

THE TRIAD CORPORATE COMMUNICATION-PUBLIC RELATIONS-MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Mihai, Roxana-Lucia¹

Abstract

Corporate communication allows an organization to build a communication strategy that combines vision, mission and values, to enable the organization to communicate messages, activities and practices by all stakeholders. Corporate communication integrated marketing communications and public relations to build, maintain and protect a company's reputation and to increase sales. Currently, corporate communication is considered to be an integrated framework for managing public affairs, investor relations, media relations, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, internal communications, community relations, publicity, sponsorship etc. Generally, corporate communication is recognized as the best possible method of building long-term corporate identity. A well designed and consistent corporate communication strategy with strongest publicity and public relations campaigns reinforces a positive image of an organization. Corporate communication contributes to continuing the process of defining the reasons for which an organization exists by managing relationships with internal and external stakeholders, and by influencing perceptions, expectations and their behavior towards the organization and its environment.

Keynotes: corporative communication, public relations, marketing communication, organizational behavior

JEL Classification: M140, M31, M370

1. Introduction

Communication plays an important role in trade networks, having fulfilled one of the four main roles:

1. information and awareness organization offer potential customers.
2. believes current and potential customers the opportunity of entering into a relationship instead.
3. consolidation of experiences, whether as a reminder of needs that people may have, or reminding them of the benefits of previous transactions, in order to convince them that we should enter into a similar exchange. In addition, it is possible to provide reassurance or comfort as to ensure counselors would precede the sale, but mostly after-sales servicing. This business approach is more effective than efforts are ongoing to attract new client.
4. acts as a differentiator, especially in markets where there are few elements to distinguish the products and competing brands. Therefore, communication can inform, persuade, enhance and build images to demarcate a product or service.

In all organizations there is a need to communicate to different parties, whether for the purposes of business activities, either for good cooperation and coordination between its own activities and the other participants of the business to optimize the distribution of goods and services thereof. But most important in this flow of communication, consumers are free to choose among the many product offerings. Marketing communication provides a core so that all stakeholders can understand the intentions of others and appreciate the value of goods and services (Fill & Jamieson, 2011).

Effective communication has the main importance for organizations. Traditionally, there are five main disciplines of communication or marketing tools: the advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing. In addition, organizations may choose to buy and use time and space in the media to transmit messages to target audiences.

¹ Lect.univ.dr., Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, roxana.mihai13@yahoo.co.uk

Marketing communication provides the ways through which brands and organizations are presented to the public. Their purpose is to foster a dialogue that will lead, ideally to a succession of acquisitions. This interaction is an exchange between each organization and each client; depending on the quality and satisfaction of the exchange process, it will be or will not be repeated. Therefore, communication is a very important part of the process of exchange and effectively represents the ability and management decisions which determine, in most cases, success or failure.

2. Identity, image and corporate reputation

Specialists concerned about the identity and image of the company, generally relate the two concepts either in terms of organization, either in terms of corporate, analyzing and how companies are representing and communicating with various audiences (Hatch and Schultz , 2000). Corporate identity is usually taken as being different then organizational identity, although there is some overlap (Hatch and Schultz, 2000). The main distinction between these two points of view on a company reflects internal versus external perspective of communication with audiences interested. When considering organizational identity and image, communication is directed towards the inside of the company, to employees. When considering identity and corporate image, communication is directed to external audiences of the company. Integrated marketing communication plays an important role in establishing and maintaining the identity and positive image of a company in the corporate and not the organizational (Iacob, 2015). Of course a company's image is projected to the outside world must be reflected in the organization (see Figure 1)

Figure 1. Corporate identity and image versus organizational identity and image

Identity and CORPORATE image	EXTERNAL PUBLIC
ORGANIZATIONAL identity and image	INTERNAL PUBLIC

As presented by Hatch and Schultz (2000), corporate identity reflects the thinking and direction of top management, even if they take into account the views of other members of the organization. Organizational identity reveal how the internal public relate and identify to the entire organization. Obviously, we can consider the fact that, in practice, exists overlap between the organizational and corporate identity. It should be obvious that all forms of corporate communication (press releases, annual reports, sponsorships, etc.), especially corporate advertising must be in line with the general marketing communications.

