

Understanding Communication Channel Use in Layoff Decision-Making in Media Industries

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Abstract: Over the decade, downsizing and personnel layoff has been commonly seen in media industries. One of the major reasons is the economic recession. According to a report on advertising revenues on the first half of the 2009 released by Nelson, the advertising revenue received by traditional media firms have dropped to twenty billion dollars, which is 15.7% less than that in previous year. In addition, the emergence of new media and the trend of media convergence further drove several traditional media firms out of business. All of these economic factors lead to the trend of personnel layoff in media firms.

The purpose of this research is to explore the meanings of communication channel use (i.e., media adoption) in layoff decision-making process in electronic media industries. The three research questions to be addressed included: 1. What kind of communication channels would media manager select to disseminate layoff decision? What are the reasons accounting for the channel (or media) selection? 2. What kind of communication channels would media workers prefer to receive layoff decision? What are the reasons accounting for the channel (or media) selection? 3. Beyond the economic factors on the table, what are the reasons

behind the scene that account for the layoff decision in media firms?

This research adopts concepts and models as analytical framework from the areas of layoff decision making, and media adoption behavior from the field of organizational communication.

To better understand underlying meanings of media (or communication channel) adoption behavior in layoff decision making in the context of electronic media industries, this research conducts intensive in-depth interviews and participation observation to collect data. This proposed research will elicit viewpoints both from the media firms and media workers and compare the differences and/or similarities between the two groups. The findings of the research are expected to lend insight to the meanings of technology in terms of media adoption behavior in communicating sensitive decision-making in organizations.

Keywords: Media Industries, Layoff Decision-Making, Communication Channel