



Ralph Tench, Dejan Verčič, Ansgar Zerfass,
Angeles Moreno, Piet Verhoeven (2017)

Communication Excellence: How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications

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The astounding new book “Communication Excellence: How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications” (2017), written by famous experts in communication sciences, Ralph Tench, PhD, Professor in Communications Education from Leeds Beckett University, UK; Dejan Verčič, PhD, Professor and Head of Centre for Marketing and Public Relations at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Ansgar Zerfass, PhD, Professor and Chair in Strategic Communication at the Institute of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Leipzig, Germany; Ángeles Moreno, PhD, Professor of Public Relations and Communication Management, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid; and Piet Verhoeven, PhD, Associate Professor in Corporate Communication at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research and the College and Graduate School of Communication Science from Amsterdam, The Netherlands, presents a culmination of research and best practice models covering strategic communication, the impact on reputation, crisis, mediatisation, organisational culture, new digital, social and mobile media as well as the development of professionalization.

This book presents a new framework to support the future development of communication departments in companies, non-profits and other types of organisations. The insights presented here are based on results from ten years of empirical research by the European Communication Monitor. Excellence is a difficult and potentially controversial topic. What stands out from the discussions is the depth and level of understanding that the book brings to a complex and much-debated area of strategic communication. These insights have enabled authors to paint a picture of what constitutes communication in organisations today, but also what makes for the highest performance.

The book foreword is written by Herbert Heitmann, PhD, President of European Association of Communication Directors, and the preface is signed by all five authors of the book. It is followed by the 3 main parts of the book (with a total of 9 chapters/commandments), an epilogue, an appendix, and an index.

Part 1, “Connected Organisations”, focuses on the organisation and the positioning of communication departments in the wider context of society and revolving around the important theme of being connected. The first commandment in this part, “Globalised: The World We Live in”, shows how we are interdependent, and how we affect people living on the other side of the globe and how they affect us. In that sense, public relations is a profession concerned

with the management of interdependencies between organisations and their stakeholders. This commandment explains several important statements: (1) internationalisation is deeply affecting strategic communication practices; (2) liberalisation of trade in the second half of the twentieth century brought unprecedented wealth to the West, but also unexpected downsides and crises; (3) organisations develop excellence in response to environmental pressures; (4) Westernisation is worldwide modernisation, and anybody who wants to stay at the top of the global communication game has to start paying attention to communication practices beyond the borders of the Western world; (5) contemporary global society emerged out of Western modernisation that produced a Westernistic global society with interdependence at its core.

The second commandment, “Mediatized: Media All Around Us” talks about the development of mass media, and how technology has considerably changed the way organisations communicate in the last decade, and also about the importance of social media. Mediatization first and foremost means the omnipresence of media in our current hypermodern society. The past decade has shown a great convergence of media importance and use in the field of communication management in Europe. The authors further write about the three faces of mediatization for communication management: “the classical face: press and media relations, still the Top Dog”, “the new face: co-production of news” and “the future face: the media as a partner: strategic mediatization”. It is also very interesting how authors noticed that consumers, bloggers and employees are considered relevant and important as new digital gatekeepers about the organisation on the social web, and therefore take an important position alongside and in addition to journalists.

The third commandment, “Reflective: Organisations Reinvent Themselves”, shows how excellent organisations are more open to influences from wider environments than non-excellent organisations. Moreover, it is this openness that gives them a competitive, strategic advantage. Further to that, strategic management is founded on a very simple idea: that the world is progressively changing due to the use of scientific methods and continuous learning. This commandment also teaches us what makes excellent communication departments different from other communication departments - it is their self-understanding. The most communicative organisations are not those with the best communicators or communication departments, but with top management that appreciates and understands communication.

Part 2, “Influential Departments”, looks at the departmental level or the communication function inside the organisation. The fourth commandment, “Embedded: Influence Through Communicative Leadership” states how excellent communication departments are embedded in the organisation they work for and the organisation is effectively embedded in the societal, cultural and social spaces they are part of. The authors argue, based on the European Communication Monitor research, that communication executives face a threefold leadership challenge: (1) to help organisational leaders to be communicative; (2) to support overall goals of the organisation through strategic communication, which includes messaging as well as listening; (3) to lead the communication department.