Christensen and Cheney (2000) have pointed out that corporate existence can not be separated from the issue of communication. In their view, companies were convinced that success will largely depend on their ability to differentiate themselves not only through their products or services, but, in fact, to justify the existence of the planned corporate image "... The identity is the problem and the communication seems to be the answer. "

The terms of corporate identity, corporate image and corporate reputation are often used interchangeably, but there are important differences between them that a manager must understand to determine strategy (Iacob, 2012). Although the scientific literature is full of explanations, this should not discourage managers to assess the strategic implications associated with each of the concepts.

Grahame Dowling (2001) offered a set of quite accurate and helpful definitions for identifying each of these concepts and the main differences between them. He describes

corporate identity as represented by "symbols and terminology that an organization uses to identify to the public concerned (company name, logo, advertising creations, slogan, etc.)". Corporate image is considered "global assessment (consisting of a set of beliefs and feelings) that a person has related to an organization." Most important here is that "image" is in the eye of the beholder. To the extent that a company has managed to create a consistent picture over time, there must be a general consensus among the target audience about what that picture is.

Dowling (2001) defines corporate reputation as "assigned values (authenticity, honesty, accountability and integrity) which a corporate image suggests to a person." Thus, understanding the wider reputation of a company depends on personal appraisal values differences across the different target audiences. What is important for a person or group may not be to another; and some may have a different weight values between different people and groups. This problem becomes more obvious for multinationals, because value systems are different from one culture to another.

Balmer and Greyser (2003) suggested that there are five critical questions which characterize the study of corporate direction (see figure 2). The first three questions relate directly to the three concepts that we discussed above, the other two indirectly.

A lot of the effort to create a corporate brand is the consumer reaction to how a company treats its employees, which is the concern of management for environmental issues and other aspects of his role in society, factors taken into account for their purchasing decisions. This has led more companies to build a tree as a strategic marketing tool to improve the performance of the financial perspective (Hatch and Schultz, 2001).

Figure 2. Description corporate direction

Corporate identity	What are the distinctive attributes of the company?
Corporate image	How is the company perceived today?
Corporate reputation	How is the company perceived in time?
Corporate communication	How and to whom communicate the company?
Corporate brand	What is corporate commitment?

Source: Adapted from Balmer and Greyser (2003)

While marketing communication focuses on the consumer or potential consumers and is based (mainly) on supports specific paid for delivering the message, corporate communication must deal with a wide and different types of public, especially including a focus on communications with employee, and not limit themselves only to the media.

Van Riel (2003) characterized corporate communication as a fusion of marketing, management and organizational communication.

3. The evolution of corporate communication

In the 19th century, large corporations in the US and UK have turned to information officers for the work of advertising and promotions, hiring thereafter press agents and propagandists for their communication campaigns. These campaigns have proved to be just simple lies presented as advertising campaigns or press releases. Early 20th century brings new challenges in business, public attention is drawn to the many political scandals and government corruption. To meet these challenges, corporations have hired former journalists or writers for disseminating general information to the media and the interested public. Until the 70s, communication specialists have used the term public relations to describe communication with the companies, domestic or foreign.

Public relations activities consist largely in communication with internal and external public, especially in communicating with the media. Later, however, with an increasing volume of information required by those interested, specialists began to regard communication work as more comprehensive than just public relations agency. This is the starting point for the new position of corporate communications. This includes, in addition to public relations activities, and traditional marketing activities and is responsible for the construction, maintenance and protection of the reputation of a company, but also to consolidate and increase its sales. Currently, the public relations activity is considered to be one of the components of corporate communication, it encapsulates the functions of public relations. Thus, today's corporate communication is an integrated framework for managing public affairs, investor relations, media, advertising and promotion site.

Corporate communication is a process of strategic management and enforcement is communication program by building and nurturing relationships with public. Experts have nominated four main functions of corporate communications:

- Relations with the media are characterized by serving promote external communication objectives. The aim of these relations is to build a positive reputation and name recognition to encourage the marketing organization.
- Relations with employees are tasked to enhance the organization's reputation and credibility with internal public. The key to remain competitive in the volatile market today is the ability to attract and retain a skilled and motivated workforce. The predominant type of communication is used interpersonal and inter-relational. Methods of delivery methods messaging by employees of the company include seminars, printed or electronic newsletters, local networks, intranet and various e-mail lists.
- Governmental relations are characterized by organizational communication to consent through regulatory systems and processes. The goal is to increase accountability through accurate information on the organization, while following to certain standards of the system.
- Investor Relations aim to build a specific performance and prospects profile as of a company through financial publications and publishing annual progress reports.

