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A. D. Baranetska

*candidate of science in social communications, associate professor
assistant professor of the department of social communications
and information activities of the faculty of journalism
e-mail: anabaranetska@ukr.net, ORCID: 0000-0002-7621-6313
Zaporizhzhia National University
Zhukovskoho str., 66 b, Zaporizhzhia, 69600, Ukraine, 69002*

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: ASPECTS OF INTERCORRELATION

The purpose of the article is to reveal the aspects of intercorrelation between reputation management and strategic communications. ¹²

Research methodology. *In the process of studying the theoretical and methodological basis on the issue of reputation and the role of information and communication component in relations with stakeholders groups, methods of analysis and synthesis were applied; the aspects of intercorrelation between reputation management and strategic communications were revealed by means of descriptive method and generalization.*

Results. *The article describes certain aspects of the correlation between strategic communications and reputation management. Reputation is presented as the totality of audience evaluation impressions, and strategic communications are presented as the system activity of forming the company's informative field and implementing communication relations. It is revealed that one of the basic imperatives of a reputation institute is trust, which, in turn, is the strategic aim of organizations' communication. The category of trust was defined as the common dominant of the studied phenomena, and it is the reason and consequence of long-term and mutually beneficial relations with stakeholders, the embodiment of which is the company's «bank of trust.» It was defined that the important component of strategic communications is a narrative that forms the content-semantic covering of the organization and through which its practical activity is perceived and thus the public's impression is formed. The significant role of business in the implementation of the national grand narrative is also emphasized. It is noted that both reputation and strategic communications are based on the systematicity of actions and the systematic nature of their realization, and, thus, they need corresponding management. The information and communication tools of reputation management implementation are described. The significance of information flow formation and the application of heterogeneous communication methods is defined.*

The novelty *consists in defining and describing correlation aspects of reputation management and strategic communications, understanding of which contributes to the consonance of their implementation and increasing the effectiveness of cooperations between companies and stakeholders.*

Practical significance. *The principles that were revealed will become useful to the specialists during development of strategic communications for a company and in the course of reputation management.*

Keywords: *reputation, reputation management, strategic communications, information and communication component, society, stakeholders, trust, narrative.*

I. Introduction

In today's information society, public opinion has become a specific determinant and driver of a number of social processes. Public perception is one of the factors in the adoption and successful implementation of a particular idea, shaping attitudes towards certain organizations and creating demand for relevant goods and services. It is a specific act of consent and support for the implementation of a particular activity in a particular area (public administration, politics, business, etc.). The importance of public consent or resistance has been proven over time and by a set of acts of relevant manifestation. A special role in this process is played by the narrative, through the prism of which the institution is perceived and the practices of interaction with it are implemented. Therefore, the

company's desire to be a leader (confirmation of its high reputation) requires it to develop proper communications (formation of an appropriate communication strategy) that would ensure the transmission of the necessary meanings and contents to stakeholders.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the issue at hand, the theoretical and methodological basis of the article is the works of researchers from various fields. Some aspects of the actualized topic have been studied by the following authors: O. Derevianko, D. Konyk, O. Mitsura, Ye. Moroz, S. Petkun, L. Prokopyshyn-Rashkevych, L. Storozhenko, O. Tereshchenia, T. Fedoriv, M. Khyzhniak, V. Shkromyda, and others.

II. Problem statement and research methods

The purpose of the article is to highlight the aspects of intercorrelation between reputation management and strategic communications.

In accordance with the defined purpose, the following tasks should be realized: to analyze the phenomenon of reputation as an important component of effective relationships with the audience; to describe the information and communication component of reputation management; to identify the areas of correlation between reputation and strategic communications.

In the process of studying the theoretical and methodological basis on the issue of reputation and the role of the information and communication component in relations with stakeholder groups, the methods of analysis and synthesis are applied; aspects of the intercorrelation of reputation management and strategic communications are disclosed using the descriptive method and generalization.

