Efficient Corporate Communication: Decisions in Crisis Management

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Many business leaders agree that almost every company experiences crisis though many of them do not apply any actions to overcome it. Crisis problems are solved not in its primary stage and usually chaotic, without any strategic crisis situation or crisis management plans (Yair, Golenko-Ginzburg, Laslo, 2007; Bivainis, Tuncikiene, 2007; Ciegis, Gineitiene, 2008; Diskiene, Galiniene, Marcinskas, 2008; Kaplinski, 2008; Markovic, 2008). Even more difficult situation appears when company's employees as well as the internal and external environment have to be informed. Therefore it is necessary to represent the organization realistically (Tijunaitiene, Neverauskas, 2009; Deephouse, 2005), to train the specialists of knowledge management (Melnikas, 2005, 2008; Saee, 2005; Sakalas, Ciutiene, Neverauskas, 2006; Kumpikaite, 2007; Rees, 2008; Boguslauskas, Kvedaraviciene, 2008).

The situation does not become easier because of the negative attitude to crises (Klein, 1981; Rosenblatt, Sheaffer, 2002; Anikin, 2008; Virbickaite, 2009). Therefore crisis solution can bring positive consequences in company's change (Gummensson, 1991; Heath,1994; Sakalas, Savaneviciene 2003; Garskaite, Garskiene, 2005; Adekola, Korsakiene, Tvaronaviciene, 2008; Valackiene, 2009; Startine, Remeikiene, 2009). One of them is efficient communication and conflict management during a crisis period (Varey, White, 2000; Januleviciute, Bieleviciene, Dambrava, 2003; Steyn, 2003; Talef–Viia, Alas, 2009). The efficiency of communication process is confirmed by the worldwide models designed and applied in practice (Turney, 2004; Deephouse, Carter, 2005; Neville, Bell, Mengüc, 2005; Luecke, 2007). Worldwide management practice demonstrates the appearance of new management area – corporate communication. Global business confederations (European Confederation of PR and CERP) prepare recommendations of public relations in business environment, which are successfully applied in strategic planning, scientific – research institutes (Corporate Communication Institute , New Jersey, USA; BNFL Corporate Communication Research Unit, Salford, UK; MBA Corporate Communication Concentration New Jersey, USA; Annenberg Strategic Public Relations Center, USA), where different business researches are done in the area of public relations. Scientific and practical discussions are published in the continual reviewed scientific journals (Theory, Culture, Society, USA; Evolution of Communication, Netherlands; European Journal of Communication, UK; Corporate Communications: An International Journal, UK). Universities in all over the world (Scotland University of Sterning; University of Alabama, USA; Viena Institute for Communications Management and other) prepare professionals according to the Corporate Communication Management program.

Communication agencies, crisis management consulting teams, consulting and teaching services successfully work in Lithuania, too, which give wide spectrum of service in public relation area: corporate and marketing communication, strategy creation of crisis communication, government relation, public relation and crisis management problem solving.

***Corporate Communication is presented as a Strategic Management function, focusing nowadays challenges: the necessity to create confidence between internal and external audience of a company; to activate business forming responsible corporate culture** (Goodman, 2006; Luecke, 2007;).*

In this context efficient Corporate Communication problems still remains relevant in social, economi and managerial aspects.

The structure of the paper:
• in the first part Corporate Communication concept has been based up emphasizing the importance of corporate communication in the management science structure;
• in the second part the process of crisis planning and strategic management has been discussed;
• in the third part practical recommendations have been defined – "Plan of Efficient Crisis Communication".

