

Strategies and techniques of communication and public relations applied to non-profit sector

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to summarize the strategies and techniques of communication and public relations applied to non-profit sector.*

The approach of the paper is to identify the most appropriate strategies and techniques that non-profit sector can use to accomplish its objectives, to highlight specific differences between the strategies and techniques of the profit and non-profit sectors and to identify potential communication and public relations actions in order to increase visibility among target audience, create brand awareness and to change into positive brand sentiment the target perception about the non-profit sector.

Keywords: Communication, public relations, social media, key influencers, social responsibility.

Introduction

The third part sector represented by non-profit institutions should be seen as a particular area whose centre of interest is “human being which purpose is to improve its physical and psychosocial comfort”, different from commercial sector whose interest is to achieve maximum profit for the organization. Therefore, the specific elements of the non-profit sector are reflected in the product-client relationship. The aim of this sector is a cured patient, a child who learns a young

man or a young woman changed into an adult with personal dignity.

The study of the non-profit sector has to be in direct connection with its specific goals. Thus the public relations strategies and techniques are also typical. Many of the classic communication and public relation actions applied in the private sector are useless in the tertiary sector.

In Romania, the non-profit sector has not reached the maximum development both in terms of its organizational capacity development, and, especially, in the general public

perception. There is a duality in the perception of NGOs. On one hand they are seen as some idealistic characters bearing an altruistic battle in a pragmatic world in which each seeks its own interest, on the other hand, mass-media has created a pattern not at all flattering for these organizations. Many still suffer from the reputation of the '90s when there were examples of organizations that have received money and did nothing concrete, leaving the public with the preconceived idea that NGOs launders money or just mime the work. One of the reasons why the public does not understand NGO's activities, and thus the role of this sector is the lack of information and insufficient promotions. Insufficient resources also make projects to not last long enough in order to become known, both as name and as impact. The result represents a lack of vision to the general public and even to the beneficiaries of the tertiary sector.

Beside this, NGOs have always depended on the created image because it affects their ability to attract funds or donations. Therefore, to be active on the market the organization's visibility, confidence in the professionalism and responsibility are essential and here the key role is communication.

Communication creates understanding; ensure transparency in the activities carried out, generating a positive sentiment, confidence and pride for the organization and commitment in future similar projects.

Given the backdrop in which non-profit institutions pursue their activities, the implementation of adequate and sustained communication and public relations strategies is a necessity designed to improve public perception and to get close the beneficiaries to services provided by these institutions.

Considering this, the approach of the paper is to identify the most appropriate strategies and techniques that non-profit sector can use to accomplish its objectives, to highlight specific differences between the strategies and techniques of the profit and non-profit sector and to identify potential communication and public relations actions in order to increase visibility among target audience, create brand awareness and to change into positive brand sentiment the target perception about the non-profit sector.

Literature review

To understand the characteristics of communication and public relations in the non-profit sector, we have, first, to underline the characteristics of the sector and the target audience.

The non-profit organization's field belongs to social sector, the "third sector", represented by the organizations that produce goods and public service, even if they are private in shape (established itself as association members) they are public by the content as Mihaela Vlăsceanu stated in her work.

NGOs are corporations with public purposes, for general interest. They are also corporate-type organizations, developing the idea of free association, the association of common interests and shared resources. The difference is the point where the non-profit corporations are pooling also the profit for interest groups, the third parties, other than associations / corporations CEOs.

Thus, the NGO gains importance, taking attributes of representation and recognition of certain social programs. Non-profit sector represents civic and community background relied on the mutual consent of its

members, of mutual recognition, a context of a consensual non-representative space in which all of individuals can participate.

The non-profit sector is a sector characterized by social innovation; it introduces changes in social as it draws the attention at the new social issues. The non-profit sector has a much greater degree of transparency than private organizations because accountability is more pronounced, direct control of the recipient is possible.

Therefore, the non-profit sector characteristics may be substituted by the four major defining elements, as they are found in the Mihaela Vlăsceanu paper:

- they are private in shape and public in their purposefulness by providing the consumer "collective goods" or public utility products (protective, cultural, educational services);
- can generate a profit, but they are a subject to the fundamental restriction of the non-distributive profit to the owners or CEOs;
- they are independent institutions and have autonomous management mechanisms similar to profit organizations;
- it implies the participation of members in the voluntary form.

