

THE EFFICIENCY OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FROM ROMANIA THROUGH MEDIA

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Abstract: *In the present research I will analyze the reactions and opinions of the interviewed persons regarding the efficiency of communication campaigns of public institutions in Romania through the media and also it will be analyzed the justified expectations of the respondents regarding a more efficient communication of public institutions. At the same time, it is aimed at presenting some comparisons between: communication strategies available in most public companies in Romania versus aspects that should be improved, developed within these strategies. Thereby, I will use the interview as a qualitative research method, to confirm or infirm the hypothesis of the present research: Public institutions deliver useful information through the media; The information delivered by public institutions through the media rarely reach the people to whom it is addressed; It is necessary to achieve an active partnership between public institutions in Romania and media organizations locally, nationally and even internationally. The interview was addressed to individuals residing in major cities of Romania but also to several people living in the United States of America and in countries of the European Union, such as Germany, France, Italy and Austria, aged over 20 years, with university education, working in public or privately-owned companies, who have visited a large number of countries, worldwide. The structure of the interview is as follows: 8 open-ended and closed-ended questions whose main objective is to measure the reactions of interviewees on both the efficiency of communication campaigns of public institutions in Romania through the media, and also the justified expectations of the respondents concerning a more efficient communication of public institutions. After summarization, interpretation and analysis of the answers, I'll respond to the two research questions stated: Should communication strategies be optimized and developed in the public sector in Romania? To what extent are monitoring and evaluation stages accomplished inside the communication strategies of public institutions in Romania? Case study results open a new research direction in this area, particularly about the development of the communication strategies in public sector in Romania.*

Keywords: communication; public institutions; mass media; efficiency

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1. Introduction

Formally, communication can be defined as any process whereby decisional premises are communicated from one member of an institution to another. Communication accompanies public institutions activity, contributing to its achieving in good condition. Public communication refers to both the exchange and sharing of public information and maintaining social bond. (Zemor, 1995)

Communication in institutions is a two-sided process: it involves both the delivery of commands, information and advice to a decision center (an individual invested with the responsibility of making decisions), and communication of decisions taken at this center in

other parts of the institution. Moreover, it is a process which occurs upward, downward and laterally inside the institution.

Institutional communication is an extra-organizational communication wherewith the institution of public administration aims to strengthen its image, to attract a climate of confidence and sympathy from the public.(Nedelea, 2006). The external communication of the public institution contributes to the reputation and image of the organization inside the institution . Moreover, it fulfills the duty of promoting the state's public institution and territorial-administrative units. Communication for promotion is in fact a special case, because although the literature invariably consider it as part of the external communication, it is done unilaterally, from the public institution to its external environment. In this situation, there aren't the members of the public body who communicate with the outside, but the organization as an institution. It gives information about the services they offer, trying to improve the layout or it simply wants to bring into notice and promote its values.(Munteanu, 2006). By its nature, public administration depends on communication: communication between different levels of public administration; communication on the same level; communication between the administration and the executive office; communication between the administration and political authority; communication in social environment.

It becomes more and more important both for administration and for its customers - taxpayers, citizens, interest groups, political authority - the development of communication channels with the "business world". The main ways to materialize this particular type of communication are:

- Advertising: through the media or through their advertising material;
- Sponsorship: funding the cultural and sporting activities;
- Patronage: financial or logistical support for artists and for non-profit or humanitarian organizations;
- Articles presenting the organization in professional publications;
- Organizing stands at fairs and forums;
- Organizing open gates days;
- Help and assistance from other similar institutions (actually not competitive) through temporary secondment of staff.

Public administration institutions aim to achieve the following features, through communication:(Dubois, 1994)

- Identifying: helps administrative institutions to ensure the reputation and bring into notice their expertise;
- Informing: that aims at bringing into notice the administrative action to the social body;
- achieving social education: that corresponds, in the guise of advice or recommendation, to the function, more and more important, of public institutions in the social life.

