MEDIA RELATIONS AS A SEGMENT OF PR ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

The work elaborates on the effect of PR activities and media relations on company or corporation business. Any company can achieve higher business level via PR and media relations by means of advertising and adequate informing of the relevant market groups. The purpose of media management has been described hereafter, stating that enforced media communication capacity between the company and the relevant market groups, results in greater company publicity, which directly affects its market demand. The influence of electronic media on the creation of public opinion has been exemplified here, along with the idea that those are actually the crucial moments in development of methodology of communication and public relations. Planned media communication enables all the main messages that the company emits, to find the shortest and the safest way to the public.

Key words: management, PR, media, planning, publicity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public relations can be observed as a profession, process, communication with the public and practice (Baskin and others, 2000). PR solve problems occurred due to unfavourable stories, rumours, or events. PR, likewise, aims to create favourable relations with the relevant public groups and propitious corporate image.

There are several key words that can describe PR: respect, perception, trust, credibility, mutual understanding, agreement, truthful and wholesome spread of information (Black, 2003). The main aspects of PR are: media relations, relations with the investors, politics, community and clients; communication with the employees; corporate identity; sponsorship (Wragg, 1996).

The first world PR association congress defined PR as art and social science that analyses trends, forecasts their consequences, counsels organizations and applies preplanned programme of activities in accordance with the organization and public interest. Public relations plans are usually created as long term plans, from 3 to 5 years, though are susceptible to changes. Each plan consists of several elements, such as target audience, key message, strategy of animating the target audience, tactic, the choice of materials, advertisements etc., the time required to achieve the plan and of course the money.

The message can reach the target audience in various ways: via electronic media, promo material, brochures, newsletters, annual reports etc, and all aiming to create publicity, i.e. media coverage of important activities. The most important part of PR activities are media, the power of conveying the message and publicity creation. That is why any successful PR manager, always has perfect relations with the press, and functions alone as a journalist sometimes, ready to present the story so that the story itself becomes a news.

Public relations include and comprise publicity, advertising, media relations, marketing, lobbying, creation of communication projects, internal communication, crisis communication, editorial assignments and opinion polls (working hand in hand with market research agencies). Communication of the company with the relevant public group via media, is highly significant work that comprises cooperation with journalists, newspapers, printed media, radio and TV stations like means of distributing the news and the events. Within those relations, it is of vital importance to secure the relation that is based on true and trustworthy information and material. The relation with media and journalists must be based on mutual cooperation, honest, mutual respect, and contribute to the quality of the communicative effect on the relevant public group.
2. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations is actually a multidisciplinary field that has been developed for the last 30 to 40 years. The concept of PR has been present in Serbia since the middle of the 80s. Any thorough research dealing with public relations appears in the last 15 years. This coincides with appearance of the PRs in Serbian companies. With the increased number of foreign marketing agencies, which appear in the late 90s, there has been an increase in PR activities of the companies operating in Serbia. According to (Taylor, 2004), the similar situation, though a bit more favourable, occurs in the other countries in the region, which can be relevant for the sake of comparison (Hungary, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania).

The aforementioned countries have started developing their PR activities for the last 20 years. The trend has been intensified in Serbia only after the year 2000, i.e. a bit later than in other countries from the region. With the entrance of greater number of foreign countries into Serbian market, PR practice has advanced significantly. (Nikolić M., Terek E., 2011)

It is important to state that PR is the field that is constantly evolving and which is in its essence comprised of practical experience. It would be wrong to believe that PR can be observed as an exact science where certain principles and doctrines are always right and applicable in all cases. It is essential to understand the needs of your organization or institution when it comes to public relations, and thus pragmatically and strategically create system of communication with the media and direct interpersonal interactions.

2.1 Planning public relations

Public relations belong to the domain of management and are of great relevance to strategic and corporate planning. Strategic management differentiates between short-term, medium-term and long-term aims. Strategy actually represents long-term business planning. This direct relation between media and PR as strategic aspect of management, is the most transparent in business plan and its element of marketing plan via planning promotions. It is considered that basic elements of a business plans are: 1. Introduction, 2. Management and organization, 3. Business surroundings, 4. Marketing plan, 5. Business activities, 6. Finance, 7. Risk, 8. Conclusion. Marketing plan is composed of the following elements: 1. Target marketing, 2. Products and services, 3. Price strategy, 4 Sales and distribution plan, 5. Promotion plan. Promotion plan of a company, when related to specific product, is to contain the following elements:

- The description of the promotion activities, including specific types of media to be used (post office, internet, radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, hoardings), their price and the benefits of that kind of advertising,
- Presentation of the activity with relation to PR (which form of the activity, which media),
- Presentation of the promotional material to be used (catalogues, prospects, brochures, radio and TV commercials, newspaper ads, posters, web sites), the cost of production and creative strategy,
- The description of company’s promotional activities with relation to other elements of promotional activities (exhibitions and fairs, personal sales, lotteries, telemarketing, etc.) (Đorđević D., Andić Ž., 2003)

![Figure 1: The relation between PR management and media](image)

Based on the priorities set with strategic plan, PR sector activities plan is developed, including:

- Plan of media appearance or presentation related to each of the activities (printed and electronic media, press conferences, TV or radio show visits),
- Plan of relevant activities to be broadcast via media (ceremonies, counselings and round tables, fair and congress visits, meetings with relevant foreign and local officials etc.),
- Plan of commercial and other promotional activities (hoardings, posters, leaflets, brochures, TV and radio commercials) based on which media buying of printed or electronic media is carried out. (Such a plan is known as media plan)
2.2 Seven deadly sins of public relations
Enlisted below are the most frequent lapses of inadequate PR programmes:

1. Function “short-sighted” – inadequate evaluation of the overall contribution of PR to great management.
2. “Screw-unscrew” philosophy – we will consult PR only when we need them.
4. Local anesthetics – Superficial dealing with the problems and not solving its roots.
5. Believing global public opinion only if it is positive and favourable when it comes to our company.
6. Short-term communicative trick – e.g. Why are you accusing us of non-communicating, well, we did deal with the issue in our last annual report.
7. Shade sham – low profile philosophy. This error is based on misconception that the company can become invisible whenever wanted.

3. MEDIA

Media present communication channel between the organization and its target groups.

3.1 The notion and the relevance of media relations
Media relations represent set of activities as part of public relations, with planned, organised and continuous aim to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relations between one organization and various media representatives (Zubanov V., Roca B., 2009). The fundamental aim of this function is to create positive publicity, as a specific form of communication with the whole the relevant public for a certain organization.

Having planned all media relations, creates situation where all the main messages relevant for the organization can find the shortest and the safest way to the target group of people, which is of great importance for the started campaign, and all with the maximal usage of the given sources. Valuable and well coordinated media relations plan increases the chances of spreading the message and its adequate media coverage.

3.2 Media influence factors
The significant media development we have been witnessing for the past few decades has not only occurred due to technological advances, but also due to appliance of contemporary managing skills. Media industry and its concentration and presence, media competition, hyper-commercialization of media industry are there to support the aforesaid. (Drašković V., 2010)

The influence of management on media and technologies, directly connected with media, is the most evident in latest developments that are fast becoming a part of our everyday life (mobile phones with advanced options, TV, IT etc.)

Figure 2: Media influence factors

In the era of globalization, management has multifunctional influence over media:

- in terms of organization – business networking and virtualization,
- in terms of planning – logistical boosting of the value of media products and services, with maximal respect to the changes occurred,
- in terms of managing – key competence insistence,
- in terms of HR – high-level training and specialization, with utter usage of knowledge economy,
- in terms of control – affirmation of controlling,
• in terms of motivation – development of a new type of leadership, which is to manage constant, fast and huge changes and to mobilize new knowledge, creativity and individual values, and finally,
• in terms of communication – relying on being informed about technological innovations and applying the same.

3.3. Managing media relations
Any organization is to adjust its own media relations to suit its needs. Management of an organization can:
A) decide to deal with all media relation activities on its own,
B) form a sector or a service to deal, solely or predominantly, with media relations, or,
C) to opt for outsourcing individual, department or agency that specialises in and primarily deals with media relations.

Still, an organization is to have a person to connect the organization’s inter life and demands with external associates, who are to represent everything to the media. The key managers of the organization have to be acquainted with the most important information, skillful and ready to give interviews and perform publicly. It is of vital importance that the information and the messages, that are to be media broadcast, shaped in accordance with and adjusted to the education, culture, and political attitudes of the target groups because otherwise the desired effect may lack.

4. CONCLUSION

Media and management are phenomena omnipresent in our daily life. It would be difficult to imagine our life and our business activities without them. The relation between management and media is highly complementary, mutually conditioned and interwoven. This relation can be observed from various aspects. Yet, it still appears that the most important of those aspects is success, which is mutual aim criterion. It is certain that there aren’t successful media without well applied management, nor is there successful management that does not make use of contemporary media.

Successful business of an organization depends directly on media and requires maximal involvement of PR sector, aiming to achieve cooperation, trust, respect and positive image of the organization, which is, in its essence, the relation between PR sector and media.

REFERENCES