1. INTRODUCTION BY DEJAN VERČIČ

2. FOREWORD BY HONORARY SPONSOR OF BLEDCOM 2010

3. AUTHORS

4. PAPERS

- Anne Gregory, Paul Willis
  What Good Looks Like in UK National Health Service Communication

- Fraser Likely

- Maria Silvia Bilaşevschi, Adina Liliana Aldea
  E-government in Romania - Features and Trends

- Kojo Yankah
  Government Public Relations in West Africa: Propaganda or Development Tool – the Case of Ghana's Ministry of Information

- Donald Alexander, David Cameron, Peter Simmons
  Future-Proofing a Strategic Communication Team for a Major Australian Government Entity

- Holger Sievert, Markus Rhomberg
  Government Communication and the Mass-Mediated Climate Debate Decision Making, System Integration and Public Communication

- Karen Sander, Francisco Diaz Lozano, María José Canel
  Government Reputation as an Intangible Value for Public Institutions and the Communication of Spanish Local Government. Proposing a Research Framework.

- Larsåke Larsson
  The Prime Minister in Front of the Press
  The Development of Government Press Conferences in Sweden

- Karen Dwek, Toni Muzi Falconi
  New Public Diplomacy Practices in Public Relations
  An Analysis of The Shift Away from the Government Model to a Non-Governmental Organization Model

- Filiz Otay Demir, Burcu Kaya Erdem
  The Reflection of the East-West Dichotomy on Turkish Public Diplomacy: the Case of “Davos Summit”

- Arhlene A. Flowers, Katalin Lustyik
  The Expansion of Junk Food Marketing, Cyberspace, and Children’s Waistlines: Government Public Relations Combating Childhood Obesity in Hungary and the United Kingdom

- Nina Furman
  Communicating Public Money: Risks vs. Opportunities

- Melanie James
  The Use of Intentional Positioning Techniques in Government Agencies’ Communication Campaigns

- Philippa Brear
  RTI Clinic Checkup: Can a Campaign to Increase Awareness of India’s Right to Information Legislation in Orissa Succeed?

- Paolo Fedele, Mario Ianniello
  Stakeholders’ Inclusion: More than a Cup of Tea? An Evaluation Model for Interactive Decision Making

- Szymon Chojnowski
  Public Relations in the EU Communication Policy

- Bo Laursen, Chiara Valentini
  Communicating the EU to the Media: The Delicate Role of Press Officers at The Council Of The European Union

- Göran Eriksson, Mats Eriksson
  Managing Political Crisis: An Interactional Approach to “Image Repair” in Political Press Conferences

- Leanne Glenny
  An Esoteric Notion: Truth and Lies in Australian Government Communication

- Kaja Tampere
  Critical Approach: Communication Failures as a Risk to Government Public Relations

- Ulrike Röttger, Joachim Preusse
  External PR Consulting in the Field of Political Communication – Theoretical Foundations and Empirical Findings from Germany

5. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

6. ABOUT BLEDCOM

7. BLEDCOM 2010

8. ABOUT PRISTOP AND DPG
Dear readers, dear colleagues, I am proud to introduce you to Government Communication: Proceedings of the 17th International Public Relations Research Symposium BledCom.

Papers selected here address the communication and public relations activities of government and government agencies at international, national, regional, and local levels. As governments – on all levels – heavily impact our lives, I need insights into how (well) they communicate.

Scholars and practitioners from all over the world were invited to respond to the Call for papers – and the best studies and commentaries are presented here, offering excellence and expertise. As such, Government Communication: Proceedings of the 17th International Public Relations Research Symposium BledCom is a valuable contribution to our collection of 8 books, several special issues of leading public relations journals and past BledCom Proceedings, all of which were published as a direct result of BledCom (see: www.bledcom.com). I daresay that BledCom has thus contributed to the development of the public relations profession.

Dear colleagues, I wish you a pleasant reading. May it bring new ideas to share, new recognitions to discuss. I will be happy to hear it from you over future BledCom gatherings.

Dejan Verčič, PhD
University of Ljubljana & Pristop
For the last 17 years, BledCom has gathered renowned communication experts from all around the world in discussing topics related to public relations practice. It has influenced numerous books, articles and studies and thus contributed to the development of the theory and practice of public relations world-wide. I was happy to sign on as the honorary sponsor of BledCom in 2010, discussing government communication.

The symposium’s organizers followed a very simple question when preparing this year’s main topic: how do governments – at national, regional and local levels – communicate with their publics. As the answer is certainly rather a complex one, I am very pleased to see public relations experts from all around the world surveying various governments’ communication practices, discussing the means, ways and results of their communication. By doing so, everybody working in governmental public relations and communication will be able to reflect on their role as communicators. Furthermore, BledCom will also offer an extremely valuable insight for governments throughout the world into how experts see their work. I believe this year’s symposium will show if and how governmental communicators follow what I believe to be their main task: ensuring people access to information regarding their governments’ activities.

As an internationally recognized symposium, BledCom can and sure will contribute to the development of government communication practices. BledCom Proceedings, dear readers, presents a valuable step on this path.

Dr. Danilo Türk
President of the Republic of Slovenia
Honorary sponsor of BledCom 2010
3. AUTHORS
Professor Anne Gregory PhD is Director of the Centre for Public Relations Studies at Leeds Business School, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Originally a broadcast journalist, Anne then spent 10 years in public relations practice at senior levels, including award winning work for one of the UK’s largest Building Societies before transferring into consultancy. She was a Founding Director of Weber Shadwick’s UK northern office and worked on a broad range of public relations and marketing projects.

Anne is responsible for creating the largest academic department of public relations in Europe. As Director of the Centre of Public Relations, she leads research, consultancy and training projects. Clients include the UK Government Cabinet Office, Department of Health, Department of Work and Pensions, Tesco Corporate and Nokia. Anne is an internationally recognized academic and teaches and speaks around the world. She is editor of the CIPR's PR in Practice series of 16 books, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Communication Management and author of books and numerous academic papers, published in high ranking journals. Anne was also President of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) in 2004, leading the Institute in its Charter initiative, and is an Associate of the respected think-tank Demos.

Anne is actively involved in the local community being a non-Executive Director of South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Trust.

Paul Willis is director of the Centre for Public Relations Studies at Leeds Business School, Leeds Metropolitan University. Prior to becoming a Director of the Centre for Public Relations Studies, Paul was Deputy Managing Director at Ptarmigan Consultants, a multiple award winning public relations agency and former PR Week ‘Consultancy of the Year’.

Paul established the agency’s strategy and planning function, playing a key role in building a culture of professional excellence within the consultancy and helping Ptarmigan to become one of the country’s most successful independent PR operations, employing over 50 people and generating a turnover of more than £4 million per annum.

As a consultant Paul has provided strategic counsel to a range of organisations and brands operating in the private, public and NGO sectors, delivering campaigns that have encompassed many issues, audiences and techniques. He has also led a range of blue chip commercial research projects covering issues such as corporate social responsibility, sponsorship, public affairs, evaluation and stakeholder analysis.

He has worked as a retained consultant for clients including ASDA, BT, BMW, Ernst & Young, The Football Association, NHS, Proctor & Gamble, Royal Bank of Scotland, UK Sport and Wm Morrison. Paul has also delivered a wide range of bespoke training programmes for organisations as diverse as The Arts Council, The UK Cabinet Office and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

He began his career running a media and research unit for a group of MPs at Westminster and then held public affairs roles both in-house and within the consultancy sector.

His current projects at the Centre include the design, delivery and management of a development programme for senior communication and engagement professionals in the NHS.

Paul is also an active researcher having presented academic papers in the UK and abroad on issues such as stakeholder power, guerrilla marketing, social media and the communication challenges generated by the credit crunch. His work has also been published in academic texts and journal.
Maria Silvia Bilaşevschi graduated from the Faculty of History “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University - Iaşi (2003-2007). She also has a M.A. degree in Project Management, Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, National School of Political Sciences and Public Administration, Bucharest (2007-2009). At present, she is a University Assistant at “Apollonia” University from Iasi, the Faculty of Communication Sciences. She is very much fond on political sciences, e-government, art history and contemporary means of communication.

Koyo Yankah has a Post-graduate Certificate in Communication Policy & Planning for Development of University in Nairobi and a Post-graduate Certificate in Communications Policy & Strategy of Cornell University in New York. As Deputy Minister of Ministry of Information he has managed the marketing, advertising and communicating of Ghana domestically and internationally. As Minister of State of the two regions Ashanti Region & Central Region in Accra he managed governance and marketing of the investment potentials of these two regions. He is a Founder of Yankah & Associates: A marketing communications firm responsible for communication strategy, corporate image, public relations and training. Also a founder, president and Chief Executive of African University College of Communications. Senior operating and management executive with strong domestic and international experience in Communications strategy, Corporate image, Public Relations and training; with a proven track record in communications related activities.

Donald Morris Alexander is a senior lecturer in Public Relations and Organisational Communication and undergraduate course coordinator at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia. Holds a Bachelor of Laws from University of Otago, New Zealand, and Masters in Organisational Communication, Charles Sturt University, Australia. He was previously a senior lecturer at Central Queensland University, Mackay campus. He was accepted into CSU's higher degree programme to undertake a PhD in leadership and communication. Has held senior management positions with AMP, Australia's largest financial services provider and American Express, where he was responsible for external/internal communications and government relations for Australia and the Pacific region. Has been a reporter for a daily newspaper and radio and television in New Zealand and then held public relations positions in the aluminium industry in New Zealand and Australia and the automotive industry in Australia (Nissan Motor Co.). Has been managing partner in two national consultancies before becoming an academic. Papers have been published on the impact of technology on public relations practice and university curriculum, and also on aspects of CEO communication.

Adina Liliana Aldea graduated from the Faculty of Communication Studies, Department of Public Relations and Communication, “Petre Andrei” University (2003-2007). Between January 2007 and September 2009, she was a University Assistant at the same faculty. Currently she is a University Assistant at “Apollonia” University from Iasi, the Faculty of Communication Sciences.

From 2008 to 2010 she studied for a M.A. in Public Relations and Advertising, the Faculty of Philosophy, “Al. I. Cuza” University. She is very much interested in new media, social networks, online political campaigns and advertising.
Markus Rhomberg (*1979) is Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication & Cultural Management at Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen, Germany. From 2009 to 2010 he worked as Guest Professor at the University of Hamburg. Rhomberg studied Political Studies, Communication Studies and Sociology at the University of Vienna and received his PhD in 2006 with a book on Agenda-Setting and Media Democracy. His current research interests are in the field of public communication on climate change issues. Currently published: “Politische Kommunikation. Ein Lehrbuch” (2009), “Adaptation or Mitigation: The Approach to Rapid Climate Change” (with Nico Stehr, forthcoming), “Risk Perceptions and Public Debates on Climate Change: A Conceptualization Based on the Theory of a Functionally-differentiated Society” (forthcoming).

Karen Sanders is professor and head of the Department of Advertising and Institutional Communication at the CEU-San Pablo University in Madrid and is visiting professor at the IESSE Business School. She lectures at a number of universities including the University of Navarra (Spain) where she teaches on their MA in Political and Corporate Communication run jointly with George Washington University, Washington D.C. Karen has written widely on political communication, journalism and ethics. She published Communicating Politics in the Twenty-First Century (Palgrave Macmillan) described in the Times Higher Educational Supplement as showing ‘fine scholarship mixed with clear understanding of professional practice and appropriate case studies’ (2009). She has also published Ethics and Journalism (Sage) in 2003 (published in Chinese in 2007) and is co-author of Morality Tales: Journalism and Political Scandals in Britain and Spain in the 1990s (2006) as well as numerous other publications including articles in peer-reviewed international journals, book chapters and numerous papers and conference proceedings. She was a founding member of the Institute of Communication Ethics in 2002 and of the Association of Political Communication in 2008 on whose board she serves. She currently works as a consultant in health and business communication.

From 1995 to 2006 she was a member of the Department of Journalism Studies at the University of Sheffield (UK) where she ran the MA Political Communication. She was previously director of media and parliamentary relations for the British Chamber of Shipping. Her undergraduate studies in Philosophy and English (Joint Hons.) were at the University of Durham (UK) and she completed her MA and Phd in Communication at the University of Navarra (Spain).

Francisco José Díaz is Professor in Marketing and in Consumer Behaviour at the San Pablo CEU University of Madrid (Spain).

He has worked in several multinationals companies such as The Coca-Cola Company, The Walt Disney Company, AC Nielsen or Take 2 Interactive; holding different positions and based in different countries (Spain, US or Japan).

He is also founder and managing director of Ziran Consulting, a communication consulting firm based in Madrid that provides public relations services in the entertainment (Ardistel, JoWood, etc.) and tourism (US Airways, Star Alliance) industries.

He holds an IexMBA from IE Business School.

Larsåke Larsson (PhD Göteborg/Gothenburg University) is Professor of Media & Communication Science at Örebro University, Sweden. Dr. Larsson’s research is within the fields journalism, public relations and crisis communication. His articles is to be found in Journalism Studies, Journal of Communication Management and Nordicom Review. He participate in Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice (L’Etang & Pieczka). Opinionsmakarna (The Opinion Makers) is the result of a larger Swedish PR project. He has carried out research projects about most severe crisis situations for Sweden, among them the Estonia wreck, the Gothenburg fire, September 11th, the murder of a foreign minister and the tsunami followed by a heavy hurricane 2004/2005. He has published several academic text books in public relations and crisis communication.

Larsåke Larsson

María José Canel is Professor in Political Communication and in Public Relations at the University Complutense of Madrid (Spain). Vice Chair of the Political Communication Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) and President of ACOP Asociación de Comunicación Política.

She has published nationally and internationally on government communication and related matters (relations with the media, media effects, corporate communication strategies, public perceptions of public policies); amongst others, Comunicación Política (Tecnos); Retrato de la profesión periodística (Cis); Morality Tales: Political Scandals in Britain and Spain in the 1990s (Hampton Press) (coauthored); Comunicación de las instituciones públicas (Tecnos, 2007). She has also published articles in the journals of Local Government Studies, Journal of Political Communication, European Journal of Communication, Parliamentary Affairs and Journalism. Theory, Practice and Criticism.

Apart from the Academia, she has got practical experience in strategic communications for public institutions: she has been Advisor to the Spanish Minister for Education, Culture and Sport (2000-2002) and Chief of the Minister’s Cabinet (2002-2004). She has also advised Spanish regional and local governments on public perceptions of public policies, and has been consultant on presidential communication for the Mexican presidency (Presidential Spokesperson’s Office, 2005).

She teaches Government communication at the University Paris XII, at Georgetown University (2007) and at the University of Navare (Spain). She also teaches Communication Strategy for Public Institutions in different institutions: Spanish National Institute for Public Administration (where she is head of the programme), Madrilian Institute for Public Administration (for regional government officials), Ministry of Justice of Spain and Regional Government in Murcia.

She has been Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics (1991); she has also taught in Italy, Great Britain, Portugal, France, Hungary, Poland, USA, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Argentina, Perú, Santo Domingo and Chile.

María José Canel

10 Proceedings of the 17th International Public Relations Research Symposium BledCom
Filiz Otay Demir

Filiz Otay Demir had B.A. from Economics and Administration Faculty of Selcuk University, Turkey. After her graduation, she was appointed as a research assistant at the capacity of Communication Faculty, Selcuk University. She earned MA in Management Science in the Social Science Institute at Selcuk University. Management Sciences Program in 1996. Mrs. Otay Demir got PhD in Public Relations and Advertising in the Social Science Institute at Anatoly University, Turkey in 2003. She has been working as head of Department and an assistant professor at the Department of Public Relations and Publicity, Maltepe University, Istanbul since 1994. She is working generally PR and marketing communication, especially brand strategies. She is married with a child.

Karen Dwek

Karen Dwek is a consultant at Millward Brown Optimor’s London practice, working in the team that produces the BrandZ™ Top 100 Most Valuable Brands, published annually in the Financial Times. Before joining Optimor, she worked in public relations and corporate communications, advising diplomats and corporate clients on media relations, issue management and crisis communication issues.

Prior to joining MBO, Karen was a consultant at Ruder Finn’s New York office, advising clients from the pharmaceutical and financial industries. For over three years, she was the Public Relations Officer at the Israeli Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Her responsibilities included interfacing with local and international media, organizing special UN events, conferences and cultural activities while promoting Israeli issues in the UN system. She also provided logistical and media relations support to three Israeli dignitaries at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2008.

Karen graduated from the University of Geneva, where she studied Political Science. She also holds a Master’s in Media and Communications from the London School of Economics and an MA in Public Relations and Corporate Communications from New York University. While completing her Master’s, Karen was a full-time volunteer at the New York Headquarters of Obama for America (Presidential Campaign), and was in charge of recruiting, training and deploying volunteers, supervising phone bank sites, and providing technical and logistical support to the field staff.

She is a Swiss national and is fluent in French, Spanish and English.

Burcu Kaya Erdem

Burcu Kaya Erdem had B.A. from Communication Faculty of Istanbul University, Turkey. She earned MA in General Journalism in the Social Science Institute at Istanbul University. After her graduation, she was appointed as a research assistant at the capacity of Communication Faculty, Maltepe University at the Department of Public Relations and Publicity in 2006. Mrs. Kaya Erdem got PhD in Journalism in the Social Science Institute at Istanbul University, Turkey in 2009. She has been working as an assistant professor at the Department of Television Reporting and Programming, Maltepe University, Istanbul since 2009. She is working generally international communication in the context of East and West Dichotomy, critical media literacy and representation of activist groups at mass medias. She is married since 2005.
Ronél Rensburg

Prof Ronél Rensburg had been the Head of the Department of Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria from 2000-2008 and is still a member of the department. She also had been Chairperson of the School of Management Sciences in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at that time. She is past President of the Southern Africa Institute for Management Scientists (SAIMS; 2001 - 2010). She is also a board member of the Ron Brown Institute (RBI) for the enhancement of business incubation in Africa, a board member of the Centre for Microfinance of Southern Africa. She is President-elect of PRISA (Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa), a member of SACOMM (Southern Africa Communication Association), a member of the North American and Russian Communication Association (NARCA) and the ICA (International Communication Association). She has recently (March 2010) been elected as Board member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management. Ronél Rensburg is coordinator of all international exchange activities, global research cooperation and collaboration initiatives for the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Ronél Rensburg holds the degrees BA (Communication); Honours (Communication); Masters in Communication and a Doctorate in Communication Science. She has delivered 43 doctoral students and more than 30 Masters and MBA-dissertations. She has published books and articles (nationally and internationally) on corporate communication, speech communication, political and government communication, corporate social investment, public relations and reputation management. Her current area of research is the role of reputation management and stakeholder engagement in corporate governance. She has a specific interest in serving the SADC-region of Africa where public relations theory, research and practice are concerned. Ronél writes speeches for politicians and captains of industry on a continual basis, as well as regular business reviews for a daily newspaper (Business24) in South Africa.

