

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Chapter 1 Generalities

1.1 What is human communication?

It is difficult to give a definition of something so simple we all “know” so many things, human communication. There are many definitions given by experts in the field, but none is universally accepted.

Communication (lat. “com”, “cum” - *together* and “munis” - *things*) refers to the influence a power system exerts against another receiver system, using various symbols transmitted through the channel that connects the two systems (C. E. Osgood et al, 1957)

In view of other authors, communication can be understood as social interaction through messages. Communication is the process through which the transmission of information is done via a message. Communication involves a person receiving the message (receiver). The path between the transmitter and receiver is called the communication channel. Organizing of the information is structured within the message. The verbal message is complemented and supported by the non-verbal components of the communication.

Communication is an substantially exchange process, energetical and (or) informational between two or more systems based on which the transmitter system (reflected) is mirrored in the receiving system (reflective). (Paul Popescu Neveanu, 1978).

Considering communication as a cyber process, it relates to a quantity of information moving from one item to another within the same system, or from one system to another without consideration of the nature and specific modality to do this movement.

Frank Dance and Carl Larson (1976) have made the effort to collect the definitions proposed by different authors and stopped at the most significant 126 formulations. None of the proposed definitions were not gifted enough to meet all the relevant stakeholders' opinions.

Human communication is an essential process to the existence of human beings.

Here are some other existing definitions:

- *Human communication is a process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimulus in order to change the behavior of other individuals (audience).*
- *Human communication means all the processes through which a mind can influence another.*
- *Communication is an action of a body or a cell that alters the possible patterns of behavior of another organism or another cell, in an adaptive manner for one or both participants.*

1.2 Objectives of communication

In general, by communication a person wishes to influence the discussion partner's way of understanding and even its attitudes and behavior. Also, through communication the way a person perceives and acts in certain situations can be seen.

Communication involves reaching certain purposes pursued in a particular context.

There are 4 types of communication depending on its goals:

- **Information** may consist in sending facts, impressions or interpretations based on facts. Submitted information does not imply influencing the behavior, but reducing information asymmetry between members of an organization.

- **Training** has a well defined goal and seeks changing in behaviors.

- **Motivation** is aimed at a specific change of behavior or preventing its exchange to the bad which might occur in the absence of communication.

- **Obtaining information is the opposite of informing and it consists of determining the interlocutor to supply information.**

Whenever we communicate, we try to convince, to influence, educate etc., always following **four main goals**:

1. to be receptive;
2. to be understood;
3. to be accepted;
4. to provoke a reaction (a change in behavior or attitude).

Generally, for these goals to be achieved, of course ***the basic conditions of communication*** must be met, such as: *the existence of as little jitter, factors related to those who communicate, but also to the environment and that may prevent reception of the message accordingly; using the same method of encoding of the message so that it can be decoded and understood.*

It is also necessary a certain readiness on the receiver's behalf to accept the message, to agree with what the other (interlocutor, speaker) is transmitting. The reaction – an attitude or behavioral change - will occur depending on how important the message is for the receiver.

But **change does not occur suddenly, but in several stages.** These are:

- 1) **denial** - the first reaction of rejection. Something new and unknown cannot be accepted immediately;

- 2) **defense** - because of the upheaval of its values system, the individual tries to defend himself (defending his beliefs, his way of behaving until then);

- 3) **exclusion** - the individual realizes that change is the only solution to his problems;

- 4) **adaptation** - is the period in which the individual acquires new knowledge, and he must combine them with those he had so far, taking into account the specific environmental conditions in which he lives;

- 5) **retrieve of the message (internalization)** - is the final stage; adapted to the new system, the individual realizes his new behavior and its benefits.

1.3. The general scheme of communication

We can talk about a communication source that produces *the message* (figure 1: Basic scheme of communication) which may contain thoughts, feelings, ideas, or emotions. The message cannot be sent in its pure form, but it is sent translated into words accompanied by everything that by body language is (see 1.6. Categories of languages).

So, the message is *encoded* in the “language” of the transmitter and transmitted via a *channel* (verbal, nonverbal, visual etc.). In human communication, we rarely use a single

channel. In this moment of communication, “noises” appear that can disrupt communication. In the disturbances category, we can exemplify natural noises (street noise, darkness, fog, etc.). Disturbances may occur in coding and decoding stages depending on the particularities of the source and destination. We mean the semantic differences of some words and life experience of each.

The signal is received and decoded at the destination. The recipient receives and understands the message conveyed more or less in line with what the sender wanted to express: the truth is the one heard, not the one spoken.

Further, the roles may change: the destination becomes the source and the source becomes the destination.

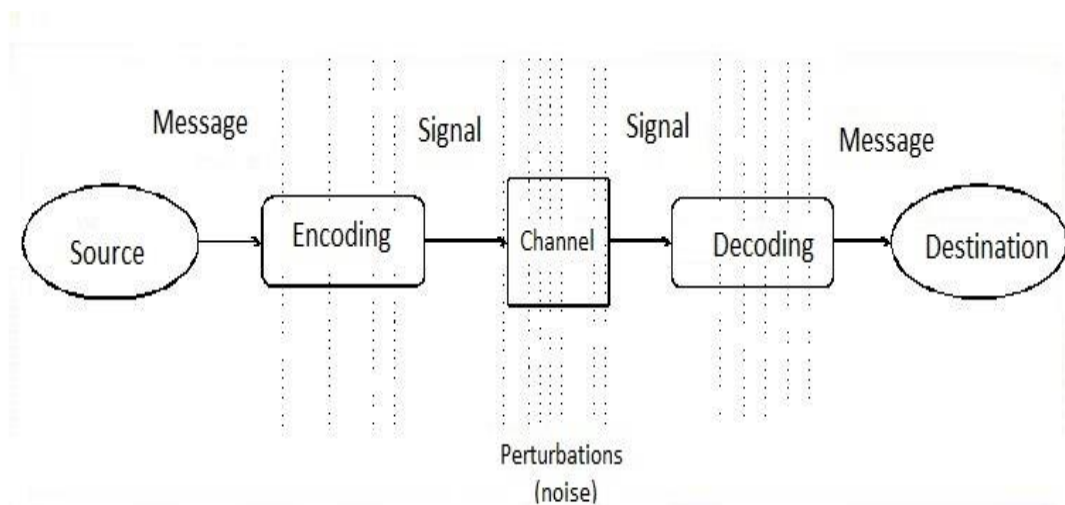


Figure 1: Basic scheme of communication

The simple diagram of the structure of the communication process has been proposed since 1934 by Karl Buhler in “Die Sprachtheorie” (Figure 2).



Figure 2

Later, Roman Jakobson, following Karl Buhler's scheme, developed a structure of the communication process, by adding three components: code, channel, reviewer (Figure 3). The relationship of communication is as follows: the transmitter transmits a message in a certain code (language) to the receiver, which will initiate an action of decoding the message that was sent.

This message is represented in a certain code that must be shared by the two partners who are in contact. Between the Transmitter and the Receiver thus takes place a transfer that performs the common element of information. The Information leaves the Transmitter and becomes information for the Receiver. Both Transmitter and Receiver are purpose oriented entities. The transmitter is designed to provide, the receiver is designed to receive.

As I said, the message is carried in a certain code. Between message and code there is some discrepancy. Thus, while the message is characterized by consistency, fluency, clarity, being determined by place, time and the mental state of the transmitter, the code is fixed, invariable, abstract, reduced to a small number of signs.

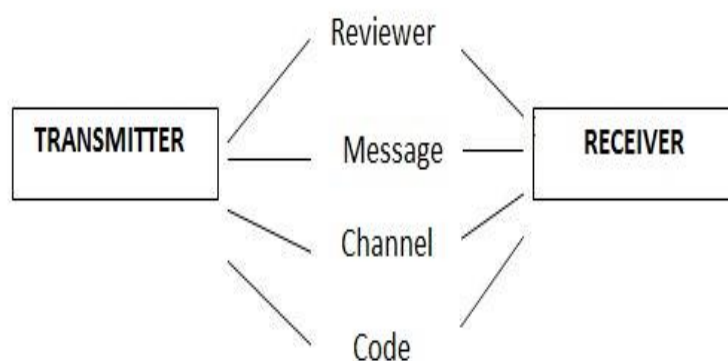


Figure 3

The elements of the communication process

Whatever form it takes, any communication process has several characteristic structural elements:

- the existence of at least two partners (Transmitter and Receiver) between which a certain relationship is established;
- the partners' ability to issue and receive signals in a certain code known by both partners (we must mention that, in general, in any communication process partners "play" the role of both transmitter and receiver);
- the existence of a channel to deliver the message.

Thus the communication process takes birth due to the relationship of interdependence that exists between the structural elements listed above.

In other words, this interdependent relationship established between the structural elements makes any communication process to unfold as follows: there is someone who initiates communication, the Issuer, and someone else whom the message is intended to, the Recipient. This message is part of the complex communication process, due to the fact that it involved encoding and decoding stages, it implies the existence of transmission channels, it is

influenced by the way of receiving the message, by the communication skills of the Issuer and the Recipient, by the physical and psychosocial context in which communication occurs.

The context and environment of communication are factors of great importance in communication. It does not have place in a sterile cultural and material environment. It takes place in a physical space, most often humanized, imprinted with a cultural and architectural style, in the explicit or implied presence of determined social contexts that influence the behavior of the actors in communication.

a) Material and temporal context include:

- spatial organization of communication: the position of partners, distance etc.
- furnishing communication space: furniture type, style, comfort etc.
- aids: amplification, background music, lights, images etc.
- temporal aspects: time, duration, pace etc.

b) Social context includes:

- the presence or absence of public or observers (co-action) may potentiate or inhibit communication, depending on the specific task of the communication act:
 - Communication is enhanced by performative activities like learning, competition, problem solving;
 - communication is inhibited by therapeutic or confessional activities;
 - potentiating or inhibiting communication is dependent on the presence of the public and interlocutors' educational aspects: personality, religion, lifestyle etc.

c) The cultural and ideological context include:

- partners microcultures (habits, mentality, religion, stereotypes etc.)
- social environment macro-culture (communication language, the cultural specifics, symbolic codes etc.)

According to Stoetzel (1963), Dumas illustrated the role of cultural context since 1906, in the analysis of smile's cultural significance: - in European cultural context smile is the cultural expression of an attitude of listening and positive relationships; - in Japanese cultural context, it signifies a state of confusion; - for the cfri from Borneo, smile expresses contempt etc.