Keywords: *corporate communication; crisis planning; strategic management; plan of efficient crisis communication.*

Introduction

Nowadays companies have to be orientated to MOTTO of nowadays management strategy: to continue to change in the management aspect, to manage social – economic environments, to be social responsible. In this changing context crisis management process should be reevaluated in the theoretical as well as in the applied levels. Trying strategically to manage crisis situations in business environment, it is necessary to talk about crisis planning and management process in a company (Klein, 1981; Rosenblatt, Sheaffer, 2002; Yair, Golenko-Ginzburg, Laslo, 2007; Bivainis, Tuncikiene, 2007; Ciegis, Gineitiene, 2008; Diskiene, Galiniene, Marcinskas, 2008; Kaplinski, 2008; Markovic, 2008). It is necessary to inform the employees about the changes in a company, internal and external environment (Deephouse, 2005; Melnikas,

2005, 2008; Saee, 2005; Tijunaitiene, Neverauskas, 2009; Sakalas, Ciutiene, Neverauskas, 2006; Kumpikaite, 2007; Rees, 2008; Boguslauskas, Kvedaraviciene, 2008). The scientific discussion (Varey, White, 2000; Januleviciute, Bieleviciene, Dambrava, 2003; Steyn, 2003; Talef-Viia, Alas, 2009) and global management practice (Corporate Communication Institute, USA; BNFL Corporate Communication Research Unit, Salford, UK; ir kt.) demonstrate *new area of management – corporate communication importance in conceptual and practical levels.*

Scientific problem: in this paper conceptual paradigm of the researched phenomenon has been applied: decisions of crisis management were analyzed, emphasizing the importance of efficient corporate communication in crisis planning and strategic management process.

In this context efficient corporate communication problem still remains relevant in social, economic and managerial aspects.

The relevance of the scientific problem is consolidated by the nowadays topicality, *when companies experience transformation changes - incorporation, international capital appearance, wide geography of the companies, mobility of the employees, particular crisis situations, global crises. So the need appears to manage communication processes in business, to generate communication ideas for crisis prevention and management.*

Having assessed crisis planning and strategic management processes described in the scientific literature, an attempt has been made ***to answer the question*** *– how to strategically manage crises in business environment, preparing crisis management plan, generating communication ideas for crisis prevention and management?*

The object of the paper: efficient corporate communication.

The subject: efficient crisis communication plan.

The aim of the paper: to base corporate communication efficiency in the crisis management aspect.

The goals:

1. To present the concept of corporate communication, emphasizing the importance of corporate communication in the structure of management science.

2. To introduce the conceptual expression of crisis planning in the different social sciences, describing the management process of crisis strategy in a company.

3. To define "Plan of Efficient Crisis Communication".

The methodology of the paper: systemic analysis of the scientific literature; deduction logic – practical construction method of theoretical perspective.

The Corporate Communication as Management Function. The Corporate Communication system of managing

The understanding of Corporate Communication is ***focused on two methodological aspects:*** *to describe the relation of social environment and business expression – management of corporate communication system* (Heath, 1994; Varey, White, 2000), *and maintenance of company's business strategy – implementation of practical decisions* (Steyn, 2003; Goodman, 2004, 2006). According to that methodological attitude, the term *"corporate"* is taken to

mean the total social collectivity, as distinct from the minority dominant coalition or shareholder groups. This is premised on a total system model of organizing.

"Corporate Communication" (Goodman, 2006) is the term used to describe a variety of strategic management functions. Depending on the organization, Corporate Communication includes: public relations; crisis and emergency communication; corporate citizenship; reputation management; community relations; media relations; investor relations; employee relations; government relations; marketing communication; management communication; corporate branding and image building; advertising.