Owen Kulemeka

Owen Kulemeka is a PhD Candidate in the College of Media at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (US). He also received a Master’s in Communication and Bachelor’s in English from the University of Maryland College Park (US). In 2009, he was named the Grunig/PRIME Research Institute for Public Relations Fellow.

He conducts research on crisis and disaster communications. His dissertation is examining disaster communication campaigns in post-Katrina New Orleans. He is also conducting research on how technologies have transformed the practice of public relations.


Owen Kulemeka

Paolo Fedele

Arhlene A. Flowers is Assistant Professor of Integrated Marketing Communications in the Department of Strategic Communication at the Roy H. Park School of Communications, Ithaca College, in Ithaca, New York, where she teaches public relations, writing, and meeting and event planning. Her research encompasses virtual worlds, visual literacy, social media applications in crisis communications, and marketing to children. She also has two decades of industry experience in global public relations agencies and in-house marketing departments in New York City and Toronto. Born in Hawaii and raised in New York, Arhlene holds a Bachelor of Arts from New York University and a Master of Professional Studies from the New School in New York City. She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America, International Communication Association, and National Communication Association. E-mail: aflowers@ithaca.edu.

Nina Furman has over ten years of experience as an expert in public relations. Having started her career in the Parliament in 1999 then continued as the Minister’s adviser for PR at the Ministry of Transport. In 2004 she became one of two key persons setting up the Public Relations Department at a newly established Ministry of Public Administration. At later stages she also headed this Department and was the Minister’s adviser for media and public relations. From 2006 she is the head of the President’s Cabinet at the Court of Audit, responsible for media and public relations, editing the official website and international relations.

Working in legislative and executive branches of power and finally at the Court of Audit enables her to have in-depth knowledge and practice on different aspects of wider public sector public relations. She is also active in the region of south-eastern Europe having lectures and advising in various international conferences, seminars and workshops and is also a founder of international PR network of Supreme Audit Institutions.

Nina Furman has master degree in American Studies and international diploma at the London School of Public Relations. At the end of 2009 she was nominated acting president of the Public Sector Communicators Section within the Public Relations Society of Slovenia.

Emese Gulyás is a Senior Researcher at the Association of Conscious Consumers in Budapest a local civil society organization engaged in the research and the promotion of sustainable consumption practices and policies. She is responsible for the design and the management of the Association’s research activities. She is also a Ph.D. candidate at the Sociology Doctoral School of the Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB), where she researches the ethical and political aspects of consumer behaviors and of consumer movements. In the recent years she has been teaching consumer behavior at the CUB. Her recent research topics include: the sustainability effects of large retail chains, obesity and governance in Europe, ethical consumption and public participation.

E-mail: emese@tve.hu.

Katalin Lustyik is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the Department of Television-Radio, Roy H. Park School of Communication, Ithaca College, and a Regional Visiting Fellow at Cornell University. Her research and teaching interests include children’s media, Nickelodeon, Disney, media globalization, and new media. Her publications have appeared in book collections and academic journals.

Katalin Lustyik is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at the Department of Television-Radio, Roy H. Park School of Communication, Ithaca College, and a Regional Visiting Fellow at Cornell University. Her research and teaching interests include children’s media, Nickelodeon, Disney, media globalization, and new media. Her publications have appeared in book collections and academic journals.
Philippa Brear is a program director and senior lecturer in Public Relations in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. She also teaches in, and advises, RMIT communication programs in Singapore, Hong Kong and Vietnam. In January 2010 she was a visiting lecturer at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Philippa has taught courses including Strategic PR Planning, PR Campaigns and PR in Global Practice. Her academic interests include PR strategy, learning and teaching, and writing, as well as communication of laws and legal issues.

Philippa has 15 years’ PR industry experience, her career in professional communication starting in media relations at Australian bank Westpac, which she joined as an economics graduate. She went on to work in professional services, managing external and internal communication for Freehills, one of Australia’s leading commercial law firms; several London-based international law firms; and Andersen Australia, where her focus was crisis and change management after the Enron scandal. Philippa was among the first PR practitioners in Australia to specialise in legal services. As a consultant, she has advised private and public sector clients in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Mats Eriksson is Ph.D. in Media & Communication Studies, Örebro University, Sweden. His research concerns public relations, crisis communication and risk communication. He has since 1995 worked in several different projects in this area, funded by the Swedish National Board for Psychological Defence, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and Preem Environmental Research Foundation. His most recent research concerns Internet and mobile communication technology in the context of risk and crisis communication. An example of his most recent work is the Swedish textbook Nätens kriskommunikation (in english, “Crisis communication and the Net”), published 2009.

Melanie James, BA (Hons) in Communication (UTS), MA in Journalism (UTS), GCert.T.Teach (UoN), has won state and national awards for her national public relations campaigns. She is a member of the Public Relations Institute of Australia and the Professional Communicators Network. She is a lecturer in communication and specialises in public relations teaching and research. Melanie authored Australia’s first book on careers in public relations and has also published a book on careers in government. Her career spans senior public relations roles in health, government and the financial services sectors as well as feature writing for national newspapers and magazines.

Since joining the University of Newcastle in late 2006, Melanie’s research work has been published in the Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal, PRism and the Journal of Public Relations Research (in press). She has presented refereed research papers at numerous conferences including ANZCA (2008 NZ - awarded commendation for best PR paper) and the PRIA Academic Forum. Her research interests span PR strategy and the use of social media in PR. In 2010 she will present her research at the International PR Research Symposium to be held in Slovenia (Bledcom). Melanie sits on the Editorial Board of the recently launched journal, Public Communication Review. She is currently working on her doctoral thesis and expects to complete her PhD in late 2010.

Mario Ianniello research fellow at the Laboratory for Research in Economics and Management of Udine State University, Italy, is currently PhD student in Public Administration and Management at Parma University, Italy, and holds a master degree in Public Relations of Institutions at Udine State University.

He has been tutor in the Balkans for the School of Education and Communication of Jonkopping University, Sweden, and for the Swedish International Development Agency. His main research interests are in the relationships between public relations and strategy, with a special interest in public administration and non profit sector.


Dr. Bo Laursen is an Associate Professor at the Department of Language and Business Communication, Centre for Corporate Communication, at the Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, Denmark, where he teaches public relations and organizational communication. He holds a doctoral degree in linguistics from the Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus. Between 1999 and 2009 he worked in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union in Brussels, Belgium, first as a translator and later as a press officer.

His research interests focus on public relations and in particular media relations and corporate social responsibility communication. He has published various articles in the field of linguistics. Email: bola@asb.dk

Szymon Chojnowski is a PhD Student at the Warsaw School of Economics, where he cooperates with International Security Department. Graduate of Collegium Civitas University in Warsaw, Master of Political Sciences (2007); Post-graduate in Public Relations at the Polish Academy of Sciences and the University of Warsaw (2009). Moreover, in 2006 he took a course at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College of London. He was prized with the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs 3rd award for the best master’s thesis in contemporary international relations (2007) and Collegium Civitas scholarship under the patronage of The Office of the Committee for European Integration and The Polish National Commission for UNESCO (2002).

Since 2008 he has been working as an analyst at International Department of the Polish Ministry of Finance. He has gathered professional experience stemming from both current post in public administration and earlier responsibilities held during his career in PR units in private sector. At International Department of the Ministry of Finance he deals with a wide range of financial and economic aspects of Polish membership in the OECD, WTO and Council of Europe. He was involved in organization of international conferences and meetings, such as the High Level Event: Ministers of Finance on Climate Change in Warsaw (2008), an event accompanying COP14. His research interests revolve around the EU communication, as well as the influence of international economic organisations on state policies.
Fraser is President and Managing Partner of Likely Communication Strategies Ltd., a communication management consulting boutique incorporated in 1987. The firm specializes in the management, organization and performance measurement practices of an organization’s public relations/communication function. Fraser has been an Adjunct Faculty Member of Royal Roads University’s MBA Program in Public Relations and Communication Management as well as an Adjunct Professor teaching undergraduate courses in the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa. Fraser is a member of the Institute for Public Relation’s Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation, elected in 2001. Since 2003, he has been a member of the Advisory Board of the annual International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC) held in Miami each March where he co-sponsors the IPRRC Jackson-Sharpe Award, a $2000 award given each year to the best joint academic-practitioner scholarly paper. He recently authored a chapter on the evolution and state of Canadian public relations/communication for the Global Public Relations Handbook (Routledge 2009). He is a Fellow of the Canadian Public Relations Society, where he has held many executive positions and received numerous awards.

Dr. Chiara Valentini is Assistant Professor at the Department of Language and Business Communication at the Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, Denmark, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in public relations, public and political communication for the European Studies and Corporate Communication programs. She gained her doctoral degree in Organizational Communication and Public Relations at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, and her Master’s degree in Public Relations at the University of Udine, Italy. Dr. Valentini has worked for and consulted organizations and public institutions in several countries, including the Italian Representation of the European Commission in Rome and the European Movement International Secretariat in Brussels. Her research interests focus on public relations and relationships management; public and political communication; public affairs and public diplomacy; international and intercultural communication; and the European Union. She is the author of a book on EU communication strategies and co-author of two books, one about Italian public relations / journalist perceptions and self-perceptions and the other on public communication in the European Union. She has also published various articles on public communications, relationship management in international contexts and media relations both in Italian and international journals, such as Journal of Communication Management, International Journal of Strategic Communication, Journal of International Communication, Corporate Communication: An International Journal. Email: chv@asb.dk

Göran Eriksson

Göran Eriksson is Associate Professor in Media & Communication Studies, Örebro University, Sweden. He received his PhD in 2002 and mainly writes in the areas of politics and media. Examples of his recent work include “The Management of Applause and Laughter in Live Political Interviews”, Media, Culture & Society (2009), Interviews as Communicative Resources in News and Current Affairs Broadcasts, Journalism Studies (2010) (co-authored with Åsa Kroon Lundell), and Adversarial Moments: A study of Short-form Interviews in the news, Journalism (in press).
Leanne Glenny currently lectures in public relations at undergraduate and post-graduate levels at the University of South Australia and researches in the areas of government communication, public relations ethics and experiential learning in tertiary education. Leanne was awarded the Donald Dyer Scholarship in 2005 and began her PhD research into the ethical environment of public service communicators. Prior to her move to Adelaide, Leanne was a lecturer in public relations and marketing communication at the University of Canberra. This appointment followed a career as an officer in the Australian Army which culminated in an appointment within the Defence Public Affairs and Corporate Communication Branch. Since obtaining her Bachelor of Arts, majoring in journalism and politics, Leanne has completed further study in management, public relations, marketing communication and telecommunications management. Leanne has published several articles on ethics in government communication and crisis communication. As a Councillor in the Public Relations Institute of Australia (SA), Leanne is involved in a new research project which aims to benchmark in-house public relations practice in corporate, government and non-profit organisations.

Kaja Tampere is teaching public relations at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland) since 2005. In 2003 she defended her doctoral theses in Jyväskylä University (Finland) about Public Relations in transition society. She taught Public Relations & Communication management courses in Tartu University from 1996-2005, and as visiting lecturer also in Estonian Business School, Tallinn University Baltic Film and Media School, International University Concordia Audentes, Artevelde Hogeschool Gent (Belgium), Utrecht University (Netherlands) and University of Sofia (Bulgaria). She also has a long practical experience in the field of Public Relations, being a PR manager and a consultant in the large Estonian companies (Estonian Phone Company and Estonian Energy Company) and public organizations (Estonian Health Insurance Foundation, Estonian Prosecutor's Office etc.). Her research interest’s focus on communication and public relations peculiarities in the different type of societies, on the strategic public relations and communication in changing processes. Her special research interest are propaganda and persuasive communication. Blog: http://kajatampere.wordpress.com/

Röttger Ulrike, Ulrike, Prof. Dr., is Professor at the Institute of Communication Science at the University of Muenster (Germany). She has done extensive research on the theoretical foundation of public relations, in particular on campaigning, issues management, PR as an professional field and PR/communications consultancies. She is president of the German Communication Association (DGPuK) and member of the jury of the “International German Public Relations Award.”

Joachim Preusse M.A. works as teaching and research assistant at the Institute of Communication Science at the University of Muenster (Germany). He completed academic studies in communication science, economics, public law and german literature from 2000 to 2006 at the University of Muenster. His current research focuses on PR-theory and the PR-activities of political organisations.
4. PAPERS
What Good Looks Like in UK National Health Service Communication

by Anne Gregory and Paul Willis

ABSTRACT
Communication in the United Kingdom’s public sector is being conducted in an increasingly challenging environment driven by external factors such as information technology impacts, and the demand for increasing accountability (Arthur Page Society, 2007). This is complemented by a public sector reform agenda and demands for stringent efficiency gains as the current Government attempts to recoup some of the public debt incurred by the Brown Government in its efforts to mitigate the worst effects of the recent economic downturn. All these pressures are driving change and change management initiatives that require organisational processes and projects to be co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered (as evidenced by the World Class Commissioning programme (Department of Health, 2009a) in the National Health Service (NHS)). This context requires a profound shift in the structure, working practices and culture of public institutions and necessitates that communication should play a more strategic and central role within these organisations.

This paper describes research undertaken for the UK NHS to discover best practice in the role ascribed to the communication function. An initial literature review was undertaken and a potential model proposed. This was then critiqued and extended by a NHS Project Board, a series of critical readers, focus groups and broader working groups to provide an evidence base from which the NHS has developed a national policy document named The Communicating Organisation. The paper describes the research that the authors undertook to provide the evidence base for the policy document.

The paper proposes that there are four attributes that characterise best practice and that the communication function should make a contribution at four strategic levels: societal, corporate, stakeholder/service-user and functional. The paper concludes with a novel conceptualisation of four roles for the NHS communication function, which acts as orienter, navigator, guardian and implementer.

The Communicating Organisation policy is now being implemented within the NHS and broader application in other public sector organisations is also being explored.

KEY WORDS: strategic communication, communication function, change, public sector, NHS, Government.
Since its inception, 60 years ago, the UK National Health Service (NHS), funded by the Department of Health, has become the world’s largest publicly-funded health system with a budget of over £100 billion and 1.5 million staff, making it the fourth largest employer in the world (NHS, 2009).

The continuing evolution of the NHS has created significant change for those working in and with it. Initiatives such as World Class Commissioning (Department of Health, 2009a), the Next Stage Review (NHS, 2009b) with its NHS Constitution (Department of Health 2009b) and the Operating Framework for 20010/11 (Department of Health, 2010) drive this change. In addition, the NHS continues to go through profound structural and cultural development, with new financial arrangements, the creation of semi-autonomous Foundation Trusts, centralisation of some services and the re-orientation of the service towards service-user design, choice and access.

In addition, communication (as public relations is labelled in the UK public sector) by Government Departments overall is being conducted in an increasingly challenging environment driven by external factors such as information technology impacts, and the demand for increasing accountability (Arthur W. Page Society, 2007). This has been exacerbated by the current financial climate that requires the NHS to make efficiency savings of between £15 billion and £20 billion over the three years from 2011 to 2014 and with no funding growth for at least five years from 2011 (Nicholson, 2009). This is also complemented by a public sector reform agenda driven by central Government that requires organisational processes and projects to be co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered with partners both within and outside the public sector. This context requires a profound shift in the structure, working practices and culture of public institutions and necessitates that communication should play a more strategic and central role. The willingness to recognise this contribution is evidenced by the increasing number of communicators that are being appointed at Board level, an appetite by senior NHS Executive Directors to champion the professionalisation of communication across the system and a commitment to invest in the training and development of communicators.

As an exemplar of these profound shifts being driven by Government, this paper describes research commissioned by the UK NHS to conceptualise and articulate best practice in the role of the communication function and intended to provide a framework for communicators operating within it. The research forms the basis of a policy document called The Communicating Organisation (Department of Health, 2009c) which was distributed to every NHS organisation at the end of 2009 and which during the summer of 2010 is being promoted and embedded within all NHS organisations. The research therefore illustrates how a bridge between theory and practice can be built by fusing the rigor of academia with policy formulation at Government Department level which then leads to direct impacts on practice. Indeed, for the last six years the authors of this paper have been deeply involved with the public sector. One as an academic consultant and one as a practitioner consultant, latterly becoming an academic and changing the orientation of his consultancy work to have an academic perspective. During this time, the authors between them have undertaken a range of research and consultancy projects for the public sector, including:

- a six month secondment to the Cabinet Office (the Downing Street department which coordinates the activities of all Government Departments) to lead a project team to research and construct a capability development framework for Government Communicators (Gregory, 2006)
- adapting and further developing this framework for specific use by National Health Service communicators
- a research project on best practice in creating a communication function for the Commission for Rural Communities
- a framework for assessing the activities of the communication function of Government Departments for the Cabinet Office
- membership of the Permanent Secretary’s Management Board for ‘Engage’, the Government recommended communication planning approach
- research into the competencies of board level practitioners in the public sector for the Department of Health Gregory, 2009)
- a series of short courses for the Cabinet Office on strategic approaches to communication (including leadership), attended by over 500 Government communicators from across all Government Departments
- a range of social marketing practitioner consultancy projects in the areas of health and recycling that covered strategy formulation, campaign development and implementation
- a review of the communication dimensions of the Foot and Mouth outbreak with DEFRA (Gregory, 2005)
- research into best practice in internal communication for the Department of Work and Pensions
- a research project on “What Good Looks Like” in NHS Communication for the NHS
- the design and delivery of a co-produced Masters course in Strategic Communication for senior communication professionals in the NHS
- the development of a co-produced Graduate Training Post Graduate Diploma for the NHS
- the development of a series of short courses for local government organisations

This level of engagement has provided the opportunity for deep interaction with, and observation of public sector communication structures, processes and practitioners, and a growing understanding of the challenges and opportunities that face these functions and individuals. In particular the co-produced post graduate level courses for the NHS have provided a multi-layered and multi-perspective insight into the aspirations for and requirements of its communication capability.
Background on the NHS

Funded by the Department of Health, the NHS is divided into 10 Strategic Health Authority (SHA) areas. Services comprise primary and secondary care. Primary care is the frontline of the NHS and the first point of contact for most people. General Practitioners (GPs), dentists, optometrists and pharmacists, work in primary care. Acute, or secondary care, can be either elective (i.e. planned, such as surgery) and usually referred from primary care; or emergency care. There are 160 acute and 60 mental health NHS Trusts and 114 Foundation Hospital Trusts responsible for over 1,700 hospitals and specialist care centres in the secondary care sector. Emergency vehicles, mainly ambulances, are also provided by the NHS. Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) manage primary care and are the major commissioners of secondary services. They control 80% of the NHS budget, drive health agendas locally and are seen to be the leaders of the NHS in their areas.