Corporate Communication responsibilities are the following:

- a) creates and maintains a strong corporate brand;
- b) develop programs that reduce discrepancies between identity and brand characteristics desired by the company;
- c) establishes responsible people for communication tasks in the organization;
- d) formulates and executes efficient procedures to facilitate the decision making on issues related to communication processes;
- e) enrolls all internal and external forces to support and achieve the objectives of the organization;
- f) performs the coordination with other international business organizations.

4. Convergence integrated communication activities

Compared with the corporate communication, public relations work has a much narrower scope. By the 70s, communication with various internal and external audiences was attributed to public relations. Mention undue focus on external communication with the public through various media. But a broader public understanding of internal and external development of digital technologies, and a more comprehensive understanding of organizations led to the development of corporate communication, public relations functions encompassing it.

Corporate communication continues to define the rationale of organizations managing relationships with various internal and external audiences, and by influencing perceptions, expectations and their behavior towards the organization and its environment. Corporate communications define three categories of communication based on the senders or recipients of service (van Riel, 1995):

- a) *Communication management* implemented by senior managers for planning, organizing, supervising, coordinating and monitoring the activities of the organization. It is very important to develop a common vision within the organization to gain and maintain confidence in corporate governance, so that the processes of change to take place under optimal conditions and to develop professional employees.
- b) *Organizational Communication* include various communication activities: public relations, public affairs, investor relations, communication with the labor market, corporate social responsibility activities, corporate advertising and internal communications
- c) *Marketing communication* includes commercial communication activities designed to support the sale of goods and services. It includes activities of the promotional mix: advertising, personalized information, personal sales and sponsored products.

Recent studies on corporate communication are focused on value and reputation management as the main asset of the company (van Riel and Fombrun, 2004). The basic themes of corporate communication are, as I described in the previous chapter, corporate identity, image and reputation; integrating verbal, behavioral and relationship between the organization and stakeholders (Frandsen and Johansen, 2013).

The primary purpose of communication in organizations, in terms of the area of marketing is to build loyal relationships with the public (Kitchen and Schultz, 2003). Organizational communication process aimed at creating social organization (Ashcraft et al., 2009), and public relations is managing relationships to position the organization's reputation (Cropp and Pincus, 2001). From the perspective of corporate communication, the communication aims reputation management.

The criteria used to classify communication at conceptual level refers to content and handsets for marketing perspectives on human communication for organizational communication, areas of specialization for public relations and receivers and sources of communication and specialization areas for corporate communication.

Comparative analysis of marketing disciplines, organizational communication, public relations and corporate communications convergence and highlights some aspects that highlight the divergent perspectives (see Figure 3). They converge in three aspects:

1. First, an organization considers communication as an indivisible concept. Marketing business concept emphasizes communication business, covering all common elements with stakeholders. Highlights organizational communication network of relationships that cross organizational boundaries. Public relations

activities include dialogue with all audiences, even if based on professional specialization, while Corporate Communication identifies with an overview of communication.

2. The second point of convergence is that all subjects adopt more or less implicitly, a relational perspective. Marketing focuses on relationships with customers and public, developing relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Organizational communication network focuses on inter and intra-organizational relationships (Monge and Contractor, 2001), and public relations assume relationship management is one of the key features of its role (Ledinghem, Bruning, 2000). Among the main goals of corporate communication activity is building relationships with everybody around the company (van Riel, 2003). This section provides the transition from the concept of communication as a connection between two points on the interaction between players.
3. The third convergence requires that all disciplines consider communication in organizations as a pillar in creating intangible resources specific to the organization (knowledge, trust, loyalty, reputation, identification), which are valuable, inimitable and is active basis for creating a long-term competitive advantage (Barney, 1991), based on trust.

Figure 3: Convergences and specific elements of business communication disciplines

Marketing: <i>competitive value of intangible resources</i>	Organizational Communication: <i>communication as an organizational component</i>
<i>Relational perspective</i> <i>Indivisible phenomena</i> <i>Intangible resources</i>	
Public relations: <i>social relevance of the public, professional skills</i>	Corporate communication: <i>organizational and managerial role of communication</i>

Source: summarizing

In conclusion, it may be noted that all topics analyzed refers to the same phenomenon - the communication to and within organizations - from a certain point of view.

