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## **The Relation of Managerial Communication - Public Management Conflicts and Crisis**

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**Abstract.** Being a basic function of management, communication is a process of transforming the information as symbolic messages between two or several individuals, some with the status of transmitter and others with the status of receiver, by means of some specific channels. Over time, the concept of communication has experienced several very different meanings. In literature, the exact meaning of the concept of communication is still the topic of some lively debates, and the perspectives addressed and the methods are particularly varied.

**Keywords:** organizational communication, public administration, managerial communication, conflict situations, crisis management.

## **1. Theoretical considerations**

The concept of communication has not been rigorously defined, but rather approximated from different angles. The etymology of the word “communication” originates from the Latin word “communis”, which can mean contact, relationship, connection, news, although the term circulated in the ancient vocabulary with the meaning of “also transmitting to others”, “to share something with the others”.

In 1949, the mathematicians Shannon and Weaver published in “*The Mathematical Theory of Communication*” an elementary model of communications, a model that subsequently generated a strong influence on the analysis of human communication. According to the model they elaborated, a communication process is performed according to a scheme (Fig. 1). In essence, the model they proposed includes three fundamental elements: an emitter (speaker, transmitter) that emits messages; a receiver (listener) that receives messages; the messages, which are distinct and ordered structures of signs that bear meanings, are formed of the elements of a code that is common to the two partners who communicate.

The paper “*Introduction to Management*” of Malcom Peel provides a more complete scheme, compared to his predecessors. Thus, any act of communication has six elements: the emitter, the message, the means of communication, the language, the receiver, the context. For human communication, these representations emphasise that, alternatively, the emitter and the receiver change their functions. According to this theory, the context is an adjacent component, but it can influence greatly the quality of the communication. He refers to space, time, mental state, interferences of noises, temperatures, visual images that can distract the attention, cause disruptions, confusions.

The communication channels are the routes whereby the messages circulate, and the means of communication are the technical support of the process. The language is another component of the communication process. One should note that the fact that the spoken language and the written one are not exactly the same language, in relation to this element. In addition, other possible “languages” can be visual images of any kind (a diagram, a drawing, a graph are more efficient than words), etc.

Frederick Cohen proposes a definition of communication in his book “*Protection and Security on the Information Superhighway*”, which exceeds the simple exchange of messages, namely: “a process by which a source of information A influences on the receiver of information B in a manner able to cause thereto the occurrence of some actions or feelings, which allow a

regularisation of the activities of B or of the group which A and B belong to. In a broad sense, by communication, we understand the “change of messages between two or several people, within an organisation, in order to achieve the objectives”, or more simply, a “a change of messages between an emitter (E) and a receiver (R)”.

When we think of communication, the very general meaning refers to a possible or real reaction between two or more individuals (elements, units, systems) between whom a change occurs, be it in substance, energy or meaning and a sense that implicitly involves the change of parameters under the intrinsic action of the very change.

people, achieved in articulated language or by other codes, in order to transmit an information, obtain stability or some changes of individual or group behaviour (Bandler & Grinder, 1982; Dahrendorf, 1996; Carnall, 2007, Dumitru, Avram & Siminică, 2015).

Therefore, communication is people’s ability to transform the meaningless words into spoken and written words, by which they are able to make the needs, desires, ideas and feelings known. People who understand the process of communication have greater control on the changes and less failures.

Thus, one may conclude that almost every problem, every conflict or each misunderstanding is based on a problem of communication, generated by the violation or incorrect administration of the aforementioned elements.

Human communication operates with a complex set of stimuli, configured broadly of the following three large categories of language: *verbal* language, meaning the articulated speech and meaning transmitted by the words of a language; the *paraverbal* language, which is the meanings beyond the words, the entire luggage of stimuli and signals transmitted by the tone, volume and rhythm of the voice; the *body* language, meaning the entire complex of stimuli and signals transmitted by posture, physiognomy, mimics, gestures, looks and distances.

There are many forms of communication. Depending on various criteria, there are: *the form of communication* exists, verbal communication, written communication, non-verbal communication; *the way of conduct*, we distinguish the direct communication and indirect (mediated) communication; *the number of individuals participating in the communication process*, there is intrapersonal communication (communication to the self), interpersonal communication (with others), group communication, mass communication (through specialised institutions, with general addressability) or global communication; *the direction* in which it is conducted, we distinguish vertical communication (ascending or descending), horizontal communication or oblique communication; *its*

*objectives* exist incidental communication (without a well set purpose), consumer communication (consequence of emotional states), instrumental communication (when a precise purpose is pursued); the *hierarchical position in the organisation*, we identify the ascending communication (with the superiors), descending communication (with the subordinates), horizontal communication (the emitter and the receiver have equal positions); *frequency of communication* can be a permanent communication, periodical communication or occasional communication; the *status of individuals or the position of the institutions involved* can be an official or a non-official communication; *importance*, we can identify communication at reduced level, average communication or strategic communication; *the reference area* can be political communication, economic communication, social communication, cultural communication; *territory* can be local communication, regional communication, national communication, international communication.

