ECREA Section for Organisational and Strategic Communication

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The ECREA section for Organizational and Strategic Communication promotes an active and critical dialogue among scholars in view of consolidating an interdisciplinary field of debate, applications and complex projects. Its aim is to approach and to debate on the fundamentals of corporate communication and to encourage the development of research topics and input concepts by different scholars in various European countries or elsewhere. The overall objective of the Section is therefore to enhance the European research within the field of organizational and strategic communications as well as to refine the conceptual and methodological background of the correlated practice.

The participation rules of the Section allow contributions from researchers, professors, master and doctoral students, as well from corporate representatives whose aim is to develop the internal research portfolios of their own organizations. The Section also allows contributions of independent specialists and consultants in marketing, public communication or related fields, as the very field of organizational communication is difficult to observe unless part of the organizational systems

The ECREA section for Organizational and Strategic Communication is open to potential members from various institutions and professional groups whose interest is to expand relevant knowledge and to share advanced expertise about the corporate world.

2007
Report on yearly activities

The ECREA section for Organizational and Strategic Communication has been created with the aim of promoting an active and critical dialogue among scholars involved in the study of corporate communication and cultures. Scholars from Europe and elsewhere are called to debate on the fundamentals of corporate communication and to propose new research topics and input concepts relevant to the interdisciplinary growth of these disciplines within the field of organizational and strategic communications.

The first major European event of the Section was organized in Bucharest, Romania, in June 1-2, on the challenging theme of **"Fundamentals of Corporate Communication: Current Trends and Perspectives".** The Conference had been proposed and organised in conjunction with the annual colloquia of the two faculties and departments of the University of Bucharest, namely the Department of Communication and Public Relations of the Faculty of Letters and the Centre for Media Studies and New Communication Technologies of the Faculty of Sociology.

About 150 participants from Romania, France, England, Germany, Poland, Canada and Turkey took part in the event. Various forms of presentations were encouraged, in order to outline the complexity of the research field

and allow contributors to find their specific place in the programme. The Agenda proposed two plenary sessions dedicated to the most salient issues in the field as well as four parallel workshops in which scholars and practitioners discussed recent and innovative projects. The Conference had programmed two pre-conference Forums on social and ethical aspects of communication, and a final Round Table on the use of electronic media and blogging. The debates were rich and inspiring, performed in a very convivial ambience. The individual presentations have been subject of double selection: a first evaluation based on the abstracts sent and published prior to the Conference, and a blind peer assessment of the full papers.

The dissemination of ideas following the Bucharest Conference created higher awareness on the topic, at least among the participants present at the event. The Section has been active in encouraging various researchers and professors to continue sharing information and promoting new challenges in the domain. The members of the Board have put their efforts in coordinating local events or debates. In Romania, for instance, the research group in the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, runs a multi-annual project financed by the National Council for Research in Higher Education (CNCSIS) that is particularly looking at the actual state of internal communication and entire strategic communication in Romanian public institutions like public administration, universities, museums, opera houses and theatres, and state libraries. A French speaking research group has been consolidated due to closed cooperation between the Section and la SFSIC (Société Française des Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication).

The Section remains open to respond to any other European language groups, in order to better represent the diversity of approaches as well as the interdisciplinary methodologies. Due to the fact that organisational culture is resulting from cultural and multicultural environment, and more and more from cultural tensions and conflicts arising from globalisation, the local and national projects of various concerned research groups are strongly encouraged.

In its first year of existence, the Section has made some steps in raising the interest for an enhanced European cooperation in the field. More efforts should be made for visibility, including online news and publication.

The Section will continue to encourage its academic members to plead for introducing or consolidating, if exist, the disciplines of organisational culture and communication in the curricula of European communication schools. The early exposure of students and their implication in debates about issues like risk communication, internal media networks, group and team dynamics, as well as organisational development are considered important inputs for educating future organisational leaders in both private and public spheres.

The Section is looking at expanding the professional exchange, in order to create "poles of excellence". Interested Universities and research centres are invited to cooperate for initiating bilateral and multilateral projects. Active partnership and networking remain the key objectives of the Section development in 2008.

ECREA 2008 in Barcelona

Call for proposal

Communication Strategy and Technology : A New Challenge

The growing interdependence between markets (including the financial markets), the development of multinational firms, the take-off in standardised products and the emergence of international media, entail traditional borders between countries (whether of geographical or political nature), just as cultural barriers between nations, to become increasingly porous.

This change is playing an active part in the construction of a new geography of markets and cultures, weaving an ever tighter mesh between the economy and globalized culture, and directly influencing the communication sector, especially through the images and messages that have been irrigating our daily lives since the end of the 1990's. Confronted by an activity that has lost its seasonality and become global, the various actors have had to

adapt. With the development of the Internet, relations between the professional stakeholders and the customers in the commercial chain have been shaken up when it comes to the purchasing approach

Another dimension has thus been added on to the initial mass communication and segmented communication, with multi-channel communication. The latter strives to better take into account the complexity of demand and the variety of the linguistic, cultural and economic factors that govern consumption habits, following as closely as possible the potential consumers who use are increasingly using Web resources. This communication is thus forced to respond to the new morphology of the markets and is turned decisively towards short term sales through its presence on the Net. Nevertheless, alongside an architecture integrating different channels operating in synergy with each other, should not communication also vehicle messages devised to contribute to building a brand image for the long term? Should not the vectors for communication and its content be taken into consideration as a whole?

Much of the activity of a press relation manager (one of the communication skills) involves obtaining articles or reports by journalists in favour of the advertiser concerned; the activity cannot be considered independently of the corresponding spin-off. Now, the development of information and communication technologies, and above all the reduction in communication budgets have over the last few years accentuated requirements as regards performance of media relations, this being borne out by the many debates that have stirred up the profession over recent months in Europe.

Meanwhile, advertising (another communication skill) seeks to obtain an effect on the behaviour of individuals belonging to the target concerned, in favour of a given advertiser, it being hard to consider the advertising activity independently of its spin-off. Now, the economic context and the reduction in communication budgets have for a number of years tended to accentuate requirements with respect to advertising performance. This too is highlighted by the many debates on neuromarketing that have put the profession in a state of turmoil over the last few years. But whether quantitative or qualitative, the evaluation of advertising performance too remains a vague concept that cannot simply be subsumed into a simple increase in sales. Indeed, advertising constitutes just one means of communication among others (public relations and promotion, for example) in an environment saturated with competing messages, fitting into an overall strategy that in turn proves top be more or less effective. Moreover, such measurement covers a variety of different means (preliminary test upstream of campaigns, subsequent test downstream, rate of memorising, of understanding, approval, attribution, etc.) that account awkwardly for what prospective customers and potential consumers really feel. In parallel with this, messages transit via the new media, including in particular the Internet, that brings with it new rules for communication.

In this difficult context, communicators, whoever they are (in public relations, press relations, advertising or internal communication) seek the tools likely to help them build their strategies as best as possible and justify them to the decision-makers. They are thus led to harness the concepts and notions used by the social sciences.

The papers we call for will reflect on this cross-disciplinary process of conceptual and methodological transfer on the basis of which corporate communication phenomena are described. They will propose and make clear different perspectives on corporate communication and illustrate their fundamental concepts. Each paper is called to introduce the state-of-the-art or key aspects of the research work connected to corporate communication in the respective countries/societies/contexts, and explain critical issues, methodologies and/or main results of studies and reflections in the field.

Scientific Committee:
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