4. Conclusions

Comparative analysis outlined in this article points out, in particular, some nuances specific to each of the subjects analyzed: competitive marketing stresses the value of intangible resources generated through communication interactions; organizational communication highlights the role of communication as a component of organizational public relations considers the social relevance of relations with the public and professional skills and corporate communication clarifies the role of organizational and managerial communication as an organizational function.

In conclusion, the disciplines of marketing, organizational communication, public relations and corporate communication refers to the same phenomenon, although they give different names related to business communication and is distinguished by specific hues. Although you can create some confusion, these variations do not represent a negative side, highlighting the multiple nature of the concept of communication. Communication is a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon (Gould, 2004), different ways of interpreting and defining the concept of communication is the result of different views resulting from different cultural and professional backgrounds.

Bibliografy:

1. Ashcraft, K.L., Khun, T.R. and Cooren, F. (2009), *Constitutional amendments: 'materializing' organizational communication*, The Academy of Management Annals, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 1-64.
2. Balmer, J.M.T. and Greyser, S.A. (2003) *Revealing the Corporation*, London, Routledge.
3. Barney, J.K. (1991), *Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage*, Journal of Management, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 99-120
4. Christensen, L.T. and Cheney, G. (2000) *Self-absorption and self-seduction in the corporate identity game*, in M. Schultz, M.J. Hatch, and M.H. Larsen (eds.), *The Expressive Organization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 246–270.
5. Complementary Course of BA English (2014), *Corporate Communication & Advertising*, University of Calicut
6. Cropp, F. and Pincus, J.D. (2001), *The mystery of public relations: unrevealing its past, unmasking its future*, in Heath, R. (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Relations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 189-204.
7. Dowling, G. (2001) *Creating Corporate Reputations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
8. Fill, Chris; Jamieson, Barbara (2011), *Marketing Communications*, Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh
9. Frandsen, F. and Johansen, W. (2013), *Corporate communication*, in Bhatia, V. and Bremner, S. (Eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Professional Communication*, Routledge, London
10. Gould, S. (2004), *IMC as theory and as a post-structural set of practices and discourses: a continuously evolving paradigm shift*, Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 20-31
11. Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M. (2000) *Scaling the tower of babel: Relational differences between identity, image, and culture in organizations*, in M. Schultz, M.J. Hatch, and M.H. Larsen (eds.), *The Expressive Organization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 11–31.
12. Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M. (2001) *Are the strategic stars aligned for your corporate brand?* Harvard Business Review, 1, 129–134.
13. Iacob, Silvia-Elena (2015), *Supporting the Image of an Institution by Means of Communication and PR*, Annals of „Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați. Fascicle I. Economics and Applied Informatics, Nr2, 2015, pg. 108 - 113, ISSN:1584-0409, pp 123-126, http://www.eia.feaa.ugal.ro/images/eia/2015_2/Iacob.pdf;
14. Kitchen, P.J. and Schultz, D.E. (2003), *Integrated corporate and product brand communication*, Advances in Competitiveness Research, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 66-86.
15. Ledingham, J.A. and Bruning, S.D. (eds) (2000), *Public Relations as Relationship Management: A Relational Approach to the Study and Practice of Public Relations*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.

16. Monge, P.R. and Contractor, N.S. (2001), *Emergence of communication networks*, in Jablin, F.M., Putnam, L.L., Philips, N. and Chapman, P. (Eds), *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 440-502.
17. Morgan, R. and Hunt, S. (1994), *The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing*, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 58 No. 3, pp. 20-38.
18. Silvia, Elena Iacob (2012), Triada imagine-reputație-performanță în organizații economice, Editura Bibliotheca, Colectia Universitaria Economia, Târgoviște, ISBN 978-973-712-669-6, 197 pg.
19. van Riel, C.B.M. (1995), *Principles of Corporate Communication*, Prentice Hall Europe, Hemel Hempstead.
20. van Riel, C.B.M. and Fombrun, C. (2004), *Fame and Fortune. How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations*, Prentice Hall, New York, NY