Classification and characteristics of the target audience

Another important aspect to analyze this sector is the definition of target groups. This analysis builds on work by Philip Kotler on marketing research in the field of non-profit and John Bryson on strategic planning in the nonprofit sector. Target audience characteristics are important because according to these types organizations will develop different public relations/marketing strategies.

A first delineation of target groups is the aware of needs:

Groups that express a visible need - this allocation of needs is realized by:

➤ *recognizing the needs by each group.*

This feature is matched to the organizations that are focusing on services (professional associations, education and culture institutions). In terms of strategy these organizations operate with corporate model and are focused on customer. In terms of communication strategy this type of NGOs are using informational and advertising strategies or marketing/PR techniques.

➤ *issues repartition depending on the needs.* Organizations that are linked to social policy: quality of life, social exclusion, non-participation in education, cultural and ethnic exclusion. The aim of these NGOs is to support a cause, Charity programs, missionary actions and public awareness of civic programs (anti-SIDA organizations). As a strategy they use social marketing type actions. On the communication level – these organizations focus on launching public campaigns to raise awareness, change civic behavior or building mass campaigns for public awareness.

➤ *Unallocated / unidentified needs* needs that are not yet public, because they have been claimed or recognized. In this situation social need is not public; it is needed to develop an intervention that will create a public opinion (e.g. domestic violence). These non-public organizations have public character in order of recognizing issues of fundamental civil liberties (right to expression, right to work).

The second delineation of target groups has the attributes:

► Heterogeneous – represents variety of personal interest, a variety regarding the expectations and aspirations of persons belonging to these groups

► Informal groups that are composed, recomposed, depending on the immediate interests, depending on how the issues are solved and adopted on the public level

► Are marked by an extreme fragility, are highly specific groups

► It is difficult for them to create similar modes of operation because they are highly mobile and fragile

► Groups are marked by a high degree of creativity, a deeper critical spirit; these groups have a greater ownership of services that are required

The methods of operation for this category are specialized niche actions. The types of interventions are situational, forms of research are research-action type (research carried out in collaboration with beneficiary, with the community studied, or the group), and the group is helped to identify its problem.

In terms of communication techniques the practitioners used tools like: appeal to oral, visual and interpersonal type of communication (e.g. online forum to communicate with such audiences). As a form of persuasion – the messages are built based on the relationship of trust, security, without risks. Also there are messages of warnings and responsibility shared between the beneficiary and the organization, for example: anti-smoking campaign. They run on the base of shared responsibility, respect, solidarity due to fragility of the audience.

Paper Content

3.1. Public Relations planning in the Non-Profit Sector

Public relations planning in the non – profit field is comprised of characteristics of the context in which these organizations run their business. Planning involves both a number of advantages and a number of disadvantages mainly due to the context, but also to the target groups to which they are addressing.

Advantages:

- Sector extremely versatile, mobility is the advantage of planning;
- Innovative sector, it is a laboratory of social ideas, discovers side, reveals the hidden themes, generating public debates, change the value of the system through awareness campaigns - producing innovations in the social sector;
- Working with volunteers – direct participation, hierarchical levels are eliminated fostering creativity, personal initiative for the public wellness;
- Transparency – controlled by the beneficiaries.

Disadvantages:

- There is a resistance, an attitude of mistrust in relation to the sector's institutional capacity to produce sustained Public Relations activities. The mistrust is generated by the apparent lack of professionalism in organizations, financial instability of these organizations, managerial / institutional disability and the theory of desertion. In this kind of theory organizations are forced to stop work immediately whenever it is eliminated the need for their activity.

Public relations activities planning

To make it easier to point out the defining aspects of planning, it was chosen the four steps planning. This analysis will focus on delineation its specificity.

Research - is more sensitive in this area – it has not the expertise and sufficient funding for complex research. The most common method of research is the research-action type.

Planning has to define the social problem for which it is addressed, the mission and then the proper planning objectives. Often the priorities are defined in the status and then they are changed into the programs. But the ideal situation is when the planning is seen as a strategic step in building communications programs.

Communication can be systematic - for organizations that enterprise a planning effort and research and non-systematic - when the planning effort is minimized or doesn't exist (they are adopted by the predefined model problem arising from donations, projects, crisis - ordered actions).

Assessment is linked to the accuracy of planning; assessment goal is to measure the degree of fulfillment of the objectives. In assessing there are used informal models of evaluation (testimonies, interviews, content analysis of media, annual reports). In case of international organizations we assist at the formal assessment - which can produce qualitative data to demonstrate impact in terms of trend, the degree of participation.