Next, the fifth commandment, “Datafied: Research, Measure and Evaluate”, indicates that, in a professional environment, research is indispensable. Successful strategies depend on research and so does the evaluation of the success of policies and interventions. It demonstrates that evaluation is the alpha and omega of any successful strategy. Here the important rule is: “you cannot evaluate what you cannot measure and you cannot improve what you cannot evaluate”.

The sixth commandment, “Strategised: Informed, Anticipatory and Trusted”, determines the meaning of “being strategic”, which is undoubtedly an essential ingredient for success; for successful organisations and for successful communication activities from press relations, internal communication to campaigning. This commandment also explains why linking communication and business strategy is the biggest issue for the field. Being a strategised department means that you have an overall communication strategy and policies, combined with specific strategies for specific problems. Strategic means that you take the other into account, which is not easy.

Part 3, “Ambitious Professionals”, drills down to the core elements that support and deliver ‘excellence’ at a personal or individual level. In the seventh commandment, “Sagacious: Knowledgeable, Reflective and Shrewd”, the authors talk about being Sagacious – as in the definition of this term – this involves being knowledgeable, demonstrating reflective wisdom, as well as shrewdness and, at times, applying appropriate mental discernment. They demonstrate these through detailed discussion and evidence on educational experience and expectations as well as exploring the explicit competencies of high performing communicators. Furthermore, the authors state that professionalisation in communication management has,

according to practitioners in Europe, three dimensions: training the communication team, continuing to develop yourself and engaging in mentoring and networking.

Next, the eighth commandment, “Linked: People, Media and Networks”, attests to the fact that we all love to be connected, and because of that, we not only use communication to orient in time and space, we use it to influence the world around us. That is why professional communication, public relations and strategic communication involves embracing the total life experience of organisations.

The final, ninth commandment, “Solid: Strong, Sensitive and Savvy”, points to the importance of listening. Multi-level listening has four levels: listening to yourself, listening to co-workers and colleagues, listening to customers and listening to the other stakeholders of the organisation and to society. Part of being solid is being able to listen well on all these levels. Here, the authors also talk about ethics, and differences based on the gender of communicators.

The epilogue “The Future of Excellent Communication: From a Soft to a Hard Discipline”, concludes that strategic communication resides in connected organisations with influential communication departments in which ambitious professionals work. Organisations need to accept the whole world as a field in which they have to benchmark, so they must be purposefully globalised, and they have to grow their ‘connectors’ around the globe to see, listen, smell and feel what is going on and be able to present themselves – so they must be purposefully mediatised. Organisations are required to act, interact, reflect and learn to reinvent themselves every single day – so they must be reflective.

The appendix is about the “European Communication Monitor (ECM) and Its Methodology”. ECM explores current practices and future developments of strategic communication and public relations in companies, non-profits and other organisations including communication agencies. Over the last ten years, more than 21,000 European communication professionals from over 40 countries participated in the survey of the monitor, ranging from 1,087 in 2007 to 2,710 in 2016. “Communication Excellence: How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications” is based on these numerous surveys, making this magnificent book even more impressive.



Damir Jugo (2017)

Menadžment kriznog komuniciranja

Zagreb _ Školska knjiga _ Edward Bernays Visoka škola za komunikacijski menadžment
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Darija Jeger

We are witnessing the growing need for crisis communication. There is great competition in the market and every wrong step in the business leads to huge losses, not just moneywise, but also in the terms of consumers. It is incorrect to think that a crisis cannot be predicted. What is true is that a crisis cannot be predicted by anyone but the person educated in the area. What makes this book, *Management of Crisis Communication*, special are the author's competences. Damir Jugo is a researcher in the field of communication science and one of the most prominent public relations practitioners in the region. Thanks to the experience gained in these three areas, the author adapted the book to everyone: students, professors, as well as experts. Regardless of degree of knowledge, this book will be used as a kind of textbook by everyone in the field of crisis communication.

As the author stated in the preamble, the book is divided into two parts: Crisis communication and Crisis communication strategies. In the first part, through five chapters, the author positions crisis communication and presents the crisis life cycle. In the second part, through four chapters, using his practical experience, the author handles specific strategies and approaches to crisis communication (Jugo, 2017, p. 6).

In the first chapter, "Basic definitions of crisis communication", the author acquaints the readers with the basics of crisis communication. At the very beginning, the author notes that "Crisis communication is one of the most challenging areas of contemporary public relations practice" (Jugo, 2017, p.12). Furthermore, he explains the difference between crisis management and crisis communication, the two key concepts most people consider to be identical. Special attention is devoted to the media and the rapid development of technology that occupy a special role in the emergence of the crisis. At the very end of the chapter the importance of proactive communication and a strategic approach to communication is emphasized.