The message can be transmitted through verbal, non-verbal or para-verbal language.

In the following we present other components of the communication process: feed-back, communication channels, communication environment, communication barriers.

The feedback is a specific message through which the Issuer receives from the Recipient a particular response on the communicated message.

Communication channels are "roads", "paths" that messages follow. There are two types of communication channels:

1. formal channels, by default, such as the hierarchical channels in an organization;
2. informal channels established on friendly relations, preferences, personal interests.

Communication channels have a technical support represented by all technical means that can aid the process of communication: telephone, fax, computer, telex and audio-video means.

The medium of communication is influenced by the means of communication; there is oral environment or written environment.

Filters, noises, barriers are the disturbances that may occur in the communication process. Disruption of the sent message can have such an intensity that between this and the message received there are visible differences. Disturbances may be internal factors - physiological, perceptive, semantic, interpersonal or intrapersonal factors - and of external nature – that occur in the physical environment in which communication takes place (strong noise, successive interruptions of the communication process).

In the communication process, a barrier is anything that reduces message's fidelity or the efficiency of its transfer.

Depending on the features they have, the barriers can be classified as language barriers, environmental barriers, barriers due to the position of the transmitter and receiver, conceptual barriers.

Doctor Leonard Saules, from Grand School of Business, Columbia University, believed that in the communication there are the following language barriers:

- the same words have different meanings for different people;
- the one who speaks and the one who listens may differ in training and experience;
- the emotional state of the receiver may distort what he hears;
- routine and preconceptions influence receptivity;
- speech difficulties;
- the use of confusing words or phrases.

Environmental barriers are:

- inadequate work climate (very loud environment);
- improper use of informational support;
- workplace climate can cause employees to hide their true thoughts because they are afraid to say what they think.

Position of the transmitter and receiver in communication can also be a barrier because of:

- the image that the transmitter or receiver has about himself and about the interlocutor;
- different characterization by the transmitter and receiver of the situation in which communication occurs;
- the feelings and intentions that interlocutors participate in communication with.

The last category is the conceptual barriers, which are represented by:

- the existence of assumptions;
- clumsy expression of the message by the sender;
- lack of attention in the reception of the message;
- hasty conclusions on the message;
- lack of interest to the message receiver;
- routine in the communication process.

Although it has different forms, representing real problems in achieving communication process, barriers are unavoidable; there are some aspects to be considered for their removal:

- communication planning;
- accurate determination of the purpose of each communication;

- choice of timing for such communications;
- clarifying ideas before communication;
- use of an appropriate language.

1.4 Why and what we communicate

First of all, let's establish that we cannot live without communication. At any time, whether we are talking or not, we communicate, expressing ideas, opinions, beliefs, emotions, feelings, attitudes, facts, energies, way to satisfy our needs (material or psychological), aspirations, desires and interests, trying to persuade, to influence or to educate.

Whenever we communicate, we consider four major objectives: to be received, to be understood, to be accepted and to provoke a reaction, consisting in a change of behavior or attitude. Sometimes we fail to achieve any of these objectives, in which case we failed in communication.

If we know why we communicate, what do we follow, which is the real goal, it is equally important to have very clear answers the following questions too:

- *What* do I mean? What does the other person want to know?
- *Who* is the person in front of me? What is her personality? What needs, what aspirations, what desires does she have? How does she see the world? What are her beliefs? What does she know about my message?
- *Where* does the dialogue take place? Which could be the best place, the best ambience?
- *How* would be best to convey the message? Verbal or written? With images or in words? Using a scientific language, or using metaphors? Seriously, or using jokes?

1.5. Why (not) get along?

Sometimes we understand each other, sometimes we don't. There are many factors that influence this: the differences of perception, speech difficulties, automatism, lack of interest, emotions and personality differences.

When our message is not understood, we tend to blame the other. It is his fault that he didn't hear what we said, he is to blame that he did not understand, he is guilty he didn't accept us and he is to blame for not having done what we wanted to do.

The truth is the one heard, not the one spoken. If we want to be heard, understood, accepted and to provoke a positive reaction from the other, is healthy for us to take responsibility for the communication process. If we do not understand each other, this may be because we did not talk "his language".

If the other does not understand us, we repeat what we have said in a louder voice. Not only he will not understand, but it is likely to alter the relationship plan.

It is desirable to verify the extents to which the words we use have the same meaning for the one in front of us and, if necessary, to rephrase the message we want to convey.

The same message can be interpreted distinctly by different people, or even the same person in different situations. To effectively manage the communication, it is essential to take into account that people are different and also that they behave differently depending on the context.

Given own experience of life, we learn to recognize certain similarities of situations. This thing that we instinctively do most of times is something positive and part of our own

learning of communication process. It can happen, however, to fail if we exaggerate on restricting communication to this patterns.

For example, suppose that for the first time we met a person she had an indifferent, absent and even superior attitude. We can expect that the next time this person to have a similar attitude. We may fail because even though the situation looks identical, that person to be very friendly at the next meeting. It is possible that the first time she had a problem that we did not know and that influenced her attitude.

Rabbit Story

This story is about a bunny who wanted to cook eight eggs.

Please read the short story and meditate a little on the moral!

Bunny has eight eggs to cook but it does not have a pan in which to fry them. He sits, thinks, and remembers that the bear has a pan. Gladly, he leaves to the bear's den to borrow a pan!

Going ... going, Bunny wonders:

- What if the Bear asks two eggs in return for pan? Hmm... That's it, I give him 2 eggs, I still have 6 and that's it, six is enough!

He goes on and then he wonders again:

- But what if it asks four eggs? That's not good at all! But what can I do, he's the only bear in the woods that I can borrow a pan from! All right then, that's business, the gain is divided fifty-fifty! So be it, if he asks me 4, I still have 4 and it's enough after all!

He had a few steps to reach the bear's den and he comes up with a new idea:

- From what I know the bear, it will take the skin off me, moreover, is a bit of a jerk, I think he will just let me 2 eggs! Oh ... God, and here I had eight eggs! How come to be left only with 2 eggs? Delicate situation, but that's it! Ultimately, rather than starving I give him 6 and I am smaller, 2 eggs are enough! These eggs will prevent me from starving today!

Finally, the rabbit came to the lair! He becomes more and more stressed, because the whole time he thought how to please the bear and him so he pulled some clear conclusions. But he hadn't asked himself one single question:

- What if the bear asks me all the eggs? What do I do? Hmm... That would be very delicate!!!

Then he decides to knock on the bear's door and the bear goes out with a big smile and says:

- Tell me, Bunny, what problem do you have, how can I help?

The Bunny says: You know what, teddy bear, I DON'T NEED YOUR PAN!!

Then he turns and goes away!

Moral:

Labeling friends, colleagues or heads without even listening to their point of views leads to a firm failure in communication!

1.6. The categories of language

Human communication occurs via three different channels: **verbal, para-verbal and body language**. According to the studies of Palo Alto school verbal occupies a share of 7%, para-verbal 38% and body language 55%.

We can speak of a fourth channel. Two people on shorter or longer distances and who are not in visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory or tactile contact may transmit and receive messages. This communication is sometimes called *energy*, sometimes „*paranormal*”.

Verbal communication is realized through uttering of the word, meaning by articulate speech and the meanings transmitted by the words of a language. Written communication we also call „verbal”.

Para-verbal communication is done via voice timbre, tone, inflection, pauses between words and verbal manifestations without verbal content: laughter, sigh, moan, scream, etc.

The body language refers to posture, physiognomy, facial expressions, gestures, looks and distances. It is important to note that meaning of gestures can differ from one culture to another.

In the context of the types of communication, non-verbal communication (body language) is interesting for at least two reasons:

- 1) its role is often minimized;
- 2) in an oral communication, 55% of information is collected and retained through non-verbal language (facial expressions, gestures, posture etc.).

Due to its large share in the communication made by an individual, **non-verbal communication** has a particularly important role. *Non-verbal language may support, contradict or replace verbal communication.* Non-verbal message is closest to the reality of the issuer and the one to which the interlocutor gives the greatest attention. Thus, for example, we often find that although the interlocutor argues that he’s telling the truth, we „feel” he’s lying. What is the „sixth sense” that receives the information not verbally expressed by the issuer? It is believed that women have this „sixth sense” better developed than men. One possible explanation could be that women are more empowered to interpret non-verbal languages, taking into account their experience in growing children, who in the first years of life communicate predominantly through non-verbal language. Another possible explanation would be that of the development of this ability to compensate for their lack of physical strength.

But until science discovers this additional „sense” that occurs in the communication process, we’ll adopt the image of man with five senses that communicates predominantly non-verbal and sometimes expresses through words. He possesses the skills to interpret the signals coming from all these five senses, abilities that develop throughout life, based on experience and learning.

Here's how to communicate through:

A. Body language

To realize the importance of body language, let’s think of mimes expressing the whole story just by body language, let’s remember of the silent movies and Charlie Chaplin's facial expression that made words unnecessary, or ask yourself why when you have something important to discuss you avoid communicating by phone and prefer face to face communication.

The explanation is: communication by phone blocks communication through body language and thus makes communication incomplete, uncertain.

Body language helps communication by facial expression, body movement (gesture), form and posture, general appearance and tactile communication

B. Face expression

This type of communication includes facial expression, **mimics** (frown, raised eyebrows, wrinkling nose, tighten lips etc.), **smile** (by characteristics and time of use), and **look** (contact or avoid the eyes, the gaze expression, gaze direction, etc.).

We tend to involuntarily smile, frown, rotate, reduce or dilate eyeballs.

The face is the most expressive part of the body and its expression is an invaluable mean of expression. Normally, the eyes and the bottom of the face are most intensely looked at during communication. It is considered, for example, that in a conversation with a woman, what eyes express is more important than what words express.

Mimics is that part of our face that is communicating: frowned forehead signifies preoccupation, anger, frustration; raised eyebrows with wide open eyes - astonishment, surprise; wrinkled nose - annoyance; enlarged nostrils - anger or, in another context, sensual arousal; tight lips - uncertainty, hesitation, hiding of information.

The smile is a complex gesture, capable of expressing a wide range of information, from pleasure, joy and satisfaction to promise, cynicism, embarrassment (Mona Lisa's smile is famous both as significance, but also ambiguity). The interpretation of the smile, however, varies from culture to culture (or subculture), being closely correlated with specific assumptions that are made about relationships between people within that culture.

