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The Importance of Image Management for a Good Society

Mircea Aurel NIȚĂ¹

Abstract

The paper deals with the importance of managing the image of a private or public organization and of any government, especially. There are underlined two important matrix used in the image and communication field and in the management field. The paper shows how these two matrices can be applied by a Government that wants to lead the mass people to a good society. Comparison and analogy are used as scientific methods together with the direct experience of the author as a private manager of the first private television after 1989, SOTI TV. For a good society, the Government must search continuously the needs, expectations, desires and aspirations for the mass people and find the dynamic ratio between individual and collective mind together with the signals of changing between different ways of thinking: PRO, AGAINST and NEUTRAL. The result is that in the end, the public opinion is moving from AGAINST to PRO, regarding the Government's decision, even it is an unpopular decision. *Why this paper?* As politician, as civil servant working within a public organization and as a member of the government, all must know the difference between myth and reality and all must improve the power to manage the image in order to become more consciousness about their own free will against so easily manipulation in a consumer society.

Keywords: image management; dual matrix; the free will; equilibrium of the mind.

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Introduction

The paper deals with the importance and necessity of managing the image of the Government, especially when an unpopular decision has to be taken. Sometimes, the Government is avoiding telling the truth to the public opinion, due to the fact that there are some cases when the public opinion isn't prepared to understand the type of decision, the type of truth that had to be used on short term, on medium and long term. Why? Due to the fact that collective mind is not only about a large group of individuals; there are a multitude of possible and probable perceptions. The paper shows that governments by the help of image management specialists can redirect the audience to another point of interest, or even transform a negative perception into a positive one (Cojocaru & Bragaru, 2012). To increase transparency, civil society activism and NGOs have to be more involved (Că-răușan, 2005). Some technologies are based on waves of different vibrations just to induce a state of the mind according with the interests of leaders that control these equipments - see the psychotronic war described by General, Ph D Researcher, Emil Streinu from Defense Military Army (Streinu, 2008) and the scientific book of Jean Paul Ronecker (Ronecker, 2006).

Image as mind representation

The image of an organization can be considered as the representation that people form about an object, person, an individual of a well-defined population, an organization or a government, according to the information they have regarding them, the type of visibility – direct or intermediated, the own *NADA* (needs, expectations, wishes/desires, aspirations; 'nada' in Romanian language means *bate* for fish), experienced emotional condition, old knowledge. In short terms, the image of an individual refers to a phenomenon, object, which has tangible or intangible dimensions. From a psychological approach, the used term is perception and range of perceptions (Rivera, Arms-Chavez & Zarate, 2012). The image, as social representations of the government or organizations, is formed due to: (1) the influence of the messages send, directly or indirectly, in the public space they act; (2) the influence of roomers; (3) through the clients satisfaction correlated with the quality of the products and services and the power of purchasing; (4) the quality of the managerial act, based in the positive results attained in the primary reality during a full cycle of management; (5) the impact of governmental messages on different target groups with strong power of influence; (6) the messages that come from third parties, seen as other pressure groups or interested groups like stakeholders, depending on their own interests; (7) the messages coming abroad the country. The images have an important role in the process of influencing opinions, attitudes and behaviors and, alongside empathy

and knowledge of desirable image management, they can influence the collective perception of the masses (Baeza, Lao, Meneses & Roma, 2009). That is why mass communication specialists are wanted (Frunza, 2012). It is neither bad, nor good, it is an old, ancestral problem, of the difference between purpose and objectives, when a visionary leader follows the general evolution interest of the consciousness and not to seize it, based on power conservation interests. Actually, any group which wishes to gain the power, whether it is a political, economic, technological, cultural, or religious group, has a normal reaction from the social and political perspective. The way this group communicates with the masses is decisive, because a communicational war is more desirable than a tangible aggressive one. And, after winning this battle against the collective mind it is easier to enjoy the tangible success of a victory. The “heavy artillery” was the messages, the targets were the individual minds, the results were new ways of a PRO thinking of these masses, but in synchronicity with the centers of interest, that control the means of communication; here, mass media play an important part (Slantchev, 2006).