Types of approaches take by the Public Relations practitioners to change behavior of the audience:

- direct behavioral change, immediate
- indirect behavioral change, progressive

Change is made directly by the type of local grassroots campaigns, using local opinion leaders and communication strategy in two steps. This change in behavior can be achieved when desirable behavior can be controlled by the beneficiary or when new behavior obtained by the beneficiary is a gratifying, is a reward or brings a certain satisfaction. In this long campaign practitioners use local media which has a real impact on the local audience. Proximity is proving to be a powerful source of interest.

Programs aimed to change behavior indirectly assume that the need is not under the beneficiary control, the decision needs a longer duration. Programs of modified progression are associated with a high personal risk (e.g. drug campaigns, campaigns against smoking). Techniques that can be used :

- Small step technique - assumes that behavior modification is achieved only after the beneficiary agreed to make a concession. There are campaigns in two steps, with awareness messages at first, and the second step aimed at behavior change.

- Engineering giant step - is based on the idea of refusal. It is a two-step planning where the first approach is denial, it projects desirable behavior, and the second step is an incipient acceptable change of behavior.

Using any of the two strategies requires caution by the practitioners because in the non-profit sector the Public Relations campaigns are context sensitive, directed by the target audience characteristics and, especially, by the needs that audience is aware or not.

Communication and Public Relations strategies applied in the non-profit field

NGO sector addresses more often resort to public communication than to the media.

Most of the programs are addressed to specific community: demographic or social and cannot work with anonymous groups, as it involves specific problems. Communication model used is bilateral - symmetrical, it is used when an agreement, a partnership or even mutual involvement is needed. Public communication is used in:

- TV Program – Talk show (seen as a public environment, encourage a debate);
- Articles placed in newspapers - create critical opinions (editorial, reportage);
- Specialized Magazines - creating a place of debate, the public is informed, alert to the nature of the arguments.

Philip Kotler speaks of 2 models of public relations used in the non-profit sector:

- 1) The classic, traditional model centered on institutional image, maintaining a certain equilibrium in relationship between the public and institutions e.g. NGO has the primary goal to promote its policy which leads to a particular sector;
- 2) Awareness (public advocacy), closer to contemporary Public Relations, serve to initiate social action.

In Public Relations practice, the NGOs actions, experts make use of techniques such as:

Public Advocacy seen as advice, guidance and institution support that the organization develops. Advocacy promotes themes, ideas, values, and supports the dialogue on social and political issues. In other words, advocacy seeks effective solutions, not legislative initiatives. Thus, when non-profit organizations are involved in advocacy actions, they call into question various aspects of society, such as individual's behavior, warning the employers in terms of internal

rules or government about the laws. Lobby refers to those actions of advocacy that seek to influence legislation. The difference between lobby and advocacy is important, because primarily for those laws that limit the lobbying does not apply to all the actions of advocacy.

Some advocacy activities that can be applied within the non-profit sector:

- Media appearances: shows, talk shows, newspapers, etc;
- Writing editorials that media will be interested to comment about;
- Organization of meetings for debates (round tables);
- Contacting government officials who have the power of decision;
- Raising the issue at every opportunity: discussion groups, websites, newsletters, blogs, forums, social networks etc.

Lobby represents technique to influence policy and legislative environment. Non-profit lobby is converted into mass lobby and should be very close to the real needs (e.g. gathering signatures, adhesives, affirmative position in relation to certain social practices). Through the mass lobby there is a direct pressure on the central institutions, but indirectly it has a high degree of transparency. There are two types of lobbying:

- Grassroots lobbying - when public opinion calls for taking action in front of legislators on a particular topic;
- Direct lobbying - direct contact with government officials or employees, in order to change the legislature.

Lobby is the process of building and maintaining relations with legislators and administration in order to influence laws and policies already formulated or implemented. If a particular issue will be decided by vote or

referendum, appeal to the public opinion is a part of direct lobbying, since in this case, the public is the court which acts as a legislative body. This information is useful in the non-profit organizations, because there are certain regulations on this regard. For example, NGOs may allocate only 25% of the funds for grassroots lobbying.

Specialized publications are used to attract attention in a credible way about a problem.

The use of education environment – the purpose is to change behavior, social values of those types of behavior that are to be educated starting with early ages (e.g. drug, sex, civic, antiviolence education)

Using the cultural and entertainment medium - NGO is using this channel because it is more generous, is not involving any risks is neutral and it's not creating hostility or guilt (e.g. painting exhibition)

Implementation of the social campaigns - a successful technique used to generate public interest in relation with raising social capital. These are public education campaigns aiming to promote a particular social behavior. Often the planning of these campaigns includes both public relations, and Social Marketing. In this case, the audiences are characterized by a social need, by a social dysfunction or a state of vulnerability.

