

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TO BE APPLIED BY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

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Abstract

Global communication is based on a basic principle very clear: in a company, everything communicates. Each expression of communication should be considered as a vital element of enterprise identity and personality. Also, global communication is developed based company's history and heritage, culture and future. Being rooted in each project's ambition, the global communication identifies and integrates the core values that will allow the company to grow and adapt to fast environmental changes.

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1. Corporative image consolidation by means of global communication

By global communication it is generally understood the range of actions that, in essence, would point to the process to conceptualize any organization's communication potential quantum, namely by putting into practice a strategy to construct and capitalize the trade mark image; to enforce the coherence policy, as well as the synergy one of the available means; to manage, with the utmost of efficiency, the assembly of communication techniques.

An extremely clear basic principle is at the starting point of the global communication: inside a company, everything and everybody communicates. Each communication expression shall be considered as a vital element of the organization's identity and personality.

The global communication has appeared as a necessity subsequently to the complexity degree increase of the organization's communicational system; it was triggered by the appearance of the corporative dimension, and also by the diversification of the targeted public. Given this context, the global communication shall be achieved by means of the organization's endeavors should such an organization have a certain communicational capital, while the organization's purpose is to capitalize this capital by means of coherent approaches – both at the commercial level, and at the corporative one, as well, so as to favour the fulfillment

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of the targets that have been set by the organization's marketing plans, and more than that, to help consolidate the respective organization's image.

All the same, all these preoccupations, that are connected to the good operation of the marketing global communication, result in the communicational action integration, actions that can be achieved by means of diverse communication methods and techniques, the coherent approach being the main element of it. This way, a new concept has appeared, namely the concept of **marketing integrated communication** that has in view the development of communicational programs that should include coherent decisions with reference to the use of communication methods and techniques, and this would stand for a major tendency in the marketing evolution.

Henceforth, according to Mr. T.A. Shimp's vision¹, the marketing integrated communication *refers to the development and implementation of diverse persuasive communication programs with the present clients, AND also with potential clients, as well, so that direct influence should be exercised on the targeted public's behavior.* At the same time, the marketing integrated communication implies that all the contact occasions, either generated by the trademark or by the organization, which the present or potential client might have as concerns the product / the service, are likely to represent possible transmission channels of the future messages. At the same time, Mr. T.A. Shimp asserts that, as far as the marketing integrated communication is concerned, there are used all the communication modalities that are considered as relevant for clients, modalities to which these ones could prove their responsiveness.

As a conclusion, we can openly assert that the marketing communication has, as of the present moment, an extremely complex content, both from the point of view of the targeted objective aspect, and of the domain of activities, and, also, from that of the specific methods and techniques.²

If reference is made to the business – related communication, depending on its value, this shall cross through several stages till the organization's message has been perceived, **the cognitive stage**, respectively (it consists in providing information on the characteristics of the products, on the product or service use, etc); **the emotional stage** (it has in view the development of an attitude to be in favor of the organization, of its trademarks or of its products); **the behaviorist stage** (conative) – its purpose is to incite to purchasing and to the proper purchasing.

The selection of the communication actions to the targets in view shall take into account the above mentioned stages, and, in spite of the fact that the barrier between them is rather vague, it can be considered, first of all, that public relations and publicity have the highest degree of adaptability as concerns the information range and the development of favorable attitudes, not only towards the organization, but

¹ Shimp T. A., *Advertising, Promotion and Supplemental Aspects of Integrated marketing Communications*, Fourth Edition, The Dryden Press, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Fort Worth s.a., 1997, pg. 12

² Popescu I. C., *Marketing Communications – strategic approach*, course support "Communication related to Marketing" – Permanent Formation Department, A.S.E., București, 2002, pg. 18

towards its trademarks and products, as well, and, secondly, that sale promotion has an impact especially on the behavior issue while inciting to immediate purchasing.

