

# DIMENSIONS OF PROMOTING IMAGE MANAGEMENT IN PRE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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**Abstract:** The management of pre university education institutions has become an important factor in promoting the school image, which is a priority for the survival of the organization. Outside school there are external and internal clients, and it is absolutely necessary to resort to a good communication both inside and outside the organization. The managerial activity that makes publicity for the educational institution is the creation and the promotion its image. Accomplished by specialized persons, this activity will lead to the success of the organization.

Key words: promoting organizational image, trade mark image, promoting image commission

In nowadays economy that is focused on services, excellent services are no longer a competitive weapon only, but also a surviving kit.

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The development of the educational system cannot be achieved without the managers' ability to promote the initiative of active communication with the external public categories.

The public image of the organization conveys in a synthetic form, the metaphor of notoriety, personality and philosophy of its organizational life. The rigorous evaluation of the organization's image assumes the necessity of operationalizing the concept of image.

Being an organizational and a public good at the same time, the organizational image conveys through the symbolism of its senses, the reputation of the organization, in the community where it functions and it is integrated<sup>1</sup>.

The process of creating organizational image is an evolving one. The result of information conveyed through media, commercials and publicity, the relations established with the local power, lead to creating organizational image. At the same time, the latter is formed through the satisfaction obtained by the external public of the organization.

The image of school is rendered by many elements: purpose, objectives, structure, resources, school organization culture and its attributes, or simply by direct

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<sup>1</sup> Scalia, D., Ducombe, P., Le management de la communication globale, Les Editions Demos, 2003

experience or by some specialized informational structures (media) or superior hierarchical (inspectorate, ministry) which have a decisive role in creating a certain attitude towards the school organization.

Approaches about creating organizational image are represented by the constructivist, theoretical and phenomenological triad<sup>2</sup>.

The constructivist approach of Jean Piaget, underlines the organizational dynamics and the importance of the components that sustain the organizational language (graphic signs, sigles, colours, design) conveyed through different categories of public. Piaget identifies a new way of communication of the organization with the target public. It is all about the constructive perception of the public towards the evolution of the organization and its image.

The theoretical approach, sustained by Serge Moscovici and Jean Claude Abric, is another important point of view regarding the construction of the organizational image and its importance. It results from the constructivist approach, but puts an accent on the links established through systems of values in society and organizational values. Thus, social implications are linked to cultural, sociological and psychological values existent in the community.

Edmund Husserl's phenomenological approach, underlines the image viewed through the perspective of personal experiences of individuals, perceived as potential consumers. Thus, according to the different categories of public, the organizational image may be a success or not<sup>3</sup>.

It is thus created a communication interaction between messages launched by the organization and the manifestations of the intern and the extern public of the latter. The senses of the organizational image coincide with the trade mark image, the symbolic image and the public image.

The trade mark image (material image) is a: symbol, a name, a drawing, a notion, a label, a graphic combination, meant to easily identify the organization or its goods. It guarantees the notoriety of the organization and the quality of its services. The symbolic image aims at the organization's discourse to the target public through promotional clips or through the involvement of the organization in solving social or humanitarian issues. The public image of an organization is all the more important as the organization is bigger and has an increasing social responsibility. The public image is established through PR politics and must have two components: material image and symbolic image.

The organizational image is multidimensional. It is related to segments that make up the structure of the organizational image, as seen by the modern management. The school image may be reduced to: real image, wanted image, involuntary created image and conveyed image<sup>4</sup>.

Among many commissions existent in school policy, a new one has appeared – promoting school image. Applying a questionnaire for Bihor county and checking managerial plans from different school sites, we note that, in many cases, the communication activity in school is done in a formal way. This means that certain

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2 Pillart, I., (coord), *L'espace public et l'entreprise de la communication*, Grenoble, Universite Stendhal, Ellug, 3, 1995

3 Scalia, D., Ducombe, P., *Le management de la communication globale*, Les Editions Demos, 2003

4 Educational Management for educational institutions, Ministry of Education and Research, Institute of Educational Sciences, Reform Project for pre university education system, Bucharest, 2001

school managers are not aware that public relations are a priority for modern school, and the advantages that they offer are numerous:

- Researching and analyzing the intern and extern background of the school organization
- Creating a pro-active attitude and foreseeing a possible crisis
- Creating a better intern and extern communication
- Involving school in different partnerships and obtaining a strategic advantage
- Identifying extra-budgetary financing resources

The importance of promoting school image is generated by the changing process of the educational system that includes: the decentralization of the pre university educational system, quality and eliminating the negative effect of demographic and social factors, that lead to diminishing school population <sup>5</sup>.

The promoting image commission should have between 3 and 5 members and must be monitored by the manager or the assistant manager, considering that public relations are a managerial function, all materials that regard intern and extern communication need the manager's approval. The manager must decide if he wants to be the spokesman of the organization or if he authorizes another person to do this job.

The promoting image commission must have the following objectives:

- To obtain and maintain a positive image of the organization
- Gain confidence among intern and extern public, in what the quality of the educational services is regarded
- Enhancing communication inside the organization
- Gain full media attention

Inside the commission, the functions must be the following: intern communication consultant, extern communication consultant, strategy communication consultant.

The members of the school image commission must have some of the following qualities: sociability, analysis qualities, creativity, dynamism, intuition, wit, responsibility, objectivity and honesty. A person with questionable moral integrity: bribe, favoritism, absence, will not be a good choice for the institution and should not be promoted in this function.

Graduating from certain communication courses, public relations, journalism, sociology or educational management is an advantage, because handling research and media techniques are very useful.

Instruction of the team members can be an individual activity or participating to different courses.

The manager can select the members of the promoting team through questionnaires, or interviews. After the selection, the manager communicates the responsibilities of each member.

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<sup>5</sup> Iosifescu, Ș., Educational Management for educational institutions, Ministry of Education and Research, Bucharest, 2001

Mentioning benefits as well as obligations is necessary because the team members must be motivated. These benefits can be negotiated with the team members and can vary. Efficient motivation always corresponds to a certain need.

Communication between the team members can be done through: phone, e-mail, internet conferences, operative meetings.

The commission for promoting school image is a changing element, and there may be persons that can be against promoting school. The manager has the possibility of applying certain strategies to involve as many teachers as possible. <sup>6</sup>

Useful tools in public relations are: the informative file, the press file, the sponsoring file, the feedback questionnaires.

The interaction between school and the milieu it function in is a continuous concern for the manager. In this respect, the manager has an important role, that of representative for the organization in respect to other organizations, groups or persons, the partnership and community involvement having benefits to increase the quality of the education process, but also to enhance specific communication competences.

Creating a real partnership with other factors that can influence and sustain the educational process: family, non governmental organizations, economic agents, central and local authorities, are all very important for the noble mission of school and education.

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