

# Public Relations in Organizational Communication

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**Abstract:-** Nowadays, companies' competitive advantage is based more on intangible than physical attributes, and factors such as knowledge management or organizational culture are absolutely fundamental. Thus, we must look at the corporate system issue and three key areas: corporate culture, corporate identity, and corporate communication. In these fields, the public relations professional acts as the manager of organizational communication and is increasingly important because he interprets, mediates and keeps open two-way communication between an organization and its audiences, especially at a time when technology advances and the internet increasingly require a knowledge manager within organizations.

**Keywords:-** Public Relations, Organizational Communication.

## I. INTRODUCTION

From reading a text by Carillo Duran and Castillo Díaz (s.d.) we find that, in recent years, the competitive advantage of companies with strong public notoriety and credibility lies much more in their intangible attributes than in their physical ones. Variables such as knowledge management, organizational culture or corporate image are issues that were initially only taken into account by large corporations but which small and medium-sized companies have gradually begun to internalize - seriously and rigorously - as necessary for the survival and success of the organization.

The corporate image is not only about the communication department but should be part of the general orientation of the organization (Gillis, 2011). In addition, an institution's base should include an appropriate mix of purposes and actions, but the latter should prevail. No intentional corporate image can be sustained for a long time, nor can it survive without properly communicating its advantages. Rouen, quoting Mumby (s.d. : 29), recalls that Organizational Communication is a "process of creating collective and coordinated meaning structures through symbolic practices aimed at achieving organizational goals."

However, as Alameda Garcia (s.d.) well warns, marketing management, finance and production policies (the tangible ones) are usually given priority in corporate management, leaving communication policies (the intangibles) in the background. There has therefore been greater concern with commercial or product communication, to the detriment of corporate or institutional communication. But organizational

communication is increasingly recognized (Sadia, Aysha & Mohd, Berhannudin & Kadir, Zulida & Sanif, Sazuliana, 2016; Keyton, 2017; Hargie, 2016; Heide et alii, 2018).

The crisis in the advertising sector, which has been gradually worsening, the fragmentation of audiences in ways not traditionally defined by the segmentation of markets, the homogenization of brands and the hegemony of a globalized market, forced companies and organizations to take over. awareness of a new reality to which they need to adapt. As a result, they are beginning to understand that to be competitive it is not enough to have good products, choose good pricing policies or decide on appropriate marketing strategies. Without disregarding any of these values, which typify business competitiveness, it is essential to integrate marketing strategies and other functional policies relating to corporate communications plans. In this sense is expressed Villafañe (1998 [1993]: 37), when he states that "the company must be understood as a global company, in which any of its basic functions cannot be separated". These functions are derived from the two systems that comprise the global corporate system: on the one hand, the strong system that is constituted by the basic organization of the company and combines management with traditional functional policies: production, financing, management and marketing policies. These macrotangible assets include, but are not limited to: products, services and markets, physical structures, organization and decision systems, planning and control procedures, and technology and business know-how. On the other hand, a system of a much less tangible nature consisting of three specific areas: corporate culture, corporate identity and corporate communication. According to the author, this set of intangible assets should be planned and managed as the rest of the company's assets. Therefore, the new competitiveness of organizations will be the result of this binomial of systems imposing the corporate image as a management principle where there is no product or service, but the management of the organization's communication resources to synergistically integrate and manage different forms of communication. business. Thus, communication is no longer an ancillary task, commonly used in marketing and marketing functions, to become a policy directly oriented towards strategic creation and maintaining a positive image (Villafañe, 1998 [1993]; Bueno, 2003; Broom, (2009 [1985]).

In this sense, physical supports, employees, company mission, products, brands, services, advertising, promotion, verbal or visual messages, are elements of identity, and, therefore, determinants in the overall image of the institution. That is, the new competitiveness vector of organizations is to achieve a distinctive image among the

public. Capriotti (2008 [1999]) reinforces this idea by indicating that the focus of the market will no longer be on the technical characteristics of the products or services available, and the battle is being fought to find a space to occupy in people's minds.