According to the first methodological aspect, this understanding explores the integration of Corporate and Marketing Communication in tomorrow's company, and discusses a model of the Corporate Communication system of Managing. *It defines the need for a total stakeholder perspective and to integrate communication activities around constituent-constituent relationships.* According to Varey (2000), marketing is described as a special case of human communication, in which all elements of the marketing mix are seen as communicative in action. The paper agrees with the Tomorrow's Company study (RSA - Corporate Communication Research Unit, 1995) that inclusion is a necessity, and argues that new management involves a form of economic democracy, which in its turn creates a need for new forms of corporate governance, monitoring, and management This will require managers to re-evaluate the appropriateness of their thinking. *The Corporate Communication model of systemic managing is forwarded for this purpose.* It means, that the corporate enterprise *has two primary communication systems that are inter-related.* The *internal system* directs activities of organising to accomplish goals that are based on the gathering and interpretation of data on expectations and attitudes, and on conditions, from the corporation's relevant environment through external channels of communication. *External systems* of communication are also used to present relevant information about the internal processes of the corporation to the relevant external environment to attempt to influence the behaviour of various publics. According to Kreps (1990), *internal communication processes* are directed towards the establishment of structure and stability in organizing, while *external communication processes* are directed towards innovation by facilitating identification of directions for corporate development. Managers and leaders seek co-operation for a productive balance between stability and innovation. Varey and White (2000), modifier Deetz, (1992) say, that managers recognize the corporate communication managing system as central to the work of the enterprise community. The Corporate Communication approach enables the reconciliation of social and economic interests, for business is in reality a socio-economic institution upon which we are all are dependent, and may allow the vista of "life ethic" to temper the debilitating effects of the mutation of citizens into consumers. We saw (Figure1) the determinants of corporate performance.
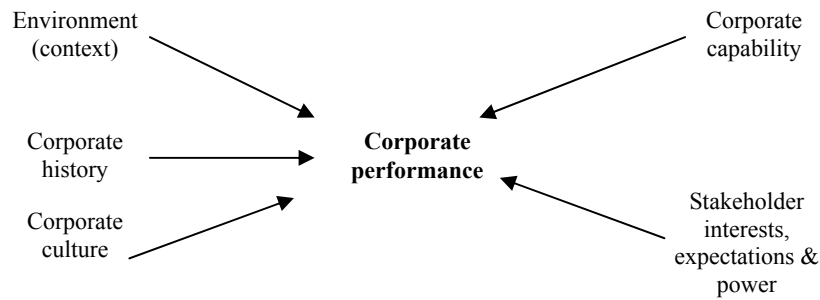
Figure 1. Determinants of corporate performance (adapted from Brown, 1995)

This position shows, ***that business is both an economic and a social institution***. Corporate governance can evolve toward collaboration among all stakeholders. The shift from profit to democracy requires the creation of a coalition of investors, employees, customers, business partners, and the public. Such a corporate community can serve all interests better. Corporate managers are dependent on stakeholders because the economic role of the firm is to combine as effectively as possible the unique resources each stakeholder contributes: the risk capital of investors; the talents, training, and efforts of employees; the continued patronage of customers; the capabilities of business partners; and the economic infrastructure provided by government (Halal, 1996). In this view, managers act as stewards engaged in a "social contract" to draw together this mix of resources and transform it into financial and social wealth, which they can distribute among stakeholders to reward their contributions. The closer the integration into a cohesive community, the greater is the wealth. Stakeholders have different interests according to their unique roles in the corporate community. These interests can be reconciled if they are organized to create a more successful enterprise. The goal of business, therefore, should be to serve the public welfare of all stakeholders. Public relations are a necessary and complementary overhead in a responsible enterprise. This trinity is often not even recognized as a sec of reciprocal relationships or communication systems (as illustrated in Figure 2).
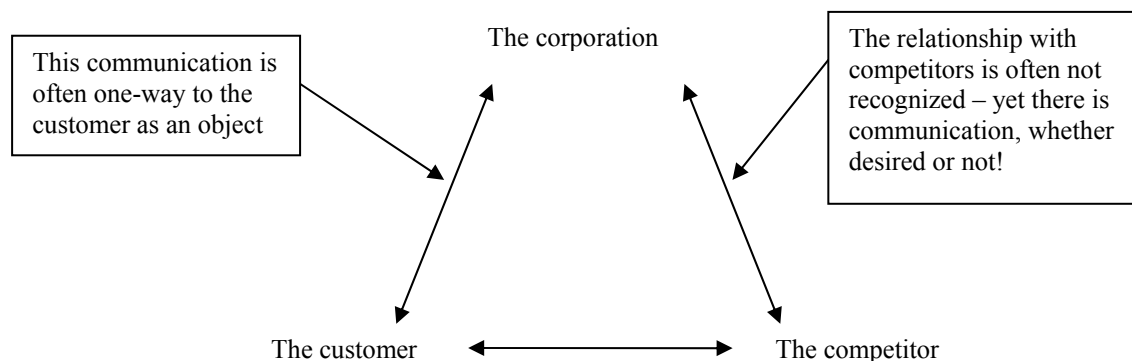