Under the World Class Commissioning initiative introduced in 2008, PCTs are performance-managed by their SHA, using a set of 11 commissioning competencies (Department of Health, 2009a) to measure effectiveness. Some of these competencies are seen to have communication as core, especially the first five:

1. locally lead the NHS
2. work with community partners
3. engage with public and patients
4. collaborate with clinicians
5. manage knowledge and assess local health needs

These new performance requirements on the PCTs and the imperative of involving local communities, staff, patients, the public and other commissioning and delivering partners, means that the traditional and largely passive approach to communication has to change. Communication is seen as indivisible to the overall assessment that will be made on whole organisational performance.

In addition, every NHS secondary care, ambulance service and SHA organisation has a communication department whose role it is to help discharge these public accountabilities as well as supply information to the press, public and stakeholders in general, and increasingly, lead on internal communication. Communication functions have grown over the last few years and currently there are approximately 3,000 professional communicators employed in the NHS.

In response to this demand, the question was asked by the Director of Communications for the NHS and his counterparts in the SHAs “What does Good Look Like” in NHS communication? By being clear about this, NHS organisations could then begin to benchmark their own communication functions and build capacity and capability in line with the increasing demands noted earlier. The NHS commissioned the authors to undertake the research for “What Good Looks Like” which underpins The Communicating Organisation policy document mentioned earlier.

There were three particular challenges in articulating what good communication looks like for the NHS:

- many types and size of organisation exist within the NHS, operating in a range of contexts and environments - for example, the communication needs of a rural PCT may be very different from a large, city-based teaching hospital. The insights therefore had to be real and relevant to communicators in their organisational situation, wherever they were located in the NHS.
- the vision of ‘What Good Looks Like’ needed to take account of very different and growing service user expectations with a ‘customer’ mind-set
- communicators in the NHS have to deal with a level of stakeholder complexity and public scrutiny that is rare - a situation that profoundly shapes and defines their professional practice and development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The overall methodological approach was grounded theory. The researchers examined extant theories and models to discover whether there was an appropriate approach that could be adopted or adapted for the NHS or whether a new one needed to be developed. These theories and models would be tested against both empirical reality, but also calibrated to ensure a clear vision of the role that communication needs to play given the new demands placed upon it.

The following research methods were employed:

- the creation of a NHS Project Board to support the What Good Looks Like project, led by the Director of Communication for the NHS, with representatives from across the NHS system
- a wider reference group drawn from communicators across the NHS
- a literature review taken from a public relations and communication perspective
- recruitment of five independent critical readers who reviewed the first and final drafts. Three of these five critical readers were familiar with health systems from outside the UK
- one-to-one interviews with 14 CEOs from a variety of NHS organisations
- recruitment of three focus groups made up of 14 senior level NHS communicators operating in local communities, a group drawn from the broader Project Board and a group of board level health communicators working in Sweden
- a workshop with 18 communication directors who are members of the Swedish Public Relations Association (Sweden was chosen as a major comparator because it has a broadly comparable publicly-funded health system).

An iterative approach meant that the research team worked closely with the Project Board, the wider reference group and the critical readers (called collaborating groups),
presenting drafts of their thinking, taking feedback and adjusting the emerging models as new knowledge and perspectives were offered.

As noted, the project was also informed by work undertaken in the public sector by the Centre for Public Relations Studies over a period of six years. This has included research into the desired competencies of senior communicators, development of a public sector capability framework, creation of a communication planning model for Government Departments, audits of existing communication activity and strategic consultancy on a number of projects.

The project had a number of constraints which limited the research: a short timescale, limited researcher time and a restricted budget.

RESULTS

The results of the study can be summarised under four headings; definitions, attributes, dimensions and role re-articulation

Definitions

The brief given, summarised in the research project title, begged two fundamental questions. What does “good” and “communication” mean? The research team concluded “good” in this context meant both effective and ethical. In the past communication in the NHS has come from the public information model of practice and taken a typical public sector approach of information provision (Gregory, 2003; 2006) with a focus on media relations and publicity (L’Etang, 2004). More recently the NHS has embraced techniques from marketing, especially social marketing, for public health projects (Powell et al 2007; White, 2008). It has also adopted a commitment to public, national consultation for initiatives such as the NHS Constitution (Department of Health, 2009b) and local level consultations on the shape and provision of community based services (Department of Health 2009a). The engagement of local communities, patients, carers and other health providers is seen as essential. However, the broader public relations view of communication which embraces “customers” as one group among a range of stakeholders holds good both practically and philosophically and hence the public relations literature formed the basis of the literature review.

A good communication function provides management with evidence-based analysis of ongoing issues and relationships that may impact on its overall reputation and operations. Communication facilitates cultural evolution internally and externally and helps organisations adapt to environmental change. In practical terms managed communication provides a range of scientifically-based interventions, including issues identification, management and resolution; stakeholder engagement, market research and stakeholder intelligence, crisis and risk planning and management, evaluation and management of reputation; and inward and outward communication programmes. The role is concerned with the analysis, understanding, management and evaluation of key relationships, to achieve results within and through them.

Four Attributes of NHS Organisations that Communicate Effectively

The scale and complexity of the NHS, coupled with the diverse needs of the local communities that it serves, means that each NHS organisation has different priorities and goals. As a result, they organise their communications functions and communication processes in different ways. However, the research identified four attributes that will characterise NHS organisations that exemplify good practice in communication:

Deep understanding of the Brand

Understanding their brand will be essential for each NHS organisation. The components of the NHS brand are complex and it enjoys considerable brand equity. Indeed, helps to define Britishness itself by being an expression of the values of the nation. A communicating NHS organisation brings its brand to life through the services it provides, through the way it provides those services, by the way it engages with its stakeholders and through its deliberate and undeliberated communication activity.

Nationally the NHS is one of the nation’s most respected and instantly recognised brands. It is a service that most of the population have a relationship with at some point in their lives. The most comprehensive attempt to define the NHS brand is the NHS Constitution (Department of Health, 2009b), which describes its purpose, principles and values alongside the rights and responsibilities that drive it.

At the national level, citizens can help shape policy changes through national ‘engagement’ initiatives, an example being Patient Choice which consulted and then agreed that service users should be able to choose where they are treated, rather than having a doctor decide for them. The results of this have been monitored up to 2009 (Department of Health 2009d).

At a local level, most people experience the NHS brand through local services (such as their General Practitioner, hospital, dentist, etc). The communication function has an important role in helping to bring to life at a local level the brand values expressed in the NHS Constitution. It also helps to develop the brand locally by seeking community views and feeding this intelligence into the service. Communication informs patients and the public about what the organisation is trying to achieve, how they can access local services and analyses whether the reality that patients experience is in line with the pledges made to them. The communication process also helps test or predict how products or services that are being developed will be received by stakeholders, and also to identify attendant risks, opportunities and threats.

The role of the communicator should be to act as a brand guardian and champion by promoting the principles of the NHS Constitution within the context of the local organisation.

Excellence in planning, managing and evaluating communication

High-performing NHS organisations will ensure that their communication is proactive...
the principle that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level or closest to

By planning, managing and evaluating communication well, NHS organisations can gain a thorough knowledge of their local communities and stakeholders, anticipate and manage reputational risks and help ensure that their perception of performance matches the experience of users and stakeholders. Communicating organisations undertake most if not all of the activities listed below:

- monitoring issues that have an impact on the organisation’s reputation, and helping to identify solutions and responses to these issues
- analysing and evaluating key internal and external relationships
- media relations management
- partnership engagement and working
- market research
- public opinion polling
- scenario planning
- crisis and risk planning, management and communication
- brand building and management
- change management and internal communication
- reputation evaluation and management
- developing, delivering and evaluating outward and inward communication programmes in order to achieve pre-defined outcomes (including social marketing initiatives)
- development of strategies for reliable and scientifically valid feedback
- analysis and development of organisational culture and climate
- evaluation and managing of reputation.

By managing proper integration across this comprehensive mix of activities, a communicating NHS organisation facilitates communication flow throughout the organisation and between itself and external stakeholders, including its service users and all those in its value and supply chain.

**Leadership support for communication**

Effective leadership will negotiate and express the organisational purpose to employees and set out how that purpose will be achieved at a local level. Leaders also need the ability to articulate the organisation’s vision in a way that resonates with patients, the public and other external stakeholders. Leaders have a particularly crucial role in explaining what the organisation is trying to achieve, defending it in the face of unjust criticism and at times of crisis. The NHS Chief Executive, David Nicholson, articulated four principles that should guide the way that NHS organisations manage change: co-production, subsidiarity (that is, the principle that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level or closest to where they will have their effect), system alignment and clinical engagement (Department of Health, 2009c). In order to operate within these principles, good communication is seen to be vital. To support change of this magnitude and complexity effectively and appropriately communication professionals must have access to the most senior leaders in their organisation.

**Communication as a core competency**

Good communication is seen to be the responsibility of all managers and all staff, in the same way that good financial management is not just the responsibility of the finance department. Staff across NHS organisations have important roles to play in engaging with their patients, the community and local partners. This is crucial as the NHS strengthens its commitment to putting patients at the heart of services, and forms closer partnerships with the communications function can help by coaching and supporting key staff in developing and communicating the organisational narrative and in being part of the organisational antennae network. The more proactive staff are about the organisation’s vision and story, and the more active their role as advocates and intelligence gatherers, the greater the potential communication and reputational impact.

**Four levels of activity**

In the public relations literature there is a huge amount on the contribution that public relations makes in society and in organisations and particularly on the roles that practitioners fulfil which cannot be adequately summarised here. This paper is particularly concerned with the role of the communication function (or department) and of individuals, especially senior managers. This brief overview of the roles literature begins with the seminal work by Broom (Broom and Smith, 1979; Broom 1982) which drew from the consulting literature to define four public relations roles – expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator and communication technician. Dozier (1992) reduced these four roles to two – communication managers, who enact the first three roles and communication technician who focus on the technical aspects of public relations work. It is this dual role proposition that dominates the literature. At the same time Grunig and colleagues (Grunig, 1992) identified through empirical work, the characteristics of good communication departments and emphasised their access to or membership of the dominant coalition, their autonomy, research orientation and their commitment to symmetrical communication. More recent empirical work by DeSanto and Moss (2004) and Moss, Newman and DeSanto (2005) identified five elements to the manager role: monitor and evaluator; key policy and strategy advisor; trouble shooter/problem solver and issues management expert. These managers also take responsibility for implementing some high level technical work. Van Ruler et al (2004) in their European study of communication departments discovered four roles for the function: reflective, managerial, operational and educational. Finally, Steyn’s (2007) study of South African companies, using the strategic management perspective, mapped the contribution of communication at various levels of business operation: enterprise, corporate, business unit, functional and operational.

The research team saw utility in parts of all these models, particularly that of Steyn (2007), however, they are mainly designed to address the needs of large corporate organisations
operating in the private sector where the minority of practitioners work. What was needed was something tailored to the public sector. Consequently, the researchers proposed a hybrid model, which after iterative testing with the collaborative groups, concluded that communication can contribute to the NHS nationally and locally at four different levels: societal, corporate, value-chain and functional.

**Societal**

The role for communication here is twofold. First to help represent the NHS so that it maintains its legitimacy (or licence to operate), place, standing and reputation in society through the clear communication of values and purpose, and demonstrating consistency of performance against them. The NHS is an interesting organisation in that it has a Constitution, enshrined in law which defines its role, values and principles. However, it is experienced locally and locally NHS organisations are able to determine their own values, missions and goals, which must of necessity, not contradict the Constitution. Communication plays a role in helping individual NHS organisations define their values, mission, goals and objectives, and assessing what broad stakeholder support or opportunity is likely to be. At both national level and local levels, stakeholder connection can be quite loose; indeed, public sentiment expressed through public opinion, may be the extent of the association. However, this connection, although loose, can be emotionally extremely strong. The NHS has the status of a national totem in the UK and it is meddled with at the peril of the meddler. Negotiating and maintaining ongoing legitimacy is difficult for the public sector especially in economically straightened times, but it is the authors’ opinion that generally speaking the sector is good at this and getting better. The legitimacy of the NHS has never been in question; rather the challenge is to Government to continue to maintain it as a national service, free at the point of delivery given its increasing sophistication and cost.

Second, at this level, the function also provides the antennae of the organisation, monitoring the external environment and stakeholder intentions, to bring essential intelligence into the organisation. Communication managers are required to analyse developments outside and inside their organisations and then reconcile their organisations with (and against) a challenging mix of social, economic, political and technological forces.

**Corporate**

At this level, public sector organisations focus on their financial and “business” goals, and hence resource allocation and achievement of business objectives (often stated as Key Performance Indicators by regulatory bodies) is paramount. The role of the communication function can be seen to be threefold at this level. First, communication must ensure that enlightened business decisions are made by insisting that the range of stakeholder perspectives is considered. It is often here that organisational values are tested and the communication role is to ensure that all stakeholder interests are represented, balanced and tested within the declared value-base.

Second, the communication function should also advise on whether the relationship and reputational capital that exists internally and externally is compatible with what the organisation wishes to achieve and whether the organisation’s culture and identity is congruent with its strategic plans (Laurati, 2008). In the current economic climate, public sector communication functions have to be much more adept at making their case as a core resource of the organisation. More usually they are seen as a spending function, not a resource function.

It is the authors’ observation that it is at this level that communicators find the greatest difficulty. Their ability to articulate the arguments for and persuade fellow directors or their seniors of the value of communication is limited, and it is here that issues such as the requirement to demonstrate a Return on Investment become apparent. Furthermore, the pre-occupation of practitioners at the corporate level of strategy tends to be on securing an appropriate slice of the resource pie for the communication function rather than the wider, strategic considerations of the organisation. It is also here that the literature lacks weight and more work is required to make the case cogently.

Arguing a case based on what reputational, relational and cultural resources are required for the organisation to succeed positions the communication function quite differently because the starting point for discussion is entirely different: it is corporate and strategic, not operational and tactical. Using the language and disciplines of business at corporate level is important. Human Resource Directors argue for the human assets required to deliver the organisational vision and business unit directors will make a case for their operational area in similar terms: communication should be no exception.

Third, it is neither desirable nor possible for the communication function to be totally responsible for the entire organisation’s relationship-building and communication activity. An essential role of the senior communication professional at corporate level is to coach and mentor other senior managers in communicating the NHS’s objectives and decisions to their peers and influential stakeholder groups who they interact with, and ensuring that they are alert to the reputational and relational opportunities and threats inherent in doing so.

**Stakeholder/Service User**

At the Stakeholder/Service User level (sometimes called the value-chain), the focus will be on those stakeholders directly involved in, and with, the organisation. Their closeness to the organisation distinguishes them from the broad societal level stakeholders who may have no specific or strong link with it but who form the substance of those social norms that form public opinion. Typical value chain stakeholders will include customers, service users, delivery partners, suppliers, distributors, regulators, employees etc. It is at this value chain stakeholder level that societal and corporate intentions and decisions are made real. The communications function has a part to play in engaging with these ‘close’ stakeholders, including those who may be regarded as troublesome, such as activist groups and online communities. This engagement could be for a range of reasons: to involve them in decision-making, to keep them informed, to persuade them to buy or to sell, to identify and work through their current and future concerns, to identify potential issues and crises, to capitalise on opportunities they raise, to solve common problems and so on.
Specific expertise in stakeholder identification, segmentation, insight, engagement and collaboration and/or management, can be offered by the communications department alongside coaching and mentoring those colleagues who engage with these stakeholders regularly. In addition, the communication function can offer help in detecting, balancing and managing what could well be the conflicting demands of different stakeholder groups and navigating complex negotiations and relationships between them and management.

A very specific and important skill is the insight that communication professionals can provide on specific groups of stakeholders and individuals: knowing stakeholders intimately, being able to judge how they are likely to behave and how that behaviour can be influenced is a critical skill of practitioners. Being alert to the differences between internal culture and behaviours and external expectations of that culture and behaviour is also especially important at this level. Individuals are representatives of the organisation and the brand, and how they behave and communicate will affect the reputation of the whole organisation. This is precisely why so much attention is now being paid to the internal stakeholder, with communication being central to successful cultural and organisational change.

The role of the communications function in being attuned to and representing all these ‘close’ stakeholder perspectives, internal and external, to senior managers in the organisation, is critical to organisational success.

**Functional**

At this level the role of the communication function is to devise, implement and evaluate programmes of activity to pre-defined objectives which support societal, corporate and value-chain plans.