## II. A NEW DISCOURSE ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

Therefore, in organizations, a new concept is emerging as a consequence of this recent management mentality: attention is shifting from sign to symbol (Alameda García, s.d.). That is, we move from the concept of organization defined as a centre of production and distribution, to the institution in a holistic perspective, emerging a new institutional discourse that expresses its values, ideology and mission.

But the challenge becomes even greater as, with this reality, the organization is presented as an actor in the public space along with other organizations, the media and the general public. This same idea is reinforced by Garrido (2001) when he indicates that companies are constantly interrelating and interacting with their environment because they are open systems consistent with their social environment. To realize their communication strategies, companies and institutions have different means, which we systematize from Alameda Garcia (2005), Kunsch (2006), Lendrevie [et al] (2010 [1990]):

- Commercial communication: Advertising, Brand Marketing, Sales Promotion, Merchandising, Direct Marketing, Sales Force, Product Placement, Endorsement, Soft Sponsoring, Bartering, Product Public Relations
- Internal communication: Intranet, E-mail, Information Boards, Welcome Manual, Internal Publishing, Focus Groups, Suggestion Boxes
- Institutional communication: Visual Identity (Logo, Uniforms, Stationary, Vehicles, Signage, Public Relations), Event Communication (Sponsorship, Patronage, Exhibitions), Press Officer, Social Responsibility, Financial Communication, Corporate Advertising, Lobby, Media Corporate, Open Days, Publications, Crisis Communication

All of these forms and actions of communication respond to diverse targets, are planned and executed by different business areas or specialists, and target different audiences. Of course, communication in a holistic sense is essential to the business or organization, and for that, works to build global communication strategies with a range of tools to help define the corporate image; however, business communications techniques are product or brand-oriented and centre on traditional advertising, sales force, marketing promotions, merchandising or direct marketing. At the same time, communication for internal human capital uses communication tools that involve all members of the organization in the organizational project, as pointed out by Álvarez and Caballero (1998 [1997]: 112): "They are

tasked with energizing the social fabric of the organization, and the internal channels and energies of members to achieve greater efficiency and competitiveness." Considering that communication is transversal, goes through all processes and is the central nervous system of the organization (Costa, 2003 [2001]), and since the company must be managed as a whole, these different forms of communication must be coordinated, integrated and managed corporately - or, in Costa's words (1995: 136) as an "organic body" - so that organizations can present themselves to their audiences and society at large with a unique discourse. It is therefore convenient and desirable to integrate and align the different forms of communication generated by the organization as a whole so that all company communications managed along a common line have a unified, harmonious and identifiable style.

Such integrated planning of all available techniques requires the establishment of an appropriate communication policy to identify the needs of each of the audiences with which it is intended to communicate and, depending on them, to establish the objectives, the message and the necessary instruments (Capriotti, ( 2008 [1999]) The concept of "corporate" involves the construction of an identity for the company or institution, under certain values, and even before any communication action. Therefore, the figure of the director of communication in coordination with the superior hierarchies gains strength and meaning, whose work can be effectively extended to all departments of the organization, thus the image of the business and the image of its products. - which traditionally walked apart - can go in the same direction, and it's corporate communication as the main management that will determine the rest of the communicative actions, and including other content and activities such as the practice of marketing or advertising, or management of external and internal communication, as pointed out by Carrascosa (1992). General communication management is a priority, on which specific advertising or marketing actions depend (Benavides, 2001).

Product communication, which has always been managed in isolation, now requires a high degree of consistency and articulation with institutional communication, as the image of the organization perceived by stakeholders depends decisively on holistic and integrated communication. So it is this that, by its globalizing nature, is structured as a guide. In a context of market saturation, characterized by a low level of differentiation, product communication becomes almost a "technical specification", so there must be a shift of resources to corporate communication, which will act as an "umbrella". under which the product communication is defined. It has the disadvantage of only advertising the specific product in question, rather than corporate or brand communication, which covers the entire product range, making it more efficient. Ideally, product communication should take on meaning in the context of corporate communication and brand image, that is, there would be synergy between them.