Figure 2. Communicative relationships (adapted from Varey and White , 2000)

Generalizing conceptually based it can be claimed that, Communication is central to the tomorrow's company approach, and communication between people is the core of business activity.

According to the second methodological aspect, it is necessary to explore the case for, and value of, Corporate Communication practice in professional development. *Aims to offer a positive relationship between Corporate Communication practice and productive global relationships as the underpinning of a sustainable business strategy (Goodman, 2006). Successful professional development of the next generation of corporate communication executives will focus on understanding of Corporate Communication functions and on strategic implementation capabilities.*

The practice of Corporate Communication has profound implications for professional development programs world wide. This attitude based on the findings of the Corporate Communication Institute's (CCI) "Corporate Communication Practices and Trends 2005" Study (Study presents the director of the Corporate Communication Institute Mr. M. Goodman).

Recent studies confirm Corporate Communication as a Strategic Management function centered on these challenges (adapted from Goodman, 2006)***:***
- the need to build trust with all internal and external audiences;
- the expectation by the corporation to accomplish more with less;

- the demand to build a responsible and accountable global corporate culture in response to a hostile environment for multinational corporations;
- the perception of the corporate communication executive as "counsel to the CEO" and "manager of the company's" reputation;
- the understanding of the global impact of the local act, and the local impact of the global act;
- the demand for greater transparency and disclosure have made media relations more complex and strategic;
- the expectation that the company be a good citizen and make money;
- the reality of global terrorism makes crisis communication planning a critical success factor for corporate communication professionals;
- the understanding of transparency as the best practice strategy for reputation management; and
- the knowledge that writing remains the core skill for Corporate Communication.

Goodman (2006) give an overview of *the role of business in public diplomacy*. Global companies and their brands touch the lives of more people than government representatives ever could. Businesses have often served a larger role in our society than that of carrying on the activities of commerce. They can serve a diplomatic function because of their intercultural sensitivity, as well as their understanding of the global enterprise they work for and of the world at large. In a world of instantaneous media coverage, transparency, and intangible value drivers, successful companies will welcome the challenge.

The Corporate Communication Institute Practices and Trends Studies from 2000 to 2005 (www.corporate comm.org/studies) and the CCI benchmark study of Corporate Communication Practices and Trends offer some guidance. *One of them discussed the academic preparation. Corporate Communication professional development program has been a growth area in higher education.* In an interdisciplinary and applied field such as corporate communication, current practices and trends can inform the academic community on what to offer in professional degree programs. *On the other hand understanding Corporate Communication provides the vision a company requires in an information-driven economy for strategic planning. Corporations use it to lead, motivate, persuade, and inform employees – and the public as well.* Dolphin and Ying (2000) studied the role of the corporate communication director in 20 UK organizations and observed, that Corporate Communications have a key role to play in the strategic planning of an organization, because of the importance of corporate reputation and the development of corporate branding, image, and identity. According to Kitchen (1997), Corporate Communications are seen *as consisting of three potentially interactive and synergistic dimensions – public relations, marketing communications and human resource management, recognizing the central nature of Corporate Communication.*

Generalizing and conceptually basing it can be claimed that Corporate Communication confirms as a Strategic Management function. This helps to describe a model of the Corporate Communication system of Managing.