The purpose of social marketing planning is to define the problem on the social level, as social problem in general (e.g. "You care too" - the Public Relations and social marketing campaign). Preliminary analysis effort is more pronounced in the case of social marketing in order to collect all relevant data and to observe all phenomena and social indicators to which the program addresses. The offer is changed depending on

the beneficiary, because it refers to a process that belongs to him and cannot be defined by the organization. If social marketing case, the planning starts in reverse mode – begins with an assessment of expected behavior and ends with the research. Planning effort is an effort to transform the content of a problem in favor of beneficiary; in commercial marketing - consumer is the one that turns the content of the problem in his personal terms.

Kotler and Andreasen define social marketing as "differing from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organization. Social marketing seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society." Like commercial marketing, the primary focus is on the consumer--on learning what people want and need rather than trying to persuade them to buy what we happen to be producing. Marketing talks to the consumer, not about the product. The planning process takes this consumer focus into account by addressing the elements of the "marketing mix." This refers to decisions about 1) the conception of a Product, 2) Price, 3) Distribution (Place), and 4) Promotion. These are often called the "Four Ps" of marketing. Social marketing also adds a few more "P's.

Product. The social marketing "product" is not necessarily a physical offering. A continuum of products exists, ranging from tangible, physical products to services, practices and finally, more intangible ideas (e.g., environmental protection). In order to have a viable product, people must first perceive that they have a genuine problem, and that the product offering is a good solution for that problem. The role of research here is to

discover the consumers' perceptions of the problem and the product, and to determine how important they feel it is to take action against the problem.

Price. The term of the price is different from the commercial marketing. In the non-profit sector, price refers to what the consumer must do in order to obtain the social marketing product. This cost may be monetary, or it may instead require the consumer to give up intangibles, such as time or effort, or to risk embarrassment and disapproval. If the costs outweigh the benefits for an individual, the perceived value of the offering will be low and it will be unlikely to be adopted. However, if the benefits are perceived as greater than their costs, chances of trial and adoption of the product is much greater. These perceptions of costs and benefits can be determined through research, and used in positioning the product.

Place. Distribution describes the way that the product reaches the consumer. For a tangible product, this refers to the distribution system--including the warehouse, trucks, sales force, retail outlets where it is sold, or places where it is given out for free. For an intangible product, place is less clear-cut, but refers to decisions about the channels through which consumers are reached with information or training. Another element of place is deciding how to ensure accessibility of the offering and quality of the service delivery. By determining the activities and habits of the target audience, as well as their experience and satisfaction with the existing delivery system, researchers can pinpoint the most ideal means of distribution for the offering.

Promotion. Promotion consists of the integrated use of advertising, public relations,

promotions, media advocacy, personal selling and entertainment vehicles. The focus is on creating and sustaining demand for the product. Public service announcements or paid ads are one way, but there are other methods such as coupons, media events, editorials. Research is crucial to determine the most effective and efficient vehicles to reach the target audience and increase demand.

Additional Social Marketing "P's" includes: Publics, Partnership, Policy, Purse Strings.

Publics - Social marketers often have many different audiences that their program has to address in order to be successful. "Publics" refers to both the external and internal groups involved in the program. External publics include the target audience, secondary audiences, policymakers, and gatekeepers, while the internal publics are those who are involved in some way with either approval or implementation of the program.

Partnership - Social and health issues are often so complex that one agency can't make a dent by itself. You need to team up with other organizations in the community to really be effective. You need to figure out which organizations have similar goals to yours, not necessarily the same goals, and identify ways you can work together.

Policy - Social marketing programs can do well in motivating individual behavior change, but that is difficult to sustain unless the environment they're in supports that change for the long run. Often, policy change is needed, and media advocacy programs can be an effective complement to a social marketing program.

Purse Strings - Most organizations that develop social marketing programs operate

through funds provided by sources such as foundations, governmental grants or donations.

NGOs and Social Media - Challenges and Opportunities

Along with the classic strategies and techniques of communication, public relations and social marketing used by NGOs, a new practice tends to be broad and to be used increasingly more. This practice includes all actions taken by the organization using social media and web-based applications.