These programmes will need to be:

- of different types depending on the needs of the stakeholder groups involved, for example, social marketing programmes for behaviour change; mass media campaigns for information dissemination; lobbying in the public affairs arena
- strategically formulated using recognised planning disciplines
- employing an appropriate variety of channels and techniques depending on the programme's purpose
- focussed at specific stakeholder groups

The function will also be responsible for re-active communication.

In addition to implementing communication activity itself, the communication function will also fulfil a capacity-building role, ensuring that managers and colleagues within the organisation are equipped to undertake tactical communication tasks thereby enabling it to become a communicatively competent organisation.

**A RE-ARTICULATION OF ROLES**

An outcome of this research led to theorising on the roles of NHS communicators. Figure 1 encapsulates this by conceptualising the role of the communication function in the NHS, the bold headings providing an overall descriptor. There was considerable debate in the research team and with the collaborative groups about the descriptors, especially Guardian. A strong alternative was Catalyst because it is clear that many senior communicators as individuals and teams galvanised their organisations into action when they discovered the realities they encountered did not match their reputation or relational ambition or posed a threat to their existing reputation or relationships. Guardian appeared to some to be somewhat passive. However, after considerable discussion, the majority view prevailed – Guardian can be seen as proactive as well as defensive.

![Figure 1. A conceptualisation of the four roles of the communication function in the NHS](image-url)

**Orienter – Societal**

The communicator acting as a compass in the NHS, ensuring that the licence to operate and its societal mandate are maintained by keeping the system orientated in the direction that maintains stakeholder support. Communication has an essential role to play by informing, involving and engaging with external and internal stakeholders to maintain the legitimacy of the brand.

**Navigator – Corporate**

Ensuring that stakeholder perspectives are brought into resource decision-making, ensuring that relational and reputational capital is factored in as a key resource, and navigating a way through conflicting stakeholder demands is the key role.
Guardian – Stakeholder/Service-user
Embedding a stakeholder and service-user perspective in the design, creation and delivery of services requires the communication function to provide vision-critical intelligence, engagement capability and evaluation to ensure the delivery of world-class services. Here the function is as guardian of NHS values in ways of working and stakeholder partnerships.

Implementer – functional
In this technical role the communication function designs and delivers (or commissions) appropriate communication activities and programmes which will deliver societal, corporate, stakeholder and service-user objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The model put forward in this paper is new. Furthermore, it is not a theoretical conceit, but a tool that has already been tested, found to work and adopted by organisations. By using this framework to benchmark their own activities, it is proposed that senior communicators in the NHS and the broader public sector will be able to diagnose and address areas of strength and weakness. They can also use it to enlighten their senior management teams of the strategic role that communication can play: indeed, they are already doing so and the point of going through the strategic levels at which public relations can make a contribution is to:

• generate a better understanding of organisational strategy and how this might be conceptualised for communication practitioners operating in the public sector;
• clarify the types of input that communications can make to the organisation as a whole, including its input into organisational decision-making;
• demonstrate that communication contributes more to an organisation than just programmes and campaigns - it can make a strategic input at all levels;
• show that programmes and campaigns have to be seen within a broader context and ensure all programmes are aligned to societal, corporate and/or stakeholder objectives;
• enable the practitioner to articulate and move between the various roles that they must play within the organisation.

The research is a detailed case study of how the bridge between theory and practice can be built. It fuses the rigor of academia with policy formulation at Government Department level which then leads to direct impacts on practice.

REFERENCES


Department oh Health (2009d) available at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_103681.pdf [Date accessed 15.4.10]


NHS (2009) available at www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/Pages/About.aspx [Date accessed 15.4.10]


Powell, J., Tapp, A., Orme, J., and Far, M. (2007) “Primary Care Professionals and Social Marketing of Health in Neighbourhoods, a Case Study Approach to Identity, Target and Communicate with ‘at risk’ Populations”, Primary Health Care Research and Development, 8(1) 22-35


by Fraser Likely

ABSTRACT

The Government of Canada employs over 5000 public relations/communication (PR/C) specialists at the federal, national political level. These practitioners form the largest single PR/C community of practitioners in Canada. These practitioners are public servants, employed by a government department or agency. Within the dozens of federal government departments and agencies, the vast majority of these communication specialists work in a designated unit called a communication branch. Over the last ten years, in order to compare management practices between and among these discrete communication branches, four comprehensive government-wide benchmarking studies were conducted.

From a review of these studies’ findings, this paper examines the practice of strategic management by Government of Canada communication branches and their heads. In particular, it looks at how management practices evolved between 1999 and 2009. Five of the generic principles, part of the global theory of public relations and derived from the work of the Excellence Project, are tested. Evidence from these benchmarking studies suggests that Government of Canada communication branches are managed strategically.

This paper is the part of an on-going research project investigating communication branch strategic management, organizational, performance measurement and leadership practices in the Canadian government. The next step would be to test the remaining generic principles to ascertain that the communication branch/head contributes to the strategic management of the department.
The original Excellence Project’s quantitative survey included 14 government organizations located in Canada (out of a total of 57 Canadian organizations) (Grunig, L.A., Grunig, J.E. & Dozier, D.M. 2002), a number of which were government agencies operating at the federal, national level. Data from these 14 were not presented separately. Data from all government organizations (United States; Canada; United Kingdom) were aggregated. These government organizations represented a mix of “federal, regional, state-provincial, local and political agencies” (Grunig, L.A. et al 2002, P. 35).

This mixture of agencies was compared to the other types of organizations (corporations; associations; not-for-profits) and said to differ in the following ways:

“The senior public relations person in government agencies is more likely to report being in a technician or media relations role than in other types of organizations – especially in comparison to corporations. However, he or she is about average for the managerial role, participation in strategic management, and being in the dominant coalition. Such a combination of roles suggests that the historical public information or public affairs definition lives on in government – of disseminating information to the general population directly or through the media. At the same time, the data suggest that the government agencies are moving toward a more managerial and strategic role. … Government agencies seem to be moving toward a strategic, managerial and symmetrical role; but they are not quite there yet” (Grunig, L.A. et al 2002, P. 86-87).

While stating that there wasn’t a statistically significant difference in Excellence scores among the three countries, the authors also made these statements about findings that were significantly different for Canadian organizations:

- “CEOs in Canada assigned a lower value to the public relations department than did CEOs in the United States” (P. 80).
- “The Canadian top communicators estimated that the dominant coalition would value public relations less than in other countries, which the comparison of means suggests is a realistic assessment” (P. 80).
- “Women headed somewhat more (61%) of departments we studied in Canada. (P. 184.) This was in relation to American PR/C departments (51%) and British (40%).
- “In Canada, a large number of department heads enact the technician role predominantly” (P. 220). In making this statement, the authors were citing the work of Piekos and Einsiedel (1991), who attributed the enactment of the technical role in part to the fact that departments are smaller and thus less specialized in Canada – in comparison to larger and thus more specialized departments in the United States.

While the Excellence study has been replicated (for example Grunig, L.A. et al 1998) or the generic principles (Vercic et al 1996) derived from the study’s excellence theory have been examined (for example: Lim et al 2005; Rhee 2002) in other countries in the past two decades, no detailed study has been conducted since in Canada. One recent study – a case study on municipal government communication - addresses a number of the generic principals (Killingsworth 2009). But, overall, this lack of research does beg the question: Are the statements made in the Excellence study ascribed to Canada – and to government agencies in Canada – still applicable after almost two decades?

In each of the fiscal years 2000-01, 2002-03, 2004-05 and 2007-08, a study was conducted of Canadian federal government communication branch management practices. The first two studies concentrated on the communication branches at department and agency headquarters, typically located in the national capital of Ottawa. The third study replicated the first two studies and examined the management practices of communication branches located in regional offices across Canada. Finally, the fourth in the series of studies included both headquarters and regionally based communication branches. A PR/C management-consulting firm - Likely Communication Strategies - conceived the idea for the study and competed and contracted for the first study by the Privy Council Office, Communications and Consultations Secretariat and for the last three by the Communications Community Office. These studies served two purposes. First, they collected statistics about such basic management information as the number of positions, number of employees, position classification levels of employees, budgets and numbers and sources of recruits. This was information that, while individual branches may have gathered much of it for their own use, had not been shared as a package to all heads of communication branches. Second, the studies described the management opportunities and challenges heads were experiencing. Again, while this was information that may have been shared between two or a few heads ‘off the record’, it was not information that was aggregated, analysed and shared broadly among all heads. The reports emanating from these studies allowed heads of communication branches to benchmark management information and practices against their peers, as well as to analyse how the management practices (for example: reporting; organizing; planning; budgeting; controlling) of their branch were evolving over the course of a decade. These reports were stand-alone documents and only once have they been repurposed to provide a second level of analysis (communication branch heads’ leadership verses management roles: Likely 2004).

This evolution of the headquarters communication branch strategic management practices is compared to the corresponding generic principles found in the global theory (Vercic et al 1996). This study did not look at the principles in relation to the theory’s specific variables (political system; economic system; culture; extent of activism; level of development; and media system), variables that need be addressed when the principles are applied to different nations. (See Likely 2009 for a brief overview of a Canadian application of each of these variables.) Of the eight (Grunig, J. 2009), nine (Vercic et al 1996) and/or ten (Rhee 2002) generic principles, this study focused on five:

The communication branch/head is/has:
- empowered by the dominant coalition or by a direct reporting relationship to senior management;
- separate from other functions;
- integrated in to one function;
Together these five generic principles address the question of whether the communication branch is managed strategically.

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Federal Political System

Canada is a parliamentary democracy, separating the roles of head of state and head of government. Canada’s official head of state is the King/Queen of England; the Canadian-born Governor General, appointed by the King/Queen on the advice of the Canadian Prime Minister and Cabinet, is his/her representative in Canada and has responsibility for the daily constitutional, diplomatic and operation roles of head of state. The Prime Minister is Canada’s head of government. The Prime Minister is both the leader of a political party and an elected Member of Parliament (MP). Currently, there are 308 electoral ridings or seats across Canada and in each a single MP is elected. The elected MP who is the leader of the political party with the most seats in the House of Commons forms the government. The leaders of the other political parties and their elected members form the opposition in Parliament. The Prime Minister as head of government chooses and leads the executive branch or Cabinet (duly elected Members of Parliament chosen by the Prime Minister usually from the party with the most seats). The Prime Minister assigns responsibilities to Cabinet members, such as Minister of Health, Minister of the Environment or Minister of Finance. The executive branch, and therefore government, depends on the support of the legislative branch or Parliament, through votes of confidence, for its continuence in power. The Prime Minister also appoints senators to the non-elected Senate and has the power to make thousands of appointments.

The government and Parliament is supported by a neutral, non-partisan, merit-based, professional, career public service. The Prime Minister and each Minister is supported by a department, headed by a Deputy Minister. The Prime Minister appoints Deputy Ministers, on the advice of the Prime Minister’s deputy minister, the Clerk of the Queen’s Privy Council. Deputy Ministers serve at the pleasure of the government. Deputy Ministers report to the Clerk. The Deputy Minister is the functional head of the department in question while the Minister is the department’s political master. Deputy Ministers, as with all public servants, are hired in to the public service and advanced based on merit, not based on political appointment. While Ministers are responsible to the Prime Minister and ultimately to Parliament for their department through the concept of ministerial accountability, the Deputy Minister is responsible to the Clerk for his or her personal performance accord. The Prime Minister and each Minister of the Crown directly employ a number of what are called political or “exempt” staff. These are partisan, political appointments; the individuals are not members of the public service and are exempt from the rules that govern the public service. Minister’s Office staff provide logistical, political, party, constituency, communication, policy and legislative advice and support to the Minister, separate from those provided by the neutral public service. Being non-partisan and neutral with their employment dependent on merit not the whims of any government, one of the fundamental tenets of the public servant is the ability to “speak truth to power.” The Prime Minister advises the Deputy Minister on the government’s political direction and directs the Deputy on policy, regulatory and program plans and changes the government desires. Exempt staff do not have the authority to direct public servants but can convey the Minister’s instructions to and ask for information directly from public servants. The distinctions between and among directing, conveying and asking is one fine line. It is not a solid, definitive line in the sand, but one that is constantly shifting.

To put the Canadian Federal political system in to the context of the 2000s, here is a summary of some of the major developments of that decade:

- The first four years saw Canada governed by a government that had the majority of seats in Parliament; a minority government (the party with most of the seats did not have a majority of those seats, 155 out of 308) was in power for the remaining six years and as a minority was dependent on the MPs in other parties to vote with the government to have legislation passed by Parliament;
- After slaying budgets deficits in the late 1990s, governments enjoyed budget surpluses throughout the 2000s until the last two years when stimulus spending pushed the government back in to a deficit situation;
- Budget expenditures rose steadily throughout the 2000s;
- The number of civil servants increased steadily throughout the 2000s after the size of the public service was drastically cut in the mid 1990s as a deficit cutting move;
- There was a greater emphasis on accountability and oversight in government operations in areas such as donations to political candidates, government appointments and procurement of government contracts as well as in the development of departmental management accountability frameworks (MAFs) which link business planning to performance measurement; and
- Prime Ministers in this decade continued, and in the latter half increased the pace, of a 30-year trend to centralize decision-making authority in the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), away from Minister’s Offices (Akin 2010; Ottawa Citizen 2004; Savoie 2008 & 1999).

1 The Canadian government employs over 450,000 individuals, but just over 200,000 are considered part of the public service. Other employees, such as members of the military and national police force, are part of other employee agreements.
The Canadian Federal Government Communications Community

Governments were responsible for the first public relations activities in Canada (Johansen 2001). First France, then England, used public relations techniques to sell the merits of investment in and immigration to their northern, new world colony (Emms 1995). After Canadian confederation in 1867, the Government of Canada (GoC) applied various media relations and marketing communication strategies and tactics in Europe and in the United States to bolster the population and the economy of the fledging country. Publicity programs were run by the Departments of Agriculture and of Trade and Commerce. From the late 1880s to the start of the WWII, the Canadian government gradually employed publicists in other departments as well to disseminate information to the Canadian public, such as the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in 1907 and the Department of National Health in 1920 (Donoghue 1993; Johansen & Ferguson 2005). By the start of WWII, “nearly every federal government department was carry out public relations functions and providing information not only directly to the public, but also to newspapers and radio stations” (Donoghue 1993 P. 101). In 1944, the Canadian government employed “396 ‘publicity officers’ of whom 156 were with the Wartime Information Board” (Donoghue 1993 P. 101). The Canadian government’s public relations efforts during the Second World War are viewed as pivotal both for the entrenchment of the function within government and for the expansion of public relations bureaus in corporations after the war. After the war, there were too many wartime information officers, most of whom were journalists prior to the war effort, for the number of available positions in the Federal government (Brown 1984). These well-trained and experienced public relations officers moved in to the private sector and in to consultancies. In the Federal government, the term public relations officer replaced the term publicist during the war, to be later replaced in the 1960s with the term information officer. The number of public relations officers grew in the Canadian government through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and in to the early 1980s as government after government introduced new or improved existing social service programs such as universal pensions and health care. The role of the information officer typically was restricted to promotion of a program after a decision was made to implement.

The first review of government public relations was conducted as part of the Giasco Commission on Government Organization’s mandate in 1962. Donoghue, a government public relations manager at the time, reports that the Commission “was quick to recognize the importance and visibility of the public relations role” though the Commission “was critical of the term public relations” (1993). The Commission also recommended among other things that the role of information officers was to “inform” rather than “impress” and the establishment of clear communication policies, guidelines, and training in public relations for government communicators” (Johansen & Ferguson 2005).

The Commission supported the continued decentralization of information activities located in individual departments rather than the alternative of centralization of government information dissemination in to a single department. Interestingly, centralization was attempted in later years, with Information Canada in the early 1970s, the Canadian Unity Information Office in the late ‘70s and with Communication Canada in the late 1990s. But, all were disbanded within a few years.

By the 1980s, information officers had their own well-entrenched classification program (IS: Information Services) a formal career path and manpower guidelines. And in 1988, the first Government of Canada Communications Policy was approved. This formal policy followed a set of principles approved by Cabinet in 1981. The principles addressed a Canadian’s “right to full, accurate and timely information” and the government’s responsibility to provide that information as well as to “learn the concerns and views of Canadians” (Donoghue 1993 P. 181). The impact of the new policy direction was significant, adding a strategic role to the sole technical role previously enacted as “media liaisons, writers, editors, exhibition designers, speech writers, and in other creative positions” (Johansen & Ferguson 2005):

This document was a key development, transforming the work of the government communicator into a strategic management function. The new policy required communication officers to research and analyze the public opinion environment, engage in planning, perform an advisory function, and manage communications. Public relations specialists across the government registered in a massive retraining effort to prepare for their new strategic roles and responsibilities.

The goals of the new communication policy were to set out basic principles of communication within the context of representative government, encourage transparency and the free flow of information between government and citizens, highlight the importance of communication in achieving government objectives, establish a framework for government-wide management of communication, and provide guidelines for implementing a range of communication activities such as advertising, publishing, public opinion research, and media relations” (Johansen & Ferguson 2005).

The new policy introduced the concept of ‘shared responsibility’ wherein the policy, program and operational branches of a government department or agency shared responsibility for determining the need, conceptualizing and planning for communication programs, activities and products with the communication branch. The intent of the policy was to integrate the communication branch in to the corporate, strategic policy planning and decision-making processes – to be “present at the table” (Government of Canada 1992). Up to this point, communication branches were relatively well-funded creative and technical units housing a full complement of writers, graphic artists, exhibit specialists, A-V experts and desk top publishers; some even had their own TV studios. Though they had media relations and issues management expertise in-house, the communication branches of this era were mainly production houses – taking and fulfilling orders for communication campaigns, activities and products from the other branches after legislative, regulatory, policy or program decisions had been made. The budget for creative and production rested with them; their services were not an expenditure budget line for the client in another branch.

