysis of the methods and instruments used in carrying out scientific research (Sampieri, Collado & Lúcio, 2006).

The choice of methods, data collection techniques, sample definition, as well as the analysis criteria and ethical considerations, was guided by the need to deepen knowledge about a complex phenomenon of practical relevance, considering the local socioeconomic context and the scarcity of previous studies on the subject in Mozambique. Therefore, the methodology sought to ensure rigor, coherence, and validity in the interpretations generated from the collected data.

➤ *Regarding the Objectives*

To increase the researcher's knowledge about the contribution of internal marketing to the motivation of TMCEL employees, allowing for a more precise formulation of the problem, creating new answers, and enabling more structured future research, the research adopted by the researcher was exploratory. This approach allowed for greater proximity to the problem and aimed to be explicit, as it involved a literature review. The sample size is small and not representative, and the data analysis is qualitative, which allowed for the acquisition of concrete data.

➤ *Regarding The Procedures*

The research was a case study, because, as Fonseca (2002, p. 33) states, a case study can be characterized as a study of a well-defined entity such as a program, an institution, an educational system, a person, or a social unit. It aims to understand in depth "the how and the why" of a particular

situation that is assumed to be unique in many aspects, seeking to discover what is most essential and characteristic about it.

However, in order to acquire rich knowledge from the intensive exploration of the researched phenomenon, this methodology was adopted, which provided detailed information based on real-life situations from the institution studied and, thus, offered subsidies for new investigations on the same topic in the future.

➤ *Regarding The Approach*

For this investigation, a qualitative approach was used because it facilitated the description of observed facts without quantifying the information and data obtained, allowing for inductive analysis, interpretation of phenomena, and attribution of meanings based on the qualitative process, thus enabling us to understand the reasons behind things.

➤ *Regarding Nature*

The research will be of a basic nature, as it will consist of generating new and useful knowledge without any anticipated practical application. Through this acquired knowledge, the aim is to seek universal truths and interests regarding the phenomenon studied; in this case, the contribution of internal marketing to employee motivation.

➤ *Participants*

This type of research is characterized by the researcher's involvement and identification with the people being investigated. According to Fonseca (2002), the selection of participants involves defining inclusion and exclusion criteria, taking into account the population to be studied, and selecting a restricted group of individuals from that population for the non-probabilistic sample who will be studied.

In this sense, a group was selected to participate in the study, and they significantly contributed to obtaining the results, as the researcher interacted directly with the interviewees. The interviewees included 2 managers, the head of human resources and the head of the marketing department; 6 administrative technicians; and 2 service agents.

➤ *Data Collection Instruments*

During data collection, different techniques can be employed; therefore, for this research, the most commonly used were the following:

➤ *Semi-Structured Interview*

The semi-structured interview was used for a more concise information gathering as this technique allowed the researcher to be directly involved with the phenomenon being researched and to be in direct contact with the participants. A guide of questions was developed which contained Six (12) open and closed questions directed to council members, administrative technicians and 2 service agents which allowed for obtaining richer results.

➤ *Non-Participant Observation*

In non-participant observation, the observer comes into contact with the group, community, or reality being studied, but does not get involved or integrate into it; they remain outside. The observer witnesses the event, but does not participate in it.

In this context, non-participant observation was used to observe the facts without necessarily being involved with the practices related to the phenomenon studied at the institution, in order to obtain information from the real context of TMCEL regarding the contribution of internal marketing to employee motivation.

➤ *Data Analysis Model*

Gil (2007) conceptualizes content analysis as:

"A set of communication analysis techniques aimed at obtaining, through systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of messages, indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge relating to the conditions of production/reception (inferred variables) of these messages."

Content analysis is a "[...] set of techniques for analyzing communications [...]" (GIL, 2007) that aims to enrich reading and overcome uncertainties by extracting content behind the analyzed message.