Unlike the occasional messages or series of messages transmitted to the public in time, regarding a certain phenomenon, object or subject, *the public relations* (Balaban & Iancu, 2009) *campaigns represent a systematic process of producing attitudes and favorable behaviors or not, of the public towards a product, and idea or an act of governing. Furthermore, they are designed especially for evolving in time, to induce a new way of thinking, which implies: (1) steps of attention attraction; (2) steps of action preparation; (3) the analyse of the impact of messages and PR events, including the risks; (4) proper action; (5) final evaluation in changing mental representations. This way the economic, political, legislative, cultural behaviours and attitudes are reoriented – see the 15 dimensions of the minimal amphitheater model, with the own interests, sometimes similar to the one of the citizens, sometimes not (Niță, 2011). Hence, integrated in a systematic process of communication, the images gain an influencing power, lower or greater, depending on the communication abilities of the communication specialist (Grigorescu & Bob, 2011). The images loaded with meanings, either visual, auricular or of other nature, bring the organization or governments in the center of attention, where it is analyzed in detail by the public. Thus the role of the image is exploited in knowledge, a true and undeniable role. The results of these judgments can be favorable or not at an individual or collective mind. What can be challenged is the content of the images, which can be authentic or not, but this doesn't diminish the influencing power of the symbols, but highlights only the sense of the influence, which is determined by the nature, quality and the authenticity of the images. But as ...the meaning is beyond the words, images, symbols and sounds, as the interdisciplinary research papers and assertions of Henry Coandă (Cocoru, 1981), Osho, Massaru Emoto (Emoto, 2007) and Gregg Braden (Braden, 2006) say, the emotions managed through the image management of an organization can*

influence more or less favorably some target groups perception towards the public organization (Berg, Barry & Chandler, 2012). Knowing the mechanisms of generating emotions has become an instrument of positivity of the government, even a public relations tool with significant influence from the media (Hener, 2010).

**The necessity and importance of the image.
Product/Management-Image matrix**

This 2 lines and 2 columns matrix proves the importance of managing an image on a market. If the variable X relates with variable Y and both variables are dual and bipolar, then there will be 4 possible combinations of the 4 quadrant represented relation. There are products P of doubtful quality (marked with minus) and good products (marked with plus), as there is a bad image or negative (marked with minus) and a good image perception (marked with plus), see Fig. no.1 and 2. Result of a manifestation of the two variables on a products and services market – we either mark them with X and Y, either with P and I -, the relation between them takes place in dualism, thus we'll identify first 2 extreme quadrants (+/+) and (-/-), see *Fig. no.3.*

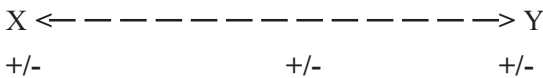


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the relation between X and Y, general case

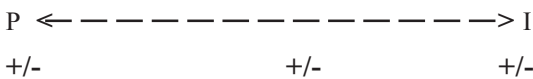


Figure 2. Graphical representation between P and I, concrete case

The dualism of the communication actors, the trasmitters and receivers, but also the dualism of the relation between them, produces dual perceptions.

Image Product/ Service	-	+
-	-/-	-/+
+	+/-	+/+

Figure 3. Product-Image Matrix

Let's define the quadrants! Thus, quadrant -/- together with quadrant +/+ are the dual quadrants of the relation, which are in fact, the extreme manifestations of the relation. From the dualism of the variables product P, image I and the relation dualism results the 4 aspects, the 4 quadrants. They are defined vertically through column 1 as a bad product - good product, and through line 1 as a bad image - good image. Thus, a cookie can be bad or good, as her image can be bad (for example the package or chromatics), or good (an attractive package or a nice combination of colours). This +/+ quadrant is the *credible product or service quadrant*, according to Valentin Stancu (Stancu, Stoica, & Stoica A., 1997). This matrix can be used even for the relation between public services and image, management and image, performance and image, organizationa and image or government and image, too.

- *The credibility quadrant*. If the measurements refer to the product, service or organization, then the quadrant will be of the organization with positive performance, or the performing management quadrant, with a positive image, meaning we differentiate the credibility quadrant. Generalizing, the governments can be credible or not (Porumbescu, Park & Oomsels, 2013) for some certain target groups, or for certain groups of states or others. In short, what exists in the primary reality as facts and positive results is confirmed as perceived image. In nowadays, following a correct world crisis management, the polish government is to be found in this quadrant.
- *The bankruptcy quadrant*. At the opposite pole is located the other extreme quadrant, represented by bankrupt organization, product bankrupt, bankruptcy service, bankruptcy management. In this case, what happens in the primary reality is confirmed by perception and this quadrant is called the bankruptcy quadrant.
- *The manipulation quadrant*. There are some particular and concrete aspects that happened in Romania for the last 20 years and they are directly linked with the main topic of this workshop. *The manipulation quadrant* is determined by the case of a positive image in combination with a negative technology which has a negative impact upon the environment. Take for example the gold exploitations at Roşia Montana in Romania and the game of image played by the public opinion in Romania.
- *The fourth quadrant* is defined by the relation of positive product - negative image. Whether we call under appeal organization or victimized organization or we define it as attacked product, victimized product. Some experts in communications and public relations know that. To some politicians they attacked the image, and at that moment, whose side do you think the viewer will take? The victim! Victimization often is used for image rehabilitation. Product- image matrix is one of the most important matrices and clearly demonstrates why it is necessary to have specialists in

image management, public management of a product or service, or specialists in public service.

