

COMMUNICATION IN PREVENTION, REDUCTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Abstract

THERE ARE NUMEROUS COMMUNICATION NETWORKS FOUND IN SPECIFIC CONFIGURATIONS AT THE LEVEL OF THE ORGANIZATION, WHICH SUM UP THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM WITH IMPORTANT ROLE IN ENSURING THE FUNCTIONING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF ORGANIZATION ACTIVITY, THIS GENERAL ROLE BEING GENERATED BY: VOLUME, COMPLEXITY AND DIVERSITY OF THE ORGANIZATION'S OBJECTIVES; CHANGES IN THE DIMENSIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORGANIZATION (THROUGH CHANGE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW IN ECONOMY, MANAGEMENT, TECHNOLOGY ETC.) AS PART OF THE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION, IT IS CARRIED OUT UNILATERALLY, FROM THE INSTITUTION TO ITS EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT. IN THIS SITUATION, THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BODY ARE NO LONGER THE ONES WHO MAINTAIN THE LINKS WITH THE OUTSIDE, BUT THE ORGANIZATION AS AN INSTITUTION. IT GIVES INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERVICES IT OFFERS, TRIES TO IMPROVE ITS OVERALL IMAGE OR, SIMPLY, WANTS TO BECOME KNOWN AND TO PROMOTE ITS VALUES.

Keywords: *COMMUNICATION, CONFLICT, PRECEPTOR, CRISIS, CONFLICT*

1. INTRODUCTION

The communication process takes place through its components: sender - the person who initiates the communication (manager or executor); message - physical of the information transmitted by the sender to the receiver, which has several hypostases (verbal and nonverbal); channel - the way of transmitting information, closely related to the message; receiver - the person or group of people benefiting from the message (executor or manager). Through the coding process, the sender uses various symbols - sounds, letters, numbers, gestures - to transmit and be understood by the receiver. The external communication of the public institution contributes to the notoriety and image of the organization in society. It thus fulfills, at the same time, the function of promoting the public institution of the state and the administrative-territorial units. Institutional communication is increasingly developed in public organizations today. Thus, large public enterprises have specialized departments on this topic and maintain their public image thanks to a sustained policy and activities. The communication accompanies the activity of public institutions, contributing to its realization in good conditions.

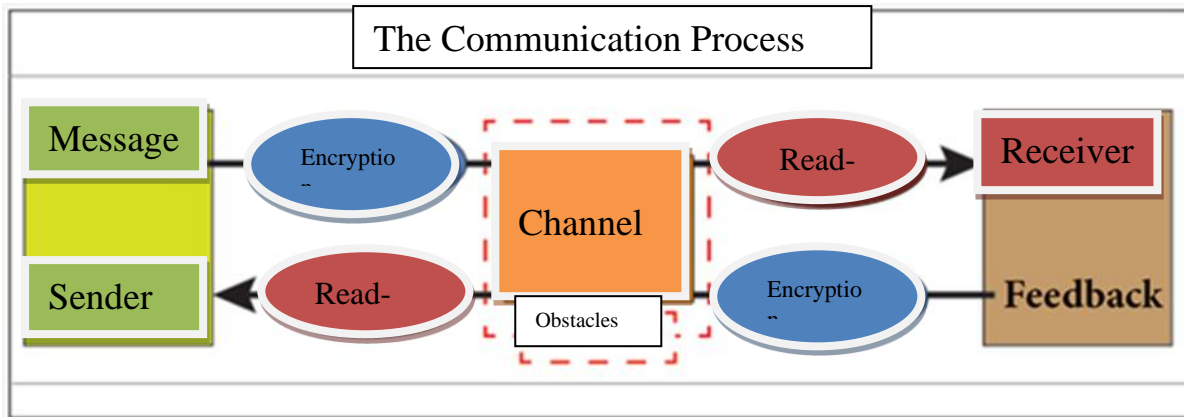
It also responds to the need of public sector organizations to assert their specific role, informing citizens of their obligations and prerogatives. Institutional communication is an extra-organizational communication through which the public administration institution aims to strengthen its image, to arouse around it a climate of trust and sympathy on the part of citizens. Located at the basis of coordination - as a function of management - communication is a process of transmitting information,

in the form of symbolic messages, between two or more people, some with the status of sender, others with the status of receiver, through specific channels and under ensuring the response, the feedback.

2. CONDITIONS OF THE COMMUNICATION SOURCE

The determining element, with well-defined purposes in the act of communication is the SOURCE (sender). We can appreciate that in situations of crisis or conflict it stands out.