The communications at the level of the organisation can be: *external communication*: with the economic and financial partners (with the suppliers of raw materials, services, capitals – banks, customers, competitors, etc.); with social partners (trade unions, associations and various organisations, local communities and public opinion), with political partners (local administration, political parties, central power), with the press; *internal communication*: with subordinates, superiors, managers of other departments.

*Non-verbal communication* involves the use of means other than the language (for writing) or the voice. The following are included into this category: *kinetic communication*, by body motion, such as: posture, gestures, facial expressions, look, etc.; *object communication*; *colour communication*, etc.

*Paraverbal communication* refers to: tone of voice (to support/ reinforce the verbal message, to contradict the message, to distort the message, to replace the message); the speed of speech and inflections of utterance; the intensity, volume of voice, pauses, emphases; other sounds produced (onomatopoeia, groan, grumble, sigh, laughter).

Paraverbal communication supports the verbal message and shows the nature of the relationships between the sender and the receiver. It can also be used to differentiate the meaning of the words.

According to Albert Mehrabian, specialist in body language and non-verbal communication, the share of the three ways of transmitting the messages is as follows: words would be only 7% of communication, the rest being the tone of voice - 38% and body language - 55%.

Many specialists believe that for the internal and external communication activities carried out by an institution, terms like “business communication” and “public affairs” can be used.

According to Stephen D. Bruning and John A. Ledingham, many researchers of recent training perceive the communication as a function to elaborate policies within the institution. These professionals use the term of “public affairs” to broaden the spectrum of communication, also including here the interaction with the governmental groups or structures, which leads to formulating public policies.

According to Grunig and Hunt, communication in an institution is “the interaction between an organisation and its publics, be they internal or external”.

Organisational communication is usually an intentional process of message exchange between people, groups and organisational levels within the organisation, with the aim to accomplish both the individual and collective objectives.

It is essential that within the organisation, some efficient communication would be achieved, which “appears when the right people receive the right information on time”.

The organisational functions of communication are as follows: *control* – to clarify the duties, to establish the authority and responsibilities; *information* – to provide the basis for decisions; *coordination* – to make the efficient common action possible; *motivation* – to stimulate the cooperation and involvement in reaching the objectives; *emotional* – to allow the expression of the feelings, etc. The complexity of communication, its purposes, objectives and implications imposed a number of particularities to the managerial communication (compared to the communication in other fields such as journalism, arts, medicine, etc.), which should meet a number of rules required by the managerial culture and policy of the organisation.

*Managerial communication* is a fundamental process of mutual interaction based on feedback, in which managers from any level transmit to their subordinates ideas, feelings, decisions, with the possibility to verify the manner in which they receive the message. It influences and changes the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, feelings, opinions of individuals and groups and therefore it is a way by which people synergistically correlate their efforts.

In this complex and continuous process of communication, both the managers and subordinates “discover themselves and converse, calm down and incite, disagree and agree, reject or accept each other both in major and current problems of the organisation.

Bell, R.L., & Martin, J. define the managerial communication as being the “exchange of information on the lower level, horizontal level and superior level and the transmission of a content via informal and formal channels, which enable the managers to meet their objectives”.

Managerial communication is therefore the decisive tools by means of which a manager fulfils their responsibilities and duties and it requires skills and abilities relevant to their role in the organisation and in relation to the business/ working partners.

The efficient management of the communication process when one should act as a contact person who ensures the interpersonal communication with the employees in the organisation, as well as with the business partners, generally with the partners outside the institution, is a serious responsibility for a manager. The effective and efficient managerial communication is a factor of competitiveness, a strategic advantage of the institution, because it can positively contribute to increasing employees’ morale and the profile and reputation of the institution.

Managerial communication acts as an integrating factor of the relations within the institution, as well as of the relations outside it, with the business partners, aiming to harmonise the interests and create the prerequisites necessary to achieve the objectives. The competitive institutions understood this and promoted the abilities and skills of communication as philosophy assumed by the management and by the whole team. In many such companies, communication is considered to be (and is used as such) one of the most valuable tools of management strategies. At the opposite pole, the faulty transmission of information, the communication errors and lack of transparency and honesty most often lead to the failure of the organisation.

The purposes of the managerial communication are closely related to the overall objectives of the organisation: information, control and training, influence and persuasion, guidance and counselling, integration and maintenance. The manager makes the information circulate, which is useful to achieve these objectives, coordinates the intermediary sources of communication, makes it possible for the useful information to arrive at the right time and at the right person, uses the information in order to make clear the purposes of the institution for employees, to co-interest them and create the satisfaction of reaching the goals for them.

In many of the institutions in the advanced economies, the trend of organisational structure decentralisation and switching from that performed vertically to that performed horizontally are currently observed; there is a tendency to adopt the TQM principles, the idea of empowerment and

involvement of employees and teamwork. The efficient internal communication becomes a key element of the organisation's strategy because: communication must occur also take place by other means; communication must operate at emotionally rather than intellectually.