However, integrating corporate communication with marketing communication is often difficult because of the different concepts that are practiced in most companies that materialize substantially in two aspects: marketing performance is generally planned in the shorter term than the management one and the power structure within the company makes it not always clear how different interpretations of communication between marketers and managers affect the practical ability to build and implement a global communication policy.

Therefore, in order to unify all company communications within a common line, there is a need to create a strategic communication platform, whose function will be to establish a relationship between objectives, strategies, concepts and action plans, translated in a set of conceptual documents. This will be a privileged instrument with two main functions: avoiding dispersion in communication as regards identity, and maximize all business communications as much as possible. In the words of Zarifian (apud Kollross, s.d. : 3),

The act of communicating is beyond the mere transmission of information, it is, in fact, a process by which a mutual understanding is established and shared meaning is formed, resulting in an understanding of the actions that the subjects involved are taken to take together or in away. convergent.

It is not enough simply to convey a message; it must be properly assimilated for a truly communicative act to occur. That is, communication must be the search for a communion of meanings and not merely information processing. Therefore, organizations should be explicitly aware of their responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of such processes. However, the act of communicating is regularly relegated to luck:

According to Corrado (1994, p. 13) there are four main reasons why this “delay to understand the importance of communication” occurs: historically not being understood as important for success; be perceived (wrongly) as a cost that produces no measurable and rapid return; be seen as a technical skill (tactical) and not as a strategic activity; and yet, the fear of organizations for processes that cannot be fully controlled. (Kollross, s.d. : 3)

The public relations professional acts as the manager of organizational communication and is responsible for the strategic management of the organization's relationship with its various audiences. Externally, public relations are responsible for building the organization's credibility with its audiences, in addition to building coherent and lasting institutional image / identity. "Society and the consumer market have become quite hostile to 'illiterate companies', who do not learn to write, listen, speak, express themselves and, above all, dialogue in the environment in which they operate." (Kunsch, 2003 [1985]: 12). Internally, public relations addresses the dynamics between organizational groups, aiming - through “coordinated and synergistic management of human and organizational efforts” (idem:

180) - the best intra-organizational understanding. Of course, while the world is gaining speed, intertwined with advanced communication technologies, the potential for damage caused by poor communication is increasing. Thus, and paraphrasing Cahen (apud Borato, 2004: 17), organizational communication will be: “(...) a systemic activity, strategic in nature, linked to the other upper echelons of the company and whose objectives are: to create - where none already exists or is neutral - maintain - where it already exists - or change to favorable - where negative - the company's image with its priority audiences.”

For Gonçalves (2010), Petrovicie (2014). Brandão (2018), Fawkes (2018), among others, the role of Public Relations in organizations has recently gained visibility, although the discussion on the topic was initiated by Broom and Smith (1979), by assigning four roles to these professionals: “Expert prescriber” (investigates and defines PR issues, develops programs and implements them); “Communicational facilitator” (interprets, mediates and holds open two-way communication between an organization and its audiences. Its basis of work is the assumption that mutual understanding facilitates the decision-making process and generates cross-cutting benefits for all involved. ); “Problem-solving facilitator” (identifies and solves problems by working together with stakeholders. It is an integral part of strategic decision making and works on goal setting, communicative needs setting. Gives advice on the implementation of PR programs); “Communication technician” (has skills in developing communication programs based on written or multimedia media. He is fundamentally a technician, not a manager).

More generally, Pierobon (s.d.) argues that, when thinking of organizational and intercultural communication, soon appears the figure of the PR professional who works relational flows, through good strategic communication planning. These relational flows, established with the groups that affect or are affected by the activities performed by the organization, follow the need and demand of the interlocutors at key moments, so communication management aims to meet the needs of customers and employees. Communication as a strategy is an effort to connect with the organization's vision, mission and objectives, the strengths and opportunities that exist in the marketplace and make the work meaningful to everyone. Communication not only sells products and services, but it helps the smooth running of a business and the relationship with its environment. If an organization does not exchange effective communication with its external environment, it will be difficult to convince potential customers or users to buy or consume their products or services or share their ideas. Similarly, if in an organization's internal environment there is no effective communication, it will be difficult to convince and motivate employees to participate and work efficiently and effectively. Corporate communication is, therefore, necessary as a form of relationship with all stakeholders as indicated by Bayon, Del Castillo and Arteta (1992): each company has a duty to

communicate, and the absence of communication is always negative communication; There is no question of the need to communicate, because you simply know that there is no alternative. It is not a question of whether or not it is advisable but how, where and when to do so, because everything is articulated to build the organizational image.