As concerns the communication process related to the international business world that bears the mark of large geographical distances and of cultural barriers, there undoubtedly appear communication difficulties between the company and the market (consumers, clients, users), difficulties that might perturb the correct transmission and reception of the messages from the international environment due to: language, economic and cultural differences; to the availability of the communication environments; to the legal limitations related to promotion; to the specific characteristics of the local distributors, etc.; henceforth, the companies that are involved in the international marketing are facing a series of strategic decisions that refer to the international communication process that relates to: *local particularities, a certain standardization level, promotion means force and their form, increase of the budgets that are oriented towards the international promotion approach, etc.*

This way, the basic structure and the international communication concepts contain, generally speaking, the following stages: the study of the target market; the setting of the standardization level; the achievement of the promotional mix; the issuing of the most efficient messages; the selection of communication means (media types); the control and monitoring process in view of reaching the objectives.

In view of crossing through these stages, the company shall run a communicational process that shall contain a series of activities of a promotional nature, that make up the company's promotional mix, out of which there should be mentioned: publicity, sale promotion, public relations, personal sale.

Besides such component parts, the international promotional mix shall also contain other promotional activities such as: direct communication, sponsorship or participation in fairs and exhibitions. Irrespective of the instruments that we consider as component parts of the promotional mix, the development mechanism of the international communication process implies the involvement of the below listed component parts:

Component parts	Characteristics
<i>Information source</i>	The international company that intends to send, to the foreign market, a message that refers to its offer
<i>Coding</i>	The message is turned into symbols to be sent to the receiver
<i>Message transmission channel</i>	It is made up of the media types (TV, press, etc.) and / or the sale agents who send the message to the receiving party
<i>De-coding</i>	The interpretation, by the receiving party, of the symbols that have been sent from the source
<i>Receiving party</i>	The targeted public who intends to carry out a series of actions that are related to the message understanding
<i>Feed-back</i>	A series of information sets that refer to the message efficiency, information that comes from the receiving party

	(targeted public) and directs towards the source in view of the process efficiency valuation
<i>Perturbation elements</i>	Unpredictable and uncontrollable influences (competition's answer, consumers' possible confusion state, etc) that are likely to affect one or more of the component parts

Source: L. Anghel, "*Communication policy related to international marketing*", Course notes, 2003, pg. 4

As far as the international communication is concerned, there is the possibility that the message be coded in consistency with a culture, and be de – coded in consistency with another one, thus, creating the grounds for confusion, or, even worse, resulting in a totally different interpretation of the respective message. Given such a context, there appears the problem **of the communication between the adjustment to the local specific characteristics and standardization.**

Irrespective of its destination (be it internal or international), the communication that the company performs shall abide by the below listed conditions should the company choose to consolidate its image on the market, and, even more than that, to achieve the set objectives:

- To be **attractive enough**, so that to be identified and selected from a multitude of communication sources;
- To be **powerful enough**, so that to be able to have an dominant position in its relationship with the targeted public;
- To be **credible**, which means that the messages under circulation be consistent with the consignee's system of values.³

2. Particularities of the communicational approach at the global level

Although the communication process pattern is clear, even the transmission of a simple message is likely to cause problems. The bottlenecks that might affect the communication process are due to the issuing party, to the receiving party or even to the channel to be used in view of the respective communication. In his paper called "The Management of Marketing", Mr. Kotler points to three barriers that could hinder the communication process:

- *Selective attention* – the receiving party fails to notice everything that is happening around him since he grants exclusive attention to what he is interested in;
- *Selective perception* – the receiving parties shall de – code the message so that to "hear" only what they wish to "hear";
- *Selective memory* – The receiving parties retain only a small fraction of the message that gets to them.

³ Balaure V. (coord.), *Marketing*, Uranus Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, pg. 430

Mr. Kotler agrees to Mr. Schramm's point of view (*Wilbur Schramm, an American researcher who has played an important part in the assertion and acknowledgement of the communication domain as a university discipline*), according to which the receiving party's attention is a function whose variables are: **recompense, constraint and expended effort**. This means that a captivating and easy to understand message implies a higher probability for the receiving party's attention to be captured it.