## **II. Specificity of Managerial Communication in Public Administration**

The concept of public administration has its source within the state, Aristotle distinguished three forms for expressing the power: the legislative, executive and judicial power. With the emergence of Enlightenment, some practical relevance of the differentiation of state power forms was also gained. Administration thus became a component of the executive power, being separated from the legislative and judicial powers. At the same time, the "government" had no more room to be an independent source of power, getting the role of leadership, managerial role within the state, belonging to the field of administration.

Thus, in the organisational sense, public administration includes all the institutions that achieve administrative activities in order to satisfy the public interest.

Managers in the public sector face four major constraints compared to the private sector: a more complicated and unstable environment, legislative and formal restrictions, more rigid procedures, more diverse services and objectives. These constraints involve the fact that the public institutions that communicate about policies and actions in this regard face specific communication problems, like the interference of the press, the need for a democratic communication, time and budget constraints, as well as supporting the teams of the institutions, their dedication for supporting the mission and achieving the objectives.

A great variety of the sources of internal communication and the lack of support for the central message issued by the manager of the public institution can lead to an external fragmented or even contradictory manifestations, generating true situations of crisis for the institution. Lately, the organisations, as collective actors, seem to have become aware of the dangers of a fragmented communication, therefore they make efforts for a better coherence of all forms of internal and external communication.

The importance of communication within the institution continues to be difficult to perceive or understand, particularly in the public structures with strongly outdated mentalities, while the authoritarian management continues to be implemented in institutions, without a mature strategy of human resources (Bogathy, 1999; Bogathy, 2002; Glasl, 2011; Basic, 2016; Matoi, 2016).

The quality of the services provided by the public administration is for the citizen a consequence of people's quality and of the way of working inside the institution.

The managers of public institutions transmit messages and receive feedback regarding the performance of the institution. They are responsible for the growth of governmental institutions and agencies, ensuring that those customers of the institution receive the best services. There is no doubt that managers are an important value for public institutions. Thus, those that are not able to appreciate their vital role will face the consequences of weak performances and depopulation of the institution by talented employees.

Brewer is one of the specialists who observed that managers play a key role in the performance and efficiency of the institution, and the supervision management is a determinant tool for the high performance of the organisations in the public sector. In developed countries, they cannot afford to lose valuable labour force, so that they tend to hire proficient managers who would inspire the employees, providing them with the favourable context for the development of personal contributions in the service of the organisation and citizens.

Riccucci specified that good policies and laws definitely motivate the employees to reach the desired goals in any institution. Moreover, an optimistic approach to the coordination and supervision of employees helps to mobilise and energise the employees following an open communication and placing themselves above the rules and laws that affect the way in which managers supervise the subordinates.

Public institutions must rely on its managers' ability to act correctly. Special emphasis should be placed on the role of managers as an important tool to establish connections between (upper and lower) levels vertically and horizontally and top management, other managers and respectively employees. The managers in the public sectors should receive the necessary authority, responsibility and necessary level of training due to their optimistic and constructive roles to monitor the employees in the state institutions. Moreover, the expectations are that they could induce among the employees that state of wilful mobilisation to contribute to the organisational growth of the institution.

Managers need to appreciate that the authority indirectly resides in the employees' perception.

Managers have the de facto power, but the employees have the de jure power. Wisely using the authority helps to gain employees' trust without pressure. It is desirable that employees would be given the authority and power of decision required to train for a potential role at a higher level of management. Thus, employees contribute to improving the performance of those institutions.

Communication in public institutions is a bilateral process that involves both the transmission of orders, information and advice to a decision centre (meaning an individual vested with the responsibility for taking decisions) and the transmission of the taken decisions from this centre to other parts of the institution. Moreover, it is a process that occurs upwards, downwards and sideways in the institution.

The organisational communication can *be: formal* (achieved on channels imposed by the structure of the organisation, by the existing rules and functional relations between people, groups, departments) and is mainly related to the joint activity; *informal* (information not directly related to the activity, with a strong emotional touch), the channels used are others than the formal ones, the rules of communication are less strict. The formal and informal communication networks coexist and sometimes interfering, in the sense that the informal ones can block the circulation of the information in the formal network, can distort it depending on the relations and interests of those involved or, on the contrary, can flex and improve the formal communication.

Depending on the nature, purpose and content of messages, form of presentation, communication can be: *written communication* used in the institution in the case of messages that must last in time, every time forgetting must be prevented or the responsibility set in an unequivocal manner; *oral communication* is faster and causes an increased satisfaction, but in the case of some standard messages (instructions, regulations, rules, reports), the written one is more suitable, both for the possibility of a faster and more uniform distribution and for it can be more useful in establishing the responsibilities in cases of dispute.

Institutional communication is an extra-organisational communication by which the institution in the public administration aims to strengthen its image, attract around it a confidence and sympathetic climate from citizens.

The external communication of the public institution contributes to its notoriety and image.

Thus, it also fulfils the function of promoting the public institution of the state and administrative-territorial units.

The communication with the role of promotion is in fact a special case, because although the literature considers it without exception, as part of the external communication, it is conducted unilaterally, from the public institution to its external environment. In this situation, the members of the public body are no longer those who maintain the connection with the outside, but the organisation as institution. It gives information on the services it provides, tries

to improve the overall image or it simply wants to make its values known and promote them.