Hence we encounter the manipulation management type, a manipulative product or service through a positive image, as NIF is watching – Sleep tight! National Investment Fund (NFI) was a manipulative organization which deceived the public opinion through paid advertising, from the clients’ money. Furthermore, the creator of the advertising spot received the national prize of Professional Association in Advertising and Public Relations from Romania. It happened nearly 10 years ago, and there was only one person punished, Ioana Maria Vlas, while the advertising firm didn’t even have their license revoked for their cynical spot. *All we did was our duty to the client!* This is a real cynic attitude. Just picture how far the manipulation through image can go! A non-efficient management had been hidden with the help of a lying advertisement, which generated a positive collective perception through the emotions that corresponded to a high level of expectancy from the masses. *Sleep tight, because NFI watches over and it works for you.* Just sleep and you’ll receive money!

NIF was a pyramidal game/scheme, and after the bankruptcy they applied a Sole Guilty Theory (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Bt4aXhLi6k&feature=related>).

In the collective mind from Romania there wasn’t such an experience of lying through advertising, but it was believe that through advertising the large companies succeeded in the West.

Important and Urgent Matrix – IUM

The dualism of the relation between two variables X and Y is once again present like in the Product/Management-Image matrix above, but this time the variables are Important and Urgent. So, if we use dualistic intensity for each variable, there exists either High degree of intensity, either low degree of intensity but for each variable-Important and Urgent. Dual perceptions will be in relations High-High, High-Low, Low-High, Low-Low, as you can see in the matrix bellow.

Urgent	Low	High
Importance		
Low	Low / Low	Low / High
High	High / Low	High / High

Figure 4. *Important and Urgent Matrix*

Let us take two actors: one can be the manager of a public or private company (Matei & Lazăr, 2011), and the other one can be an employee or a client. If the perception of the manager together with his decision is that should be better to renew a stock of products one time per month not to have high costs with transportation, the perception of the client can be another one. The satisfaction or the expectation level of the client is linked with the Urgent variable, as for example: he needs flowers now in this evening, as today, even this night, is the celebration of his girlfriend's birthday. So, the manager works with Low intensity of the Importance variable, while the client works with High intensity of the Urgent variable. The client belongs to the High/High quadrant, while the manager can be find either in Low/Low quadrant if the profit for the needed product (flowers) is very small in comparison with the profit from other products; either in High/Low quadrant if his profit based on flowers is big enough but Urgent is Low because his mind is thinking that the transportation costs are big. His main interest has a big priority (big profit scarifying the needs of one client) in comparison with the big interest of taking flowers for the client. Here is the lack of empathy of the manager together with the oriented mind to profit and not to customer satisfaction. But, this decision can be on short term either a wrong one as in the future the client can never come into his shop for more important shopping, either a positive one as the client is living in another country and he will never return to the address of his girlfriend. That is why the best attitude in communication on behalf of the manager is to ask him *Why do you need flowers at this hour?* So, according with the client answer, the manager will know how to move faster and quickly to serve this potential client. The best reaction of the Government is the same with asking question to the client, just to measure not only the public needs of people, civil servants or high civil servant working in public administration, but the expectations, desires and aspirations-this is the *nada*. Here is a good management of a government (Jaliu & Radulescu, 2013) based on questionnaire, research studies from social perspective and from public, private and ONG marketing. The introduction of a new framework of ideas and values is the first step toward adopting a new paradigm (Mora & Țiclău, 2008). But, when a bad decision against some groups of people will be taken by the government either because of incompetency, either because of the corruption, either because there is no other choice on short term, some of this representing causes of reform in the public sector (Șandor & Tripon, 2008), then the image of the Executive Power will go down. What can be done, in this situation? One of the solutions is to minimize the importance of this bad decision taking as term of comparison another variable which can be more dangerous and cruel for other big groups of interests (Popescu, 2007). And of course can be maximize the Urgent variable, too, telling to the people that now is better to take the bad decision than later on. For example, let us treat the dieses now in the beginning than to treat later the patient when the costs will be very high. So, what is this game? As a

matter of fact, the government is influencing the mass perception in order to justify bad news like cutting the salaries because of a big deficit in the public budget, just now during the global crisis. It happened not only in Romania, but in other E.U. countries as well (Iancu, 2010).