The look

They say the eyes are the „window of the soul“. The way we look and are looked at has close relation to our needs related to approval, acceptance, trust and friendship.

Even to look or not to look at someone has a meaning. By looking at someone we confirm his presence, his existence there for us; intercepting someone's gaze means desire to communicate. A direct look may be about honesty and intimacy, but in some situations it is communicating threat. In general, an insistent and continuous look may bother.

Making short and intermittent eye contact shows lack of friendship. Up movement of the eyes means trying to remember something; down - sadness, modesty, timidity, or concealment of emotions. The sideways look or not looking at someone may indicate lack of interest, coldness. Avoiding eye contact means hiding feelings, discomfort or guilt.

People who are not confident they will avoid the interlocutor's eyes in situations where they feel threatened, but will seek their eyes when favorable; there is even "to cling with the eyes" phrase.

The look is a "non tactile" way of touching someone, hence the expression "to comfort with the eyes".

Dilated pupils indicate strong emotions. Pupils widen, generally at the sight of something pleasant, to which we have an attitude of sincerity. Pupils decreases as a manifestation of lack of sincerity, uneasiness. Frequent blinking indicates anxiety.

C. Body movement

The body communicates through **gestures, position, and motion of the body.**

Gestures

To realize how common the gestures we use are, we can try to talk with our hands held back.

Some elements of gestures' language are: raising fists - denotes hostility and anger, and depending on the context, determination, solidarity, stress; open arms - honesty, acceptance; hand to the mouth - surprise and covering your mouth with your hand - hiding something, nervousness. Head resting on the palm means boredom, but hand (fingers) on the cheek, on the contrary, shows extreme interest. Hands held back can express superiority or attempt to self control.

Pay attention to cultural differences. For example, by moving the head up and down we say „yes,” while the people of Sri Lanka convey the same by head movement from right to left. The gesture of pointing with the finger is considered rude to us, insult in Thailand and absolutely neutral in the USA.

Using excessive gesticulation is considered rude in many countries, but hand gestures created Italians fame as passionate people.

The way Americans cross their legs (relaxed, loose motions, without restraint) differs from that of Europeans (controlled, careful to the end position); crossing legs of men differs from that of women. An American will even put feet on the table if this means a comfortable position or if he wants to demonstrate total control over the situation. To us, people tend to be quite aware of how they make this gesture and associate it in different ways with formality, competition, tension. Restless movement of the feet denotes boredom, impatience or stress.

Posture

Posture / position communicates primarily the social status that individuals have, think they have or want to have. Under this aspect, it is a way in which people relate to one another when they are together. The consequences of posture give us information about attitudes, emotions, level of courtesy, warmth.

A dominant person tends to keep his head up, a subjected person keeps it down. In general, body leaning forward mean interest in the interlocutor, but sometimes means anxiety and concern. Relaxed, leaning back in his chair, may indicate detachment, boredom or excessive self confidence and defense to those who believe they have a superior status over the interlocutor.

The postures people have linked to their relationship when they are together can be classified into three categories:

1. Inclusion / non-inclusion, posture by which activity space available for communication and limited access to the group are defined. For example, group members may form a circle, may turn / bend towards the center, stretch an arm or leg over the period left open, indicating that access to these groups is limited.
2. The body guidance – means that two people can choose to sit down face to face (across) or together (parallel). The first situation communicates predisposition for conversation, and the second - neutrality.
3. The matching / non-congruent posture which communicates intensity with which a person is involved in what the speaker says or does. Intense participation leads to congruent position (similar to the interlocutor's); in this case interlocutor's change in posture triggers change of posture of the strongly involved in the communication. Where differences in status between communicators exist, views or opinions, positions are non-congruent: the person does not look at the interlocutor, does not interact in any way.

Motion of the body

The conduct of a person in a communication in terms of motion of the body can be:

- characterized by lateral movements, considered good communicators;
- characterized by rear-end movements, considered man of action;
- characterized by vertical movement considered persuasive man.

In America the so-called “head hunters” appeared - specialized consultants on the problem of finding the right people for a certain managerial function. These specialists use these clues intensively

D. Tactile Communication

This type of non-verbal language is manifested by the frequency of touching, how hands are shook, hug mode, take someone's arm, shoulder beat etc.

We know what this touches means to Romanian, but in different cultures they can communicate different things. For example, in Japanese, tilting your head replaced shaking hands as greeting, while the Eskimos greet with a slight blow on the shoulder.

Some people avoid any touching. The strength and type of touch depends largely on age, greeting, relationship and culture.

E. Personal Presence

Personal presence communicates, for example, through body shape, clothing, smell (perfume, specific odor), jewelry and other clothing accessories. In our culture we have certain attitudes regarding the connection between body shape, appearance and personality. We distinguish three types of appearances:

- 1 - Ectomorphic (brittle, delicate, thin and tall);
- 2 - Endomorphic (fat, round, short);
- 3 - Mesomorphic (muscular, athletic, tall).

Due to social conditionings we "learned" what to "expect" from people belonging to different categories. Thus we tend to perceive ectomorphs as young, ambitious, suspicious, tense, nervous and less male; the endomorph are perceived them as prematurely aged, old fashioned, less physical resistant, talkative, kind-hearted, agreeable, reliable, friendly, dependent on others; the mesomorph are perceived as stubborn, strong, adventurous, mature in attitude, full of self-confidence, eternal winners.

Clothing, insofar as the result of personal choice, reflects individual personality, is a kind of extension of the ego and, in this context, communicates information about it. It can even affect our general behavior or others. Garments can be used to create a role.

Clothing and accessories can mark real or alleged social status. For example, women who have access to a high managerial function will tend to dress in a particular way (two-piece sober suit), wearing similar to men accessories (briefcase).

Non-conformist clothing communicates that the carrier is an original, social rebel, creator of possible problems or an artist. Careless clothing is generally associated with the intrinsic value of the individual.

For business situation is assessed quality and stylish clothing but not sophisticated.

Personal hygiene is an important factor. Smell "telegraphs" messages to many people, even without being aware of it. Strong fragrance, even quality one, draws attention in an inappropriate way and suggests bad taste or certain intentions.

F. Space language

The space language must be intercepted simultaneously on the 5 dimensions: size, degree of privacy, height, proximity – remoteness, inside - out.

Each of us has preferences in relation to the distance from those with whom we communicate. In most European cultures, we accept the proximity of more than 4-50 cm only for those of family or loved ones; this defines personal space. “Invasion” of this space produces discomfort.

We communicate comfortably when the distance to the interlocutor is 1-2 m, distance defining **personal space**. In a smaller space it is hard to focus on communication. We are often faced with the situation that, while talking with someone, we take a step forward or one step back in order to adjust the space at the appropriate size for our personal space.

Exaggerated approximation can communicate threat or purely personal relationships; excessive remoteness communicates arrogance, importance, higher social status. The more a person is important, the more will tend to choose a wider desk, which requires a greater distance from the speaker.

If we follow the way people tend to choose place in a room (where there is a choice) and how their personal space is marked by spreading sheets, stretching of limbs etc., it becomes obvious what they want to tell us.

The way the manager uses the space during meetings can communicate something about his personality, about management and decision-making style. The manager who sits behind the desk indicates the unwillingness of action. Perhaps this type of manager will take decisions alone and his management style is more autocratic than democratic.

In general, smaller spaces are perceived as friendly, warm and intimate. The big ones are associated with power, status and importance. Therefore, we are often intimidated by entering a large space, with tall and massive furniture.

G. Language of the colors

Beyond her emotional perception and experience, color is a mirror of our personality and therefore influences communication. Creative thinking takes place best in a room with more red, and the reflection of ideas - in a room with more green. The brilliant colors are chosen by the people of communicative action, extroverts, and the pale ones - by shy, introverted people.

The significance of the color may be different in different cultures. For example, red is associated in China with joy and festivity, in Japan with fight and anger, in American Indian culture it means masculinity, love in Europe and communism in the USA. In countries with African population, black suggests good and white - evil. For Europeans, black is the color of sadness, while this state is expressed in Japanese and Chinese by white. Green means envy for Europeans, joy to Asians and hope in some countries, while yellow notify the European cowardice, jealousy, intelligentsia for the Americans and for Asians it signifies purity.

Color affects communication in the next issue: warm colors stimulates communication, while cold colors inhibit communication; monotony as well as excessive variety of color inhibit and distract the communicators.

H. Language of the time

The way we communicate through body language is correlated with:

- time precision

- lack of time
- time as a symbol.

Time precision

Time is regarded as something precious and personal and, in general, when someone allows structuring it for us, this communicates difference in status.

To arrive later or earlier at a business meeting or to be punctual or not at a meeting has certain meanings: it communicates the attitude towards interlocutor or that activity, the perception of status and power, the respect and importance given. The delay may irritate and insult.

The more people are kept waiting, the more they feel humiliated; they feel disregarded and lower as social status. Thus, the language of time can be used, intentionally or not, to manipulate, control or subject or to communicate respect and interest.

Lack of time

We perceive time as a limited personal resource and therefore the way each of us chooses to use it communicates our attitude towards the one requesting some of this resource. If you do not give time for a specific communication you will be charged as granting no importance. Surveys have shown that, in general, positive communication relationship grows proportionally to the frequency of interaction (i.e. time together).

Time as a symbol

This requires some habituation, such as rhythm (e.g. eat three times a day and at certain times). Similarly, seasons require certain activities and a way of life clearly situated in time. Holidays and rituals, likewise, are marked by time. The businessmen know that the winter holidays mean buying more and working less.

Finally, after what has been characterized in every kind of language, it is good to know some aspects of non-verbal language to be taken into account in the interpretation of it:

- To avoid misinterpretation of an item of non-verbal language is better to interpret it in the context of all other verbal and non-verbal elements.
- Individual, educational, life experience etc. personality characteristics are factors to be considered in the correct interpretation of non-verbal languages.
- The instructions for use and interpretation of non-verbal languages differ in several ways: from individual to individual; from profession to profession; from community to community; from culture to culture.