By its very nature, public administration depends on: the communication between the various levels of the public administration; the communication on the same level; the communication between the administration and the social executive office; the communication between the administration and political authority; the communication in the social environment.

It becomes increasingly more important both for the administration and for its customers – the taxpayers, citizens, groups of interests, political authority – the development of the communication channels with the business environment.

The public administration institutions seek to obtain a relation of proximity with the citizen, by means of communication; by coming closer to them and entering into dialogue, they get to know their requirements and grievances

(Badea, 2008; Cerban, 2011; Strehie, 2015).

Observing and implementing the principles and rules of efficient communication have to do with managers' personality, the specificity of the moment, as well as with the type of the communication strategy they adopt.

The following communication strategies can be practiced: *the control strategy* – used especially in emergency situations, when the manager expresses their full authority, imposing severe restrictions; *the structuring strategy* – used in the process of restructuration, complex organisation and modernisation, planning for ensuring the order and discipline by information, guidance and persuasion; the *dynamic strategy* – successfully practiced in allied environments in rapid change, is oriented towards immediate activities; *participatory strategy* – characterised by bilateral transfer of information with mutual influence, ensuring the decision making by consensus; *the acceptance strategy* – aims at accepting the opinion of the partner who was asked to advise the manager; *the avoidance strategy* – accepted only in special situations that impose restrictions in providing information (Farnham & Horton, 1993; Dima & Vladutescu, 2012; Ioana, 2014).

Choosing the communication strategy at each moment of evolution of the public institution and its implementation depending on the actual conditions is the manager's responsibility, who must use it with maximum efficiency in reaching the goals set.

Taking into account the specificity of the public domain, the following types of communication are known in public administration:

### ***Interpersonal communication in public administration***

One of difficulties of performing an efficient communication process is generated by the *cognitive dissonance*, which involves the selection of the information sources in accordance with the own convictions of the entities involved in transmitting or receiving the message communicated.

The phenomenon of cognitive dissonance is very common in public administration. Thus, when a group is formed to discuss various problems, we observe that, from the heads of departments to ministries, to general managers, to secretaries of state, etc., everyone finds the group where the others have the same vision of problems. When the meeting begins and the members of the group express their personal opinions, they hear their own points of view presented in different words and leave being reinforced in their initial convictions, which are similar to those of others.

Moreover, a psychological mechanism is also manifested among public officials, a mechanism acting in the sense of rejection and distortion of information and realities that are inconsistent with their own convictions.

Situations where the official gives the impression to listen are encountered frequently, although in reality he/ she does *not* pay attention. They are just polite, remaining calm until it is their turn to speak, a time when they review their own arguments. Their answer is almost entirely inappropriate with what the previous speaker said, fully ignoring the points of view expressed by the citizen. Therefore, such obvious rejection gives rise to a real problem of communication and must be recognised as such;

#### ***- External communication of public administration***

Being under a permanent and direct contact with the social environment, the public institution faces sensitive situations generated by this and tries to respond to them by organisationally initiating some approaches oriented to changes, transformations, rebalancing (Bozeman & Straussman, 1990; Binney, 1992; Teodorescu & Buşu, 2015; Hart, 2016). On the other hand, any transformation or change is felt also on the outside, in its turn, the administration influencing and shaping the social environment. Within the processes of external communication of public administration, it is possible to appear *communication barriers*: between the various institutions of the public administration, due to the high level of specialisation of each one of them, to not giving the proper importance to the collaboration between institutions; between the public administration and citizens:

#### ***- Communication between the public institution and citizens***

In all their activity, public authorities must aim to satisfy the general interest of the population, and the institutions of the public administration are

bound to get closer to the members of local communities and maintain a permanent contact with them. In this regard, the public administration must communicate, be open to dialogue, respect and consider the citizen.

The institutions of the public administration use the communication in the actions undertaken or in the relations they establish.

Public communication is the form of communication that accompanies the activity of the public institutions in order to satisfy the general interest. The messages transmitted include information of public utility. Thus, the public communication must inform the citizens on the existence of the institutions in the public sector, way of operation and their attributions, legality and opportunity of decisions adopted. By public communication, it is also aimed to know the needs and desires of the population so that public institutions, through the role and attributions they have, would come to meet them, thus achieving a general interest.

Public communication has the role to convince that through the institutional policies achieved, as well as through the public decisions adopted, a general interest is pursued, thus obtaining the adhesion of citizens.

By internal communication, the personnel is continuously informed on all that goes on in the public institution. Internal communication plays an important role also in the terms of training and motivating the personnel, thus contributing to the achievement of the quality of the performances and to a better satisfaction of citizens' needs and demands. Public institutions may use a wide range of techniques and means of communication, such as: publications, specialised brochures, display, TV channels, the press;

#### ***- Communication between the public official and the citizen***

In the process of communication, the public official – citizens relationship is a substance of the action of public administration. The communicational units, respectively the public official (as emitter) and the citizen (as receiver of messages) have clear objectives: the emitter aims to inform, to convince, to instruct, to capture the interest, to be efficient, and the receiver shall endeavour to *be* attentive, to understand, to retain.