How can be used this IUM? For an integrated decision, the matrix must be applied upon the manager thinking, the client thinking but upon the relation between the two parties, too, so that the final results including IUM will be seen in the four quadrants.

The dynamic ratio between individual conscience and group conscience

When we are born our human mind has no mental or social representations (Ogletree & Oberle, 2008). But, the groups within the society have already mind representations based on values, symbols, heroes, attitudes, behaviors which are considered normal. Later, there will be a process of transmitting these collective mind representations to the individuals, so that slowly, the human mind will think according with this transmitted soft-is nothing else than the way of thinking of any individual who is growing within a culture, society, religion etc. So, our first perceptions are totally influenced by the family, groups, society etc. The ego is coming from this *collective mind* which already exists when we are born. So, all types of fears such as, egoism, envy, sadness, nervousness, revenge etc. are taken by children as a normal process of transmitting these fears from the collective mind (Demertzi *et al.*, 2009). Later, becoming mature the individual way of thinking *-individual mind-* can be opposed or not to the collective one, so that not all the time an individual will agree with the collective mind or common thinking of the majority.

The last stage is the third one that is based on the transcendence of the individual mind beyond the collective mind. This is the mind of pioneers and genius, such as Einstein, George Enescu, Brancusi, Beethoven etc. Why? Because by transcendence, our mind can jump beyond the words, languages, symbols, religious etc., getting out from the dualism as a general characteristics of the knowledge from TERRA, and can go beyond the limits of senses knowledge. Changing the paradigm and the approach, from energetical *-vibrational-information* paradigm to transdisciplinary approach, see the Romanian academician Basarab Nicolescu and the French academician Mathiew Richard (Lutz, Greischar, Rawlings, Richard & Davidson, 2004). The Law of the Included Third Party can support our mind to leave dualism and to go to reach the transdisciplinary truth. Thus, while a disciplinary research refers to maximum one and same level of reality, transdisciplinarity is focused on the dynamics set by the simultaneous action of more levels of reality (Nicolescu, 1994).

Let us take a democratic model of elections. By democracy, some politicians are elected in the Parliament, so that they can vote a law against the interest of some minority groups and they can help some other hidden interests not linked with the public interest (Carausan, 2009). From now on, the mature adult will think, why should I trust the politicians if they take bad decision? Just because they have been elected in a democratic way? This argument is not enough! For him, this decision has a personal Urgent and Important intensity, in comparison with the so called bad decision coming from the government. What can be done? Use communication specialists just to express a positive thinking on behalf of public opinion. Some practical aspects of applying the theoretical aspects above will be underlined in another paper, just to underline the difference between the declared interests and real interests behind the government position. It is possible that after another few years, our adult, enough mature, to transcend the dominant collective mind against his individual mind, due to the fact that now, the graduate of a Public Administration Faculty or Political Sciences Faculty, has his own free will. This is the real situation when future changes positive oriented can happen in the society in order to respect a public interest of high utility (Niță, 2012). And here is the main role of a university that all the time must be in contact with real needs of the people. In marketing approach this is known as customer satisfaction that should lead the business. In public administration or political science it is used the term of material welfare and spiritual welfare. In the Romanian Constitution at article no 82 and 104 are used both terms above, but the spiritual satisfaction was not at all a target for all the governments after 1989.

Conclusions

To get better governance is not necessary just to manage and lead the nations, for example, with good consulting technocrats, or the state, but to take care of the image of the government, too. Credibility of politicians is decreasing if there is not enough transparency (Borțun, 2005), because the matrix of product-image was not properly used by specialists in mass communication. People expect to be informed in advance and not after the decision have been taken. So the expectations must be known and managed. Even a bad decision must be taken, such as decreasing the salaries of different segments of population, the management of the high risk in becoming more negative the image of the government is a necessity. In case of a bad decision, one of the solutions that can be used consists of the Importance and Urgent Matrix.

In order to improve the image of public institutions, there were taken a series of measures, including increasing transparency by creating specialized depart-

tments in communication and public relations. Regarding the legislative framework, the Romanian laws no 52/ 2003 and 544/2001 ensures transparency and openness of Central Public Administration to citizens through two major mechanisms: public participation in rulemaking, and public participation in decision-making.

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