1.7. The fundamental features of communication

Moreover, based on the submitted situation we can identify some communication features:

- Communication is meant to put people in touch with each other, within the environment around them;
- in communication process, through message content certain goals are to be achieved and certain meanings transmitted;
- any communication process has a triple dimension: outward communication (verbal and non-verbal actions observed by the interlocutors), meta communication (what is meant beyond words) and intra-communication (communication achieved by each individual in his inner, low self);

- any communication process takes place in a context, meaning it takes place in a certain psychological, social, cultural, physical or temporal space, in a close interdependent relationship with it;
- communication process is dynamic, because every communication once initiated has a certain development, it changes and changes people involved in the process;
- communication process is irreversible, meaning that once a message sent, it cannot be “stopped” in its “way” to the recipient.

Please note that the features listed above are derived strictly from the present case.

To those listed we can add:

- in crisis situations, the communication process is faster and has a greater coverage;
- meaning given to a message may be different both to the partners of communication and between the receptors of the same message;
- Any message has a manifest content and a latent one, often the latter being more significant.

1.8. Principles and functions of communication

Regardless of the social system, communication performs **eight functions:** *information, socialization, motivation, dialogue, education, promotion of culture, entertainment and integration.*

1. INFORMATION

- providing access to informants
- provision of necessary information for a carried out activity which allows achievement of the objectives
- provision of necessary information for implementing decisions

2. SOCIALIZATION

- creating a climate that stimulate interaction

3. DIALOGUE

- organizing dialogues, insuring the feedback
- stimulation of communication
- boosting initiative and creativity

4. EDUCATION

- transmitting necessary knowledge to the improvement of the professional training and spiritual development
- acquiring skills and competencies needed to perform the profession
- amplification of the capacity to perceive and interpret phenomena, to approach and effectively solve issues

5. CREATION OF IMAGE

- provision of necessary information to create the personal image
- forming a consciousness of belonging to an organization or social group

6. MOTIVATION

- providing information tasked to strengthen interest and participation in the duties
- recognizing of performing achievements
- boosting self-confidence
- increasing personal responsibility

7. ADVOCACY

- transmission of cultural elements (slogans, norms, value systems)
- enlargement of the cultural horizon
- development of imagination and creativity
- fostering ethical and aesthetic needs

1.9. Communication plans: content and relationship

Communication proceeds in two planes, the one of content and the one of relationship. Sometimes, without knowing why, we can like someone and dislike other. The content plan transmits information, while the relationship plan transmits information about the information. The words (content) carry ideas, notions and concepts, while the tone of voice and body language (relationship) transmit attitudes, emotions and feelings. The content plan represents WHAT is being communicated, while relationship plan materializes HOW communication is done, thus defining the content plan.

As we have seen from our own experience of life, the purpose of communication is strongly influenced, even determined often by the relationship plan. If there is consistency between the two plans of communication, then we trust what a person says, whom we may like. Otherwise, if we sense a dissonance between the plan of the content and the plan of the relationship, then we do not trust the message, the other may become unlikable to us, and sometimes this may trigger the defense mechanisms that characterize each one of us. In such situations, we do not focus on the message, but on how we can protect our interests, needs, or real or imaginary dangers that we perceive.

If we perceive as positive the information from the relationship plan, things the other said may seem interesting and even scholarly to us. The relationship plan sends signals of dominance or submission, friendship or enmity. The relationship may be *positive* (sympathy, friendship, acceptance, admiration, approval), *neutral* (indifferent) or *negative* (discomfort, dominance, hostility, disapproval, rejection, contempt).

Let's imagine many ways to say, for example, „*Good job!*” The same words can be perceived as a praise, or, conversely, as contempt or slighting. Depending on our mood, we can interpret these words as a reproach, even if this was not the intention of the other. If the relationship is positive, then it is likely that perceptions be of appreciation or praise. If the relationship is negative, we will charge the same words as a reproach, a devaluation, in which case we will defend.

When the relationship is negative, the relationship plan becomes more important than the plan the content. Communication is diverted, and what happens next is a series of lines of attack or defense. Relationships partners become purely emotional, irrational. The aggressive tone, ironic, nagging, overbearing, or whining, aggressive, trivial or contemptuous gestures become factors of alteration of communication.

What to do when the relationship plan is altered? In this case, it is virtually useless to continue the discussion on a rational level. If the other triggered the defense mechanisms, a sign for negative stress, the only thing we can do is to help the other to get out of stress, to alter the relationship if we want to go back to the mutual interest communication and mutual satisfaction of needs.

1.10. Levels of communication

Depending on the number of people we can speak of five levels of human communication: *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *group*, *public* and *mass*.

Intrapersonal communication is communication to itself. The human being is listening to itself, raises questions, doubts or worries, judges or reflects, communicates through thoughts or images. Intrapersonal communication is very important for mental balance.

Interpersonal communication is the dialogue between two people. In the best case, they take turns hearing each other trying to respect and understand each other and trying to convey as clearly as possible for other their needs, aspirations, interests and desires.

Group or team communication is a dialogue in an intimate up to 10 people group. In this group or team, a person spends most of his social life. Here is where knowledge and personal experiences are shared, problems are solved and important decisions are being taken, inevitably creating and solving conflicts. This level of human communication will be addressed in more detail in the chapter dedicated to team communication.

Public communication occurs in lectures, speeches and presentations held by one person. Apparently, the person who lectures communicates more, but things are not so. Each participant communicates verbally or non-verbally, asking questions for clarification or giving information with regard to its interest or disinterest.

Mass communication takes place through the dissemination of written or oral messages or visual by a media system to a large audience. It includes a variety of forms such as books, press, audiovisual. The main feature of mass communication is that the response is delayed in time, the message going in one direction.

1.11. Communication spaces

Building good interpersonal relationships can start with the correct selection of the correct distance for the partner. So standing too close and too far away may be perceived as inappropriate and may impede building a good relationship with each other.

“Adequate” distance differs from one person to another. There are people who prefer a greater proximity and touching is not a problem, while others prefer a larger distance. However, there are differences from one nation to another or from one culture to another.

Distance dilutes communication, while proximity enhances it. If the news is good, the proximity may be appropriate, if the news is bad, distance is rather indicated. But there may be other situations heavily depending on the personality of those concerned.

We can talk about four interpersonal distances categories: *intimate*, *personal*, *social* and *public*.

Intimate zone

Intimate zone is up to 50 centimeters, about half an arm. It is the distance of intimate dance, of consolations, sex, also of the close fight, meaning an area fiercely defended. In this area we only allow people whom we trust most and that we are very close to, blocking access to others.

We must look carefully (not necessarily with suspicion) the touches of others. We will return later with the possible effects of manipulative touches.

Disregarding the intimate area can be perceived as a dismissive of the person. Extending the intimate area depends on each individual's personality and its self-assurance. However, intimate area depends on the social status of the person. Big bosses usually have large offices and high chairs.

Personal Zone

Personal area lies in the range of 50-120 centimeters, corresponding to a normal distance at which two people talk on the street or in a large room and can be reached if both hold arms outstretched.

This area has a special psychological significance: activation of the “ownership” instinct on the partner when a person of the opposite sex enters.

Social Zone

Social area is between 1.20 to 3.5 meters and is reserved for social contacts, negotiations, sales and professional relationships.

The public area

The public area (> 3.5 m) is where interpersonal communication loses its character. It can be an official speech or course. Public distance provides security and a posture with psychological dominance to the individuals behind the chair, or stand.

1.12. Efficiency in communication and art of communication

The road towards performance and then toward mastery in communication has the same steps as in any other field. Theoretical learning cycle comprises the acquirement of theoretical notions (in our case will be the reading grids of *Transactional Analysis* and *Process Communication Management*), communication experience (exercises and awareness), reviewing and analyzing the experiences and applying the acquired in the future.

There are four steps in a learning process that we can imagine as an ascending spiral: we communicate, we reflect and analyze, we conceptualize, we progress and so on (Figure 2: Cycle of Communication Learning). Following this path, we become performers of communication. We are efficient and we get along well with many people. For mastery though we need something more. We could call this something integration of knowledge or completeness of communication.

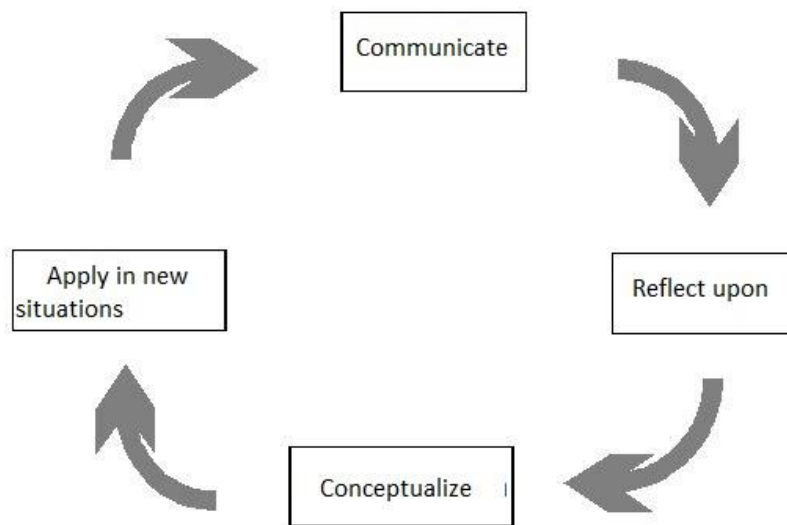


Figure 2: Communication Learning Cycle

If the basic knowledge of theoretical principles and acquisition of skills at the behavioral level may be sufficient to be effective in communication, **the art of communication involves the use of human functions in their entirety: behavior, thinking, intuition, feeling, emotion and, finally, communication.**

HALFWAY HOUSE (Allan Pease – “Communication Skills”)

On the slopes of the picturesque hills of Italy, halfway between Venice and Verona, there was a small inn. One night, a traveler stopped there. - Where are you going? the innkeeper asked. - I am from Venice and I go to establish the Verona, the traveler replied. Tell me, he continued, how is people in Verona? - How were the people of Venice? the innkeeper asked. – They’re some creepy people! the traveler exclaimed. They're indifferent, cold and distant. Never lift a finger to help others. That's why I left. - Hmm, the innkeeper said, you’ll not like Verona then... People there are exactly the same! Disappointed by what the innkeeper told him, the traveler retired in his room. Later the same night, another traveler arrived. - Where are you going? the innkeeper asked. - I am from Verona and I am going to Venice to settle down’, said the second traveler. Tell me, he continued, how are people of Venice?