If the source currently emits messages according to a normal regime based on the organization's own options and schedules, required by the requirements of daily activity, when a crisis or conflict occurs, the situation changes radically.



Now, the transmitter is strongly challenged, on the one hand it is quickly and totally subject to new, stringent, internal, presentation of solutions for resolving the crisis, preserving the image, in an extremely short time, the powerful "bombardment" of questions coming from outside the organization through direct contact with the press and various government agencies.

It seems that such a situation is not at all convenient.

The external "bombardment" of questions in crisis and conflict situations has pertinent explanations that lie both in the increased receptivity of public opinion to the sensational and in the professionalism of journalists.

From the point of view of the communication scheme we can show that strong influences of the receiver on the source are felt.

Once the purpose and objectives of the communication have been clarified, the sender must have careful control over the act of communication, the level of which will vary inversely with the level of involvement of the recipient.

From this point of view, in situations of crisis and conflict, we militate for communication strategies that achieve an orientation of the transmitter control, which we consider to be (Amado, G., Guittet A., Psychology of group communication, Polirom, Iași, 2007):

- of informing: it implies that the issuer wants the recipient to find out, to understand; it is not necessary to involve the recipient in the communication except through short questions or for clarifications;
- of persuading: implies the issuer's desire for the "receiver to act", strategically corresponding to the crisis situation but especially the conflict, as a peaceful solution to resolve it: to know his opinions, his pretensions, to convince him to do something, to act.

According to the criterion of the way of carrying out the action, in crisis and conflict situations, we appreciate that the issuer can use:

- **step-by-step strategies:** very necessary to keep the situation under control; they derive, first of all, from the plan of preparation for the crisis and aim at providing fast information to the media; In the whole series of messages prepared by the crisis teams, an important place is occupied by the periodic reports that help to control the rumors;
- **strategies for reversing the character** of some image indicators that require a lot of counter-argumentation ability from the sender;
- **image reversal strategies:** they are the most spectacular and are absolutely necessary when the crisis or conflict has shaken the organization strongly or when the "image" component is considered the basic weapon for one or another of the conflicting parties.

Image-reversal communication strategies have been used successfully in both the war in the former Yugoslavia and the Persian Gulf War.

For the success of the communication source in a delicate situation of crisis or conflict, it is important to analyze the credibility that it has in front of the receiver, depending on its perception.

Analyzing what we can do at the level of communication strategy, we believe that credibility can be enhanced by enhancing initial credibility and gaining additional credibility.

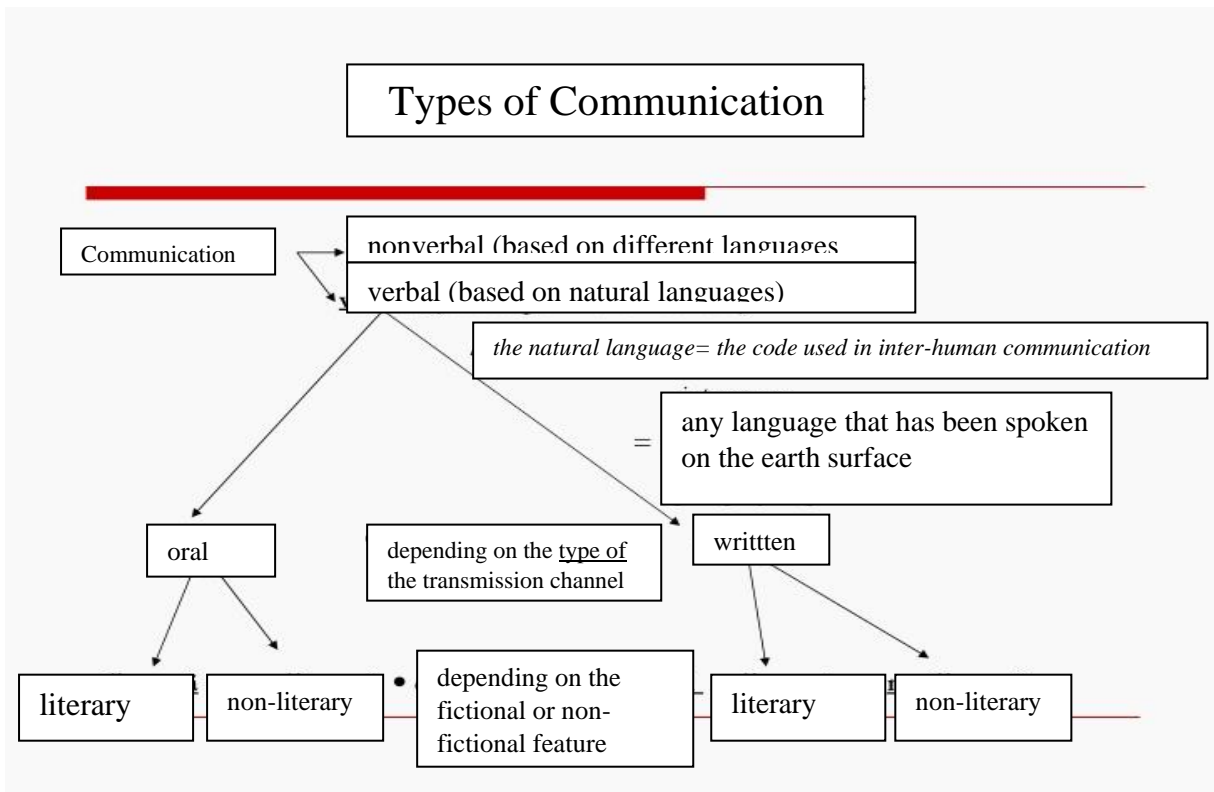
In situations of conflict or crisis, the issue of maintaining initial credibility is acutely raised, but communication skills can lead to additional credibility.