The multinational companies are facing, and struggling against a serious range of difficulties⁴ in their effort to develop global communication program. They have to decide whether the product is adequate to a certain country, to verify whether the market segment that they approach is both legal, and normal, as well. The companies shall decide whether the advertisement style is admissible in all the involved countries, and whether the advertisement shall be carried out at the "headquarters" or locally.

1. **The product** – many products are restricted or forbidden in some parts of the world. Beer, wine and alcoholic drinks cannot be either promoted or traded across Moslem countries. The tobacco products are the subject matter of strict regulations in many countries of the world. Sometimes, a company is compelled to modify its product sale policy. For example, Avon China Inc. has been forced by the Chinese Government to stop direct selling to the Chinese consumers, and to open retail shops. The new promotion campaigns have, thus, positioned the company called Avon as a retail distributor rather than a direct marketer.

2. **The market segment** – Coca-Cola has business relationships with more than 230 trademarks in more than 200 countries. The company has a portfolio of different advertisements that are consistent with the different national market segments, while the local segment managers decide which ones to use in relationship with each segment taken apart.

The American toy manufacturers have found out, much to their surprise, that, in numerous countries (such as Norway, Sweden, etc) no TV commercial can be addressed to children below the age of 12. There is more to it since Sweden is struggling hard to extend this interdiction to the level of the other EU countries. To avoid any problems, McDonalds develops their own commercials in Sweden as "a restaurant for the entire family".

3. **Style** – the style of the commercial is also important as the comparative commercials, although accepted and usual all over the United States of America and Canada, as well, are (a) less usual in Great Britain, (b) unacceptable in Japan, and (c) illegal in India and Brazil. PepsiCo had, in Japan, an advertisement with a taste comparison test that was refused by several TV stations, and, in the end, it resulted in a real bringing to justice action. China has very strict censorship rules regarding the radio and TV publicity: the expression „*the best*” is forbidden, so are the commercials that „*disregard social habits*” or those commercials that present women „*in an inadequate way*”.

⁴ Kotler Ph., *The Management of marketing*, Teora Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, pg. 755

4. **Global or local amplitude** – nowadays, more and more multinational companies are attempting to make a global trademark image by using the same publicity policy all over the markets where they operate and run business. When Daimler AG has merged with Chrysler, to become the 5-th automobile manufacturer in the world as size, the new corporation has applied to a three week publicity campaign in more than 100 countries, and this meant: an insertion as long as 12 pages in dedicated magazines; 9 advertisements – as long as 2 pages – in daily papers; and a 24 page brochure that was sent to the leaders of the economic, government and syndicate sectors, as well as to the media of news. The campaign slogan was: „Expect the unexpected”, and in the advertisement images, there appeared people belonging to both companies while they were working together.

3. *Global communication techniques at the corporation level*

The transmission modalities⁵ to which the global communication appeals are practically made up from the *techniques* that have been used to this purpose, out of which a couple are worth mentioning:

3.1. **Communication by means of design**

The communication by means of the graphic *design* can be carried out by resorting to:

a) *logotype* – it means to render evident a company's identity (as a social reason) or a trademark. The logotype stands for the basis of developing the program (the system) of the visual identity, and it turns out to be the first communication vector for any company. And, should we add to this the fact that, according to which more than five million trademarks that are registered in the world allow the preponderantly visual identification of an equal number of organizations, then, it turns out it is necessary that we should underline the fact that each logotype must – in order to have the chance and opportunity of being correctly perceived – answer to and abide by certain very rigorous elaboration criteria, and by this, we respectively mean: exclusive, in order to avoid confusion with other signs, symbols, logotypes, etc; evocative of the company's profound identity; durable, to the purpose of capitalizing the visual perception of each company; declinable (usable) on any type of communication supports; coherent with the reality that exists inside any company, and also, coherent with the respective company's future projects.

b) *visual identity systems* – they represent a resultant of putting into practice the coherence and connection reason between all the identification supports of an organization. The conceiving of a visual identity system needs that an analysis of the company's historical data be carried out, and, it also implies the taking into account of several aspects, such as: the constitutive elements of the existing visual identity (the organization's historical data, the steps of its evolution, and, not to omit, the present managerial and production structures); the perception, by the public, the

⁵ C. Regouby - *La Communication Globale*, Les Éditions d'Organisation, Paris, 1992; p. 82

present identity (image) of the organization; the strategic dynamics within which the company projects its future evolution.

c) *packaging* – it has in view the wrapping that defines the substance of the content; the conditioning that defines the structure of the content; the graphical expression that defines the marking of the content.