- How people of Verona were? asked the innkeeper. - They are wonderful people! exclaimed the traveler. They are careful, warm, friendly and willing to help. I was sorry to leave them. - Then you’ll like to Verona, the innkeeper said. People are exactly the same!

Moral!

The others react to you in the same way you treat them themselves.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1.13. The principles and fundamental rules of effective communication

Concerns about facilitating and improving communication existed since ancient times. Although the rules of effective communication seem very simple and available to everyone, being the fruit of a lengthy communication experiences, practice shows that their application is frequently violated.

a) Optimizing verbal communication

- Express what you think as direct, precise and simple as possible.
- Send only little information at a time.

Verbalization modes:

- Direct and precise verbalization - clear formulation of thoughts and feelings;
- Involvement personal - „I like your drawing” instead of „your drawing is beautiful”;
- Involvement of the other - using nonverbal component, a clear indication of the position of the other; do critics in particular;
- Learning to insist when we want to achieve something;
- Let's be friendly and polite in order to keep a good relationship with the interlocutor.

The motives of the ones that do not verbalize could be:

- Fear of mind;
- Fear of others' opinions;
- Fear of ridicule;
- Fear of failure and mistake.

b) optimization of nonverbal communication

- To assert yourself:
1. Be aware of nonverbal elements impact on the meaning of the message.
 2. Know well own nonverbal behavior.
 3. Change it, if necessary.
 4. Notice how you usually interpret the message of others.

b. 1. Improving eye contact

- when and how we look at the interlocutor:
- When he speaks, we should have an attitude of obedience.
- When we want to insist on a passage from our discourse.
- When we pass the word to the interlocutor

Do not hold permanent visual contact!

b. 2. Improving mimic

Situations in which it is appropriate to smile:

- when you want to start a dialogue;
- when you thank
- you receive or make a compliment.
- The smile facilitates contacts, its absence hampers the interlocutor.
- The smile is inappropriate when you are criticized or when the speaker is angry.

b. 3. Voice improving

Voice:

- send emotions;
- Can be vibrant, determined, sad, choleric, happy, hostile etc.
- elements :
 - Volume (> <; must be adapted to the situation);
 - Timbre (seriously - calm, sharp - expressing emotions);

- Verbal flow (fast, slow);
- Articulation (mistake, clarity);

b. 4. Adapting posture and interpersonal distance

General posture concerns:

- gestures: - the way we sit;
- how we stand;
- being open / closed;
- dynamism / lack of energy;

Interpersonal distance:

- distant / friendly;
- pesky / indifferent;
- types of distances depending on situations

Basic rules on effective communication

Expressed synthetically, they are:

- Quantity rule – in what they are saying, the speakers should provide the necessary information, no more, no less;
- Quality rule - what speakers say must respect the reality;
- Relationship rule - the message conveyed by the speaker must be fit for communication purpose;
- Significance rule - the information transmitted must be significant to the context and circumstances in which communication takes place;
- Style rule - speakers must be clear, coherent, comprehensive and concise;
- Receptivity rule - issuers must adapt messages to the receptor characteristics and their presumed knowledge.

American Management Association has developed a list of **ten rules for effective communication**, as follows:

1. Try to clarify your ideas before communicating

The more you systematically analyze your ideas, the more they will become clear. This is the first step towards effective communication. Communication often fails because of the wrong planning. Good planning should take into account the aims and attitudes of those with whom we communicate and who will they be affected by it.

2. Examine the true purpose of each communication

Before transmitting you have to wonder what you want to get from your message - information, action initiation or change a person's behavior. Identify the most important goal and then adapting the language, tone and overall approach will serve this specific objective. Do not try to get too much from a single communication. The more concentrated the message is, the more chance of success it will have.

3. Take into account all physical and human element when you communicate

The meanings and intention are communicated only by words. There are many other factors influencing the overall impact of communication and a good manager must be

sensitive to the general climate of communication. For example, the moment of communication – when you make a certain announcement or pass on a particular decision; the environment - whether the message is communicated in particular, or otherwise; the social climate defining work relations within the company or department and sets the tone of the communication; habits and past practice.

Also think at the extent to which communication complies or not to the expectations. Be always aware of what you have around. Communication is like a living organism that must adapt to the environment within the company or department and to impose the required tone.

4. Consult with others in planning the communication, if necessary

Often it is desirable or necessary to encourage the participation of others in planning the communication or developing the communication foundation. Such consultation often helps to achieve insights and obtaining objective message. Moreover, those who have helped planning communication will be the most active supporters.

5. When communicate you should be aware of the extra-language features

Use tone, expression, apparent receptivity to others responses - all have a huge impact on those that you want to reach. These subtleties of communication are often overlooked, but they affect the listener's reaction to a message even more than the basic content. Similarly, the choice of language - especially knowing the nuances of a meaning or emotion propagated by using a word - determines reactions from the listeners. Communication includes all human behaviors that result in an exchange of meaning. How well this communication succeeds depends on how well you communicate in general.

6. Do not miss the opportunity to convey something valuable or helpful to the listener

Taking into account the interests and needs of others - the habit of looking at things from the point of view of the interlocutor - will often result in good opportunities to convey something of value or help for the interlocutor. People respond much better to a manager whose messages take into account their interests.

7. Track the communication

If you do not follow the reactions to see if our message has been understood, the greatest efforts related to communication will be perhaps in vain, without us knowing whether we were successful in expressing the meaning and our intentions. This tracking can be achieved by questions, encouraging the receiver to express their reactions, through further contacts and reviewing performance according to information received. Make sure that there is important feedback for each communication, so as to get it right and to follow the desired action.

8. Communication for tomorrow too, not only for today

Although communication may be regarded as an act to cover immediate needs, these should be planned keeping in mind the past, in order to give consistence to the views of the speaker and, even more important, they should be consistent with the interests and long-term goals. For example, in the case of poor performance or shortcomings of a loyal subordinate:

postponing the submission of unpleasant elements is more difficult on the long term and is not fair to subordinates and organization.

9. **Be sure your actions support communication**

In the final analysis, the most convincing communication is not what you do but what you say. If the action or behavior of a person contradicts his words, the tendency is to lose sight of the words. This is the best management practice for any manager - clear granted responsibility and authority, a right redemption for efforts and enforcement of a better policy – that helps communication skills more than orator abilities.

10. **Look also to understand, not only to be understood**

When we start talking, we often stop listening - in that sense to be on the same wavelength with the reactions and behavior of our interlocutor. It is even worse that we are guilty of serious lack of attention when others are trying to tell us something. Listening is one of the most important and difficult - and neglected - communication skills. By this we are asked to focus not only on explicit meanings the interlocutors express but also on implicit meanings of unspoken words and hidden meanings that can be significant. We must therefore learn to listen with your mind, if we want to know what is in the mind of the interlocutor.

Listening is one of the most important attributes of communication, asking concentration for both the perception of spoken words and understanding of non-verbal messages. The latter are often more meaningful than the basic message.

Chapter 2 COMMUNICATION - PUBLIC COMMUNICATION - PUBLIC RELATIONS

2.1. ACTORS OF COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Whatever the form that dresses, any communication process has the following features:

- two partners of communication (a transmitter, a receiver);
- a message;
- a code;
- a channel for transmitting the message.

In the practice of public relations, the transmitter is known as *an organization*. For this reason, for public relations the phrase “organizational communication” is also used. The „organization” term is generic, including various types of institutions: structures of the power (government and ministries, the presidency, the military, local government), political parties, trade companies, cultural and sport institutions, NGOs etc. After J.W. Guth and C. Marsh, public relations can be practiced in five different types of organizations:

- **public relations agency** - independent companies that provide, on a contract basis, public relations activities requested by various organizations;
- **corporations** - within large economic groups there are public relations specialist departments that deal with specific audiences of that company;

- **governmental structures** - public relations departments are organized within the ministries, government agencies, local government; they distribute information on the activity of these institutions and monitors media reactions and public opinion moods, reacting according to them;

- **non-profit organizations** - specialists working in universities, hospitals, churches, foundations, NGOs etc. with specific tasks like relations with media, government organizations, donors (fund-raising), specific audiences;

- **independent public relations consultants** - these specialists are employed by different institutions to punctually meet specific public relations activities.

Public relations specialists are de facto transmitters of organization's messages, which is why they are also called *relation specialists* or *practitioners*.

The receiver of organization's messages is the public. It is defined as „a group of people bound by common interests and characteristics that equally respond to certain issues”.

There are several types of public, sorted by:

- *position to the organization*: internal (that activates within the organization) and external (those that are placed outside of it);

- *attitude towards the organization*: supporters, opponents and neutral;

- *presence in the organization*: traditional (public that is already linked to organization) and future (public that may become interested in organization).

Traditional publics of the organization are:

- media (local and national media, written and audiovisual, specialized and generalist);

- employees;

- members (top and middle management, the boards and management committees, honorary members, retirees and advisors);

- community (community organizations - police, church, leaders in those environments - educators, local mayors, local officials, bankers, ethnic leaders);

- government institutions;

- investors;

- consumers.

The transmission channels through which messages reach the public organization are of three types:

- *controlled media*: these are the channels on which specialists in public relations can exercise control over message's content, the timing and place of delivery. Examples: newsletters, letters, brochures, web sites, public speeches, promotional materials (audio-visual and printed)

- *uncontrolled media*: this category includes the entire media system (press agencies, newspapers, radio, television). Public relations specialists no longer have control over the final message.

- *Special events*: are designed and done by the organization in order to create a privileged relationship with its key publics (sponsorships, creating training centers, conferences, awards ceremony, open days, concerts and celebrations).

After T. Hunt and J.E. Grunig, throughout their history, public relations have developed in several **models of communication**:

- **press agent model:** in this model, communication is performed in a single direction from source to receiver, without taking into account the specificities and public expectations; the main purpose of the transmitter is to control the public and to make as much publicity as possible;
- **public information model** (public information): this model aims the dissemination of accurate and reliable information to the public, but communication is still unidirectional;
- **asymmetric bilateral communication model** (2-way asymmetric): communication takes place in two ways, i.e. organization - public and public - organization; thus public feedback is taken into account and messages are built according to them;
- **bilateral symmetrical communication model** (2-way symmetric): in this model communication takes place in two directions too, but now it takes into account the reactions of the public in order to change *the behavior of the organization*.