Corporate Communication responsive to the demands of the profession should focus on the strategic challenges that executives face:
- building trust;
- efficiency;
- building a culture of accountability;
- counseling the corporation and the CEO;
- managing the company reputation;
- managing the impact of globalization;
- transparency in media relations and reputation management;
- managing corporate citizenship and corporate social responsibility;
- managing issues and crises; and
- writing as the core skill for corporate communication.

Corporate Communication is more art than science. It is interdisciplinary, drawing on the methods and findings of anthropology, communication, language and linguistics, management and marketing, sociology, and psychology.

The Process of Crisis Planning and Management Strategies in the Corporation: the context of different social sciences

Action planning enables management to not only evaluate the dynamics within a business environment, but also evaluate similar changes related issues. In this way, action planning may be helpful in integrating the constituent parts of a strategy process and developing the crisis management perspectives.

Schoemaker (1997) notes, that crisis management is like a multidisciplinary process, which cannot be left only to the public relations department. This social phenomenon is treated in the convergence of separate sciences: personnel management, psychology and management.

It is important to notice that theory of crisis firstly evolved at macro-economic level. Then there were developed theories not only about constancy of crises but also about their management, most often using state regulatory instruments, too (Anikin, 2008; Charbit, Virmani, 2002). However increasing instability of external business environment stimulated scientists to pay greater attention to the analysis of crisis situation at companies. It was tried to validate the concept of company's crisis situation (Webser, 2000; White, 1989), to name company life cycles and crisis expression (Hauschidt, 2000; Fink, 2002; Mitroff, 2004). In the academic literature modern crisis is described (Rosenblatt, 2002), where the emphasis is given to the aspect of change management and to integration of both spheres - human resource and technical-organizational. It is noted that modern crises have features that were not noticed and analyzed earlier: the influence of growing population, economic growth and recession, the impact of development of technologies, crisis communication problems.

Stable management model is ignored by modern crises. Evolving unforeseen disturbances unbalance organizational functions, provoke crisis situations. Changes need not only technical means but ready specialists and information management as well.

It has been proved by ***public communications researchers*** (Shrivastava, Mitroff, Miller, Miglani,1988) Shrivastava, I. Mitroff, D. Miller, A. Miglani (1988), that mass media is a very important external agency acting as an intermediary after a crisis has taken place. After a crisis has taken place, the management of the organization should cooperate with the media in order to maintain the reputation of the organization, to present truthful information which might be quite distorted if mass media is avoided. It also functions as a means of information to the clients, suppliers and all interested parties; therefore it is essential that the information presented is clear, accurate and informative. The management of the organization should have the public information prepared beforehand, as speaking on the spot presents a possibility to even worsen the crisis situation of the organization. Contacts with mass media have to be maintained not only in the face of a crisis situation, but also in the absence of a crisis, as an organization should have good relationship with mass media representatives, a factor essential in implementing the process of the organization's strategy. Complicated business environment encourages looking for new ways to evaluate the situation in which changes have taken place, as well as adapt and manage the continuity means for further activities. Every manager should know the weakest areas in the personnel management and have the prepared identification strategy, which will relieve the adaptation of a new member in organization, its aims and value process and influence on the performance efficiency and satisfaction of the work seeking to control the crisis situation. Difficult business environment stimulates to look for new ways to assess the changing situation as well as to implement and manage new means for business continuity. In crisis planning process discussions and future perspectives are essential. While evaluating the plan it is firstly necessary to renew and evaluate all the most essential aspects of crises planning. Adequate staff training is necessary for that, alongside with the analysis of the situation and search for alternative solutions (Valackiene, Krasenkiene, Demeniene, 2009). Consequently, both internal and external aspects of analysis are essential in the crises planning process (Dougherty, 1992; Sally, Ray, 1999; Millar, Lawrence, 2004).