The public authority seeks through communication, a close relationship with the citizen; approaching and dialogizing with the citizen, they know better the requirements or wishes.(Munteanu, 2006)

2. Case study

In this research, I will analyze the reactions and opinions of the respondents as regards the efficiency of communication campaigns of public institutions in Romania through the media, and justified expectations of the respondents regarding a more efficient communication of public institutions.

Thereby, I'll use the interview as a qualitative research method in order to confirm or to rescind the hypothesis of this study:

- Public institutions deliver useful information through the media.
- The information delivered by public institutions through the media rarely reach the people to whom it is addressed.
- It is necessary to achieve an active partnership between public institutions in Romania and media organizations locally, nationally and even internationally.

The topic of the interview is : The efficiency of communication campaigns of public institutions in Romania, through the media. Overtones locally, nationally and internationally.

The main objective of the research consists in presenting the reactions of interviewees on both the efficiency of communication campaigns of public institutions in Romania through the media, and also the justified expectations of the respondents concerning a more efficient communication of public institutions.

The interview was addressed to individuals residing in major cities of Romania but also to several people living in the United States of America and in countries of the European Union, such as Germany, France, Italy and Austria, aged over 20 years, with university education, working in public or privately-owned companies, who have visited a large number of countries, worldwide. Undoubtedly, this category consists of people who are very often informed by the media and have a permanent contact with media organizations in each country. Furthermore, these people have very clear terms of comparison on the subject of mass media activity at European level. The interview was applied to 20 people. Average duration of the interview is 25 minutes, including detailed answers to all questions. The interviews took place between 16th February 2015 – 1st March 2015.

After summarization, interpretation and analysis of the answers, I'll respond to the two research questions stated:

- Should communication strategies be optimized and developed in the public sector in Romania?
- To what extent are monitoring and evaluation stages accomplished inside the communication strategies of public institutions in Romania?

The structure of the interview is as follows: 8 open-ended and closed-ended questions whose main objective is to measure the reactions of interviewees on both the efficiency of communication campaigns of public institutions in Romania through the media, and also the justified expectations of the respondents concerning a more efficient communication of public institutions.

At the same time it is aimed at presenting some comparisons between: communication strategies available in most public companies in Romania versus aspects that should be improved, developed within these strategies.

At the end of the interview, after the 8 questions that follow the goals stated before, I have asked two more questions whose main objective is to acknowledge the age and the actual residence of targeted subjects. I have chosen a structured interview in order to keep the same number of questions and the same disposal for all interviewees, likewise for the profound approach on the topic of the research.

I will interpret and analyse the answers for each question in the interview guide.

2.1. Generally, how often do you have contact with public institutions in Romania?

After addressing the first question in the interview guide these percentages arise, as regards the contact of the respondents with public institutions in various fields:

- About 50% of the respondents appeal monthly to the services of one or more public institutions in Romania.
- About 20% of the respondents appeal daily to the services of one or more public institutions in Romania.
- About 15% of the respondents appeal weekly to the services of one or more public institutions in Romania.
- About 15% of the respondents appeal yearly to the services of one or more public institutions in Romania.

2.2. To what extent are you satisfied with the modality of public institutions in Romania to communicate through the media?

After addressing this question in the interview guide these percentages arise, as regards the respondents' levels of satisfaction:

- About 60% of the respondents said they are satisfied on a small scale with the modality of public institutions in Romania to communicate through the media.
- About 25% of the respondents said they are satisfied to a very low degree with the modality of public institutions in Romania to communicate through the media.
- About 15% of the respondents said they are not at all satisfied with the modality of public institutions in Romania to communicate through the media.
- None of the respondents stated to be satisfied to a great extent with the modality of public institutions in Romania to communicate through the media.

2.3. Generally, do you think that public institutions in Romania deliver useful information through local, national and international media?

After addressing the third question in the interview guide, the following percentages arise as regards the usefulness of the information delivered by public institutions through the media:

- About 70% of the respondents believe that public institutions in Romania deliver useful information through local, national or international media organizations.
- About 30% of the respondents believe that public institutions in Romania do not deliver useful information through local, national or international media organizations.