2.2. WHAT ARE PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Public relations take over, in specialized and mass respect, a series of outreach and information activities and information transmitting that, until the advent of mass media were held empirically and restricted, in the manner of interpersonal communication, or dogmatic and extended, in the manner of propaganda. Public relations are not based on propaganda, but on persuasion.

Public relations mean a management of communication that contributes to establishing and maintaining communication and, in this way, to mutual acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its public. Public relations evaluate public attitudes communicatively approach an individual's policies and procedures or an organization's of public interest through a program of communicative action which aims to gain public understanding, acceptance and trust.

The functions of public relations:

- a. presenting a group from outside
- b. help outsiders to understand its ideas and operation mode
- c. show the group what is its exterior image and suggest communicative action to obtain the goodwill of others, of external audiences.

Although it is a relatively new field, **PR** exists since the beginning of social life. To define it there are no less than 472 phrases; it seems however that none has managed to capture everything that encompasses it. PRSA (Public Relations Society of America), following a campaign to modernize the definition of Public Relations, has formulated a new definition of this area, which many specialists (Jim Grunig, Neville Hobson, Jeremiah Owyang) found it to be "satisfactory" or they said it would be "a contemporary tailored interpretation". Here's how it sounds: ***"Public relations mean a strategic communication process that builds beneficial relationship for both organizations and their audience"***.

However, we can understand what public relations are dealing with due to the general instrument it uses: COMMUNICATION. Whether we are talking about online communication (social - media), offline communication (public speaking, media relations), internal or corporate communication, all start from a common denominator: **the communication** and get along in another common point: **public relations**.

Relations with the public are activities specific for organizations that have opened customer contact areas where these have access to information, documents, transactions (goods or services) or consultancy. Also, they are only used for the external environment, while public relations can also be used in domestic environment.

Furthermore, some scientists believe that, while representing different fields, *relations with the public are the necessary feedback for public relations*.

Thus, to conclude, we can see that public relations and relations with the public are two separate areas, first aiming to harmonize relations between the organization and their external and internal audiences and the last pursue good service to customers.

2.2. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Public communication defines very broadly communication from the government (national, county, local) and from state institutions!!!

Although the term has common features with communication, public communication has peculiarities.

The peculiarities of public communication you should be aware of:

- its main determinant in your work is THE CITIZEN!
- transparency towards the citizen and the society is very important;
- you are morally responsible and must give reckoning for what you do;
- work to satisfaction and support, not for profit and money.

Communication is the key element in the management of any institution (private company, large or small or local government).

Communication in public administration takes two forms: internal communication and external communication.

Four factors are essential for a successful communication program:

1. The administration is convinced of the importance of communication.
2. Administration agrees that is necessary to strategically plan the communication, like any other management function.
3. Administration allocates budget and resources (including a professional communicator full time employee) for communication actions.
4. Finally, the administration insists that the communication strategy is periodically updated, because it knows that the situation is changing, as well as the political and financial environment.

This manual is oriented towards practical aspects too (listed in Annexes set out in each chapter), easy to use in developing a communication strategy for strengthening how the organization communicates, both indoors and outdoors. We are fully aware that communication projects may differ in terms of complexity, from one area to another, from one institution to another and even within a single institution.

Therefore, the recommendations described below will not always be relevant to all cases.

Institutions that are interested can choose between them on those they consider useful to establish or improve communication strategy or adjust certain elements to the conditions and characteristics of the local government in which they want to apply this model.

WHAT IS A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY?

In order to launch an effective communication program, the institution must first clearly understand their communication environment. First it defines the ***communication policy*** and then sets ***the goals and priorities*** of its program of communication - a program that is also the bearer of the vision, mission and priorities of the organization. The next step is the ***communication plan***, which lists a number of communication projects in short, medium and long term, that allow the organization to inform its partners and to listen at the same time. Once a ***project*** undertaken, the institution measures its success by analyzing a series of simple ***performance indicators*** and starts planning the next series of communication actions.

The cycle that includes all these elements - communication policy, objectives and priorities of communication, communication plan, communication projects and analysis of performance indicators - is the ***communication strategy*** of an organization.

2.3.1. Internal communication, external communication

Effective communication is more than a simple transfer of information: it must be ***two-way, open to exchange of information and feedback***.

There are two types of communication: internal and external.

Among *employees*, the adoption and implementation of an *internal communication* contributes to the integration of employees, brings a sense of belonging to the organization, creates a healthy working environment and increases the efficiency of the organization.

Internal communication fosters collaboration and promotes improved work relations.

Internal communication is the exchange of messages within the organization, involving people and groups. It may be:

✓ **Formal**

- - Features mainly large institutions, it takes place in a systematic and formalized way
- - Communication channels are created in a controlled way
- - System of responsibilities and delegation of tasks hierarchically
- - Information is transmitted slowly and in three ways: top-down, bottom-up, horizontally

✓ **Informal**

- any communication taking place outside formal channels of communication

Informal communication channels that arise spontaneously transmit **rumor** (non-formal messages that relate to situations, events, happenings) and **gossip** (message refers to people).

Internal communication channels:

- Appear and exist uncontrollably;
- They are fast, selective and have great power of influence;
- Supplement formal channels;
- Are the pulse of the organization;

- *They can make direct links between the head of the institution and hierarchical subordinates on the last level;*

- *They have the most active role when the institution goes through periods of change or is threatened in any way.*

Important!!!!!!

Internal communication develops a spirit of collaboration and stimulates improved work relations

External communication reveals, in fact, the purpose of local government. Local government has the responsibility to inform the public on how money is spent and the types of services offered in exchange.

A good communication plan establishes a dialogue between government and the public by explaining priorities, projects and political positions.

The local administration has to deal with several audiences: *government, regional or provincial administrations and associations, various national and international organizations, journalists and priority, citizens.*

External communication is the communication between the administration and citizens

In recent years there has been a pass from *the external information to external communication, a two-way activity resulted* from the need of public administration for public support in their intentions and decisions.

In the following chapters we will develop the most effective ways of communicating with citizens, by which the administration can offer to those who elected them transparency, consistency and dialogue.

2.3.2 The environment of communication: a diagnosis tool

Before starting work on a communication strategy it is necessary to assess the state of communication in the institution.

a) SPOKESPERSONS

Spokesmen for local authorities speak *on behalf of* the administration? Who are these spokesmen?

- **Mayor**
- **Deputy mayors**
- **All elected members of the Council (the local or county councilors)**
- **Senior executive management (CEOs, heads of service, office, department)**
- **Public servants**
- **The Communication Officer**
- **Others**

To avoid confusion in the messages sent by local authorities, officials say the number of spokespersons should be limited. Usually the mayor and deputy mayors are allowed to comment on political issues. The Communication Officer / Spokesman comment nonpolitical topics.

There should be a good mechanism, perhaps a procedure for feedback between employees and spokespersons, so that they may receive brief information before giving interviews or speaking at a public event.

The use of *key messages* may be considered: offering key messages on specific issues (particularly the controversial ones) can be very effective for transmitting the point of view of authorities at different levels. It also ensures a consistent message and avoids transmission of the impression that there was dissension between members of political institutions.

Senior executive management and staff represent the administration. Every time they expresses, they send a message, good or bad, to the people around them.

b) MESSAGES

- The main messages must align to strategic planning. Communication conveys the mission and vision of the organization and helps it achieve its goals and fulfill its strategic priorities.
- Too many targets at once means losing focus and message would not be as effective in political terms; the public will also be confused by different messages. You have to set your main communication objectives for years to come and stay consistent in those messages.
- Messages can be transmitted very non-formal, as for example, in a conversation between two colleagues; or formally / officially, for example during a conference or through a paid advertisement in a newspaper.

c) AUDIENCES

Internal Public

- Mayor and Deputy mayor(s)
- Board members (local, county)
- The management and employees
- Others

External Public

- Citizen
- Regional / county administration and government at national level
- Employees of local, county, regional and Government administration
- Civil society
- Members of organizations and pressure groups
- Journalists responsible for public field and political journalists
- Others

Depending on the destination of the message, to a category of internal or external public, it must be approached differently:

For the internal

• Employees need information on all projects and policy decisions. They must receive this information before being made public, so be prepared for any consequences they would have on their work.

• Unlike external audiences, employees are very interested in “internal” news such as birthdays and preferment of their colleagues, opportunities for training / instruction, parties organized at work etc.

For the external

- External audiences need information on about all matters of policy. External public should know who to contact if it has questions.

- When you inform the external audiences, do not assume it knows all the details; do not use complicated acronyms or numbers of laws unless you are sure the audience understands what this means.

- In general, the public (citizens of a country) does not require detailed or complex information, but just a sketching of the situation. Include contact details for those who would like more information.

d) TOOLS

- Logo / Emblem
- Face to face conversations
- Phone calls
- Letters
- Business cards
- E-mail
- Advertising
- Banners
- Meetings
- Seminars
- Circulars or newsletters for members
- Conferences
- Audiences
- Brochures
- Posters
- Magazines and newsletters
- Press releases
- Commercials
- Interviews
- Sponsored television or radio programs
- Other

Some tips for choosing the best tools:

- Before investing time and money in building an instrument, make sure it is suitable and that will reach targeted audience. Does the target audience understand what he reads? Aim for simplicity.

- Adapt the text depending on the targeted audience. Information brochures must be written in an easy everyday language, unlike the policy documents.

- • Plan the distribution of informative material: posting has financial and time limits.

- To reach the general public, consider advertising on radio and in newspapers. But be careful: advertising is very expensive.

E) FEEDBACK / REACTION

Good communication has two ways, because the organization must *inform* and *listen to the public*, to give him the option of responding, to comment, to congratulate, to protest or request additional information.

Available tools for *transmitting comments and ask questions*

- Phone
- Website
- Intranet
- E-mail
- Mail
- Reader's corner in newsletters
- Audiences, personal contacts
- Suggestions boxes
- Other

Some tips that can measure and take feedback more quickly and positively from citizens:

- The best way for the government to create appropriate services and policies is listening to the public.
- Ensure that information material mentions an address and a phone number.
- In most countries any serious organization is now expected to include a website and an e-mail.
- If employees have e-mail accounts, they must treat incoming mail such as “ordinary” letters. Employees must daily check for new mail *and answer them operatively*.

f) OBSTACLES

Even the best-planned communication may encounter obstacles. These obstacles can be “physical” (poor quality phone line, a strayed letter, background noise during a discussion, a misspelled word in a letter, overabundance of competing information) or “emotional parasites” (a personality conflict between the issuer and receiver, cultural differences or language).