In the aspect of personnel, crisis management requires the involvement of managerial groups. In the process of crisis management system people have to take active participation, otherwise it may lead to the collapse of the organization. However, there are managers who are not convinced that crisis management is worth the effort. Mitroff (2004) says that if the managers' readiness is not appropriate, then crisis management and communication with external agencies becomes problematic. Managers should try to discuss solutions which might help find a compromise regarding the position and reputation of the organization, although such ways might also cause a risk. A wide overlook of possible issues is a welcome factor. All this has to be considered in advance. This is closely related to crisis planning. The researchers (Shrivastava, Mitroff, Miller, Miglani, 1988) emphasize that it is essential to learn from failures and draw conclusions, from which the organization learn a lesson. Crises overview and lessons learned are essential, if the efficient steps have been

planned to help stop the development of the events. This kind of evaluation is essential to strengthen the short and long-term policies within the organization.

Research literature on psychology offers typical Crisis Management approaches: organizations may be characterised by two aspects: preparation for a crisis and recovery after one (Sheaffer, Mano-Negrin, 2004). Preparation is such a state within the team, when it is prepared to forecast both the internal and external circumstances of their competitors. A recovery after a crisis is a positive state, when all of the abovementioned components cease to exist. An existing Crisis Management plan is necessary, although it is not sufficient, as there is a danger that the organization will ignore the warning signs or will cause a threat for a crisis to take place due to a very high point of dependability to the existing plan. Plans may create wrong senses of preparedness, which in reality do not seem to exist.

Analysing crises management in the managerial aspect, it has been proved that it is still an unexplained field and it covers several methodological schools. The main strategic thinking within an organization is to use technological analyses and decision making processes. This strategic thinking was applied for various type enterprises and in most industries, mainly as a result of growing and competitive functionality. Thompson, Martin (2005) divided the strategic process under three main features: *formulating a strategy, implementing a strategy and evaluating it.*

In the process of crisis management strategy *formulation encompasses a precise setting of goals, objects and mission within an organization, analyses of external environment, in terms how it can affect the enterprise alongside with its internal resources and possibilities for strategic alternatives.* The decision making strategy finds it very useful to analyze intermediaries and their impact to the organizational culture. The attractiveness of the potential strategy is its capability to support the factors which are welcome within an organization, as well as what it is possible to do with the resources and competences available. *Implementing a strategy* is related to choosing an efficient strategy within an organization, which means implementing the strategy in practice. Strategy implementation always determines efficient management and may significantly influence implementation of success for the whole strategy. *The evaluation of the strategy* is probably a less researched part of the strategy, although it is a very important factor in successfully choosing a strategy. This is not only related with execution or means of execution, it also signals when it is time to make corrections to the strategy and quicly change the external environment. *The evaluation of strategic thinking and moving planning* towards strategy management helps the strategic thinking remain heterogeneous.

Action planning, as an approach to strategy, acquires a high degree of unexpectedness in the business world. Action planning helps the management see a wide view of the future, as this makes influence on their organization and evokes a deeper insight than the analysis of external environment. Schoemaker (1997) describes action planning as "a disciplined method to imagine a possible future". In this way it helps avoid the thinking, such as "what has

happened" and "who is going to work now?" when alternative future is being considered. *Action planning is the main integrated part in the strategy process.* Schoemaker (1993) emphasizes that rational planning is important, although not sufficiently long term in the business environment. Each action plan has a story behind it, in terms how various elements can interact under current conditions. Action planning most often encompasses the elements which cannot be easily modelled. Action planning implementation encompasses several important factors: building up a team and organizational culture. Leadership and management are also essential components in action planning.

Therefore, both action planning and strategic thinking are closely related to crises management and all the three elements are directly interrelated. The more organization management direct their strategic thinking to action planning, the easier crises management process is going to be with fewer negative consequences. Crises may also make organizations go another direction (Preble, 1997). *Crisis Management and Strategic Management have similarities,* such as evaluation of environmental conditions, including the evaluation of intermediaries and their importance for management. Most enterprises have detailed crisis management plans, however, a very small part of those plans are realistic in the strategy process. If both processes − crisis management and strategy management − are correctly evaluated, the organization can be looked at with a perspective.