It may have been a policy of the Government of Canada, but acceptance and implementation of the 1988 Communications Policy was neither quick nor complete. Even with a concerted
The FCC was funded through taxation. Each head was taxed a certain amount to fund an Executive Director and the work of the Communications and Consultations Secretariat in the Privy Council Office, set up four working groups to examine the introduction of the 1988 Policy and plot future steps leading to its universal acceptance and full implementation (Government of Canada 1992). Their work was bolstered not only by a survey of heads of communication on the status of implementation but also by the work of the Excellence Project and in particular by a presentation in Ottawa by James E. Grunig.

The work to further the adoption of the 1988 Policy carried out by the FCC as well as by the Communications Management Practices Group in first the Privy Council Office, Communications and Consultations Secretariat and then the Treasury Board Secretariat was short-lived, as it – like the government communications community as a whole - ran in to three major roadblocks. First, all communication branches as well as all branches in every department were hit with across the board cuts in 1991. This was followed in 1992 by a $75 million dollar cut to the operating budgets (non-salary) of communication branches, reducing monies available for creative and technical work (Government of Canada 1992). Finally, in the 1994-6 period, the government of the day initiated a major deficit reduction exercise called Program Review. Central staff functions were targeted and by the late 1990s, communication branches were shells of their former selves. Not only had they lost the operating monies that kept their creative and technical service areas funded but they also lost salary dollars and thus employees. Cuts were made to the communication specialists – exempt staff – in the Minister’s Office as well, forcing public servants to be assigned to these offices and to take on some of the non-political communication duties (Delacourt 1993). By the end of the ‘90s, the services offered by most communication branches were restricted mainly to media relations and issues management. The hope that had come to the communication community with the 1988 Policy had long faded. Even the bodies that had promoted the 1988 Policy and attempted to develop a sense of community for communication specialists such as the FCC, the ISI and the Communications Management Practices Group were long gone.

By the turn of the decade, the federal government deficit had been slain and budget surpluses were at hand. Though it took to the mid 2000s for the size of the public service to match the pre-Program Review size, growth in this decade of government programs, expenditures and public servants was constant fiscal year to fiscal year. The need to communicate and the renewed desire by government to communicate forced communication branches to ramp up as well as broaden their service offerings and the resources and expertise required to deliver those services. The following are some of the major developments in the past ten years:

- The Government of Canada approved a new communication policy. The 2002 Communication Policy continued the language around the purpose of government communication first enunciated in the 1981 principles and then in the 1988 Policy but, most importantly, it described in very explicit terms the authorities, roles and accountabilities for communication branch heads and their staff. The head, who was to report directly to the department head, was assigned full accountability on behalf of the department head for the management of the department’s communication function, whether sub-functions and activities were being carried out at the headquarters communication branch or in regional communication branches or in any other departmental branch (Government of Canada 2002);
- The Communications Community Office (CCO) also was created in 2002. The CCO assumed some of the interests previously pursued by the Federal Communications Council, The Information Services Institute and the Communications Management Practices Group. The CCO is a community of practice, a creature of the heads of communication branches. It is not an institution of government. Heads make up the CCO’s steering committee and pay a yearly voluntary tax to support an executive director and staff. The CCO has focused not on communication policy development but on community development. The CCO has funded the benchmarking studies of communication branch management practices, four collective staffing exercises having a primary goal of bringing talented communication specialists in to the public service, student outreach events at university campuses across the country, an initiative for leadership development titled the Coach-Assisted Mid-Level Mentoring Program, competency profiles for each classification level and regular conferences (Seymour 2010);
- While the salary and operating budgets of communication branches were cut drastically in the mid 1990s, the budgets of departmental program and operational branches were not to the same degree, resulting in these branches by the end of the 1990s still able to fund their own communication activities and either going directly to contractors to do so or they hired their own communication specialists. In many departments, there were a series of “satellite” communication units, independent of the designated communication branch. A major preoccupation of heads over the decade was the repatriation of these satellites (Likely 2001; 2003; 2008);
- Recruitment was a necessary focus of communication branch heads throughout the 2000s. In the early part of the decade, there was a large pool of terms, casuals, freelancers, students and freshly minted consultants left over from the downsizing period of the 1990s to fill everyone’s needs. By the end of the decade, there were far more permanent positions available than there were employees to fill them. In the latter half of the decade, retention became a problem as a shortage of talent created a churn effect as communication specialists moved from position to position and department to department, and advanced in to higher-level positions, with ease. (Government of Canada 2008; Lahey 2008; Likely 2001; 2003; 2005 and 2008; Seymour 2010);
• On-line e-communication grew to be the communication channel of choice for the publication of information, requiring new skill sets among communication branch employees (Likely 2008); and
• In the last half of the decade, final approval for all government communication activities and products (such as announcements, events, speeches or replies to reporters’ enquiries by Cabinet members, MPs of the party in power or by civil servants) was centralized in the Prime Minister’s Office and the Privy Council Office. Heads had to set up elaborate processes and mechanisms to track approvals, both as a go-ahead for the development and production of an activity or product and as a sign-off for the finished product (Akin 2010; Blanchfield & Bronskill 2010; Davies 2010; Kozolanka 2009 & 2006; Rudnicki 2009; Stanfield 2009; Thomas 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Government PR/Communications

Though various researchers have commented on the paucity of study on communication in and by governments and the management of that communication (for example: Clemons 2009; Lee 2008; Liu & Horsley 2007; Fairbanks, Plowman & Rawlins 2007), the 2000s did see a flurry of research activity. Some of it was country specific (such as Australia: Glenny; Canada: Kozolanka, Johansen; India: Kour; Netherlands: Vos; United Kingdom: Gregory; United States: Clemons, Fairbanks, Lee, Liu & Horsley). Much of it was research on roles of government communication specialists (for example: Clemons 2009; Edes 2000; Gregory 2006; Liu, Horsley, & Levenshus, 2010; Liu & Horsley 2007; Thomas 2009; Vos 2008 & 2006), with special attention to specific practices such as information dissemination by communication specialists (for example: Edes 2000; Fairbanks, Plowman & Rawlins 2007; Gelders & Ihlen 2009; Gelders, Bouckaert & van Ruler 2007; Lee 2001a; Lee 1999). Rather than saying there is limited interest in research on government communication, it is perhaps better today to state that while critical mass has not yet been reached there is, in fact, a substantive parade developing in the parade grounds. That said, a distinct model for government communication, particularly one that is comparative across countries at various political levels (national; region/state/province; and municipal/local) has not been developed and tested. Different analytical frameworks in use are ones that compare the public sector to the private sector (Fairbanks 2005; Gelders, Bouckaert & van Ruler 2007; Liu, Horsley & Levenshus 2010; Liu & Horsley 2007). Or, they suggest that similar models may be applied to both (Grunig & Jaatinen 1999). Liu and Horsley (2007) have conceptualized what they consider a distinct model for public sector communication, though they acknowledge its potential constraints:

“We recognize that the decision wheel, like all other models, has limitations. First, the wheel was developed from the literature, and both the model and the resulting propositions need to be tested empirically. In addition, the wheel can only be applied to democratic countries based on federalism principles, such as the United States. Despite these limitations, the wheel provides a useful tool to help government communicators select the most effective means of communication based on the situation, environment, and available resources. The wheel also provides an initial framework for reconceptualizing how public relations is practiced” (Liu and Horsley 2007: P. 391).

The model, indeed, does require examination. Simply for example, while the United States is democratic and a federation, it is also a republic. Canada is a democracy, a federation but a parliamentary democracy with an appointed Senate not an elected Senate or upper house. Can the “decision wheel” be truly applied to all “democratic countries based on federalism principles” or is its possible utility singular to the United States? The importance here is that while there are many common factors influencing public sector communication there may be others unique to each country or level of government. Liu et al have found some resonance in their model; there are factors that make public relations practice in government different from that in the private sector. But, they also found many similarities. (Liu, Horsley & Levenshus 2010; Liu & Levenshus 2009). At this point, it is difficult to determine at what level of analysis the “decision wheel” can be applied. Grunig and Jaatinen (1999: P. 1) made the statement that “the principles of public relations for government are the same as for other types of organisation, but that the specific conditions to which the principles must be applied are different.” Does the decision wheel identify principles or conditions or perhaps both? Gelders, Bouckaert, & van Ruler (2007) identified four ‘conditions’: a more activist environment; a greater legal and regulatory umbrella; more formal processes; and greater diversity in stakeholders and thus communication objectives. There appears to be overlap between these ‘conditions’ and the decision wheel models ‘characteristics.’

The majority of government communication research, thus, is on roles, practices and the behaviours of communication specialists particularly as spokespersons. Little has been produced on communication management in the public sector, with the exception of a handful of works such as Grunig & Grunig (2001), Killingsworth (2009) and Vos (2008).

Global Public Relations Theory: Generic Principles

The Excellence Study researchers defined generic principles as “that in an abstract sense, the principles of public relations are the same worldwide” (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002). J. Grunig (2009) listed the generic principles as:

• empowerment of public relations;
• integrated communication function;
• a separate communication function;
• headed by a strategic manager rather than a communication technician or an administrative manager who supervises technical services;
• involved in strategic management;
• two-way and symmetrical communication;
• diverse; and
• ethical.
These eight he called essential, noting that: “the generic principles have been described in different ways in different publications” (2009: P. 2). Originally, the nine principles, derived from the 14 characteristics of excellent public relations programs identified in the Excellent Project, were described as follows (Vercic, Grunig & Grunig 1996):

Involvement of public relations in strategic management;
- Empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management;
- Integrated public relations function;
- Public relations as a management function separate from other functions;
- The role of the public relations practitioner;
- Two-way symmetrical model of public relations;
- A symmetrical system of internal communication;
- Knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical public relations; and
- Diversity embodied in all roles.

Subsequently, the generic principles have been tested in Slovenia (Grunig, Grunig, & Vercic 1998), Korea (Rhee 2002), Singapore (Lim, Goh & Sriramesh 2005) and Bosnia (Kent & Taylor 2007). A tenth principle - ethical - was added post Slovenia (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002 P. 545). The study in Singapore followed the strategy of the Korea study and limited the number of principles to four: involvement of public relations in strategic management; empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition - direct reporting relationship; use of the two-way symmetrical model of public relations; and knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical communication. Rhee (2002 P. 166) restricted her research to “the principles related to the core concept of strategic management of public relations in the excellence theory.”

Of these four studies, only Lim et all (2005) included public relations practitioners from “government ministries” in their survey sample though they were not broken out as a separate category for detailed discussion in the findings of the study. Interestingly enough, none of the researchers who have demonstrated an on-going research interest in government communication have sought to examine the global theory and generic principles in a public sector setting. It appears only Killingsworth (2009) has married a study of government communication with a test of the generic principles. Her study was of a municipal government in Canada.

Research Questions

To evaluate whether communication branches in the Canadian Federal Government evolved over the course of the decade to be managed strategically, the following research questions were developed for this study:

RQ1: To what extent is the head of the communication branch empowered?
RQ2: To what extent is the communication branch separate from other departmental branches?
RQ3: To what extent does a head lead an integrated communication function in the department?
RQ4: To what extent is the head of the communication branch a strategic manager rather than a communication technician or an administrative manager who supervises technical services?
RQ5: To what extent is there diversity within the communication branch?

METHODOLOGY

In this descriptive study, findings from three benchmarking studies of Canadian government communication branch management practices, commissioned by the Communication Community Office, were re-analysed. Only the 2001, 2003 and 2008 reports involving headquarters communications branches were used. Sixteen communication branches were selected. These 16 were represented in all three studies. Although the total number of communication branches participating in each study was greater than 16 (28 in 2001; 29 in 2003; 35 in 2008), only these 16 participated in all three. Some departments and thus communications branches were amalgamated in this period. On the flip side of the coin, a number of new departments and new communication branches were created later in the decade. Or, in some cases, when the benchmarking study was in the field, a communication branch was between heads and therefore did not participate in a given study. Therefore, a non-probability, purposive sample was employed. To respect the protocols established for the re-use of the benchmarking study data, individual government departments, communication branches and heads are not identified by name in the findings and discussion that follows. Of the 16 departmental communication branches in the sample, they represent departments in all fields of work: policy; regulatory; program; and operational. The communication branches vary in FTE size from small to very large.

Each of these studies employed the same methodology. First, heads were e-mailed a questionnaire and asked to report on various statistics concerning topics such as reporting relationships, composition of their management team, number of approved permanent and term positions and number of employees, classification levels, salary and operating budgets as well the number of and source of new hires. Second, heads were interviewed in-person for between one and two hours and asked about the challenges they faced and the changes they made, such as to the overall structure, organization and reporting, to and within various sub-units, to the Branch budget and resource allocation situation, to working and management relationships, to Branch policy, planning and performance measurement systems and to the HR management program. Heads were also asked to explore how they saw their leadership role in the Branch, in the department and across the communications community. These were semi-structured interviews, with heads receiving an interview guide with a list of interview themes a week or so before the interview. Questions pertinent to this research, taken from the questionnaire and interview guide for the 2008 study, are found in the Appendix.
The questionnaire and interview data were analysed separately in the reports but their implications were drawn together in a conclusions section. For the questionnaire questions, the data was presented directly in tables. For the qualitative stage, the data went through three stages: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and validation. First, the data in the interview transcripts was coded for evidence that answered the primary research questions. During the second stage, checklist matrices were created to summarize the codes that emerged from data reduction. Finally, during the conclusion stage, the matrices were reviewed to identify the meanings that emerged from the data. These were then presented in the report.

For this paper, only the questions that provided evidence relevant to the five research questions were re-analysed. Data gathered from organizational charts and government policies was used to corroborate the evidence from the three reports. To ascertain if there was an evolution towards a greater degree of strategic management over the ten-year period, where possible, tables were developed to plot data taken from each of the three reports in series.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**RQ1: To what extent is the head of the communication branch empowered?**

Vercic, Grunig and Grunig (1996 P. 37) described empowerment as “the senior public relations practitioner executive usually becomes part of the dominant coalition.” Rhee (2002 P. 164) also portrays empowerment in that way but includes an or “… or by a direct reporting relationship to senior management.”

Questions in each of the three benchmarking studies of Canadian Government communication branch management practices asked heads to report their reporting relationships and whether they were permanent members of the highest level executive committee in the department. Data are presented in Tables 1 and 2 following.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRANCH</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>DM†</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>ADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>ADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>12 DM/4 ADM</td>
<td>12 DM/4 ADM</td>
<td>13 DM/3 ADM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. DM is a Deputy Minister, the typical title given the public servant who is the most senior executive in a department or agency. An ADM is an Assistant Deputy Minister, an executive who reports to the DM and who is in charge of a major part of the department’s business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRANCH</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11 Yes / 5 No</td>
<td>15 Yes / 1 No</td>
<td>13 Yes / 3 No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

**Heads as Permanent Members of Highest Level Executive Committee**

The 2002 Government of Canada Communications Policy defines the head of communications as the “senior official designated to support the deputy head (Deputy Minister; head of the department or agency) in co-coordinating and directing their institution’s implementation of this Policy. Heads of communications are members of senior management and report directly to deputy heads. They are accountable to deputy heads for managing the communications function …” (Government of Canada 2002). There are grey areas in the application of the Communications Policy. Where in Table A it shows that the head of communication reports to an ADM, the head of communication still has been assigned primary responsibility for “coordinating and directing their institution’s implementation of this Policy” and for “managing the communications function.” But even so, they as Director Generals report to ADMs with communication in their titles, such as ADM of Regions and Communications, of Corporate Services and Communications or of Policy and Communications. In some cases, while communications reports to an ADM, the head of communication works directly with the DM and sits on executive committee (as noted by the examples in Table 2). That said, four of the heads of communication
are themselves ADMs, the rest being Directors General. These four ADMs have other responsibilities besides their main responsibility of communication, such as: ministerial correspondence, consultations, parliamentary affairs and/or stakeholder relations. To a great extent, these are complimentary services to communication.

Considering the Communications Policy was introduced in 2002, empowering the role of head of communication in policy, there were only slight bumps in reporting relationships and membership on the highest management committee. At the end of a decade, are heads more empowered now? The answer would be slightly more so – from an average of 75-80% of heads to 85-90%, based on these two criteria. That said, in the 2008 benchmarking study, the following statement was made about how heads saw their leadership position in the dominant coalition:

“Heads suggest that the community has made significant gains in enacting a leadership role. They see more Heads at the table. They also see Heads, through personality and competence, gaining credibility while at the table. They appreciate this even more so since they feel “it is a difficult, risk averse environment” for the communications function currently, where managerial implementation skills seem to be valued more than leadership, strategic or advisory skills.” (Government of Canada 2008)

That comment brings the discussion of RQ1 back to the definition of dominant coalition in a government. Thus far, dominant coalition is presented as the executives or senior leaders in the neutral, non-partisan public service and does not include a government’s political leadership. Certainly, it does not include the Minister and the Minister’s advisors (his or her senior political exempt staff) with whom the head of communication would have regular and sometimes direct contact. Though other authors have commented on this relationship (Akin 2010; Blanchfield & Bronskill 2010; Government of Canada 2009; Kozolanka 2009a, 2009b & 2006; Stanbury 2009; Thomas 2009), the benchmarking studies did not address the question of political or the government in power empowerment.

In summary, by 2009, it can be said that there is a fair degree of empowerment of the communication function within the Canadian public service.

**RQ2: To what extent is the communication branch separate from other departmental branches?**

The evidence presented in RQ1 also suggests that the communication branch is separate from other branches. In only a limited number of departments is the communication group part of a larger branch that includes functions other than communication. Even in these cases, the head of the communication groups works directly with the most senior executive and in approximately half the situations sits as a permanent member of the top management committee along side her or his direct supervisor.