III. Results

Today, reputation has become one of the basic aspects of a company's effective functioning and an important factor in establishing long-term relationships with the audience. If someone gets to know an organization through its represented image, the desire to remain its client is formed through the prism of the pragmatic effect of the consumer-company relationship, i.e. reputation. Despite the fact that the reputation institute as a system of norms that contribute to its formation and generation of public attitudes towards a particular object, as well as formal and informal laws to address problematic issues [7, p. 102], is currently in the process of its formation, it is undeniable (as reflected in a number of relevant scientific studies) that one of the central categories of such interaction with audiences is the imperative of trust. After all, from the stakeholders' (interested parties') viewpoint, reputation is the level of their trust in the organization [quoted after 11, p. 94; see also 2]. Noting that the formation of trust is the basis, process and consequence of any relationship, researchers talk about a kind of «trust bank» (A. Golin) [quoted after 11, p. 94; quoted after 12, p. 135], and point out that resources invested in the company's reputation during its successful operation will help to maintain proper market positions in crisis situations [quoted after 12, p. 135]. According to the researchers, «the development of the reputation institution in the business environment will solve a number of issues important for society, such as integrity and social responsibility, the formation of business ethics and information hygiene, transparency of communications, etc. that will definitely have a positive impact on the business itself» [12, p. 108].

To ensure the effective operation of an organization for the long term, a deep understanding of the essence of the reputation phenomenon and its structural components and tools that construct an effective system for maintaining the appropriate status of the company among stakeholders is required. Today, business reputation is the most valuable asset of a company, a specific product in the format of a certain social myth, which contains a special objective and subjective system of evaluative judgments of target audiences [8, p. 551]. This is a certain imprint of the result of pragmatic interactions of the audience with the structure, which are reproduced in a series of impressions about it. One of the criteria for the formation of such perceptions of an organization is the disseminated messages about its activities that present the relevant information field around it and identify it in the information space. That is, the company should be included in the relevant narrative that describes the dominant meaning, the idea of its existence and position. That is why, when working on the reputation of an organization, experts must clearly understand its philosophy, mission, and system of values in order to reflect them in a series of messages for their audiences. Only under this condition, in a situation of well-established communications at all levels, is it possible to obtain a product of proper quality and the desired contact with customers. For example, J. Doorley and H. F. Garcia interpret reputation through a special formula, where the sum of perceptions (actions) about a firm is the result of establishing a number of relationships and relevant communications [quoted after 11, p. 94]. Given that companies interact with different groups of the public (internal and external), it is obvious that effective cooperation in this area requires the development of a holistic communication system. Therefore, reputation can be viewed through the prism of an organization's ability to manage consumer trust, and one of the areas for its formation is reputation management of information communications [see 2].

The information and communication component of reputation development is the area where the company and the audience reach mutual understanding, which in the future forms a long-term relationship. Information provision and support are manifestations of an organization's openness and social responsibility, especially when it comes to crisis situations. Well-established communications demonstrate knowledge of the public and understanding of their needs. All of this indicates the structure's desire to be as useful as possible, needed by stakeholders, and its interest in providing quality services, creating appropriate conditions, establishing mutually beneficial contacts, i.e., timely

response to today's challenges. That is why information flows (G. Ferris) [quoted after 1, p. 17], which represent the organization, are so important in managing the reputation of the subject.

In particular, V. Shkromyda summarized a number of information methods of forming an organization's reputation offered by researchers, including: information coming directly from the company, experience of cooperation with the company, dissemination of messages through the media, indirect messages, public institutional information, gossip, talks, rumors. The author also adds two more items for obtaining data about the institution: information materials of reputable public organizations, independent professional structures, rating agencies, bloggers, and dissemination of public institutional information through messages of audit companies, investment organizations, venture capital firms, etc. These points make it possible to outline a set of effective means and channels of communication [12, p. 136–137]. In particular, O. Derevianko notes that among the set of tools for communication and reputation development with groups of stakeholder audiences, product PR (PR sales support, branding), integrated marketing communications, internal PR, GR (Government Relations), IR (Investor Relations), CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) are used [2].

The diversity of information and communication tools makes it possible to reach different groups of the public, which is important for developing a reputation. In particular, researchers have identified a number of technological methods and approaches to managing and developing a company's reputation, each of which has its own direction of action and information impact. These are: «agents of trust» (based on extrapolation of reputation from the company's membership in relevant independent, professional associations, societies, etc. through compliance with the ethical codes and statutes of these communities); «corporate culture» (focused on ensuring an adequate atmosphere in the team and effective relationships between employees (updating of HR management)); «corporate social responsibility» (involves intense public activity of the company); «crowdsourcing» (consists in finding and obtaining a client-partner); «public leader» (active public participation of the company's management); «products and services» (focusing on the company's services and products in the information flow); «professional staff» (involvement of employees and officials with high professionalism); «achieved goals» (presentation/demonstration of competitive advantages and market leadership); «work with opinion leaders» (implemented by inviting reputable journalists, professional experts, public figures and activists, bloggers); «maintaining an official website» (promotes the dissemination of corporate information about the company's activities); «favorable Internet search engine» (optimization of the search engine and its results); «presence in social networking services» (carried out through communication strategies of SMM (Social Media Marketing) and SMP (Social Media Promotion) [13, p. 99–100]. As evidenced by the presented positions of the information and communication spectrum of reputation development and its maintenance, active processes are currently underway to study the vectors of establishing contact and forming long-term relationships with audiences.