The second chapter is devoted to the theoretical analysis of key concepts of crisis communication. That is why this chapter provides definition of terms: issue, risk and crisis. Considering the many definitions of crisis, the author devoted time to divide and explain three common elements in all of them that explain the crisis as an atypical event that causes damage to the organization and forces it to communicate with different groups. Furthermore, the chapter brings the theoretical section of the concepts of crisis

management and crisis communication in which readers become acquainted with five myths about crisis communication. The author in fourth section of this chapter offers a look at crisis communication through the prism of strategic communication, presenting the RACE model as a model for successful planning and management in public relations (Jugo, 2017, p.36). Finally, attention is placed on image and reputation, on which a crisis can leave serious consequences.

“The theory of crisis communication” is the title of the third chapter of the book. The chapter is divided into 5 sections defining possible theoretical approaches during crisis communication. The first is, the organization’s reaction to accusations by its publics. Then we are presented with the , according to which the organization establishes threats and locates the publics with which it has to communicate in order to restore its image. is the third approach to a crisis. This approach is based on providing information to stakeholders who, during the crisis, have the need for and demand it. The fourth approach, the , puts stakeholders in its center, while the last presented approach is , the most applicable theory in crisis communication.

Chapter four, “Classification of crisis situations”, explains how to analyze a crisis situation. Through the chapter, defined are possible causes of a crisis situation, a crisis created in an external environment, a crisis created within the organization as well as types of crisis situations. Special attention is directed to an unintentionally triggered crisis such as a crisis caused by natural disasters and technical circumstances.

With the fifth chapter, the “Life cycle and development” phase of crisis situations, the first part of book ends. This chapter brings together basic models that address the crisis life cycle definition: the three phase crisis model, the four phase crisis model and the five phase crisis model. Explained at the very end of the chapter shown is a six stage sequencing of prediction failure, the oldest model which has catastrophes in its focus.

“Strategic crisis management: Pre-crisis phase” is the sixth chapter of the book and also the beginning of its second part. Focusing on practical knowledge, the chapter offers an overview of methods used to analyze the situation during a crisis. The chapter is divided into five sections, offering a comprehensive guide to public relations practitioners during

the pre-crisis period.

The seventh chapter of the book, “Strategic crisis management: Communication during the crisis”, is concerned with an awareness of the importance of good communication during a crisis. This chapter provides the form and content of communication during a crisis, ways of adapting communication to specific stakeholders and analyzing the external and internal public. Moreover, the chapter elaborates on communication with the media during a crisis and the role of individuals in the organizational system because the organization is made up of people who have to be adequately represented. In the last section of the chapter, the author explains the importance of documenting all activities and the importance of corrective communication with stakeholders.

The eighth chapter, “Reactive communication strategies”, provides support to public relations practitioners in a crisis situation. The author offers a total of seven key strategies that can be utilized. For each of them it is stated that they are strategically different, how to recognize them in practice and how to apply them in a given situation. A specific characteristic of this chapter is the case study examples for each of the strategies, demonstrating their proper application or ungainly use in practice.

The last chapter, “Strategic crisis management: Post-crisis phase”, rounds off full communication activity in every crisis situation. In the first part of the chapter, the author offers a suggestion on how to assess the consequences of a crisis as well as the undertaken activities, taking into account that all stakeholders are involved (Jugo, 2017, p 225-229). The second part of the chapter is about applying organizational learning as a necessary factor in preventing the repetition of a crisis situation. In this chapter, attention is on ethics in crisis communication and the chapter ends with ways of improving the organizational system after a successful end to a crisis situation.

Finally, Management of Crisis Communication is comprehensive textbook for this area of public relations. The book is easy to read thanks to its structure, which allows the easy transmitting of knowledge and its effortless upgrading. Thanks to the wonderful graphic design, text comprehension and pulling out key concepts are at a level that significantly facilitates readers when learning or using the book during a crisis situation.

The list of literature at the end of each chapter, as well as at the end of the book, makes it easy for readers to find additional literature for further reading. In addition to the list of literature, at the end of every chapter, the author has set out questions and tasks to show what has been presented and as a useful review to students. At the very end, the author provides a glossary of more than 70 words as a kind of review of what has been learned by reading this book.