Between 1999 and 2009, the number of heads of communication branches in the ADM classification (a step up from the typical Director General classification) increased from one to six – within this group of 16. As noted above, the ADM, Communication position came with a larger branch – a branch made larger by the addition of other, complimentary services. The trend was to increase the size of the communication function, through additions of complimentary service lines, through adding new communication services such as e- and on-line communication and/or through integrating existing communication service lines existing in other branches (see RQ3). The tables that follow illustrate the growth in communication branch size, as a separate function:

**Table 3**

*Communication Branch Budgets from Fiscal Years 2000-01 to 2007-08*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>$21.3M</td>
<td>$13.2M</td>
<td>$8.1M</td>
<td>$18.8M</td>
<td>$6.0M</td>
<td>$12.8M</td>
<td>$26.2M</td>
<td>$5.4M</td>
<td>$20.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>$20.4M</td>
<td>$11.8M</td>
<td>$8.6M</td>
<td>$17.3M</td>
<td>$7.4M</td>
<td>$9.9M</td>
<td>$5.1M</td>
<td>$3.3M</td>
<td>$1.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>$14.8M</td>
<td>$10.8M</td>
<td>$4.0M</td>
<td>$7.8M</td>
<td>$5.2M</td>
<td>$2.6M</td>
<td>$16.8M</td>
<td>$3.6M</td>
<td>$13.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>$9.9M</td>
<td>$5.1M</td>
<td>$4.8M</td>
<td>$3.9M</td>
<td>$2.2M</td>
<td>$1.7M</td>
<td>$5.0M</td>
<td>$1.9M</td>
<td>$3.1M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>$12.4M</td>
<td>$10.5M</td>
<td>$1.9M</td>
<td>$3.4M</td>
<td>$2.0M</td>
<td>$1.5M</td>
<td>$5.4M</td>
<td>$3.0M</td>
<td>$2.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>$7.7M</td>
<td>$5.2M</td>
<td>$2.5M</td>
<td>$5.8M</td>
<td>$4.0M</td>
<td>$1.8M</td>
<td>$4.6M</td>
<td>$2.7M</td>
<td>$1.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>$8.2M</td>
<td>$4.5M</td>
<td>$3.7M</td>
<td>$5.7M</td>
<td>$3.7M</td>
<td>$2.0M</td>
<td>$5.4M</td>
<td>$3.2M</td>
<td>$2.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>$7.4M</td>
<td>$4.8M</td>
<td>$2.6M</td>
<td>$7.1M</td>
<td>$4.6M</td>
<td>$2.4M</td>
<td>$6.4M</td>
<td>$3.2M</td>
<td>$3.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>$12.6M</td>
<td>$7.7M</td>
<td>$1.3M</td>
<td>$7.1M</td>
<td>$3.2M</td>
<td>$3.9M</td>
<td>$7.0M</td>
<td>$2.5M</td>
<td>$4.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>$4.7M</td>
<td>$4.0M</td>
<td>$700K</td>
<td>$5.8M</td>
<td>$5.1M</td>
<td>$700K</td>
<td>$3.2M</td>
<td>$2.7M</td>
<td>$500K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>$6.6M</td>
<td>$4.3M</td>
<td>$2.3M</td>
<td>$5.2M</td>
<td>$3.6M</td>
<td>$1.6M</td>
<td>$4.2M</td>
<td>$2.6M</td>
<td>$1.6M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>$6.9M</td>
<td>$4.1M</td>
<td>$2.8M</td>
<td>$4.8M</td>
<td>$3.6M</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
<td>$4.0M</td>
<td>$1.3M</td>
<td>$2.7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>$3.6M</td>
<td>$2.8M</td>
<td>$800K</td>
<td>$3.7M</td>
<td>$2.6M</td>
<td>$1.1M</td>
<td>$3.0M</td>
<td>$1.9M</td>
<td>$1.1M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>$3.7M</td>
<td>$3.0M</td>
<td>$700K</td>
<td>$2.0M</td>
<td>$1.6M</td>
<td>$400K</td>
<td>$1.8M</td>
<td>$1.4M</td>
<td>$400K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>$3.1M</td>
<td>$2.4M</td>
<td>$900K</td>
<td>$2.9M</td>
<td>$1.9M</td>
<td>$1.0M</td>
<td>$2.3M</td>
<td>$1.2M</td>
<td>$1.1M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>$4.8M</td>
<td>$3.2M</td>
<td>$1.6M</td>
<td>$3.4M</td>
<td>$2.3M</td>
<td>$1.1M</td>
<td>$4.8M</td>
<td>$2.1M</td>
<td>$2.7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$148.1M</td>
<td>$97.4M</td>
<td>$50.7M</td>
<td>$104.3M</td>
<td>$59.0M</td>
<td>$45.4M</td>
<td>$105.2M</td>
<td>$42.0M</td>
<td>$63.2M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 The A-base budget is the approved on-going base budget. B-base budgets are add-on funding that will sunset.
Table 4
Communication Branch Number of Approved Positions and Number of Employees in Those Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Agency</th>
<th>Total Number of Approved Indeterminate(^3) and Term Positions Followed by</th>
<th>Total Number of Indeterminate and Term Employees in Communications Branches Involved in All Three National HQ Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>178 / 180</td>
<td>182 / 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>208 / 171</td>
<td>206 / 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>158 / 120</td>
<td>53 / 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>140 / 115</td>
<td>68 / 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>111 / 96</td>
<td>73 / 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>99 / 92</td>
<td>76 / 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>111 / 75</td>
<td>126 / 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>72 / 66</td>
<td>70 / 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>71 / 60</td>
<td>54 / 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>70 / 56</td>
<td>52 / 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>58 / 46</td>
<td>59 / 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>43 / 43</td>
<td>28 / 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>54 / 42</td>
<td>28 / 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>41 / 39</td>
<td>47 / 44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTALS</th>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>1595</td>
<td>1461</td>
<td>1327</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) An indeterminate position is a fully and ongoing funded permanent position.

Communication branch budgets grew in this period because salary budgets grew absolutely and as a percentage of the total budget. None of these 16 communication branches are sublimated to any other branch within their departments, even though some report within a branch that combines other functions. Overall, these 16 communication branches operate as separate functions – able to “move communication resources from one strategic public to another” (Vercic, Grunig & Grunig 1996 P. 38; Rhee 2002 P. 164; Grunig 2009 P. 2). The evidence presented in RQ3 next supports this conclusion.

RQ3: To what extent does a head lead an integrated communication function in the department?

J. Grunig (2009 P. 2) describes integration as “all public relations functions into a single department” or the coordination of the “departments responsible for different communication activities.” Only integration allows makes it “possible for public relations to develop new communication programs for changing strategic publics – that is, to manage strategically” (Vercic, Grunig & Grunig 1996 P. 38). From RQ1 and RQ2, we learned that the Canadian government’s 2002 Communications Policy assigns communication branch heads accountability for managing the department’s total communication function, or in other words: integration.

Evidence from the benchmarking studies demonstrates how heads worked through out the 2000s to integrate the function. In the Background section of this paper, a point was made that at the end of the ‘90s, program and operations branches in many departments had invested in their own communication units. These units were created for publishing, internal communication, marketing communication and/or outreach/public education purposes. They were separate from similar units within a communication branch and independent of communication branch authority and accountability.

In the 2001, 11 of the 16 communication branches included in this study reported that there were independent ‘satellite’ communication units in their department. Four of the 11 said there was somewhat of a semi-formal, functional relationship between the satellite(s) head and the communication branch head. The rest did not have a working relationship. Branch heads described being either in the process of conducting or planning to conduct a review of satellite units, primarily to get a handle on the department resources given to communication activities carried out outside of the role of the communication branch. By 2003, four of the 11 had repatriated the satellite units in their department in to the communication branch. Another three were repatriated between 2003 and 2008, leaving only four of the 16 with independent satellite units. Even with the remaining four, there were steps taken toward functional reporting – driven by new government requirements for business planning and performance reporting across all departments. Though regionally based communication branches were not part of this study, the same trend appeared, both in terms of repatriation of previous independent regional communication office to become units within the communication branch and with regard to greater functional reporting. Certainly, it can be said that by 2009, in any given department there was greater integration of the communication function. The 2002 Communication Policy provided the authority. Towards the end of this period, as noted previously, the centralization philosophy of the government in power also fueled the need to integrate the communication function. The centralization of approval processes in the Privy Council Office and the Prime Minister’s Office, both for giving the green light to any communication initiative and for the signing off of communication products, forced all communication units in a department to follow a single approval format.
RQ4: To what extent is the head of the communication branch a strategic manager rather than a communication technician or an administrative manager who supervises technical services?

Likely (2004) examined the data from the 2001 and 2003 benchmarking surveys to determine the roles that heads of communication enacted. He discovered that heads enacted three roles: technician; manager; and leader. He argued that the leader role was different than the manager role, be it as an administrative manager or as a strategic manager. Talking about all heads that participated in the 2001 and 2003 studies (not just the 16 portrayed here), he stated that:

“The executive leader role takes many of the activities described as part of the enactment of the manager role to a higher level of conceptualization. Where the manager, for example, developed goals and objectives for the branch, managed the branch budget, managed people or planned public relations programs, the executive leader reprioritized the branch (vision; direction; purpose), identified, acquired and re-allocated resources, developed a comprehensive HR regime and developed an integrated planning framework. The executive leader also designed organizational structures, developed learning and training programs, created centres of expertise and formalized relationships with clients. From the evidence, this conceptualization of a higher level role is more than simply a fuller depiction of the manager role.” (Likely 2004 P. 143).

The evidence from those studies suggested a daily juggling act, as heads moved from one role enactment to the next:

Regardless of the size of the communication function, heads reported in interview that they also enacted the manager role. A number stated they were active as technicians as well. Drawing items from Broom’s 24-item set or variations thereof to describe manager role enactment (D.M. Dozier in J.E. Grunig, 1992; D.M. Dozier and G.M. Broom, 1995; D.M. Dozier, E.L. Toth, S.A. Serini, D.K. Wright and A.G. Emig, 1998; L.A. Grunig, E.L. Toth and L.C. Hon, 2001; L.A. Grunig, J.E. Grunig and D.M. Dozier, 2002), each and every head stated that they spent time: managing goals and supervising for their branch; preparing and managing the branch budget; managing people and supervising the work of others; making communication policy decisions; informing and counseling management; meeting with clients and executives; meeting peers; solving public relations problems; managing public relations programs; implementing new programs; evaluating program results; being held responsible and accountable for the success or failure of a public relations program; conducting or analyzing research; and managing the organization’s response to issues. The smaller the size of the communication branch, the more the head personally participated in department or agency day-to-day issues management (solving public relations problems; managing the organization’s response to issues; informing and counseling management). All heads stated that they “got their hands dirty” when the problem or issue was of major importance and its management involved the Minister and/or Deputy Minister. Many were involved on a regular basis (briefing; counseling; facilitating decision-making; etc.). For others, it was on a case-by-case basis. On an irregular basis but when the importance of the issue demanded it, up to half of the heads claimed they were also doers: they wrote, edited or produced messages (briefing notes; Q&As; speaking points; media lines; etc.). That is, they enacted the technician role. This was the only time when they played this role and their experience and background (coming up through the ranks with experience in issues management and media relations), not the size of the branch, determined whether they enacted the technician role or not. (Likely 2004 P. 142).

As the number of service offerings increased and thus the size of the communication branch grew throughout the 2000s, it became more difficult for heads to juggle these three roles. Data from the three benchmarking studies describes a reorganization of executive positions in the branch, a reorganization intended to allow the head to perform higher-level roles on a more consistent basis. In 2001, seven of the 16 communication branches involved in this research study had established a second-in-command (2IC) position to support the work of the head. By 2003, eight branches had this position. By 2008, 15 of the 16 employed this role.

The 2IC was a position a classification level below the head and one or two classification levels above the rest of the executives on the management team.4 Evidence from the three benchmarking studies points to two models for the operation of the 2IC position. The more prevalent model is to have the 2IC responsible for the daily media relations, issues management and communication product approval processes. The 2IC would oversee the media relations unit, the account executive units (communication advisors assigned to individual internal client units) and the ministerial support communication unit. This portfolio would handle response to reporter inquiries, issues and ministerial needs (announcements; speeches; events; etc.) as well as handle the approval mechanisms for communication products (media lines; Qs & As; media releases; speeches; briefing notes; etc.) through a long and complicated government approval process. Ultimately, the head is part of the approval process and would get involved if the issue was deemed serious enough that the Minister and/or Deputy Minister were also actively involved but the management of this technical work – as well as writing and editing as a technician when required - would fall to the 2IC. In this first model, the head has responsibility for the management of other communication branch effort including research, planning and production activities as well as leadership activities around human resource development, liaison with clients/heads of other branches, branch and department business and performance measurement programs and strategic support to the Minister, Deputy Minister and the department’s management team. For the second model, the roles of the head and 2IC are reversed. By the end of the 2000s, there was only one communication branch employing the second model. The first model was predominant. By the end of the decade for the 16 communication branches in this study, the head enacted both the manager and leader roles but not the technical role.

In support of this statement, heads stated in the interviews conducted for the three benchmarking studies their increased involvement in business planning and HR recruitment and retention. In the third study in 2008, heads complained about the time required to

---

4 There are a number of levels to the Canadian government’s classification schema for executives (EX). If the head is a Director General (DG) at the EX-03 level, the 2IC would be an EX-02 with the rest of the management team at the EX-01 level. If the head is an EX-04 (ADM), the 2IC would be an EX-03.
adhere to the government's new accountability framework and the effort needed to develop business plans for the branch as well as performance measurement reports. Almost all of the 16 communication branches had a comprehensive HR Plan, most of these integrated with a business plan and a strategic communication framework and/or plan. Employee turnover rates in many of the communication branches were approaching 40-60% in the late 2000s (Government of Canada 2008b). Some of this was from retirements and short-term parental leaves, but most of the turnover came from the "churn" within the government’s communication community brought on by a sellers market: there were more available positions than there were qualified candidates to fill them. The head's role in trying to maintain a critical mass in his or her cubicles can be summed up in this statement from the 2008 benchmarking report:

"Many Heads believe that, in today's market, the No. 1 job of the DG is recruitment. This is a three-pronged role. First, Heads must create an environment in the branch that will be attractive to potential hires. This includes an appropriate work/life balance, a sense of community and great team spirit, and professional development opportunities including the provision of second language training. Second, the Head can't rely on Human Resources and must build staffing capacity and capabilities in the branch. Included in building capacity and capabilities are a living HR Plan, assignment of an EX or IS as a senior staffing lead, and constantly running competitions. Finally, the Head plays a hands-on role as chief recruiter. A good amount of time is spent networking, identifying talent and then calling and pitching potential recruits. Many Heads meet with anyone who sends over an unsolicited CV. A number visit university campuses. Heads who believe they are successful at recruiting state that they are constantly doing anticipatory staffing. (Government of Canada 2008a).

In summary then, over the decade, heads moved from a combination of technical and managerial roles to a combination of managerial and leader roles ensuring the heads were in a position to be able to manage the branch strategically.

**RQ5: To what extent is there diversity within the communication branch?**

Diversity is described as the inclusion of: “both men and women in all roles, as well as practitioners of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds” (J. Grunig 2009). The practice of excellent public relations and the ability to manage the communication function strategically is not possible without a diverse workforce – one that matches the diversity in any given society.

Heads of Canadian government communication branches, as with heads of every other departmental unit, much ensure a degree of diversity within their staff ranks. Each much match a formula for the number of women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of minorities in their employee mix. This mix must match the workforce availability percentages of these groups within the Canadian society. For example, the percentages for 2005-06 were: women 52.2% (average across government 53.5%); Aboriginal peoples 2.5% (average across government 4.2%); persons with disabilities 3.6% (average across government 5.8%); and members of minorities 10.4% (average across government 8.6%) (Government of Canada 2008a). Heads must report the percentages in their yearly HR Plan and establish remedial steps if needed. Evidence from the 2008 benchmarking study suggests that heads usually were making three or four of their quotas, in the same situation as any other branch head. There was diversity represented in the communication branch. The data did not give a breakdown of how this diversity was spread throughout the classification levels.

In 2008, while the number of women increased to 53.8% across the public service, the numbers differed per employment category. In the EX category, the percentage of women was 41.7% (this is a large category from EX-01 Directors to EX-05 Deputy Ministers). The percentage of women in the communication IS category (IS-01 entry level to IS-06 managers) was 69.2%. The last figure did not include women in the communication EX or executive category. That figure was unavailable. But, from the three benchmarking studies it is possible to determine the number of heads who were women, as the next table illustrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Gender diversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRANCH</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6 W / 10 M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that as the number of women increased within the communication branch, the number of women in the head position grew as well. Within the communication officer cadre (Information Services classification) as a whole, 69.2% of the employees were women in 2008. Within the group of heads of communication, women filled 62.5% of the head positions in our sample of 16 in 2008. Contrary to the finding of the Excellence Study that women supervised communication branches of a smaller size than men, that was not the finding here (Grunig L. et al 2002 P.184). Women were heads of small, medium and large communication branches. In summary, there appears to be growing diversity within the communication branch.
This study demonstrated that five of the generic principles as presented by Vercic et al. (1996) are applicable as a test of strategic management in the Canadian federal government communication branch situation. The study also showed that Canadian government communication branches had moved to a position where it could be said that they are managing the communication branch strategically. This is said with caution since the sample size of this study only represented a little less than one-half the total number of communication branches in the last benchmarking study in 2008. The sample, though, includes a very good representation of the major departments in the government.

The applicability of the other generic principles (involvement of public relations in strategic management; two-way symmetrical model of public relations; knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical public relations; and ethical) was not evaluated. The data from the benchmarking studies would require additional analyses to address these principles. But, since each benchmarking study only dealt with communication management practices at the public service level, it would be problematic to probe concepts such as strategic management, symmetrical public relations and ethics without research at the political government level as well. To more fully understand if the communication practices in the Canadian federal government can be explained by the excellence theory, future studies could augment this research by focusing on communication management practices at the public service – political interface.

Finally, we agree with Liu et al. (2010 P. 211) that it is “time for communication scholars to catch up, providing a better link between government communication practices, applied communication research, and theoretical development.” We would also add that it is time for researchers who focus on government communication to utilize the excellence theory and the generic principles in their studies and for scholars knowledgeable about the theory and principles to apply them to government communication management practices in other setting.