3.2. Communication at site

This type of communication refers, with priority, to the following two technical forms, namely sales incentive that has, initially, been centered on uniquely quantitative objectives (the motivation and the stimulation of the “force to sell” or of the distribution network with the purpose to obtain accurate commercial results), or on promotional actions to be developed (“articulated”), traditionally, “around” four large basic mechanisms: action to be taken against prices; games and competitions; prizes; “test” offers.

The domain of these “animation” activities is extremely rich and complex, starting from “*sampling and distribution of prospects based on the door-to-door system*”, “*editorial coupon distribution*” and “*animation by promotional games at the product selling site*” and ending with “*the organization of tasting sessions*” and with “*accidental*” sending of “*mystery-clients*” (who are keen on purchasing the respective product which is about to “sell out” due to “massive selling opportunities”...). More than that, in order to become effective, such animation actions need quickness, an excellent organization, a perfect knowledge of the “site”, and, last but not least, a high capacity “to seduce” when the consumer is contacted.

3.3. Direct communication

The technique that has in view the direct and individual “touch” of the scopes that the seller has proposed, while persuading the potential client to take actions and / or react immediately – this type of communication allows the obtaining of concrete results (to be measurable) and it thus facilitates the setting of the number of “contacts” that shall be generated further to the action that has undoubtedly exercised on the potential future buyer.

The applied and used methodologies as concerns the direct communication shall develop, improve, and they become, every year, more and more sophisticated. This way, the *mailing* procedure, the sales catalogue to be sent by correspondence, the press release accompanied by the answer – coupon, the phone practice, “the no – address flyers” that are distributed directly into the mail boxes, the telematics, etc – all of them represent an equal number of modern and efficient means that would allow not only a quicker adjustment of the offer to the increasing requests of certain market segments, but also and increase of the psychological impact of the direct communication on the public as consumer.

3.4. Socio – relational communication

The socio – relational communication has in view the internal relationships; the public relationships; the institutional relationships. In the context of the socio – relational communication, *the company has in view* the outlining of a vision and of the principles of an internal nature on the company's institutional vocation, by “covering” all the “dimensions” of this one: economic, social, cultural and public.

To this purpose, the organization's actions constitute the strategic basis of any form of internal communication, and the content of this one is, with priority, determined by the global communication assembly that is adjusted to the respective company. All the same, the role played by these actions is multiple, mobilizing, respectively (the organization's employees are directly involved), unifying (the project contributes to the acknowledgement of the company's identity), and integrating (it favors the convergence of all the employees' will towards the purpose fulfillment and / or the achievement of the organization's joint targets).

Conclusion

From the point of view of the communication, the present period is marked by and through the strong acceleration of the focus of this one both at the national level, and at the international one, as well. The fact can be explained by the appearance of several favorable factors such as the quick world-wide process of the products and of the exchanges; the intensification of competition on all the markets; the passage from “general communication” to the communication that is based on technologies that turn more and more sophisticated and expensive; the spectacular development of the “*out media*” – type communication (promotion, direct marketing, *design*, internal communication, public relations, sponsorships, etc), fact that has eloquently proven that the publicity agencies could, no longer, exclusively claim the communication monopoly.

Henceforth, the main element and the motor of these transformations at the society level, is represented by the *communication*. Therefore, in order to exist and durably develop, the company must appeal to the assembly of its own messages regarding the making up of a real territory of its identity and personality, while the basics of this territory has its origin in the culture of each organization taken apart.

Under such circumstances, by attempting to optimize each invested monetary unit, and by including, in a perfect synergy, the consumer and the citizen, in a viable and durable relationship with the organization, the communication becomes global.

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