2.4. How many times have you acquired useful information for you through the media, from press statements sent by public institutions in Romania?

Question number 4 brings in the impact and feedback of the respondents referring to the delivery and dissemination of information towards them. The results are:

- About 70% of the respondents stated that only a few times have acquired useful information for personal interest, through press statements disseminated in local, national or international media.
- About 25% of the respondents said they have often acquired useful information for personal interest, through press statements disseminated in local, national or international media.
- About 5% of the respondents said they have never acquired useful information for personal interest, through press statements disseminated in local, national or international media.

2.5. In the past year, which of the following public institutions do you consider to be more active, within mass media programs in Romania?

Question number 5 will emphasize the presence of public companies in the media, but not through press statements sent by these companies. The results are:

- 70% of the respondents believe that the most active public company in Romania in local, national and international media has been the National Anticorruption Directorate.
- About 15% of the respondents believe that the most active public company in Romania in local, national and international media has been the Romanian Government.
- About 10% of the respondents believe that the most active public company in Romania in local, national and international media has been the Presidential Administration of Romania.
- About 5% of the respondents believe that the most active public company in Romania in local, national and international media has been the City Hall in the town of each respondent.

2.6. What general recommendations do you have as regards the communication strategy of a public institutions in Romania? Please explain your answer.

I will present the main opinions and arguments of the respondents on optimizing communication strategies in the public sector in Romania. The main responses were:

- To have a clear and transparent communication strategy, including the recruiting of people who work in the communications department of any public institution in Romania.
- I think public institutions in Romania should be much more active and involved as regards their communication strategy. Only through transparency and visibility they will be able to approach citizens.
- More transparent and useful communication. Communication must be constant on all media channels, and when appropriate, on local and national or international channels as well.
- Constant communication of the results.
- Transparency and involvement - very difficult to achieve in the current context of employment made by institutions that aren't looking for competent people, but for those who are influential.
- Total transparency, respect for citizens by delivering accurate information, making available online forms and documents required to be used for different situations, announcing legislative changes in due time.
- Firstly, to have a communication strategy. In many public institutions in Romania, at the moment there is not even a strategy for that purpose. To consider the needs of beneficiaries, to adapt their messages by using a clear and understandable message, to implicate all employees in the implementation process.
- More professionalism. More appliance regarding the relationship with the citizens.
- Each public institution should apply the relevant articles (Law 544/2001) and to have an expert employee in the field .
- To give any information brief and to the point as regards local, national or international interest.
- To inform citizens correctly and regularly.
- Main regulations must become compulsory promoted in order to inform people through all communication channels.
- Be more transparent concercing topics and useful information for citizens.

- Use communication channels with the largest audiences (internet, TV, radio, newspapers) for delivering useful information to citizens.
- Identify some effective solutions to inform citizens about the rules / requirements / legislative changes in the public interest.
- Information must be accurate and timely.
- The flow of information must be coherent.

2.7. To what extent do you agree with the development of active partnerships between public institutions in Romania and local, national or international media organizations?

After addressing of the seventh questions in the interview guide, these percentages arise as regards the need to accomplish an active partnership between public institutions and the media:

- About 55% of the respondents believe that achieving this kind of active partnership between public institutions and the media would be useful to a great extent.
- About 30% of the respondents believe that achieving this kind of active partnership between public institutions and the media would be useful to a very great extent.
- About 10% of the respondents believe that achieving this kind of active partnership between public institutions and the media would be useful to a very low degree.
- About 5% of the respondents believe that achieving this kind of active partnership between public institutions and the media would be useful on a small scale.

2.8. Do you think is enough for the information to be delivered through the media? Or it would be useful, that within the communication strategy, to necessarily include the monitoring and evaluation stages of information delivered? Please explain your answer.