REFERENCES


Proceedings of the 17th International Public Relations Research Symposium BledCom 41


APPENDIX

Selected Questions Utilized in this Study
Taken from the Original Interview Guides

Communications Community Office
The Fourth Benchmarking Study of Federal Government Communications Branches

2007-08 Headquarters Survey Questionnaire

Question No. 1:
Please indicate the number of Ministers, Secretaries of State, Deputy Ministers, Associate and Assistant Deputy Ministers (or equivalent) in your department or agency.

Question No. 2:
Please indicate the current total number of department or agency-approved positions.

Question No. 3:
Please indicate the department or agency 2007-08 approved budget.

Question No. 4:
Who by title is designated the Head of Communications (as defined in the 2002 GOC Communications Policy). To whom does the Head of Communications report? Has this reporting relationship changed in the past few years?

Question No. 5:
Is the Head of Communications a member of the department or agency Executive Committee (the highest level management committee)?

Question No. 6:
Please indicate if there are one or more department-wide communications committees. If yes, please indicate the title and role of each committee, who chairs each committee and give an overview of each committee's membership.

Question No. 7
Please indicate the 2007-08 A-base budget allocation for the headquarters Communications Branch, and describe in general terms how the budget might have changed in the last two fiscal years (A-base budget increases; budget reductions; internal reallocations within the budget).

Question No. 8:
Please indicate additional B-base budget allocations over and above the 2007-08 A-base budget reported in #7, and their source.

Question No. 9:
Please indicate the members of your Communications Branch senior management team, by title and classification level.

Question No. 10:
Please indicate the number of approved indeterminate and term positions at each classification level. Please indicate the number of indeterminate and term employees currently employed at each classification level.

Question No. 11:
Please indicate the number of new indeterminate or term employees hired at each these classification levels since September 1st 2005 and the source of their recruitment.

Recruitment Sources:
A = from within the department
B = from within the federal government communications community
C = from within the federal government but from outside the communications community
D = from outside of government
E = from being bridged as a student

Question No. 12:
Please indicate the average number of Coop / FSWEP students per year working in the Branch from 2004 to 2007.

Question No. 13:
Please indicate the total number of ‘satellite’ communications units at headquarters (formal communication units outside of and independent from the Communications Branch), and the type of unit.

Question No. 14:
Does your department or agency have lead responsibility with Special Operating Agencies (SOAs) and/or Portfolio Partners? If so, please indicate the number of separate communications branches with which you have a direct working relationship.

Communications Community Office
The Fourth Benchmarking Study of Federal Government Communications Branches

2007-08 Headquarters Interview Topics
Interviews with Heads of Communications

PROPOSED INTERVIEW TOPICS

The purpose of the interview is to discuss your approach to the management and leadership of your communications branch. Management and leadership topics are listed below. Discussion of each topic will follow a similar pattern: what changes have you made; what pressures did you face that necessitated that changes be made; what challenges did you overcome in the change process; and what new results have you achieved with the changes made. For the purposes of this interview, management activities and leadership activities are seen as different. Bennis and Townsend (Reinventing Leadership: Strategies to Empower the Organization. William Morrow, New York. 1997) offer this difference: “The manager maintains: the leader develops.” Management (with core activities commonly defined as (1) planning and budgeting, (2) organizing and staffing, (3) controlling and problem solving) executes and administers. On the other hand, leadership (with core activities as (1) visioning and strategizing, (2) energizing, motivating and inspiring (3) aligning and enabling) creates,
builds and bridges and guides. Please think about management and leadership differences as you prepare your answers to the following topics:

1. Please describe any changes made in the overall structure, organization and reporting arrangements to the Communications Branch since 2004 (or since you became Head).
   - Structural Models
   - Organization of Work Groups
   - 2IC
   - Reporting
   - Communication Committees/Networks

2. Please describe any changes made to and within these sub-units since 2004.
   - Head of Communication’s Office
   - Ministerial Communications
   - Policy and Planning
   - Media Relations
   - Advisory Services/Client Account Executives/Teams
   - Internal Communications/Change Management Communications
   - Citizen-Centered Communications/Outreach
   - Promotion/Marketing Communications
   - Web/e-communication/Social Media
   - Issue/Crisis/Risk Management
   - Creative Services (writing/editing; publishing; audio-visual; exhibits; speeches; etc.)
   - Advertising
   - Research and Evaluation (environmental scanning; POR; performance measurement; consultation; etc.)
   - Services (translation; distribution; media monitoring; inquiries; etc.)
   - Other (ATIP; Parliamentary Affairs; etc.)
   - Administration (finance; IT; HR; etc.)

3. Please describe any changes to the Branch budget and resource allocation situation since 2004.

4. Please describe any changes to your HR management program since 2004.
   - Recruitment
   - Competitions
   - Orientation Programs
   - Retention/Attrition Rates
   - Succession Planning (EXs; IS-06s; IS-04s and 5s)
   - Competency Profiles
   - Learning Environment
   - Learning/Training/Development Programs
   - Growing your Own Talent
   - Coop / FSWEP Students
   - Training & Individual Employee Learning Budgets
   - HR Business Manager / HR Plan

5. Please describe any changes made in working and management relationships since 2004.
   - within your Branch, between your office and sub-units or among sub-units
   - between your Branch and the Minister’s and/or Deputy Minister’s Offices
   - between your Branch and internal clients
   - between your Branch and Regional Offices
   - between your Branch and ‘satellite’ units in the department or agency
   - between your Branch and departmental or agency SOAs or Portfolio Partners
   - between your Branch and various agencies (PCO; TB; other)

6. Please describe any changes to Branch policy, planning and performance measurement systems since 2004.
   - Policies, Procedures and Guidelines
   - Annual Plans (Business; Communications; etc.)
   - Planning Integration and Involvement (planning unit; strategists; regional offices; etc.)
   - Communication Program Evaluation
   - Communication Branch Performance Measurement

7. Please describe your Branches’ unique or best practices (what you do better than other Branches).

8. Please describe how you see your leadership role: in the Branch; in the department; and across the communications community.
   - role in the Branch
   - role vis-à-vis a 2IC, if any
   - role vis-à-vis your management team
   - role vis-à-vis regional communications
   - role vis-à-vis a department or agency wide Communications Committee, if any
   - role within the department or agency senior executive team
   - role vis-à-vis portfolio partners, if any
   - role vis-à-vis central agencies
   - role within the communications community
   - role as a leader or an agent of change

9. Please provide demographic information for the Head of Communications.
   - How long have you worked in the GOC?
   - How long have you worked in communications?
   - What were your last three previous positions?
   - Is your education and training in communications / public relations or in another field(s)?
   - Is it your desire to remain in communications?
E-government in Romania - Features and Trends

by Maria Silvia Bilașevschi and Adina Liliana Aldea

ABSTRACT

Romania underwent a period of great change and development as a result of the transformations encountered in the field of informational technology and communication and also, as a result of the globalization process in order to adapt to the requirements imposed by the E.U. and to meet its citizens' needs of information. Nowadays, E-governance represents a strategic element of the national economy both for Romania and for other countries.

This article suggests that Romanian e-Governance initiatives may potentially have major organizational impacts by the help of communication among the governmental agencies, ministries, public services and citizens. The entire public service needs to improve its working methods and to adapt the existing governmental organisation to the new informational era. In Romania, the e-Government implementation started in the early 2000. Because the Romanian e-Government system has made a lot of progress since its beginnings led to a significant number of international prizes, world wide recognition, a series of pilot projects and also accomplished and implemented projects.

In order to magnify the e-Governance benefits we will discuss about three essential matters: interoperability, information and interactivity. We observed that the problems regarding the interoperability matter may be related to the technological level but in the case of information, especially interactivity, the problems that appear are commonly related to will. First of all, the governmental agencies or the ministries would WANT to display their services in order to be available and useful for other agencies. Moreover, the agencies would WANT to readjust the services displayed by other agencies in order to create and develop new systems. Only after these stages are completed all these systems are to be used equally by each citizen regardless the way they interact with e-Governance.

More precisely, the goal of the paper is to analyze how the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCIS), the institution commissioned with the governmental policy in the field of electronic communication, mail services, information societies and its services, creates and implements the e-Governmental solutions. The main goal that determined the elaboration of a number of e-Governance strategies is to offer public services through electronic means using the available funds as efficient as possible. Romania, and other member states of the European Union, could save hundred of billion of Euros from the public funds if they update their administrations according to the action plan regarding the on-line administration proposed by the E.U. at the end of 2006.
When the European officials discuss about reducing the bureaucracy, they refer especially to e-Administration and e-Government. However, e-Government is mainly developing only on the promises made by the public institutions without taking into account the opinions and the wishes of the community members and without citizens knowing all the details about its activity and purposes.

We also discuss about the vision of the Romanian Ministry of Communications and Information Society in order to highlight their goals. These goals are the creation of a coherent and integrated national system for the on-line public services offered for each citizen, for the business community and for everyone interested.

This article draws on two projects implemented by MCIS: www.e-guvernare.ro and e-Romania www.romania.gov.ro. One of these portals: www.e-guvernare.ro was considered one of the best and received international appreciation in 2005. The second, www.romania.gov.ro, is for the time being still a concept or more a pilot portal.

Our research findings were influenced by several studies published in the last years such as the study Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide (2007): A Longitudinal Assessment of Municipal Websites Throughout the World.

On this paper we will try to answer to a series of questions as: How useful are these portals? How do these portals please the citizen regarding the e-Government? How does the citizen know what information he can access and use from the e-Government system? How often projects such as e-Government are abandoned and fail, though they provide useful and in real time information, only because they are not as accessed as the promoter expected?

We will highlight some suggestions for the improvement of the Romanian e-Government such as: the Romanian authorities should and must support financially the development and the extending of these services through electronic means, to stimulate the interoperability between the national, European and international public services and to establish fruitful and constant partnerships with the civil society and the private sector.
G, B, C OF E-GOVERNMENT

The changes brought by the globalization at international scale gave birth to new opportunities for all the countries regarding the public and private sector.

In the last several years we’ve witnessed a revolution of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) with consequences that made many countries to adapt their strategies according to the opportunities offered by the new means of mass communication. In addition, we agree with Robert Schware who states that „the success of ICT-enabled development (or e-development) will thus not be measured by the diffusion of technology, but by advances in development itself: economic growth and, ultimately, achievement of the Millenium Development Goals.”.

From the new media perspective, the main goal of each government is to use the Internet in order to ease the communication process with the internal and external stakeholders, thus making the e-Government process more connected to citizens.

Therefore, we discuss about the emergence of new governmental forms that offer the following advantages, according to the World Bank: better access to the public information and services of the authorities, reduced bureaucracy, empowerment through information, transparency and anti-corruption, improved services for business and rapid exchange of data between the central and local authorities. However, “the real benefit of e-government lies not in the use of technology per se, but in its application to processes of transformation”.

Nowadays citizens ask for better services, higher security and democracy, while the business environment asks for the reduction of bureaucracy and an increased efficiency. The success of the e-Government is given by the benefits and facilities offered after its implementation.

In order to magnify the e-Governance benefits we will discuss about three essential matters: interoperability, information and interactivity. We observed that the problems regarding the interoperability matter may be related to the technological level but in the case of information, especially interactivity, the problems that appear are commonly related to will. First of all, the governmental agencies or the ministries would want to display their services in order to be available and useful for other agencies. Moreover, the agencies would want to readjust the services displayed by other agencies in order to create and develop new systems. Only after these stages are completed all these systems are to be used equally by each citizen regardless the way they interact with e-Governance.

Interoperability means the capacity of the informational system of the public institutions to communicate and exchange data in a consistent and coherent way, according to the national Laws regarding the interoperability.

Since its emergence, e-Government has been defined in a variety of way. At a first sight, e-Government is about the use of ICT and multimedia technologies to improve the access to and delivery of government services to stakeholders. An interesting idea about the e-Government, states that “e-Government is about using the tools and systems made possible by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to provide better public services to citizen and businesses”.

Another concept is provided by the World Bank as it follows: “e-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government.”.

However, e-Government means much more: it is different from but builds on the administrative reform policies inspired by New Public Management (NPM) implemented throughout the EU over the past twenty years. Nevertheless, e-Government goes even further.

E-government is about a process of reform in the way governments work, share information and deliver services to external and internal citizens-clients. Specifically, e-government connects information technologies to transform relations with citizens, businesses and other arms of government. Analogous to e-commerce, which allows businesses to transact with each other more efficiently (B2B) and brings customers closer to businesses (B2C), e-government aims to make the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), government and business enterprises (G2B), and inter-agency relationships (G2G) more transparent.

Government-to-Government (G2G) facilitates the data sharing and electronic exchanges between government organizations at national, local and county level.

Government-to-Business (G2B) – “G2B services can include provision of legal and statistical data, means for online tax payment, submission of information, getting licenses or paying fines via Internet, etc. The projects aimed at the provision of information for business support and development, such as informational portals for potential investors,
on-line expert consultations, legislation databases or on-line trading platforms, are also extremely important”10.

Government-to-Citizen (G2C) - according to Milena Head and Eldon Yu-zen Li 11– this model has three instances: m-communication, m-transactions, and m-voting.

In the paper Demand for online government services: Case studies from St. Petersburg, Anastasia Golubeva and Irina Merkurzeva, identify other stakeholders, than those mentioned above, that can benefit from the opportunities offered by the e-Government services, such as employees and non-profit organizations (G2N).

Government-to-Employees is about the use at different hierarchic levels communication tools between governmental institutions and their employees. „Creation of integrated information systems in order to gather, transfer, process and store internal agency data provides foundations for further elaboration of government electronic services offered to external users – citizens and organizations”12.

Government-to-Nonprofit Organizations – nonprofit organizations frequently act as cooperating partners in e-government projects and therefore in many cases can be considered as experts in this field.

### E-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY IN ROMANIA

At the beginning of 2001, Romania made its first steps towards e-Government. One of its first attempts it’s considered to be the high school entrance exam, in the summer of the year 2001 when 203,000 pupils/candidates were distributed at their chosen high school and the competition results were published on the internet.

As a result of this success, the Romanian Information Technology Initiative (RITI) has been created with the aim to promote policy and regulatory reform and to create enabling environments for ICT, including e-commerce, e-Government and an open and secure Internet.

In order to reach some goals of e-Government, such as reducing the bureaucracy, costs, increase the transparency of the public institutions, in March 2002 the Romanian e-Procurement system was launched. In January 2006, the electronic payments between government and citizens have been amended and that meant the development of the electronic payment via bank cards. www.eppractice.eu › Home › Factsheets

In March 2006, the early e-Auction portal was extended “to manage the on-line auctions of over 1000 public authorities and more than 82 product categories”13.

The official e-Government portal was launched in September 2003, providing a “one-stop shop to central and local public services and forms online”14. Users can register for “interactive and transactional services”. As for the services provided by this site, as will discuss later on this paper there are several fully online interactive services and approximately 700 administrative forms which can be “downloaded, filled-in, signed and electronically submitted to the appropriate authority”. This portal is known as “Electronic National System, and provides non-stop access to information from central and local government institutions, official forms and interactive services.

In November 2006, a new step regarding the improvement of online government has been made when the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) launched the Virtual Payment Office, www.ghiseul.ro as to facilitate the interaction between citizens and public institutions by offering online services such as the payment of taxes, fines and other financial obligations via bank cards. The first service provided on the Virtual Payment Office was the online payment of traffic fines.

A new agency functions since June 2007, Agency for the Information Society Services (ASSI), that acts, according to its initial regulations like a Government CIO Office, taking over the specific e-Government General Inspectorate of Communications and Information Technology, abolished in April 2007. Its main tasks have been the implementation of e-Government and administrative services at national level. As for its responsibilities we’ll briefly mention: the operational development of the www.e-guvernare.ro portal, the administration of the electronic public procurement portal (www.e-licitatie.ro) and the IT system for the electronic assignment of road transport authorisations (www.autorizatiauto.ro).

A breakthrough in the Romanian e-Government, as the Minister for MCI Károly Bobély said, was the release, in February 2008, of the Knowledge-Based Economy project that enabled business people to register their businesses and apply for permits and other documents on-line15. This new updated system desires to provide “information and services to public authorities, citizens, small businesses, schools and public libraries”.

Following the enactment of the Decision no. 198 in February 2008 “contracting authorities are compelled to use electronic means for at least 20 % of public procurement” and in order to respect the Manchester Declaration and the E.U objectives, the Romanian Ministers has to have at least “50 % of public procurement above the European thresholds to be carried out electronically by 2010”.

An important project is the “platform for the integration of e-government services in the National Electronic System (SEN)” with the aim to “increase the quality of e-Government

11 Head, M., Li, E. Y. (2009), Mobile and Ubiquitous Commerce: Advanced E-Business Methods, Premier Reference Source
12 Ibidem
15 www.eppractice.eu › Home › News
services provided by the central public administration for citizens and business by introducing the Point of Single Contact (electronic) and the One-Stop Shop concept in e-Government.” As to achieve all the mentioned promises, measures were taken such as: “the implementation of the One-Stop Shop concept for the electronic governance, for users - basically Romanian people and firms - to interact in a single electronic point with the Public Administration” in order to exchange documents and information and procedures as to ease the access to a remote service by electronic means.16.

Not only through laws, regulations and decisions the e-Government system has been improved but through training sessions on Electronic Public Procurement at which participated over 700 trainees by June 2009. 52% of the participants were representatives of contracting authorities that use e-Procurement services, whereas 48% were representatives of economic operators, as the ASSI stated. These training sessions desired to “offers better access to public contracts, and simplifies tendering procedures for both suppliers and contracting authorities.” Since November 2009 the points of single contact are operational as a part of the e-Government portal, and through them it is desired to ease the procurement of online authorizations required to conduct activities in Romania for the E.U. citizens.

Another interesting project, from governmental perspective, it’s the e-Romania portal launched on June 2009 that comprises two dimensions: an informational one containing general facts on Romania’s history, geography, and administrative structure; and an operational dimension with real time online services for citizens and companies, tax payment, issuance of legal documents, criminal records and certain authorizations. This pilot project it’s desired to help “decentralize services, elevating the government efficiency level and reduce administrative costs”.