➤ *Interview Categorization*

Thus, content analysis aimed to bring to light what is in the background of the message being studied, seeking other intrinsic meanings within the message. However, this research aims to analyze the contents of the following categories:

- Category A : Internal Marketing actions existing at TMCEL in Nampula.
- Category B: Motivation level of TMCEL Nampula employees.
- Category C : Contribution of Internal Marketing to the motivation of TMCEL employees.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of data obtained through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation revealed three main categories:

- Existing internal marketing actions
- Perception of employee motivation and
- Communication and recognition tools used by the institution.

➤ *Internal Marketing Actions: An Almost Symbolic Presence*

Despite its recognized strategic importance in the literature (Bekin, 1995; Brum, 1998), the data indicate that internal marketing actions at TMCEL are incipient and fragmented. Only sporadic communications were identified through internal emails and some informative meetings which,

according to employees, rarely result in practical improvements.

- *A Staff Member from the Technical Department Commented:*

"Meetings do take place, but they're just to fulfill the schedule. The decisions have already been made, and we don't have a voice to offer our opinions."

This account highlights the absence of organizational dialogue, contradicting what Cerqueira (2002) argues, for whom effective internal marketing requires active participation and two-way communication.

➤ *Motivation Compromised by Lack of Recognition.*

The prevailing perception among respondents is one of professional devaluation. There are no policies for recognition or structured feedback, and career progression processes are perceived as nonexistent or arbitrary.

- *An Administrative Technician Stated:*

"We've worked for many years, but it seems like nobody notices. They only remember us when something goes wrong."

This testimony reflects what Herzberg (1968) classified as the absence of motivational factors (recognition, promotion, achievement), resulting in chronic demotivation. This scenario directly compromises performance and talent retention, as Robbins (1999) and Maximiano (2000) warn.

➤ *Vertical and Uninspiring Internal Communication.*

Institutional communication is described as top-down, centralized, and inaccessible. Most employees feel excluded from decisions and poorly informed about the company's direction.

- *As One of the Interviewees Observed:*

"A lot happens in the company, and we only find out about it through the newspapers or from customers. Inside here, nobody explains anything."

This statement reveals a breakdown in information management, compromising transparency and internal engagement. According to Brum (2003), the lack of integration and information sharing reduces the ability of workers to feel part of the organization, an essential element for self-motivation.

The choice of a qualitative approach is justified by the need to interpret perceptions, feelings, and meanings attributed to the work environment—dimensions that could hardly be quantified without loss of depth. The interviews allowed for capturing emotional nuances, frustrations, and expectations. Non-participant observation, on the other hand, offered valuable behavioral data, such as the distance between leaders and teams or the tense atmosphere during meetings.

As argued by Sampieri, Collado & Lúcio (2006), this type of approach is particularly effective when seeking to understand organizational phenomena in complex social contexts marked by subjectivity, such as the case of TMCEL in Nampula.

Based on the analysis of the data obtained and its articulation with the theoretical framework of Human Resources Management and Marketing, it is concluded that internal marketing makes a relevant contribution to the motivation of Tmcel employees in the city of Nampula, although still in a limited and not fully structured way.

The study demonstrates that internal marketing is a strategic tool with great potential to boost employee motivation, performance, and commitment. However, for this potential to be fully realized at Tmcel, it is essential to adopt more structured, inclusive, and communicatively effective practices.

The results showed that the company has some internal marketing practices, such as training, recognition programs, and incentives. However, these practices are characterized by their irregularity, low reach, and limited visibility among employees. This lack of consistency compromises their motivational impact, causing employees to exhibit moderate levels of motivation and, in many cases, to be dependent on occasional stimuli.

Regarding motivation, it was found to be strongly associated with the recognition, appreciation, and inclusion of employees in organizational actions. The absence of continuous and equitable programs generates perceptions of inequality, which reduces engagement and organizational commitment, as argued by Idalberto. Chiavenato.

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