Communication with citizens is achieved by: exposures, activities of informing, debates, sessions of communications, investigation programs, cultural-educative activities, participation in competitions, own publications, billboards, transmission of various information through written or oral ways to and from the management and specialised structures of the public administration institutions. Communication is absolutely essential for organisation. It is obvious that without communication there can be no organisation, because then there is no possibility for the group to influence the

individual's behaviour. In addition, the availability of certain techniques of communication will broadly determine the way in which the functions of decision-making can and must be distributed in the institution.

In terms of the legislation in force, public institutions have the responsibility to inform the citizens (accurate and simple information), to have an audience with them and consult them on the issues that concern them.

The role of communication in manager's activity is special because managerial communication includes complex issues related not only to processes of internal communication, with the employees, but also to the external communication, with the suppliers, the investors, etc. Thus, communication is motivated by the following needs within the institution: to set the objectives and achieve the consistency with the organisational structure; to establish and maintain the relationships among the employees; to develop fair and efficient relationships of mutual understanding and acceptance among heads and subordinates, colleagues, individuals inside and outside the organisation; to express the transparency in the decision-making system; to create the internal and external credibility of the organisations; to change the perception of investors towards the organisation; to develop partnerships with the trade unions, etc.

Communication is involved in almost all aspects of managers' work. It serves as a facilitator of managerial actions. Communication tends to influence or change the perceptions, behaviours, feelings, people's opinions, all the activities that include the human factor, using the communication.

Thus, managerial communication does not only have the role of transmitting the messages of information, training, persuasion or motivation. It becomes a dynamic and independent force, which is shaped by the environment where it operates. The communication system creates powerful tools to continuously adjust the institution's structure and processes to the continuously changing conditions. Managers' basic role becomes that of developing and maintaining alive the communication system, meant to support the implementation of the institution's strategy, of the organisation's "nervous system" and "body". The need to improve the manager's skills of both interpersonal and group communication inside as well as outside the organisation resulted from here.

As a general rule, managers in the helm of the organisation are required to develop the best possible working relationships with the teams they manage, providing them a comfortable working environment and applying solutions to rapidly solve the problems that could be obstacles in obtaining performances. The success in management decisively depends on the manager's ability to

communicate. In this regard, managerial communication is correlated with the inspirational leadership role of management, creating an organisational atmosphere that encourages the exceptional efforts, high commitments, intellectual stimulation and acceptance of risks.

In essence, the leadership in an organisation involves the following roles: to establish a clear vision, to share that vision with the other members of the organisation so that they could follow it voluntarily, to provide information, knowledge and methods in order to fulfil the strategic vision and to coordinate and balance the conflicts of interests between the members of the organisation.

Therefore, the truly efficient managers use managerial communication in order to lead and motivate their teams to perform and reach the objectives and purposes the organisation sets.

As form of inter-human communication, managerial communication has certain particularities imposed not only by the purpose, objectives and its role, but also by the organisational environment and organisation structure.

Within a public institution, managerial communication can be: *internal managerial communication* which refers to the exchange of messages that occurs within the institution, involving individuals or groups and can be formal and informal. Communication is formal when the messages are transmitted through preset channels and can take the form of, e.g.: reports, notes, circular letters, presentations, meetings. Formal communication is characteristic especially to large institutions, much of the communication activities occurs systematically and in a formalised manner and many times bear specificities related to the profile and purpose of the organisation (Ionescu, 2008; Ionescu, 2013; Negrea, 2013; Cox, 2016). Informal communication is any communication that occurs outside the formal channels of communication. Informal communication includes two main components: the communication that occurs through informal channels created spontaneously and the communication the manager has outside the context of subordination imposed by the organisational structure; the *external managerial communication* is increasingly more accentuated because the operating environment of the institution is characterised nowadays by a high degree of computerisation and by an extremely rapid change. Connecting the institution to this environment is possible only through an efficient and effective external managerial communication. The more rapidly the environment of the institution changes, the more important is the communication conducted constantly, permanently and in every possible way. Outside the institution, the manager communicates with elements from the economic, social and political environment: customers, suppliers, competitors, shareholders, associates, local community, general

public, mass-media, government, parties. The manager must be the connecting link of the institution with this environment in order to provide the guidance of the institution, the process of continuous change and progress. The external managerial communication therefore materialises in the relationships established with those who are linked in any way to the organisation and the public in general. The manager is also the representative of the organisation externally and in representing its interests, they support the creation of the organisation's image.

*In public administration, there is a close connection between managerial communication and the styles of management.* A leader can use various styles of management to fulfil his/ her role. During the years of study in many groups and organisations, a number of theories of leadership has developed. The "situational leadership" is a very popular and frequently addressed model. It explains that the style a leader chooses depends very much on the group's level of training. In other words, on how cooperating and experienced are in assuming the responsibility as a group. Situational leadership is aware of the fact that the leader must be flexible, and the members of the group are the most important factor.