AWARDS

The Computerized Admission in High Schools and Vocational Schools (ADLIC) received the “Best Practice” award at the International e-Government conference, Brussels in 2001. As a recognition of the e-Government “one-stop shopping” concept, the Romanian project was the only European project chosen to participate at the World Summit on the Information Society at Geneva (December 2003), as to be given as an example in an international tour (2 years), together with other four projects from the whole world.

Hereby, since 2001 till today SEI (IT Based Educational System) gathered some awards and international recognition such as: the “eLearning in Praxis” award given by the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia for “the best solution for eLearning”, ”Good Practice Label”- European e-Government Awards 2009, European IT Excellence Award 2008, Frankfurt - eLearning AEL, “Best Practice in eGovernment” 2007 – award given by the European Commission for the Educational Database, International Project Management Association


BEST PRACTICE

Today, e-Government is a part of the strategy created by the Information Society, focusing mainly on “back office infrastructures and services”18. The political responsibility belongs to the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (MIRA) while the executive control belongs to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT). The Agency for Information Society Services (ASSI) is a part of MCIT and it is responsible for implementing and managing at national level electronic systems related to e-Government such as the following portals: e-Government (e-guvernare.ro), the electronic System for Public Procurement (e-licitatie.ro), the Virtual Payment Desk (www.ghiseul.ro), and the IT System for the electronic attribution of international on transport goods (autorizatiiauto.ro)19.

INTERNET ACCESS

According to Benchmark Measurement, November 2009 report, Romania has made some progress on Information Society indicators, such as internet access and broadband availability.

In e-Government, online availability of public services has increased, but usage by business is stalling. According to the same report, Romania’s e-Government organizational strategy “falls into a wider Information Society policy which aims at modernizing Romania’s administration and the economy”.

The National Electronic System (SEN) offers information, online forms, access to legislation and other services needed by citizens. Furthermore, by October 2009 SEN comprised 11.581 public institutions and another 1231 public institutions were added by the end of that month; the raise was about 11%.

Following are the data collected by the Benchmark Measurements for 2009:Information Society Indicators.

According to the Internet World Stats, in September 2008, Romania had 7,430,000 Internet users as of Sept/08, 33.4% penetration, per GfK. 1,949,100 Internet broadband connections as of Nov/08, per ITU, 8.8% p.r. Population 21,498,616.

The use of internet rose up since the year 2000 by 828.8% according to New Media Trend Watch.


The UN e-Government survey conducted in 2008, placed Romania under mid range countries by utilization of e-Government online services (percent of utilization 41%). This indicated that Romania e-Government strategy needs to increase its efficiency in order to attract more potential users to use the online e-government services.

Regarding the e-Government, and especially e-Commerce, only 3% of all individuals in Romania had used internet for ordering goods or services in 2008. This low attendance is due to the fear one may have about online transactions, considering them to be risky. The use of debit/credit cards online is not very extended for buyers. According to a study made by Gemius in October 2009, about a half of internet users are suspicious about buying goods or services online.

At this stage, it is important to mention that the authorities assigned with the public information regarding e-Government’s services have to plan out the promotional campaign in order to catch the attention of its future users more thoroughly.

**E-GOVERNMENT AND E-ROMANIA PORTALS**

At the present time, according to the Government Resolution no.12/2009, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society (MCSI) is the institution assigned with the governmental politics regarding the electronic communication, information technology and the services of the informational society. In agreement with public statements of the authorities, the main objective of this institution is to accomplish the e-Romania online services together with its strategic component of e-Government.

The term of “informational society” refers both at the interaction between authorities and citizens through the increase of operational efficiency and at the increase of competitiveness in the business field through the complex use of Information and Communication Technology (TIC). All the MCSI’s objectives concerning the e-Government field must be elaborated in the line with the current necessities and realities of the Romanian society, keeping in mind the exigencies imposed by the European Union.

In attempt to implement the e-Government system, MCSI tried to take into account all the involved stakeholders in order to action more efficiently at organizational, financial and administrative level. Thus, as to reduce the bureaucracy through the e-Government strategies, both public administrations: central and local together with private companies must be involved in order to define a coherent framework. The use of the newest communicational technologies is intended to allow the citizens and the businessmen to communicate efficiently with the public authorities 24 hours per day.


Because 47.3% of the Romanian population lives at the country side and has no access to Internet, through the implementation and development of the e-Government system, the authorities desire was not to reduce or renounce at the traditional institutional offices but to stimulate the use of cost-free, easy to use services. At this stage, it is important to mention that many countries opted for an executive agency to handle the development, roll out and management of shared services and infrastructures: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, and Sweden.

WWW.E-GUVERNARE.RO

According to the structure of the portal www.e-guvernare.ro, it is structured on two sections: One-dimensional Interaction – the first section -Online forms allows downloading the files and the documents used in many different public institutions which can be printed, filled in and sent by classical means of delivery (post office) to all allocated institutions. The number of the available documents will be in continuous development. At this time a number of approximately 150 forms are available for download. These forms may be signed electronically according to the legislation in force and sent to the addressed agencies through electronic means that guarantee the delivery. The purpose of this section is to inform the citizens regarding legislation and the regulations associated with the interaction. The names of the documents and the names of the public institutions are ranged in alphabetic order in order to be more easily identified. The access to the documents does not require any previous logging in as user. Within the section of Online documents, there is an internal section whose purpose is to provide the required information necessary under attendance and one meant to access the administrative portal web. The most important online administrative forms belong to: Ministries, Inspectorates and Departments of Education, Local Councils, Cultural Institutions, Institutions Coordinated/Subordinated by/ to the Prim Ministry, Hospitals, Town Halls, Autonomous institutions and so on.

Bi-dimensional Interaction – the second section is dedicated to the on-line services which ask for an online fill-in of a series of documents meant to solve some problems related to the administrative part, without being necessary to come to the inquiry offices. Since June 2009, the online service has been active as a result of prioritizing the functionality of the existing system. Through the Unique Form System there are six services online available at present, and their number will be progressively extended through Government decisions. The system is available at the moment, to more than 650 companies, the most important contributors and large tax payers from the entire country, and requires initial registration. The following services are available at present: Declaration submitted to ANOFM (National Agency for Employment), Declaration submitted to CNAS (National House for Health Insurance), Declaration regarding the payment obligations towards social insurance budget (National House for Pension and other Insurance Rights), Declaration regarding the profit tax (Ministry of Finance), Deduction regarding VAT (Ministry of Finance) and Declaration regarding the payment obligations towards the general consolidated budget (Ministry of Finance).

Under the Online Services quick access one may also access links regarding: The electronic system for issuing licenses for international carriers (www.autorizatiiauto.ro), The Virtual Payment Office (www.ghiseul.ro), Public Procurement Electronic System (www.e-licitatie.ro), Romanian cyber crime center (www.efrauda.ro), Online customs’ declarations, Visa Online (www.e-guvernare.ro).

There are also quick access sections to external portals: Government of Romania, The Senate of Romania, Chamber of Deputies, Presidency and intern quick access: Public administration on the Internet, Public institutions registration, Enrolled Public Institutions, Public Institutions - Login.

Though we repeatedly accessed the external and internal links, some of them weren’t functional or the access had been restricted.

WWW.ROMANIA.GOV.RO

Given that in June 2009 the main priority of the MCSI was the interoperability of the existent Romanian systems at central, regional and local level the e-Romania application has been launched. This project is meant to be a national system included within the public online services, in the best interest of any citizen, business environment and any local and central administrative institutions.

MCSI promises that by the end of 2010, they will have implemented the entire system of services included within the e-Romania program. The sum of 500 million Euro estimated in order to implement the strategy approved by the Government will be funded from the following sources: structural funds at our disposal from the European Union budget, other types of non-refundable funds etc.
“The Romanian strategy implies more than a simple web portal, as it has been speculated. It is also about the internal relation of the public administration, both central and local so that we can affiliate to the requirements of the entire world. We meet the claim of the citizen, helping him not to loose any time or money coming in our institutions. By transparency, we save both the public money and we reach the level at which everything can be accessed no matter where, no matter when. More importantly, everybody can do it for himself.” said The Minister of Communications and Information Society of Romania, Gabriel Sandu.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Society of Romania (MCIS) will play an integrating role in the intercessory with all institutions from the public administration involved in implementing the e-Romania strategy.

The e-Romania strategy has three types of services in view: electronic (e.g.: setting up companies, approvals for construction, changing the address, paying the taxes and the impost); to inform on-line (e.g.: transport, justice, agriculture, tourism); online support (e.g.: log in, electronic billing).

According to the memoir drawn up by the MCIS, the e-Romania strategy (www.romania.gov.ro), with its essential component connected to e-government, has the following objectives:

- The first Group of objectives, related to the public institutions
- The second Group of objectives, related to the European recommendations and the legislative provisions specific to Romania

These objectives regard especially strategies that are concerned with the efficiency in communication between the public administration and the business environment. There are a series of strategies meant to reach the target of objectives based on policies like: establishing a web portal with online documents to help the citizens interested in setting up a company to make all the necessary intercessory online, sending the wage grid online, establishing a web portal to facilitate how to solve the problems at the customs taking into account the international legislative environment, processing the public auctions (including the presentation and evaluation), the online presentation of any petition meant to get the necessary approval for constructions, ordering online the necessary documents or administration orders, changing the address online, implementing the election system online (for the citizens from abroad), creating an international geo-portal meant to have access to different aspects from the interactive map, presenting online the declarations of VAT and on income.

The third group of objectives related to e-Romania web portal: MCIS promotes the portal through a double perspective: the citizen’s one and the one of the business men. The web portal is consolidated under the form of an integrated system of many online services. It is based on the principle of the “single point access”.

The web portal has a hierarchical structure sending the information from the national (president, Parliament) to the local system (The Prefecture and County Council). These are just some of the promises that MCIS has already made and they claim everything will have been accomplished by the end 2013.

Among the fields supported by the web portal, the following ones can be mentioned: e-Health, e-Environment, e-Transport, e-Agriculture, e-Justice, e-Education, e-Culture, e-Church, e-Tourism, e-Associative, e-Sport, e-Participation. At present, the project e-Romania is just at the level of a concept which can be clicked on at the following address: www.romania.gov.ro.

Although in June 2009, according to a report published by the European Commission, Romania occupied the last place in the European chart regarding the broad band use of the Internet. The Romanian Government allocated approximately 500 millions Euros for this project in order to finalize it by the end of 2013. This large sum of money stirred up a lot of controversies, and negative reaction appeared immediately arguing that in the present economical context it’s too much to spend.

However, e-Government is mainly developing only on the promises made by the public institutions without taking into account the opinions and the wishes of the community members and without citizens knowing all the details about its activity and purposes. Thus, the online users have a very important role in the development of the public services.

On the other hand, on March 2010, through a press release the Romanian Government announced that the e-Romania portal has been launched as a concept project and not as a definitive portal that can be access at www.romania.gov.ro. Thus, the information provided by this portal may change over night, but it’s hoped that in the near future a solid portal to be developed in order to offer coherent and integrated information.
CONCLUSIONS

In our paper we’ve taken into account a number of European studies such as: Digital Governance in Municipalities Worldwide (2007); A Longitudinal Assessment of Municipal Websites throughout the World, in order to acknowledge how the e-Government services are understood by the citizens. Therefore, this study analyzed the official websites of more than 86 countries, highlighting the most important aspects such as: privacy/security, usability, content, services and citizen participation.

Accordingly, Bucharest, the capital of Romania, occupies rank 36 from the 86 analyzed countries in Overall E-governance Rankings (2007). As for the investigated aspects that we mentioned above, Bucharest occupies rank 19 in a European chart made on 36 European countries, as it follows:

In addition, according to this study as for Privacy/Security Bucharest occupies rank 37 (score 3.6), as for Usability the capital occupies rank 18 (the same position as Brussels with score 14.38). As for Content it occupies rank 36 and rank 33 for the online provided services. A low score is registered regarding the Citizens Participation, occupying rank 60.

However, e-Government is mainly developing only on the promises made by the public institutions without taking into account the opinions and the wishes of the community members and without citizens knowing all the details about its activity and purposes. At the same time, the online users have a very important role in the development of the public services.

We can asses that according to the study results of Wauters, P., and Nijskens, M., and Tiebout, J. (2007), 35% of the services in Romania are fully available online².

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SERVICES FOR CITIZENS</th>
<th>MAXIMUM STAGE</th>
<th>ROMANIA STAGE/LEVEL</th>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income taxes: declaration, notification of assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 (-40%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.formulare.e-guvernare.ro">www.formulare.e-guvernare.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search services: Standard procedure to obtain job offerings as organised by official labour offices, no private market initiatives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.anofm.ro">www.anofm.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security benefits: • Unemployment benefits • Child allowances • Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement) • Student grants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-3 (-55%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mmssf.ro">www.mmssf.ro</a> <a href="http://www.anofm.ro">www.anofm.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal documents (passports / driver’s license)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1-2 (-40%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pasapoarte.mai.gov.ro">www.pasapoarte.mai.gov.ro</a> <a href="http://www.pasapoartebucuresti.ro">www.pasapoartebucuresti.ro</a> <a href="http://www.mae.ro">www.mae.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car registration (new, used, imported cars)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.autorizatiiauto.ro">www.autorizatiiauto.ro</a> <a href="http://www.drpciv.ro/info-portal">www.drpciv.ro/info-portal</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application for building permission</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration to police</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (30%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public libraries</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 (-15%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.biblacad.ro">www.biblacad.ro</a> <a href="http://www.unibuc.ro">www.unibuc.ro</a> <a href="http://www.bcu-iasi.ro">www.bcu-iasi.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mai.gov.ro">www.mai.gov.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment in higher education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (-45%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.edu.ro">www.edu.ro</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SERVICES FOR BUSINESSES</th>
<th>MAXIMUM STAGE</th>
<th>ROMANIA STAGE/LEVEL</th>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social contributions for employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.formularunic.e-guvernare.ro">www.formularunic.e-guvernare.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate tax</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.formularunic.e-guvernare.ro">www.formularunic.e-guvernare.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><a href="http://www.formularunic.e-guvernare.ro">www.formularunic.e-guvernare.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration of a new company</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-2 (-45%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.onrc.ro">www.onrc.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of data to statistical offices</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.insse.ro">www.insse.ro</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs declaration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment-related permits</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-3 (-25%)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mmediu.ro">www.mmediu.ro</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sophistication level in Romania scores 57%. Of note is the low level of citizens’ services interactivity, whilst services for business have an average of 84% at a transactional level. The statistical service attains a pro-active “stage 5” level. The social services “Child allowance” and “Student grants” are also at a pro-active level 5.24

The national portal (www.gov.ro) provides information on governmental regulations, but no direct access to the basic public services and no personalized access for business and citizens. The scoring is thus rather low at 20%.

This leads to the conclusion that, whilst business online services score very well, particular attention is required to develop online citizen services. Romania presently stands in the lower quartile of the EU27+.

In conclusion, we tried to give an answer, based on our present study, regarding the usefulness of these portals. As we previously observed, some of the links/quick access from the www.e-guvernare.ro portal are either restricted or inexistent. From the citizen point of view we observed that the users of the Internet services heard of the e-Government portal and some of them used its services. Though these e-Government services aren’t used frequently, a rise of the online transactions with the public authorities took place in the last few years. The main accessed sections of this portal are those that comprise information such as materials about public administration, databases, documents regarding businesses, downloading forms.

From the governmental perspective, e-Government helps reducing the bureaucracy, the costs, the wages of the public functionaries, stimulates administrative reform and so on. The businesses are also advantaged because the time spent on the internet is significantly reduced, and one can access more forms or services than in everyday routine. The main obstacle is that without a coherent regulation, the “offline”/office bureaucracy will be moved on the online area. Since now, the Romanian government opted for the pilot project formula. The problem is that the data gather by these portals haven’t been analyzed and, in consequence, Romania doesn’t have a back-office application. Together with these aspects, Romanian is also confronted with the reorganization of some public departments, thus the reduce number of public employees active in e-Government strategy and with the decayed mentalities of some citizens over 60 years old who don’t use the internet.

Another question needs and answer: how does the citizen know what information he can access and use from the e-Government system? As we previously shown, the structure of the www.e-guvernare.ro website it’s quite simple to use. One can discover either the services or forms he desires to consult or use simply. For the Romanian users there is also a full documented Guide in order to help them fill out the online forms, to register on the website and other useful information. The main problem it’s represented by the number of public institutions registered online. Some institutions are missing, other appear only with their name, without any forms or services to offer.

Only the implementation of these projects isn’t enough. Both citizens and the functionaries that use these portals may benefit from the provided services. A large number of the Romanian people still use the classic way of paying their taxes due to the lack of information or trust, preferring the public counter over the internet.

We briefly analyzed the local newspapers and online forums in order to find out how people feel and understand the e-Government services. As we previously stated, many citizens don’t know what services they can access through the Internet because the MCSI hasn’t realized a coherent campaign to inform them. The Romanian government promised that by the end of this year, the companies may upload their tax records through the e-Government portal. On the other hand, many companies avoid the use of e-Government services because they consider that the processing time of their forms (such as fines) is to slow. We will highlight some suggestions to improve the online e-Government services. Thus, Romanian authorities should continue to support financially the development and the extending of these services through electronic means, to stimulate the interoperability between the national, European and international public services and to establish fruitful and constant partnerships with the civil society and the private sector.

We recognize that Romania is currently facing serious economic, social and environmental challenges, but in order to accomplish its promises, Romanian Government must be more open, flexible and collaborative in their delivery of public services across the country. Learning from the experience of other European countries, Romania has to implement a consistent communication strategy according to the individual and collective objectives. This process starts from Government to society, together with the businesses, civil society and individual citizens directly involved in this development.

This process has to start from Government to society, together with the businesses, civil society and individual citizens directly involved in this development in order to succeed.

---

REFERENCES


Golubeva, Anastasia and Merkuryeva, I. Demand for online government services: Case studies from St. Petersburg, Information Polity, IOS Press, Volume 11, Number 3-4, 2006.