Social media is a great tool that civil society organizations can use to communicate with their audience, market their services, connect with their networks or improve the way they work and promote their social development agenda. The key features of social media are participation and interaction, connecting people and providing the tools necessary to have a conversation - all important components of NGOs' day-to-day work. Strategic use of social media is actually helping civil society organizations to measurably reach new people. It also brings added value to mission driven work. Social media is propelling non-profit goals to build a movement around a core advocacy issue, improve customer service or programmers, reach new donors, or raise awareness of a non-profit brand around the world.

The activities of social media present a very high potential of communication with target groups and have the advantage of lower costs to create greater awareness. A study of the social impact of Weber Shandwick in partnership with KRC Research among 200 chief and communication executives and of several non-profit organizations and foundations revealed that most of non-profit

organizations (88 %) experiment the social media platforms in order to access a wide and relevant audience. Another large majority of the persons questioned (79%) said that they could not demonstrate the impact of social networks for their organizations. The study revealed that the majority of professionals working in non-profit organizations and foundations believe that online presence helps to raise awareness among the public audience (92%), keeps external public involved (86%) and reduce costs promo and Public Relations actions costs (77%). In addition, social media helps non-profit organizations to reach audiences outside the target (67%). A percentage of 62% say that benefits outperform risks. For these reasons, majority of them (85%) intend to make greater use of social networks in the next two years, while 78% will need a broader and deeper expertise in this area.

Despite predominantly positive perceptions on social media among non-profit organizations, the survey points several challenges. Two thirds of the directors of non-profit organizations participating in the survey (67%) believe that traditional media is more effective in supporting efforts to raise funds than social networks (67% vs. 22%). Equally, managers in the world of non-profit organizations are more skeptical about the ability of social media to help them connect with key audience, such as donors (45%), media (39%) and the policy makers (31%).

The results mentioned above revealed that communication and public relations practitioners should acquire new skills in order to use all the social media benefits.

These skills were categorized aptly by the:

- Online constituent intelligence. Given the many-to-many nature of the Internet,

however, it becomes vital for public relations practitioners to also be the eyes and ears of the organization online, monitoring constituent content, extracting value from that content, and providing intelligence based on that content, which the organization can use to make strategic business decisions.

- Online communication management.

The organizations we represent need to have a clear, common online voice. This voice must be reflected in the company's various Web presences, its e-mail responses to queries, its participation in discussions, its engagement of constituents, and the content it contributes to other online resources (for example, interviews in online publications). To complicate matters, this voice cannot be inconsistent with the image that is projected offline. This voice cannot happen by accident—we need to carefully plan and craft the approach the organization takes online, serving as architects of the company's online communication efforts.

- Community building and participation. It should be clear by now that no communicator can control online dialogues, but we certainly can—and should—foster such communication and develop it. Communicators must learn to participate in discussions on behalf of their clients and companies, and to create communities targeting constituent audiences that support the institution's objectives.

- Technology skills. There is no way out of it—we must learn enough of the technology to know which tools to employ and to manage the vendors and suppliers who will create the online resources for us to assure the desired outcomes are achieved. This does not mean we must know how to write code or configure servers—but then again, few

public relations professionals know how to produce class-A four-color separations for print.

The most important technologies to understand include those used for: the creation and maintenance of online communities; the review and analysis of information residing on the Internet, including the use of search utilities; custom communication development, including understanding of how databases work.

But that does not mean communicators should forget the skills they have acquired over the years of performing traditional communication. The importance of other channels has not diminished, even as the importance of the Internet has increased.

Some experts have suggested that public relations can never be practiced the old way again. That means that the practice of public relations must now integrate these new skills and processes.

Practitioners need to continue to practice good, solid public relations management and tactics. But they also need to learn the new skills required to incorporate the Internet strategically.

The development of social media network

Since 2003, online social networking sites have experienced explosive growth, becoming a major phenomenon in the new millennium. Online social networking allows people to connect and share information and ideas with others via the Internet. These online communities were created as a means for members to socialize and are often seen as a fun diversion from work.

In the era of Web 2.0, non-profits must take their online messages to a new level.

Using social media tools like blogs, podcasts, videos and collaborative wikis they can initiate more interaction, make their work more interactive, and can positively distribute their message. We have seen that there is occasionally mistrusts among people regarding certain non-profits, which are not always transparent about their activities. When communicating with interactive social media, stakeholders and supporters can have each have better understandings of each other and ascertain whether everything is working properly.