Modern trends in the information space are accompanied by transformations also in the field of communications. Due to the active development of the Internet and its capabilities, the phenomenon of online reputation has become more relevant. After all, stakeholders receive a large amount of information about the company from this network, so it has become a powerful platform for implementing a virtual dialogue between the organization and its customers. Today, online reputation is a significant component of reputational capital and a separate structural element with a specific set of tools and methods (SMM, SERM, SEO, Crisis and Public ORM), its own advantages and disadvantages [6, pp. 123–124, 125–126]. In particular, the speed of reputation management is accompanied by the corresponding probability of large-scale dissemination of negative information and the unleashing of an information war by competitors [6, p. 125].

Therefore, in the practice of reputation management, there is the concept of on-line reputation management (ORM), which is understood as «a system of measures that involves the use of various techniques and services to create and maintain a sustainable positive impression of the company and its activities among the target audience through the Internet and, as a result, increase the loyalty of contact groups to the enterprise» [ibid.] Online reputation has become one of the ways to strengthen an organization's position in the market, which is, in particular, due to the large-scale development of social media. Therefore, powerful companies develop online strategies to maintain their image [1, p. 14].

The availability of extensive communication and information tools opens up broad prospects for reputation management. In particular, there are potential opportunities to change the tone of the information field to a positive one, create new communication channels or form a new dense information field in the Internet space for new companies in case of detection of negativity [4, p. 42].

In general, information and communication activities should be based on systematicity and systematic implementation of the appropriate type of relations with different groups of the public. It is about developing an appropriate strategy, in the broad sense of the company's strategic communications, and, accordingly, applying basic provisions and principles that include studying the target audience and the market situation, clear planning, monitoring the information field around the organization, information response, interactivity, synergy of communication technologies, etc. It is the synthesis of different aspects of communication that maximizes the achievement of the strategic goal of the institution, since certain types of communication activities are aimed only at solving specific problems of their sector. Their integration for the purpose of effective functioning of a corporate institution causes the «birth» of strategic communication, the essence of which is to influence the target audience and achieve the desired

result [9, p. 391]. Effective use of the dominant strategic communication tools contributes to the development of a consistent program that involves the creation and dissemination of messages that contain important information and have a significant impact on the audience. Strategic communications require the formation of promising long-term relationships between various actors, management and staff, media and audience, government and society [10, p. 116]. At the same time, experts should proceed from the fact that the strategic goal of this type of communication is to establish trust. The basis of the remark was D. Konyk's statement about the organization of strategic communications between a particular government body and its target audiences that affect its activities [5, p. 36], as well as personal beliefs in the applicability of strategic communications in the business sphere.

Therefore, trust as a kind of guarantee and imperative of adequate, mutually beneficial relations is one of the aspects of the correlation between reputation and strategic communications. After all, both of these phenomena are focused on establishing stakeholder confidence in the company's responsibility. Trust is a central category in the formation of long-term relationships between an organization and its audience, where strategic communications are a kind of assurance of the firm's ability to adhere to the defined mission and values, while reputation is a kind of reproduction/implementation of the stated views. At the same time, a high reputation coefficient becomes the key to the successful implementation of information campaigns, because such communications are already invested with stakeholder trust capital from previous experience of interaction with the structure.

The interdependence of the analyzed phenomena also lies in the fact that the firm's reputation affects the effectiveness of strategic communications, while the latter provide information support for the implementation of communication contacts with stakeholders, which are carried out on the basis of information transparency, honesty, reliability, publicity, respect for the client's right to be properly informed and participate in the relevant dialogue.

Another important category of reputation management and strategic communications is narrative, because strategic communications create a kind of content and semantic shell (narrative) for the company's practices (reputation). Their correlation becomes an indicator of the company's reputational value (goodwill) and a guarantee of its further ability to influence the public in solving urgent issues, even at the state level.

