Chapter 16

From the Interview “Eye in the Eye” to the “Eye in the WhatsApp”: The Impact of Social Media on the Praxis of the Press Office in Organizational Communication Projects

Cintia Medeiros
Universidade Salvador, Brazil

Vanessa Brasil Campos Rodriguez
Universidade Salvador, Brazil

Manoel Joaquim Barros
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0719-2802
Universidade Salvador, Brazil

Sérgio Maravilhas-Lopes
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3824-2828
IES-ICS, Federal University of Bahia, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how technology and social media have transformed the praxis of press advisory activity and projects within the scope of the Communication of Organizations. To this end, it finds impacts on the functions of the activity facing this new scenario caused by the emergence of social media, updating the required profile of the new press advisor. The study adopts the conceptualization of the functions of the press officer in the organizational communication made by Duarte (2009), analyzing 17 of these functions in this new context. Authors studied the praxis of each function, before and after the advent of social media. They chose these functions because they stand for the dynamics of the Press Office, from the strategic to the operational level. The study found which social media are most used by press officers to publicize actions of their organization.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9993-7.ch016
INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the diffusion of Information Technology has caused a profound change in daily life, in addition to society’s actions and thinking; with reflections on culture, scientific research, science and all segments that guide human life. In the dawn of the recent millennium, we saw a new wave in digital innovation, with the emergence and spread of networks and social media (SM). The Organizational Communication (OC), a discipline that studies how organizations within the global society process the communication phenomenon (Kunsch, 2009), received direct reflexes from this new scenario.

The Press Office (PO) is one of the tools of organizational communication, which, according to Kunsch (2009), is divided into four principal areas: marketing, internal, administrative and institutional. Institutional Communication has PO in its compound. This study proposes to analyze the transformations that occurred in the PO activity, due to the use of SM.

The so-called digital social media (DSM), platforms that allow the creation and sharing of content between people, have changed the traditional model of PO activity. The flow of information, which was previously unidirectional, from the sender to the receiver, pulverized itself, without control, nor borders. Social media, such as Facebook¹ and Twitter², began to affect some functions of the activity. Currently, social media are based on the mass media, in a process of demassification of these vehicles, which, compared to the earlier universe, the offline³ world, sounds primitive.

Thus, an important change in the way this activity runs occurred. Press releases⁴, previously just printed, are now digital. The press offices currently work with an online database. Important resources, such as face-to-face meetings, are mostly held in the field of videoconferencing, needing these professionals to master this technology, from new skills, with a more strategic than operational profile.

The first question, from this study, was to understand “how did social media transform the praxis of press advisory activity in the context of the Communication of Organizations Projects⁵”? Its overall aim was to find and analyze the impacts caused in the activity of PO, in front of this new scenario, provided by social media. In addition, the research analyzed new tools, adopted by the segment, in counterpoint with those qualified as traditional, studying their impacts on the functions of the activity, to understand the required profile of the new press officer.

This study was qualitative and quantitative. For the qualitative approach, we use the Content Analysis technique for exploratory, discovery, and verification purposes, confirming or not assumptions or presumptions. For the purposes of our analysis, we adopted the conception of the functions of the press officer in organizational communication, made by Duarte (2009), of which, we evaluated 17 functions, considering the new scenario provided by social media.

The concept of social media (SM) used the delimitation of Terra (2007), which considers texts, images, audios, blogs⁵, microblogs⁶, communities, message boards, online discussion forums, podcasts⁷, wikis⁸, vlogs⁹ and the like, that allow the interaction between the users and caused a change in the praxis of the Press Office.

PRESS OFFICE ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

During the period of the Industrial Revolution, the first concepts of organizational communication (OC) began to form due to profound changes in labor relations in the social, political, and economic fields,
Related Content

Ethics and Education: A Markov Chain Assessment of Civilian Education in Air Force Materiel Command
[www.igi-global.com/article/ethics-and-education/227744?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/ethics-and-education/227744?camid=4v1a)

The Main Concepts Behind the Dematerialization of Business Processes
Liliana Ávila and Leonor Teixeira (2019). *Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in Business Operations and Management* (pp. 508-519).
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-main-concepts-behind-the-dematerialization-of-business-processes/212134?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-main-concepts-behind-the-dematerialization-of-business-processes/212134?camid=4v1a)

Dynamic Capabilities and Innovation Radicalness: Review and Analysis
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/dynamic-capabilities-innovation-radicalness/59840?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/dynamic-capabilities-innovation-radicalness/59840?camid=4v1a)

Ability of the Actor Network Theory (ANT) to Model and Interpret an Electronic Market
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/ability-actor-network-theory-ant/7211?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/ability-actor-network-theory-ant/7211?camid=4v1a)