It is bad if the issuer failed to maintain the initial credibility and a lower "balance" of credibility was reached.

3. Communication - An essential component of public relations activity, but also an effective weapon in crisis and conflict situations

For social relations and implicitly for public relations, communication is an essential component, a state of mind and a tool. It is, at the same time, a force for progress, the path to understanding, harmony and justice, but also a source of conflict, evil and hatred.

COMMUNICATION, (Cornelius, H., Faire, Science of conflict resolution, Science and Technology Publishing House, Bucharest, 1996) is defined as performance to decipher the meaning, significance, connotation and denotation of social connections, organized or disorganized, using symbols, signs, representations and other ways of informational modeling, in order to trigger, obtain stability, amplify, diminish, postpone or stop individual or group behaviors (behaviors).



Picture. 2. Types of communication

From consulting several dictionaries or works, it results that to communicate means: to make known, to give news, to say, to inform, to be in touch with, to lead to, to notify, to speak with, to share something.

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

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

Regardless of the model we are referring to, in essence, we must emphasize that any communication:

- involves sources (transmitters) and receivers (recipients);
- involves encoding and decoding (processing) the meanings transmitted or received; the meanings that can be given by language, gestures, facial expressions, body position, smell, etc. ; involves competence and performance aimed at the ability to use a set of coding and decoding rules and the physical and mental capacity to send and receive a message;
- implies the existence of messages, ie coded signals, verbal or nonverbal, which have meanings for other people;
- takes place in an environment that involves filters, disturbances and implicitly various barriers in communication;
- implies the existence of a feedback;
- has a certain result (effect) and is governed by a certain ethic.

The abnormality of conflict situations has major implications for how the communication process should be conducted in such conditions.

The communication strategies this time can only be the result of a laborious process aiming at a complex of communication acts that are in close interaction and complementarity, with the precise focus - the image of the organization.

Throughout the public relations activity, but especially in conflict situations, including in the military field, communication is the most important component in image management. Obtaining information means gaining power, giving information means strengthening it.

In designing the communication activity for conflict situations, it is necessary for the public relations specialist to take into account all (or almost all) the categories of possible and useful "communications" in such situations and to take into account not only their interaction and complementarity, but also of a certain hierarchy according to criteria such as: time of receiving the message (duration of communication), authority and authenticity of the source, available channels, intensity of impact on the target audience, its interest in the organization.

In a nutshell, communication in conflict situations could be achieved in the following ways: informing the staff of the organization, of the internal community and, as the case may be, of the international environment; with the consent of the organization's management and the implementation of the crisis plan, the questions of the press and government agencies are answered in a timely manner;

- the official speeches of the leaders of the organization;
- deliberate creation of press events by the organization .;
- commenting on domestic and international public opinion;
- media comments on the event produced;
- the debates within the organization regarding the solution of the crisis;
- inter-organizational debates (negotiations) in order to resolve the crisis or conflict situation.

4. Message malfunctions and disturbances

In situations of crisis and conflict, effective and efficient communication is largely dependent on the accuracy and accuracy of the message. The message sent must be as close as possible to the intended one, and what the recipient receives must also be as close as possible to the source's intention.