By its nature, business is also one of the mechanisms for implementing the national narrative, the grand narrative, as it is one of the manifestations of national identity. A variation of the grand narrative, according to D. Dubov, is the strategic narrative, which can also be seen as a macro-story or a basic ideology. The mechanisms of its implementation can be very diverse and can be implemented in various areas where the state considers that a certain common understanding of processes, attitudes towards processes or events should be achieved [3]. The role of business in the implementation of national ideas has become especially powerful and significant in times of crisis. After all, the shown algorithm of actions by organizations with a high reputation has greater chances of being accepted and applied by a wide audience. In turn, the actualization of the relevant meanings by the firm becomes evidence of its involvement in solving a socially important issue, which enhances reputational indicators. In particular, such processes took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and are still present during the full-scale war in Ukraine. Clear crisis/anti-crisis communications in conjunction with real-world practices become an effective means of interacting with the public. Conscious integration of business into the national grand narrative strengthens the company's reputation by addressing global issues of national importance. For example, today, Ukrainian businesses are facing serious challenges due to the war unleashed by the aggressor country Russia against Ukraine. Awareness and fulfillment of priority tasks by business (interaction with society, assistance and support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and defenders, as well as employees and preservation of their jobs, employment of internally displaced citizens of Ukraine, fulfillment of obligations to the budget) demonstrate the social responsibility of business and the formation of its reputation [7, p. 102].

As the present shows, «businesses that adhere to the norms of the reputation institution have an impact on the inactive part of the population, promoting thoughts that make them reflect on the situation of certain things. And civil society is ready to disseminate information about such companies and gives them a clear advantage» [7, p. 108]. At the same time, the lack of unity between the company's messages and its actions or the company's deliberate non-inclusion in the grand narrative can lead to a loss of trust (i.e., the destruction of one of the important links of reputational capital), as well as to the formation of a certain public narrative-opponent (anti-narrative). According to the researchers, «for companies that do not realize the consequences of their actions, Ukrainian civil society demonstrates them by organizing large-scale information campaigns that force businesses to pay attention to the problem, respond to it and solve it» [7, p. 105]. In the absence of the desired result, the mechanism of cancel culture is activated [Ibid., p. 105], which will lead to a decrease in the company's reputation capital.

Strategic communications are an accompanying tool for creating and maintaining an organization's reputation (and reputation management in general), while an existing positive reputation makes it possible to increase the pragmatic effect of an information campaign by persuading the audience to accept the suggested solutions in a given situation. Thus, D. Konyk emphasizes that a typical communication campaign should be constructed according to the following scheme: description of the problem and obstacles to its solution, and then demonstration of the suggested solution. Its role is not

only to raise public awareness, but, above all, to motivate the target audience to act. «Of course, all communication campaigns have an educational effect, but the audience should learn through the experience of implementing specific practices, not just through passive consumption of information. Moreover, information that does not lead to mobilization for action will have no impact» [5, p. 40].

Strategic communications is an important area of generating stakeholder investments by establishing interaction with various public groups, creating an information platform, ensuring effective communication dialogue, targeted information at all levels of the organization, declaring the mission and values of the organization, ensuring the company's «visibility» and recognition in the relevant market and among the target audience. In turn, reputation management is a mechanism for increasing the effectiveness of strategic communications.

IV. Conclusions

To summarize, the intercorrelation of the phenomena under study is primarily manifested in their interdependence and mutual necessity, as well as in the basic components of their implementation such as the production and implementation of narratives based on the imperative of trust. In particular, when it comes to reputation, companies' activities should be based on the basic principles of strategic communications (specifically, trust relations, publicity, information transparency, and data reliability), and the narratives formed should be consistent with the actual practices of organizations, which will demonstrate their socially responsible positions and narrative integration.

The prospect of researching this topic is to further expand the boundaries of understanding reputation and reputation management, as well as to study the role of the information and communication component in the formation of the reputation institution.

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Баранецька А. Д. Репутаційний менеджмент у контексті стратегічних комунікацій: аспекти взаємодії

Мета статті полягає у виявленні аспектів взаємодії репутаційного менеджменту та стратегічних комунікацій.

Методологія дослідження. У процесі студювання теоретико-методологічної бази з питання репутації та ролі інформаційно-комунікаційної компоненти у відносинах з групами стейкхолдерів застосовано методи аналізу та синтезу; аспекти взаємодії репутаційного менеджменту й стратегічних комунікацій розкрито за допомогою описового методу та узагальнення.