The most obvious problems that can affect communication with diverse audiences

- Lack of communication between senior management and employees
- Lack of communication between employees themselves
- Insufficient financial and human resources needed to produce information material
- Senior management does not believe in the importance of communication
- Misunderstanding the mission
- Cultural or linguistic differences in the area / territory
- Political tensions between local government and the national
- Population scattered over a large territory
- Lack of interest of journalists for specific topics related to local government
- Others

Constant use of an emblem / logo of a helps identify any information material.

Knowledge is power. Senior management must understand that informing the employees gives them more power.

As earlier said, the communication must be strategically planned. If a communication responsible undertakes various projects without a certain structure and planning, efforts will be wasted on contradictory projects.

2.3.3 Writing communication policy

As well as on any other policy document, a communication policy regroups principles, procedures, recommendations, guidelines, etc. related to communication with the public both internal and external. The communication policy should be fully aligned with the strategic planning plan.

Preparing communication policy takes time and attention to detail as the document will be the foundation of communication program for many years to come. Communication Policy should contain the following information and any other relevant materials related to communication:

- The Vision
- Mission
- Positioning (or slogan)
- Values of the organization
- Priorities

2.3.4. Setting goals and communication strategies

To start a communication project without a communication plan is as jumping on a bus you do not know where it goes. Before the organization begins working on specific communication initiatives, long and medium term communication goals must be set, and then designed various strategies to make these goals achievable.

The objectives of a strategy of communication are generally defined by converting problems. The more important question in a communication campaign is “What we want to achieve?” From this framework one must go further to specific questions, which, depending on how we defined the problem, will lead to establish clear objectives (each objective being actually the equivalent to a sub-problem from the initial definition).

The specific objectives thus determined involve activities of an independent character (needed to achieve the goal), but also interdependent (integrated into the overall campaign activities).

Guide for developing a communication strategy model:

<http://www.aor.ro/documente/ProiectulIntarire/Ghid%20de%20elaborare%20a%20unei%20strategii%20de%20comunicare.pdf>

2.3.5. Development of the communication plan

Compared to *communication policy*, which is a guide that sets rules and recommendations for future years, *communication plan* is a series of concrete projects (events, publications, programs etc.) which helps the organization meet its goals.

The projects arising from the objectives and strategies of communication are addressed to external or internal categories of public and there can be sporadic or regular, short, medium or long term projects. Projects also include feedback mechanisms.

The communication plan lists *all* communication projects that the organization will undertake in the coming year and gives the following information for each:

- Project title
- Project description
- The responsible person
- Partners, if the project is developed in collaboration
- Starting date and deadline for implementation (if any) of the project

- Audiences (who is this project prepared for?)
- Indicators (project success?)
- Special budget allocated to this project
- And so on

The list of projects included in a communication plan *can* be very detailed, but it is not *mandatory* to be very detailed. What matters is the level of thinking for preparing the communication plan and the commitment to carry out as much as possible these projects within the timeframe and the budget.

The communication plan is a dynamic document that should be rewritten annually, according to the budget and priorities. A communication plan can also be written for a specific major project.

How to write a communications plan

Any communication plan must ask the fundamental question “For what purpose was this organization established?”, “What are the aims pursued?”, “What are the key objectives?” These questions are the basis for developing your plan.

Meanwhile you have to wonder how well the public knows that the company’s work and what is his opinion about it. To gain an objective view on the matter field research will be needed - often fast questionnaires or telephone calls to a representative sample of subjects are enough. This way you can find out how the company is listed in people’s mind.

Where do you want to go? (Your goal)

How do you want your organization to be after a certain period of time - for example one year, three years or at the end of a campaign? Do you want to make yourself known to many people and if so why? Do you have the ability to effectively deal with larger clients, customers or visitors?

Whom you address? (Target audience)

To what sectors of the community do you address? For example you can address local opinion leaders such as your local representative of the Parliament or your local newspaper publisher, parents with children under five, or those concerned with the fate of the elderly. "The public" or "everyone" is too vague expressions. As the target audience will be specified more precisely the more you will have more success. Choosing your audience does not mean to exclude everyone but to know better a smaller group of people. Find out the information sources of your target audience. What newspapers read those targeted? Do they listen to local radio? Are they are part of another network? Do they consider that the local newspaper is not good for anything? All these will help you apply the strategy.

What message you want to convey? (Key message)

Try to be very clear about the message you wish to convey. Key messages are usually simple and rarely involve statements about the company’s policies. You should ask yourself “Why would target audience appeal to us?” The answer “because we are good” is not enough. Why are we good? “We are trustworthy” or “we know what we are speaking” are both key messages. It is not always necessary to communicate a key message in words - it can be incorporated into the design of promotional materials.

What methods will you use?

How can you best impress your target audience with your message? This depends on the information we have about that audience. Think beyond media relations. If speech is best then use it in conferences, meetings, visits - all can be part of a PR plan. What about exposures in shop windows, direct mail or trade shows? Your methods should be based as much as possible on information about the target audience. Needless to do a lot of work to appear in an exceptional business magazine, for example, if very few people among those who are the target audience read that newspaper - local weekly might be more useful to you.

Strategies and timetables

In other words, your plan of action. Do you want a strong wave of advertising or a more leisurely one? Set your goals and a timetable - magazines, even local ones, can print the article even after three months from the time you have requested it. For example, if your strategy involves attending as many meetings, then propose yourself to participate in the X meetings over the next six months. Each method or chosen means of communication will have its own time limits. If you set some concrete goals it is possible that you forget your good intentions!

Budget

How much will all this cost? In an ideal world your budget would cover all the costs necessary to implement your strategy. In reality you have to limit your options. You will not be able to apply everything you have proposed so point your resources on the methods you consider most effective - even if not the most appealing. Certain stages of your strategy could start only after several months of implementation of the strategy, and in this case you may have time to raise some extra money. Lenders offer easy money for a precise action if it is part of an overall communications strategy rather than an action on its own.

Assessment

This step will definitely give you headaches! But how else can you check if your efforts have been successful? Always book time for this operation, even if involves only keeping some newspaper clippings and a record number of interviews. Doing this on a regular basis you can tell when things do not go as you wanted. It is a very good prevention system that enables you to change your strategy rather than bang your head against the wall.

!!! Note - the best strategy is a flexible one that can change over time.

2.3.6. Some communication instruments

There are some possible ways to communicate, both at internal and external level: imaginations and budget are the only elements that limit your area of communication instruments. Nevertheless we cannot underline enough the importance of choosing the communication instruments appropriate for the audience category you are trying to communicate with. The most expensive projects are not always the most effective ones too.

a) Printed materials

Whenever it comes to printing costs, keep in mind that a complex document, large, with many colors, glossy printing means higher costs. Before starting work on the design of your document, contact several printers and ask them how you can save on your budget.

- **Newsletters:** weekly, monthly, every two months, quarterly; printed or made electronically; sent by post, by fax or by e-mail. The newsletter is one of the best tools for continuous informing of the people. The newsletter must contain useful information to readers and be attractive; must have short articles on interesting topics, and not long transcripts of legal documents; photos "in action" of the members and partners on the fieldwork, instead of static and repetitive photos of VIPs during meetings;
- **Letters:** a 2-3 page informational letter about a technical topic or on a new policy can be achieved faster and at lower cost than a special edition of the newsletter; it can be distributed to specific categories of public;
- **Brochures and guides:** explain who is the institution or contain various local government issues (internal procedures, new laws, how to organize consultative meetings).
- **Posters:** must be on a particular theme (e.g.: environment, democracy) and not just to promote local administrations.
- **Calendars:** scenic photographs sent by different local authorities.
- **Invitations:** at an event at a press conference, or the annual meeting.
- **Map the country:** not a tourist map, but an instrument with information about each local government.
- **Annual reports:** internal or external.
- **Magazines Press:** photocopies of articles that mention the local administration can be distributed to members and partners.
- **Promotional items:** pens, shirts, bags.
- **Business cards** of employees and Board members

b) Audiovisual materials

These articles give weight presence during a conference or seminar.

- **Slides,** electronic or printed (e.g. PowerPoint): to maintain public interest, the speaker should not repeat word for word the contents of the slide, but use visual support to illustrate his presentation, especially if the subject is complex.
- **Slides:** Slides are not as popular as in the past, but it is a possibility and they are much cheaper than a videotape.
- **Videotape:** very expensive to make and serve only a limited purpose. After several months, the video will seem outdated.
- **Banners:** institution / organization should have some banners with the name and logo / emblem them. The banners are installed in a conference room in seconds. They identify the organizer of an event, not only for participants, but also in newspapers or on television, if the event is present press.

c) Electronic Communication

Many organizations invest a lot of time and a lot of money in a next-generation internet site, but their main audiences are not yet equipped to use the new site. Such sites are often abandoned by organizations that created them after only a few months.

- **Website:** for information, names and positions of employees and senior management, updates on upcoming events, copies of press releases, positions taken on political issues etc. In countries where the Internet connection may be poor, it is much wiser to create a website with very few photographs and illustrations. It is never necessary to use animations on the site; although they can create an interesting effect will slow connection to the site, and visitors will quickly bored.
- **Intranet:** Web site for the exclusive use of employees and managerial staff. Visitors require a password to access it. The intranet provides specific information on the conditions and work situations.
- **Electronic message "panel":** on the Internet site, a place where employees can exchange information, can ask questions, may share similar experiences and can help each other, even if they are scattered throughout the country.
- **Conference call telephone:** an option that is not available in all countries, but which can save travel costs.

d) Events

Events are an important element of a good communication program, because a lot of it is based on personal interaction.

- **"Open Doors Day" Event:** on a set day, citizens are invited to visit the headquarters of the local government and meet with elected members and staff.
- **Receptions:** to announce the launch of a newsletter, moving to a new building to celebrate an important event, etc.
- **Training seminar:** for elected members and employees.
- **Booth / Stand:** in a fair, an exhibition

e) Consultation Tools

Never forget *listening* to your audience. Feedback on operations is rarely provided spontaneously, so it will be necessary to provoke reactions from your audience. The information you'll get in return is priceless.