It is a desideratum that largely depends on the mechanics of communication: encoding and decoding of messages, noise, filters and barriers (disturbances) in communication, environment, channels and languages used.

So, the messages themselves, isolated from their source, are not complete, the meaning of the message is in its sender, in everything we can or cannot observe from its communication, always paying attention to the elements related to the communication mechanics.

In addition, in the special situations we refer to, for the message are also important:

- sensitivity of the receiver to the message;
- the sentimental side, which must be covered by a precise and supportive communication;
- the special interest of the public, which requires us to move directly to the basic idea;
- controversial situations, which force us to leave room for compromise;
- the authority and credibility of the issuer.

5. Strategic variables on the environment and communication channels

The implications of the environment and communication channels regarding the communication strategy, in crisis and conflict situations, send us to the requirements resulting from the analysis of the conditioning related to the source, receiver - message.

The characteristics of the communication channels belonging to the two communication media, written and oral, can be analyzed in this specific situation, depending on a multitude of criteria: time, cost, accuracy, place, detail, relationship, need for writing, etc.

We think that for the conflict situation the factors prevail (Drăgan, I., Paradigms of mass communication, Publishing House and Press, Șansa-The Chance, Bucharest, 1996):

- **time**; we are in the "counter-timer" fight of image preservation or, as the case may be, image overthrow; we are obliged to give the first decisive blow in an information war; oral, interpersonal (face-to-face or electronically mediated) communication with journalists is required with acuity;
- **accuracy**: important factor, especially in combating rumors; it can be reflected primarily in the press release, but also very carefully in interpersonal communication relations; the message presented to a group may, however, lose its accuracy due to the different types of filters (perceptual, somatic, etc.), inattention, decoupling from the listening station; obviously, the information transmitted can differ even more if we communicate, face to face, one by one, with several people;
- **place**; it can be the one of the crisis, the accident or the headquarters of the organization;
- **relationship**: face-to-face communication, through its opportunity, can initiate and develop positive communication relationships;

In conclusion, oral communication and interpersonal communication (face-to-face or electronically mediated) are paramount in conditions of crisis or conflict because:

- the time available is short; sometimes, debates, negotiations, etc. are required
- the information is short; immediate and close feedback is needed;
- it is necessary to fight rumors and achieve a close relationship;
- it is necessary for certain persons or groups of people to know the information and to pass it on;
- ensures the direct presence of leaders with their authority;

CONCLUSIONS

Crisis communication is the most challenging and fascinating practice of communication. Information is missing or poor and there is not enough time for research and data collection. It is difficult to determine in crisis situations which option is a good choice. An established course of action opens a number of problems, and another course will open another. The importance of crisis resolution is the quick decision and the efficient and effective communication

The determining element, with well-specified sources in the act of communication is the source (the sender).

If the source currently emits messages according to a normal regime based on the organization's own options and schedules, required by the requirements of daily activity, then the crisis occurs or the conflict situation changes radically.

Now the transmitter is challenged; one part is quickly and completely subjected to new, stringent, internal requirements, to present solutions for resolving the crisis, to preserve the image; it must face, in a very short time, the strong "siege" of questions coming from outside the organization through direct contact with the press and various government agencies

Odată clarificate scopul și obiectivele comunicării, emițătorul trebuie să aibă în atenție un permanent control asupra actului de comunicare, al cărui nivel va varia invers proporțional cu nivelul de implicare a destinatarului.

It is very important that before transmitting a message and even during its construction, to ask ourselves what the message could mean for the receiver and what would be his reaction to this message.

Here is another operation that needs to be included in the series of mandatory operations of communication and exceptional situations.

This is an element of caution regarding the impact of the crisis on the media and public opinion or, in case of conflict, a test of the possible reaction of the opponent.

For the success of the communication source in the delicate situation of crisis or conflict, it is important to analyze the credibility that the sender has in front of the receiver, depending on his perception.

In special situations of crisis and conflict, an efficient and effective communication is largely dependent on the precision and accuracy of the message.

The message sent must be as close as possible to the one intended by the source, and what the recipient receives must also be as close as possible to the source's intention.

A perfect symbiosis must be achieved between sending short, precise messages that convey the real state of the conflict situation and mastering the equilibrium state of the receiver. At the impact of the first message about the state of emergency, the stress should be as low as possible, then in the following messages we should reduce it and eliminate it gradually.

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