The importance of Web 2.0 for non-profits organization

Using interactive applications, two-way online communications and user-generated content the established core constituency of a non-profit can be expanded wider, possibly transforming it to a global powerhouse. The dotted list below reveals some advantages:

- Blogging communicates with the target audience more frequently and more cost-effectively than newsletters and appeal letters.
- Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds of blogs, videos, etc., allow supporters to receive, read, and act upon the communications at their own pace.
- Providing various strategic tools for engagement.
- Creating a means for building relationships with stakeholders and communities.
- Promoting networking and fundraising.
- Facilitating campaigning to a large, and sometimes even targeted, audience.

- Allowing for more space to spread the word at a cheaper cost.
- Reaching younger generations and having higher chances of getting them involved.
- Transparently telling a story through sound and visuals.

Regardless of the type, scope of work, mission or objectives of any given NGO, there is a social media tool, channel or site that can facilitate and further enhance and perfect the process of spreading the word about the NGO's project. All tools and channels have the power to capacity a more specialized exposure and an easier means of content sharing across the world. For the new practitioners in social media, I've synthesized several steps which must take into account that the message conveyed by NGO's be visible in social media:

- Add the organizational objectives, mission and vision, whenever possible, on whichever site or channel you decide to join;
- Add a cause-related picture as your avatar. For example, if the organization is promoting animal protection, add a picture of a pet or your logo;
- Spend time monitoring relevant issues and topics of discussion on different blogs and other social media venues;
- Communicate with other NGOs utilizing social media and try to build strong connections with them;
- Try to engage with the organizational audience by assigning someone to represent the institution and its cause across social media sites.

Therefore, in the new socio-economic context, NGO's needs more than ever to build credibility and increase its reputation in the market. The more a company strives

to provide as complete information about products and services offered, the more involved in field work and provide relevant information in its area of expertise, the more it becomes more credible in the eyes of consumers, which certainly will influence purchasing decisions.

Communication and Public relations practitioners should be able to reach the public with relevant information needed in the same moment when the need exists among the public necessities. Today are much more direct channels through which information flows to consumers. In the 5 - 10 years ago its great public relations purpose was to obtain space for publication in the press and information through press releases sent directly by the company, but the information were available only to a small group of journalists who depended on the article in the publication page they are working. Today, because of the online environment, Public relations can create content that it distributes directly to the target audience. Online Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter, Digg, Hi5, LinkedIn, My Space, NetLog etc.), blogs, specialized online communities, forums, online publications are environments that disseminate public relations information.

Even if the information transmitted by the company did not reach the front page of publications devoted by the media information comes under the eyes of a numerous public, even spread worldwide, and the feedback is more relevant and more quickly. Following reactions so NGO's can draw conclusions about what they offer on the market (products or services), and the effective communication strategy. A key feature of social media is the integration of different platforms as well as the ability to direct different kinds

of content and formats to particular spaces.

A well-crafted public relations strategies and implementation will be reflected in increasing brand awareness, will enhance credibility and, why not, will transform the organization into an opinion leader in the professional area in which it operates.

Conclusions and implications

Therefore, in the new socio-economic context, NGO's need more than ever to build credibility and increase the reputation in the market. The more a company strives to provide complete information about products and services offered, the more involved in field work and provide relevant information in its area of expertise, the more it becomes more credible in the eyes of consumers, it certainly will influence purchasing decisions. In their activities, NGO's can use the classic - traditional model centered on institutional image, maintaining certain equilibrium in relationship between the public and institutions or strategies to obtain a high awareness through public advocacy and social media, or, even, to influence policy and legislative environment through lobby activities. Using any of these two strategies requires caution by the practitioners because in the non-profit sector the Public Relations campaigns are context sensitive, directed by the target audience characteristics and, especially, by the needs that audience is aware or not. Practitioners need to continue to practice good and solid public relations management and tactics. But they also need to learn the new skills required to incorporate the Internet strategically. Because of the methods of operation for this category the practitioners need to be specialized in the niche actions. The types

of interventions are situational, forms of research are research-action type (research carried out in collaboration with beneficiary, with the community studied, or the group), and the group is helped sometimes to identify its problem. For that reason, NGO's specialists should make the best choices in terms of choice of strategy, channels of dissemination of the message and the proper identification of target audience needs.

It should also mention that the aim of this work was to realize a monograph of

communication and public relations strategies applied in the non-profit sector. Readers and experts in the non-profit sector should not look at this work as a recipe for success, but as a sum of specific techniques and strategies they can consider in their activities to perform on the market, to increase visibility among target audience, create brand awareness and to change into positive brand sentiment the target perception about the non-profit sector.

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