The Influence of the Organizational Culture in Public Relations

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Abstract
Modern society, defined by the large number and complexity of organizational members, could not function without public relations. The communication strategies and programs they develop, they help to create bonds of trust between the various organizations and the public surrounding them, and facilitates interactive relationships between different levels of society.
Keywords: public relations, organizational culture, management

Introduction

Organizational culture is usually created by the dominant coalition, especially by the founder or manager of an organization, and public relations managers do not get influence if their values and ideology differ substantially from that of the organization. Organizational culture is also affected by the society culture and by the environment. It affects public relations in the long term by moulding the world view of the public relations function and thus influences the choice of a model of public relations inside the organization. [2]

While such a model identifies many of the variables essential to communication management and control, it also shows that if a culture is essentially hierarchical, authoritarian and reactive, the dominant coalition will generally choose an asymmetrical model of public relations. Furthermore, it will choose not to be counselled by the public relations expert who traditionally was often not seen as having enough strategic awareness and therefore was of limited value. Many companies have changed their departmental names from 'public relations' to 'corporate

communication' to reflect this development. With the future unknown, developmental debates centre on the dominant theoretical models we have identified. [4]

Key day-to-day executive skills and technical expertise come together in professional practice to support public relations strategy in-house or outsourced to blue chip management consultancies and public relations agencies. Professional expertise is organized at micro (in-house relations) and macro (external relations) levels. Integrated communication tools and techniques can be broadly classified into eight strategic areas forming an integrated communication network. These have been defined as having a significant body of peer-reviewed knowledge underpinning them, based on academic theory and empirical research. [3]

Individuals play a fundamental role in organizational culture. Organizations need to consider the type of employees that can most effectively drive knowledge management. From a diverse range of research (psychology to management) it is possible to tentatively postulate a core of reasonably stable personality traits by proximally defining characteristics associated with *creative* individuals.

An important aspect of knowledge exploration and exploitation is collaboration through interaction and communication. Interaction and communication are human behaviours that facilitate the sharing of meaning and which take place within a specific context. Individuals who facilitate communication within the knowledge process facilitate integration and thus contribute heavily to a programme's success.

Models of Corporate communication

The study of corporate communication is perhaps one of the broadest multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary subjects available in universities today. Topics will be studied from: politics; economics; management; marketing; philosophy; sociology; environmental studies; languages, semiology and semantics; cultural studies.

Universities still have difficulty in deciding whether to classify and invest in the study of this discipline as a 'media arts' subject area or a 'business and management' subject area. Media and creative arts faculty people approach public relations through journalism, film, radio and photography production (for events/publicity etc.) while business faculty

people approach public relations through a management orientation based on planning and control in line with business strategy. The methodological principles for development of public relations as an academic discipline are based on accepted research methods, depending on the purpose of a particular piece of research or analysis. [2]

There are three main areas of popular academic research:

1. - business and political communication strategy, which includes public or government affairs and corporate reputation;

2. - governance and leadership communication strategy, involving employees, managers, directors and shareholders;

3. - integrated marketing communication strategy.

The importance of the analytical approach for practitioners cannot be overestimated, given the critical role of monitoring and evaluation of campaign policy and planning in today's changing multimedia, new technology context.

Strategic public relations are concerned with managing the relationships between an organization and a much wider variety of stakeholders or audiences and range of priorities at any given time. The development of macroeconomics and environmental management studies has put pressure on the public relations industry to focus public relations strategy on the dimension of the enterprise or organization that goes beyond the bottom line of profit and shareholder price to include measures of corporate success based on social accountability. As well as an organization's role in the economic life of its country and its position in the global or national marketplace, public relations counsel and activities form an important part of an organization's policy in defining the environmental factors that affect its corporate business activities. These include social stratification, social welfare and national policy, technology, and the political, legal and regulatory processes appropriate to a particular organization or the industry in which it operates. All these factors need understanding of the attitudes and cultural norms that influence an organization's reputation and public acceptability. [6]

Operational strategy

Public relations are practiced in organizations ranging from SMEs to transnational, multinational corporations with budgets bigger than many countries' governments. [7]

Baskin *et al* (1997) say: Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to develop positive relationships and to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectations. Public relations practitioners develop, execute and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among an organization's constituent parts and publics. [1]

Classic models of strategic management try to balance the internal and external perspectives by correlating corporate mission with external environmental factors over time. Adapting Pearce and Robinson (1982) cited in Grunig (1992), the public relations operations manager must [5]: communicate the mission of the company, including broad statements; develop a company profile that reflects its internal condition and capability; assess the company's external environment, in terms of both competitive and general contextual factors; analyse possible options uncovered in the matching of the company profile with the external environment; identify desired options uncovered when the set of possibilities is considered in light of the company mission; communicate to all prioritized stakeholder groups the long-term objectives and grand strategies needed to achieve the desired options; develop annual objectives and short-term strategies that are compatible with the long-term objectives and grand strategies; implement strategic choice decisions using budgeted resources by matching tasks, people, structures, technologies and reward systems; review and evaluate the success or otherwise of strategic campaign processes to serve as a basis of control and as benchmarks for future decision making; incorporate ethical considerations into the decision-making cycle.

The role of public opinion in the behaviour of organizations continues to increase via the internet and, while the public relations profession has always been aware of its obligations to all stakeholder groups, a global economy is making for increasingly onerous relations. [7]

In the next table are presented a four traditional public relations models.

Characteristic	Model			
	Press agency/ publicity	Public information	Two-way asymmetric	Two-way symmetric
Purpose	Propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
Nature of communication	One-way; complete truth not essential	One-way; truth important	Two-way; imbalanced effects	Two-way; balanced effects
Communication model	Source → Receiver	Source → Receiver	Source ↔ Receiver ↔ Feedback	Group ↔ Group
Nature of research	Little; 'counting house'	Little; readability, readership	Formative; evaluation of attitudes	Formative; evaluation of understanding
Leading historical figures	P T Barnum	Ivy Lee	Edward L Bernays	Grunig et al, educators, professional leaders
Where practised today	Sports; theatre; product promotion; celebrity	Government; non-profit associations; business	Competitive business; PR agencies; consultancies	Regulated business; PR agencies; consultancies

Source: Adapted from Grunig and Hunt (1984)

It has already been stated that communicating consistently between stakeholders or audiences does not mean communicating the same message. Rather, a fundamental requirement in public relations is to develop a consistent corporate message (and tone) that appropriately reflects the organization in the way that the organization wishes to be reflected, even as events, crises and issues are occurring. At the same time, messages must be

capable of being adapted creatively to be understood by the different audiences targeted.

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