According to the situational leadership theory, in a group, the appropriate management style depends on the mix between "cooperation and skills". In general, the more cooperative and capable is the group, the more authoritarian and exclusively oriented towards the resolution of tasks should the leader be.

Taking into account the possible situations in public institutions, the following styles of management are known: the style based on the ***leader model, which accurately indicates what is to be done*** is appropriate when the team members are either new or inexperienced and need major support, guidance and encouragement to solve a task. The connections within the group are not explored to a great extent. This type of leader structures the tasks and guides the members of the group. The leader defines the roles of each member of the group and guides them to what, how, when and where they should perform a task. An important role of the manager in such situations is to reward and encourage; the style based on the ***trainer leader model is applied when*** the group is more responsible, more experienced and cooperative. The main role of the leader is to assist the members of the group to achieve a task for which they do not have the necessary skills. The leader prepares the members of the group by training the skills necessary for that task, directs and guides if needed, encourage and inspire in order to maintain the attitude of the group; the style based on the ***participative leader model*** is practiced by the leaders who are

aware that the group has the skills necessary to fulfil the tasks. However, the group can be uncooperative (hesitant, bored, etc.) in order to start or complete the task. In this case, the members of the group and the leader participate together in taking the decisions and brings them together. The leader focuses on the relationships within the group and on the emotions of the individuals within the group. The members feel important when the leader provides them with moral support and encourages them. In this role, the leader is a resource-person, a saviour; the style based on the *model of the leader who delegates is adopted by* a leader who will choose to delegate the tasks when the members of the group are also cooperative, but also have the necessary skills to assume the responsibility and guide their decisions. The leader is confident that the group fulfils its tasks, and observes it remotely.

In principle, no model can be appropriate for any situation or occasion. To be a good leader, it is important to thoroughly know the group – where they are in terms of skills, knowledge, desire for cooperation (Iorgulescu & Marcu, 2015) .

Taking into account the management style, it is necessary to propose a profile of the efficient public manager. The current crisis of confidence in the governmental structures of Romania after the revolution is growing continuously. The dissatisfaction to the public service is deep and profound and turned into a collective Romanian consensus. The common view is that the government rather create than solve public problems, and that the governmental programs and policies contribute to lowering and *not* to improving the quality of life.

To define the public management and implicitly the public manager, it is important that we understand where the perception comes from, that public management is inefficient by definition. It is however good to also know that while the public sector encounters difficulties in implementing the programs, the private management is not a panacea either. An unsuccessful public program is targeted much more by the press compared to the private sector. The failures of the public sector are more difficult to hide, particularly if the failure involves a subject that is in the public eye, such as public health. Most of the time, the mass-media assumes it is a fraud.

Thus, in a quite hostile environment, the image of the public manager is a “sure recipe for failure”, with the following characteristics thereof: *the insecure bureaucrat* because nowadays, the public manager and the public official in general, suffer from a serious image issue, which is nourished with all kinds of stereotypes such as the profile of an inept bureaucrat, an image reflected particularly in the press and in the anti-governmental rhetoric, *the tool*

*of politicians* because one of the most serious problems public managers face is the lack of control on setting the objectives. Public managers cannot control their Board of Directors or the forum it that manages them. Unfortunately for the public manager, the interests of elected leaders are difficult to design and most of the times change without prior notice. Because the political interests determine the purposes of the institutions, public managers often face changes of priorities. The most efficient public managers are those who learn to adjust the programs so that they can reflect the change of priorities. Efficient public managers learn to foresee the changes in the policy directions and build an agile organisation able to rapidly change the direction; *a sure recipe for failure*. One reason for the negative perception of public management is the very image of the public manager. Public managers are not isolated from the society. They are the subject of the same symbols and images in the media that bombard the society. The negative image can become a strong self-perception in the mind of the public manager. This may leave room to a psychology of the loser who can monopolise the subject; *the mistake to allow the constraints “to constrain”*. Attitude is an essential factor to influence the success. Instead of mobilising to find a solution, they blame the barrier to be the reason for failure. Any of the issues public managers face can be overcome. Sometimes, the solutions are complicated, but they exist. The passivity of some of the public managers is partly a function of their inability and partly an attribute of the Romanian culture; *the mistake to allow the precaution become inertia*. *Efficient public managers are cautious people, while less efficient public managers are shy people. Attentive managers understand that the unprepared actions can have unpredictable consequences. However, it is very easy for precaution to become a generalised paralysis. New projects are often abandoned when managers face negative signals; the mistake to hide behind ambiguity*. The bureaucratic language is recognised as being unintelligible. Public managers learnt to hide their actions behind the elaborate phrases, acronyms, evasive formulations, passive voice. These techniques are used to prevent those outside the system to understand who does what (Gioroceanu, 2015; Ianoş Stănescu, 2015; Sandu, 2016). Unfortunately, some public managers try to hide their incompetence, inaccurate assumptions of responsibility or inaccurate performance indicators behind some vague statements. Managers of this type can create an even better personal image. They can receive many promotions, even if they are undeserved; *the mistake to ignore that people matter*. The last attribute of the “recipe for failure” is that of ignoring that people matter.

Management can be defined as the art of determining people to do things. Efficient management means to determine people to do what is right.