From the point of view of the outside public, the benefits of proper communication management can translate into greater consumer confidence, and consequently increased sales and reputation (Broom, (2009 [1985]; Fombrun, 1996; Seitel, 1998 It may even be a way of resolving a crisis faster, as we will see below, as reputation acts as a reservoir of trust and transparency. In short, as Van Riel (1997: 26) notes, It is the perfect basis of favourable relationship with different audiences:

Corporate communication is a management tool by which all forms of internal and external communication are consciously used and harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible to create a favourable basis for the public relations on which the company depends.

Internet-derived technologies, which allow organizations to plan their efforts globally and networked, but also in a virtual dimension, contribute greatly to this effort (Castells, 2002; Fuchs, 2009). In other words, the economy began to organize around information management networks that are also instruments for a capitalist economy based on innovation, globalization, work flexibility and adaptability, which requires a culture of continuous deconstruction and reconstruction (Castells, 2002). Therefore, the new economy is informative, global and networked. Informative because it depends on the ability to generate and apply information processes; because in terms of capital, labour, raw materials, or consumer markets, it is organized on a planetary scale, in a continuous process of expansion that crosses all barriers to economic and competitive exchange, in a process of evolution from local to international and multinational and ultimately networked as productivity and competitiveness are established on the basis of networks of employees, suppliers, customers or partners (Castells, 2002; Cardoso [et al], 2005; Castells, 2005).

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Today we have a new organizational logic that replaces the principle of mass production advocated by Taylor and reemphasizes the importance of small and medium enterprises as sources of innovation and job creation. Organizations now enjoy a new workforce of the most skilled "cyber workers," but with whom the interaction has also changed (Thorne, 2005). The application of new information and communication technologies within organizations has led to changes in attitudes and behaviours in the workspace. These changes, while representing a revolution in communication, do not, and cannot, change the basic rules of communication (Cunha [et al], 2003), but they do change the way organizations and their audiences, partners, customers and

distributors relate. , opening horizons and forcing all actors to innovate in the search for new forms of interaction and knowledge (Sobreira, sd). The potential of these technologies for storing data for growing groups of individuals has brought new opportunities for communication and the emergence of hybrid forms of communication, such as relational marketing, focused precisely on archiving and analyzing customer data... Email and social networks explore new forms of distribution and direct marketing and turn word-of-mouth into planetary-level viral marketing. In addition to speed, massive storage capacity and simplicity, the Internet's potential for interactivity greatly facilitates interaction between organizations and their audiences. According to Serra (2003: 14) the internet "as a means of communication presents itself as a kind of symbiosis between the one-to-many and one-way diffusion media and the one-to-one means of interaction". one and two way ". This feature translates into a valuable tool and terms for organizations' communication strategies as it enables information to be targeted to a more or less extensive and differentiated audience, and offers major advances in content quality, coupled with in terms of text, image, animation, graphics and sound, allowing richer, more varied communication and better suited to the needs of its users.

Information management (Cândido, Ana Clara & Vale, Mariene. 2018; Costa, Sely & Leite, Fernando, 2018; Santos, Beatriz & Santos, Camila & Damian, Ieda; 2018) contained in web pages or numerous Internal communication is changing the relationship between organizations and their audiences, and the balance of sender/receiver forces is intensifying. The latter, with full and direct access to information, becomes more demanding than it once was. But not only in this way is the great difference between the public of the traditional media and the new media: in fact, in addition to the increased demand for information, the latter is no longer a passive recipient to become an active and proactive recipient ( Fuchs, 2009; Sobreira, sd).

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