Результати. У статті висвітлено окремі аспекти кореляції стратегічних комунікацій та репутаційного менеджменту. Репутацію подано як сукупність оціночних вражень аудиторій, а стратегічні комунікації – як системну діяльність із формування інформаційного поля компанії та здійснення комунікаційних відносин. Виявлено, що одним із базових імперативів інституту репутації є довіра, яка, своєю чергою, є стратегічною метою комунікації організації. Охарактеризовано категорію довіри як спільну домінуючу досліджуваних феноменів, яка є причиною та наслідком довготривалих і взаємовигідних відносин зі стейкхолдерами, втіленням чого є «банк довіри» компанії. Визначено, що важливою компонентою стратегічних комунікацій є наратив, що формує змістово-смыслову оболонку організації та кризь призму якого сприймається її практична діяльність, а отже, формується враження громадськості. Наголошено на вагомій ролі бізнесу в реалізації національного гранд-наративу. Відзначено, що як репутація, так і стратегічні комунікації базуються на системності дій та систематичності їх реалізації, а отже, потребують відповідного менеджменту. Описано інформаційно-комунікаційний інструментарій реалізації репутаційного менеджменту. Визначено вагомість формування інформаційних потоків та застосування різномірних комунікаційних шляхів.

Новизна полягає у визначенні й характеристиці аспектів кореляції репутаційного менеджменту та стратегічних комунікацій, розуміння яких сприяє суголосності їх здійснення й підвищенню ефективності взаємодії компаній зі стейкхолдерами.

Практична значущість. Виявлені положення стануть у пригоді фахівцям під час розбудови стратегічних комунікацій для компанії та в процесах здійснення репутаційного менеджменту.

Ключові слова: репутація, репутаційний менеджмент, стратегічні комунікації, інформаційно-комунікаційна компонента, громадськість, стейкхолдери, довіра, наратив.

Baranetska A. Zarządzanie reputacją w kontekście komunikacji strategicznej: aspekty wzajemnej korelacji

Cel artykułu polega na ujawnieniu aspektów wzajemnej korelacji zarządzania reputacyjnego i komunikacji strategicznej.

Metodologia badania. W trakcie badania podstaw teoretyczno-metodologicznych na temat reputacji i roli komponenty informacyjno-komunikacyjnej w relacjach z grupami interesariuszy zastosowano metody analizy i syntezy; aspekty wzajemnej korelacji zarządzania reputacją i komunikacji strategicznej ujawniane są za pomocą metody opisowej i uogólnienia.

Wyniki. W niniejszym artykule wyświetlone są samodzielne aspekty korelacji komunikacji strategicznej i zarządzania reputacją. Reputację przedstawia się jako zestaw wartościujących wrażeń odbiorców, a komunikację strategiczną jako systemową działalność polegającą na kształtowaniu informacyjnego pola przedsiębiorstwa, a także na realizowaniu relacji komunikacyjnych. Ujawniono, że jednym z podstawowych imperatywów instytutu reputacji jest zaufanie, które z kolei jest strategicznym celem komunikacji organizacji. Kategorię zaufania scharakteryzowano jako wspólną dominantę badanych fenomenów, będącą przyczyną i skutkiem długotrwałych i wzajemnie korzystnych relacji z interesariuszami, których ucieleśnieniem jest „bank zaufania” przedsiębiorstwa. Ustalono, że ważnym elementem komunikacji strategicznej jest narracja, która tworzy treściowo-znaczącą powłokę organizacji i przez pryzmat której postrzegana jest jej praktyczna działalność, co znaczy, że formuje się wrażenie publiczności. Podkreślono znaczącą rolę biznesu w realizacji wielkiej narracji narodowej. Zwrócono uwagę, że zarówno reputacja, jak i komunikacja strategiczna opierają się na systematyczności działań i systematyczności ich realizacji, dlatego wymagają one odpowiedniego zarządzania. Opisano instrumentarium informacyjno-komunikacyjne służące do realizacji zarządzania reputacją. Określono ważność kształtowania przepływów informacyjnych oraz zastosowania różnych kanałów komunikacyjnych.

Nowość badania polega na ujawnieniu i scharakteryzowaniu aspektów korelacji zarządzania reputacją oraz komunikacji strategicznej, zrozumienie których sprzyja zgodności ich realizacji oraz zwiększeniu efektywności interakcji pomiędzy przedsiębiorstwami a interesariuszami.

Znaczenie praktyczne. Ujawnione przepisy są użyteczne dla specjalistów podczas rozbudowy komunikacji strategicznych dla przedsiębiorstwa, a także w procesach realizacji zarządzania reputacją.

Słowa kluczowe: reputacja, zarządzanie reputacją, komunikacje strategiczne, komponenta informacyjno-komunikacyjna, publiczność, interesariusze, zaufanie, narracja.