The manager must obtain resources in order to provide incentives. Incentives are used to determine people reach organisational objectives.

### **III. Involvement of Managerial Communication in Public Management Crisis**

Crises have become increasingly more a regular component of the social, political, economic life and of the institutional scene. Most often, a crisis deeply affects the image of the organisation. The management of crises cannot be improvised, but it is based on the correct assessment of the circumstances and mastery of appropriate response strategies, which are prepared and even experienced long before the crisis outbreak.

Thus, the crisis can be defined as any event or circumstance that endangers the continuation of the organisation's activity. Examples of this kind can be financial collapses, epidemics, disasters, accidents, injury of people, to attacks on people's lives.

On other words, crises are complex phenomena that can affect either the whole social assembly, or certain sectors thereof (economic life, political system, international relations, financial and banking systems, social structure, educational and cultural institutions, etc.).

Specialists in various fields know the definitions given to the concept of crises, namely: in the Dictionary of Sociology coordinated by Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu, crisis is defined as: “a period in the dynamics of a system, characterised by the increased accumulation of difficulties, conflict outbreak of tensions, which makes its normal operation difficult, triggering some strong pressures for change”.

Psychologically, crises can be moments in life that: are part of the normal evolution of the human being, corresponding to stages or phases of its genetic development. In the papers devoted to the management of crisis, it is considered that it occurs when: “the whole system is affected, so that its physical existence and basic values of the system members are threatened to such an extent that the individuals are required to either realise the erroneous feature of these values, or to develop mechanisms of defence against these values”.

From this managerial perspective, crisis is the result of threats in the environment, which are related to the weaknesses of the institution and appears when the threats in the environment interact with the weaknesses within the organisation.

In recent researches, debates and practices in the field of public relations – the crises or pre-crisis – are defined as phenomena of interrupting the normal

operation of an institution and as moments of blockage or of poor organisation of the exchange of information between the organisation and its internal or external public.

From the perspective of the professionals of public relations, the crisis occurs therefore as a rupture, as an undesirable situation, which interrupts the normal operation of an institution and affects its image at the level of the public. Therefore, it is necessary to have a global strategy to meet the crisis (crisis management), a group of well trained specialists (the crisis cell) and a proper policy of communication (crisis communication).

However, an interesting opinion is based on Richard Nixon's observation according to whom "within every crisis lies the seeds of success", prefiguring that a skilful manager can see an opportunity where others only see the crisis.

In literature, special attention is paid to the typology and stages of the crisis, as well as to their decomposition into specific stages and, based on this, to the identification of suitable strategies to manage them.

Crises are classified according to: *causes* (due to some internal or external, conjunctural or structural factors); *the development over time* (sudden or slow); *magnitude* (superficial or deep); *level where they operate* (operational – they affect the current activity, strategic – they affect the development of strategies, identification – they affect the identity of the organisation, consequences – they affect the personnel, customers, partners, public opinion).

Generally, there are three types of crises the organisation may encounter: *the immediate crisis* - is the most unpleasant type of crisis that occurs suddenly and therefore there is no more time for research or planning (fire, collapse etc.) For this type of crisis, depending on the specificity of the institution, it needs to create early action plans in case of disasters, avoiding panic and confusion when the crisis emerges; *the urgent crisis* - is the kind of crisis that can be triggered suddenly, but after a period of boiling. During this period, public relations specialists have the time to prepare an action plan developed from the research and evaluations carried out; *the sustained crisis* - is lengthy and may persist for months, even years, despite all the effort of public relations specialists for the extinction thereof.

Crises affecting institutions take place over several stages: preparation of the crisis (the warning stage), the identification of crisis potential of some events can lead to preventive measures or even cancellation of the crisis; the acute crisis - this is the time to identify a crisis; the chronic stage of the crisis, it may take more or less time and it may contain investigations from various survey courts, public debates, exoneration actions and attempts to regain public

confidence; end of the crisis. The aim of crisis management actions should be to reach this stage as soon as possible. If the preparation stage of the crisis is well exploited, then the crisis is under control and the organisation quickly reaches the end stage of the crisis.

Usually, in order to have as few consequences as possible, a crisis must be led through methods of crisis management. Timothy W. Coombs identified the following stages of crisis management:

*Stage 1.* Anticipation or detection of crisis signals. Most crises signal their approach in various ways. Therefore, specialists in crisis management should develop a system to detect and identify these signals, then collect information about those signals and analyze this information;

*Stage 2.* Crisis prevention. It includes problem management, risk avoidance and building relationships. The key to this operation is open, honest communication, through the exchange of information and opinions, joint effort to seek solutions to the crisis.

*Stage 3.* Crisis preparation. At this stage it is necessary to identify vulnerable elements of the crisis in question, to create the crisis cell, to elect a spokesperson, to draft a Crisis Management Plan, to structure a Crisis Communication Plan, etc.