- **Polls:** at the end of each public event, submitted in an annual newsletter; sent by mail or e-mail to collaborators etc.
- **Round Tables:** conferences on specific topics, with speakers from various fields.
- **Events in the region:** visits to various local projects to exchange information on various important topics.
- **Suggestion box:** inside the headquarters so that visitors can leave notes with their ideas and comments.
- **Answering coupons** in every edition of a newsletter, asking for suggestions.
- **E-mail:** visible on Internet site and business cards of all employees.

- **Questions or complaints:** When it receives a request for information or complaint, create a tracking system to ensure a personal trace of the reply.

In the annexes, there are examples of on-line newsletter, questionnaire about public transport, meetings with NGOs, specialized commission rules within Local Council.

f) Mass media

- Paid advertising: in newspapers, magazines, or radio.

NOTE: TV advertising is extremely expensive; it is rarely a good idea for a non-commercial organization to spend a large part of the budget on television commercials.

- Press conferences: only for major announcements to the press.
- Permanent section: some media outlets, particularly alternative / independent might be interested in providing a regular column, for free or at low cost.
- Press releases: only for major announcements to the press. It is not always necessary to write an official press release to be sent to all journalists in the country; once the communication responsible has formed a working relationship with various reporters, a simple phone call or an e-mail to the right person is often enough for a story to appear.

Relation with the media is a complex part of the communication strategy but could become one of the most powerful tools of communication.

2.3.7 Media relationship

a. Reactive media relations

The importance of the media in contemporary society is undeniable. Local governments need to form good relationships with journalists dealing with political issues. This is true everywhere, even in countries where most journalists are working for the state.

At some point, any national organization will be contacted by the media to comment on issues related to her field of activity.

- Make sure the phones or emails are answered to reporters extremely fast - in an hour – and give relevant information. If the journalist wants an interview, the officer will establish the necessary communication with the relevant spokesman.
- Ensure that all staff and all managers know the manner of response to a request from the media.
- If there is a crisis linked to the local administration, be prepared - the media will contact the communications department. Make sure the spokesman has received instructions and knows the situation.

b. Proactive relations with the media

Organizations with a good communication strategy not only respond to media requests: they generate such requests and should be continuous efforts to be present in newspapers and magazines, on radio or television.

- Prepare a daily press review of all articles on local government; let circulate the copies of the most interesting articles and archive the articles. Use this press review for:

- knowing that journalists are dealing with the public domain and policies;
- finding out what interests them most.
- following local and national news and trying to increase media interest.
 - Before sending a press release or announcing a press conference, make sure you know what you are going to announce is really “news”. It will be of interest to the media? Why would a journalist care of the ad you want to do? Find a perspective to make your news interesting for those who do not work daily in public administration. When your "news" are not interesting for journalists, do not send them.
 - When you organize a press conference, create “opportunities to take pictures” to illustrate the message you are trying to send. Let the conference room and hold a press conference in a place that is relevant to your message. Use your imagination.
 - Interactive live broadcasts on radio and television (the public may call and ask questions on certain topics) often seek guests. Offer your services.
 - Negotiate with radio and television from the community the launch of permanent programs devoted to local government issues. Do the same with newspapers.
 - Do not forget the local media and specialized one (e.g. specialized publications on environmental or management issues).
 - Keep in touch with electronic media on the Internet too. If there are no “e-publications” relevant to your country, there might be in the neighboring countries or search specialized publications at continental level that could be interested in news.

c. Media relations in times of crisis

In times of crisis, in media relations you need to be **open and honest and to stay calm**.

- There are several ways to react to negative news in newspapers, on radio or television:
 - > Contact the journalist and give him the chance of an interview with a spokesman for the journalist to clarify the situation.
 - > Within a day or two send a letter to the editor, signed by the mayor or one of the executives in which the administration clarifies its position.
 - > If many media representatives are requesting interviews it may be more convenient to quickly organize a press conference and answer to all questions in one meeting.
 - Before spokesman to give an interview or speak at a press conference, he must be very well informed and master very well the key messages to be communicated. Think about all the questions media might ask and find relevant answers before the interview.
 - There are always two sides of the same story; spokesperson must remain as neutral as possible and try to understand the positions of both parties.
 - If there are no lawyers involved who have recommended that a particular issue is not discussed, it is never a good idea to answer “no comment” when a reporter asks a question. It is much better to be honest, briefly explain what the situation is and what does the administration to fix it, so that all involved parties are satisfied.

- Communication is not covering the truth or embellishing it. The spokesman must not ever say any lie during an interview.
- If a reporter asks a question the spokesperson does not know the answer, it must simply say “I do not know” and can offer to contact the reporter when he has the information.

2.3.8 Evaluation of the communication program results

When you have prepared a communication plan you included a list of indicators for each project. Certain evaluation factors are *quantitative* (number of journalists present at the press conference, the percentage of local employees who participated in an event), while others are *qualitative* (increase in satisfaction with local governments, analytical articles in national newspapers).

Make sure you evaluate each project based on these indicators. For example:

- At the end of each training session ask participants to complete a one-page questionnaire. Analyze their comments. Adjust the next session accordingly to this.
- Keep a record of those who require brochures, posters and other informational materials. Which products are most required?
- Analysis of the number of telephone calls, faxes and e-mails requesting information. Does this number increase after the newsletter is sent to the target groups? After an article appeared in a national newspaper?
- Assess not only the quantity but also the quality of media reporting that over the years. Articles about local government have become more thorough and positive?
- Ask the administrator of the website or Internet service provider the number of visitors to your website. When are there more visitors - after distributing a newsletter by e-mail, after a press conference?

Considering these results, reevaluate your communication projects and make necessary adjustments.

The communication plan should be rewritten regularly, ideally every year. Special projects that were successful may become permanent programs; other activities, less successful, should be adjusted or canceled. But if needed, if necessary, reset the communication plan even sooner than annually - not necessarily in its entirety, but only in certain steps (actions / activities, public, tools, feedback etc.).

From time to time you have to also evaluate the overall communication strategy, especially if there has been a change of context, such as a change of county council, the prefect and / or government (or in it).

2.3.9 Communication campaign

Not infrequently, the decision makers of the local government pass without hesitation to conduct a communication campaign, often known as the “press campaign” although, as you will see later, such an approach may not be limited to one target group - the media.

Campaigns are in vogue today.

In all sectors of society: in sports, in business, especially in politics.

Remember the election in the United States after which George Bush has become president. Both candidates have spent \$ 350 million on election campaigns.

What is observed is related to the events. Especially in sports, generating publicity. Olympic Games, World Cup, Soccer Champions League etc.

The organization of campaigns is currently an industry.

They are studied at university. There are courses and training sessions on the subject. "The Art of Political Campaigns" was a very successful seminar in Washington in 2004.

Failures to Avoid

Despite, or because of their popularity, campaigns often fail. Especially in the non-profit sector. Even those most well organized and implemented.

These failures are due to lack of money that is essential if you want to generate advertising today. But more often these failures are due to lack of training and research. It is about goals and expected results, about short and long term goals.

The campaign is a temporary event, to be placed in a long-term strategy.

In a plan. A business plan and a communication plan.

A plan with ideas and long term goals.

With a strategy for the future. With activities and tracking / their continuation in time.

The biggest mistake you can make is to start a campaign without having to consider the alternatives.

What overall strategy tools are available and which are most effective?

Is campaign the best mean to achieve goals?

Or would education, regulation, legislation or lobbying be preferable?

In addition, campaigns cost money. Lots of money. For advertising on television and radio, for advertising, folders, leaflets and brochures. To create Internet sites etc.

Is there enough money available? Have you planned funds in the budget for these activities?

Definition, goal, effect

Before discussing the success or failure of a campaign we conceived definition of specialists from the Association of Netherlands Municipalities:

A campaign is a series of short-term activities to promote a product, a service or an attitude, by using a focused message and understandable, which could cause a profound impact on audiences chosen.

Key words:

- Research,
- monitoring,
- aims and target groups
- message
- Means and events
- Press and publicity.

Most campaigns aimed at the transfer of information and knowledge to the general public or specific target groups. These campaigns were quite successful. Researchers have concluded that the level of knowledge, after applying a successful campaign, sometimes increase on average by 10-15%.

The effect of short-term campaigns on changing attitudes or behavior is not easy to prove. Attitude and behavior are influenced by various factors. It is difficult to determine what factors are dominant in a particular situation because of their variety - commercial advertising, other topics of interest to the community, other campaigns etc.

But these campaigns are often influenced by unexpected and unforeseen factors: global issues, crises and disasters, political and social issues, external exaggerated advertising.

In general it can be said that a campaign to raise awareness of the problems and possible solutions, well prepared and deployed, is often successful, but things get more complicated and problematic when the target is influencing opinions or attitudes or changing behavior.

In recent years, in Romania it is fashionable to talk increasingly more, in many ways, about the country's integration into the European Union.

Thus in 2005 the "Information for Integration" campaign occurred conducted by the Government through the Ministry of European Integration. It originally consisted in a research project to find target groups and needs for information, followed by programs established with different activities for different target groups:

- Europe in school
- Together for young Europe
- Europe, my love, I know you and gain you
- European integration and business environment
- Europe is important for you
- Entrepreneurs in rural areas
- Public administration, integration counselors, specialists in European integration
- Relations with the media
- MEI Information Point
- Euro-Dispatch
- MEI website
- Information Bulletin of the MEI "European News"

To be successful, a campaign must be clear and informative, if it is possible to be striking, but not irritating, and above all, credible.

Humor is appreciated but clear information gives better results.

Another example of an information campaign run by the Vaslui County Council and addressed to a specific target group can be found in Annex.

Check list

To thoroughly prepare a campaign, it is advisable to use the following list:

1. Identify the situation and problems: is it knowledge, attitude, or behavior?
2. Think of the alternative: education, legislation, regulation, lobby etc?
3. Identify target groups: general public, specific target groups?
4. Describe the objectives: in general, for each target group?
5. Discuss the overall message or messages target groups?
6. Determine approach: strategy, tactics, concepts etc.
7. Choose means: TV / radio commercials, advertising, posters, folders, Internet, intermediaries, etc.
8. Discuss the role of the media: topics for interviews, discussions.

9. Make a schedule of short-term and long-term results.
10. Make a schedule of distribution of information materials.
11. Pre-test the message / messages, check them during the campaign and evaluate them after it.
12. Provide budget for research, design, personnel, outside contracting, production and distribution.

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