I will present the opinions and arguments of the respondents about the usefulness and need to develop a communication strategy, which necessarily includes monitoring and evaluation of information delivered through local, national or international media channels. The main responses of the respondents were:

- It is compulsory to show the monitoring and evaluation stages in the communication strategies.
- Monitoring and evaluation is required because in this way we can see if the information effectively gets at the citizens, and what is the impact and its feedback.
- It would be helpful, within the communication strategy, to show the monitoring and evaluation stages, as it would increase the effectiveness of the communication process and therefore the results.
- The information must reach the citizens through diverse media channels. The results of these communication, monitoring and evaluation strategies can influence the transmission of information prevalently to a particular channel, and improve them as well.

- Without monitoring and evaluating how could we check whether the information reached the target audience?
- Any information sent must be monitored and evaluated in order to find the efficiency of delivered information.
- Communication strategy can not turn out well without monitoring the way the information reached the target group, and an assessment of the feed-back too.
- It isn't enough for the information to be delivered without any monitoring and evaluation in order to increase confidence in the information presented.
- Only through monitoring and evaluation is possible to analyze the efficiency of delivered information.
- Communication strategy also involves monitoring and evaluation phases, and in private companies investing large budgets in communication campaigns, I think the focus is on these two stages. In conclusion, public companies should use monitoring and evaluation stages.
- Monitoring and evaluation are necessary likewise in any other company - in order to draw conclusions and regulate future actions.
- It would be necessary both monitoring and evaluation stages to observe the impacts and to regulate under way if something doesn't go according to plan.
- It's 100% compulsory that monitoring and evaluation stages be present in the communication strategy. Without these stages no one can say if the information reached the population, or they even had an impact on them.

2.9. How old are you?

Questions were addressed to people aged over 20 years, as follows:

- 60% of the respondents aged 20 to 30 years.
- 40% of the respondents aged between 31 to 40 years.

2.10. Where do you live at present?

The questions were addressed to people living in the United States of America and in Europe - mainly Romania (Bucharest, Sibiu, Brasov, Cluj-Napoca), Germany, Franta, Italia and Austria.

3. Results and conclusions

Most of the respondents appeal monthly to the services of one or more public institutions in Romania, and about 20% of the respondents appeal daily to the services of one or more public institutions in Romania.

Most of the respondents said they are satisfied on a small scale and to a very low degree with the modality of public institutions in Romania to communicate through the media.

Most of the respondents believe that public institutions in Romania deliver useful information through local, national or international media organizations.

Most of the respondents stated that only a few times have acquired useful information for personal interest through press statements disseminated in local, national or international media, while only 25% of the respondents said they have often acquired useful information for personal interest, through press statements disseminated in local, national or international media.

Most of the respondents believe that the most active public company in Romania in local, national and international media has been the National Anticorruption Directorate.

The main opinions and arguments of the respondents on optimizing communication strategies in the public sector in Romania were:

- To have a clear and transparent communication strategy, including the recruiting of people who work in the communications department of any public institution in Romania.
- I think public institutions in Romania should be much more active and involved as regards their communication strategy. Only through transparency and visibility they will be able to approach citizens.
- Total transparency, respect for citizens by delivering accurate information, making available online forms and documents required to be used for different situations, announcing legislative changes in due time.
- More professionalism. More appliance regarding the relationship with the citizens.
- Information must be accurate and timely.

Most of the respondents believe that achieving an active partnership between public institutions and the media would be useful to a great extent and to a very great extent.

The opinions and arguments of the respondents about the usefulness and the need to develop a communication strategy, that necessarily includes monitoring and evaluation of information delivered through local, national or international media channels were:

- Monitoring and evaluation is required because in this way we can see if the information effectively gets at the citizens, and what is the impact and its feedback.
- It would be helpful, within the communication strategy, to show the monitoring and evaluation stages, as it would increase the effectiveness of the communication process and therefore the results.
- Only through monitoring and evaluation is possible to analyze the efficiency of delivered information.
- Communication strategy also involves monitoring and evaluation stages, and in private companies investing large budgets in communication campaigns, I think the focus is on these two stages. In conclusion, public companies should use monitoring and evaluation stages.
- It's 100% necessary that monitoring and evaluation phases be present in the communication strategy. Without these stages no one can say if the information reached the population or they even had an impact on them.

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