*Stage 4.* The implementation and instrumentation stage of the crisis. It begins when a trigger event marks the beginning of the crisis. At this stage, crisis management specialists must apply crisis management programs in particular for crisis communication with the public involved. It comprises three stages: crisis acknowledgement. At this time, the members of the organisation must accept that they are facing a crisis and they should adopt appropriate behaviour; mastering the crisis. This period is dominated by measures taken to respond to the crisis; in the communication plan, it is particularly important that these answers are explained to various audiences; resuming work. This period involves actions whereby the organisation shows it has overcome the crisis and will resume its activity at a normal rhythm;

*Stage 5.* Post-crisis stage. Actions in this stage enable verification that the real crisis is over, verification of the way the public concerned perceived the crisis and the behaviour of the organisation during the crisis, preparing the organisation to successfully cope with another crisis. During these moments, crisis management is assessed, conclusions are drawn, communication with the public involved is continued and monitoring of post-crisis actions is carried out.

There are no well-defined recipes for mastering a crisis situation. Correct management of the crisis is a sum of measures prepared in time, allowing the organisation to coordinate unexpected situations, namely: efficient

crisis management enables an organisation to maximize its chances and reduce the dangers it faces; crisis management is a set of factors designed to tackle crises and to reduce damage from future crises; crisis management is a strategic planning process, aiming to remove some of the risk and uncertainty due to adverse events and thus allows the organisation to have its evolution under control.

The rules underlying the composition of a Crisis Plan are: it is particularly important to make up a crisis team able to work continuously; the crisis team must be familiar with its structure; choosing a spokesman who is aware of the key strategies and messages of the institution is fundamental; the list of rescue personnel should be established well in advance. In a crisis, there are various emergency situations, which call for the involvement of specialists in various business areas; it is also useful to have the data from government representatives and local administration; wording press releases beforehand and making up press kits; considering the worst case scenario and sketching the next steps in its management (Arhip & Arhip, 2013).

Specialists in the practice of public relations focused their attention mainly on the basic principles and rules of the behaviour in crisis situations: say it all and quickly; communicate as much as possible; coordinate information; refresh information; check out the amplitude of the situation; prepare for a crisis in advance; prepare top management for crisis management; be honest; maintain close relations with the mass media; keep a humane attitude; go as far as possible to put things right; never say no comment.

It may be concluded that during crisis, it is very important to take certain steps in order to manage the situation: making up a crisis cell, separated from the rest of the organisation, avoiding panic, and having a single spokesperson; electing members of the crisis cell among the management of the organisation, and including experts in such situations; establishing a coherent and unified strategy of crisis management.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In terms of communication in crisis situations, we must have regard to the following order of priorities: care for human beings; respect for the environment and limiting the risks or effects; economic and financial approach (damage).

There are several theories stating how managers should respond in case of an external crisis, but even these theories seem to be inconsistent. The approach "stiff response to threats," "crisis denial" and "environmental scan" are some of the theories that analyze managers' attention and response to crises.

In case of rigid response patterns and crisis denial, the crisis situation shifts the manager's attention from the hot spot of the crisis because it creates disturbances which may prevent the managers from being able to consider relevant information on the items in the organisation's environment, which are the source of the crisis. The environmental scan model and stress theories show the idea that managers will pay more attention to the external crisis (external environment) by considering the importance, immediacy and uncertainty of the problem.

Most often, managers are members of the crisis cell that oversees the management of special situations.

The crisis cell is a transversal functional group comprising those persons designated to deal with any crisis. It has the following tasks: to devise a Crisis Management Plan. This is done after the vulnerable aspects of the organisation have been set by means of different research methods. This plan must anticipate and respond to most types of crises the organisation may face; it must implement this plan. The implementation of the plan is first carried out in crisis simulation and then, when facing real crises; to react effectively to unanticipated problems not included in the plan. No plan can anticipate every detail of a crisis, therefore, the crisis cell must be able to provide solutions to those problems that were not foreseen in the plan, but can occur at any point in a real crisis.

The crisis cell is headed by a crisis manager (usually the public relations manager), working with the directors of the organisation, coordinating the work of other team members and taking the decisions, designing, sketching and checking texts to be sent out. The crisis cell also includes an assistant manager, a coordinator of the crisis control centre, other specialists in public relations with various responsibilities.

Obviously, the structure of this team will vary from event to event. Besides the people mentioned above, depending on the nature of the crisis, it will also include the head of the financial department, the human resources manager, the head of the marketing department, lawyers and other professionals with skills within the scope of the crisis.

This list also includes the tasks of each team member during the crisis (during the crisis, the members of this team will be relieved from their routine). Crisis management is a group activity, where crucial decisions are taken collectively.

Election of crisis cell members will be based on the tasks they have to perform, namely: to act as a team in order to facilitate the achievement of crisis objectives; to devise and implement the crisis management plan so as to

facilitate effective organisational responses; to collectively take the decisions necessary to solve problems encountered by the crisis cell; to listen to the views of others in order to collect as much information as possible on the crisis.

Most of the times, the manager is involved in the public communication of the institution's messages and these messages relate to what happened, what the organisation does to remedy the situation and what the organisation's directors feel about what happened. The communication of these messages, especially to the media during crisis situations will be done only in line with the crisis plan and the measures taken at the institution level.

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