Strategy planning creates certainty and reduces ambiguity. This is the initial precondition, as well a process in any organization. Action planning enables the organization to move from the first stage to the second stage of crises process, if this is integrated into the strategy management actions as a dynamics and a tool for further learning.

All the abovementioned positive action planning features prove the necessity of action planning and its importance in the organization. Setting up a strategy, planning actions, these are the ways to more easily overcome the crises and how to manage them. This is an apparent help in a crisis situation. Having a strategy and action plan, both the staff and management find it clearer how to behave in a given situation, as this has already been talked about, discussed and planned.

Pollard, Hotho (2006) state that the more an organization is prepared for crisis situations, the better it can be managed, decision making in the crisis situation will be better thought over and efficient. Both crisis management and strategy management depend on the creative and intuitive thinking. The efficiency of crisis management depends on the manager's ability to evaluate possible sources of the crisis and make corresponding decisions. Still managers do not always pay adequate attention to a crisis and solve only when it occurs. Stress and ambiguity often follow crises, which negatively effect decision making. The sooner the managers are able to find the main factors for risk, the more the crisis plan is efficient regarding decision making. According to Pollard, Hotho (2006) *action planning may become a catalyst in business environment.*

Crisis Management requires collaboration with systems, efficient internal and external communication, *setting the persons and their roles expressed by special duties and responsibilities, effective collective decision making, control and collaboration responsibility.* Smits and Ally (2003) note that while solving the effect of strategy plans and potential crisis it is essential to estimate the intermediaries' involvement. Most managers will agree that good relationship with intermediaries is an indispensable part in the enterprise's strategy plan. *After a crisis has occurred, with the help of media, it is very important to maintain good communication with intermediaries*. This should be the main detail in the strategy management process in order to solve the crisis. Managing communication during the crisis period is not an easy task. Pollard, Hotho (2006) states maintaining relationship with the media has certain benefits. Media related communication may be included into crisis planning. Before crisis occurs, the organization can quickly and efficiently pass information to the press. Mitroff (2004) emphasizes that human relationship and communication might be efficient in a crisis situation. Essential is a premeditated involvement of local media companies, while further working with an appropriate action plan. This attitude is important especially in organizations where important is the fact that they are familiarized with crisis planning and their roles are defined as well as possible. They can be more than usefully involved into crisis planning, as public information professionals may have specialist communication knowledge, they should be advised on crisis planning, setting responsibilities, and communication with intermediaries. Such close working relationship will be useful managing communication in a crisis situation, which will allow the organization strengthen their crisis management skills.

If the organization has a strategy, both the managers and company employees are preparing for action planning, and the crisis management in the organization is going to be efficient.

The Plan of the Efficient Crises Communication

The most viable methodological approach in the cognition of Crisis Communication is systems approach. Theoretical studies (Bernstein, 2004; Chong, 2004; Turney, 2004; Zerman, 2004; Seymuor, 2006; Luecke, 2007) show that Communication and Mastering the Media are an important tool for every crisis handler and in each active *stage of Crisis Management:* contingency planning, containment, and resolution. It is importante as an instrument of control and coordination. Effective media relations begin before a crisis occurs. The basic steps of effective Crisis Communications are not difficult, but they require advance in work in order to minimize damage.

Bernstein (2004) implement's these **10 steps of Crisis Communications**; the first seven of which can and should be undertaken before any crisis occurs. *1. Identify Your Crisis Communications Team.* Ideally, the team will be led by the organization's CEO, with the firm's top public relations executive and legal counsel as his or her chief advisers. Other team members should be the heads of major organization divisions, to include finance, personnel and operations. *2. Identify Spokespersons.* The decision

about who should speak is made after a crisis breaks — but the pool of potential spokespersons should be identified and trained in advance. Not only are spokespersons needed for media communications, but for all types and forms of communications, internal and external, including on-camera, at a public meeting, at employee meetings, etc. *3.Spokesperson Training*. Spokesperson training teaches you to be prepared, to be ready to respond in a way that optimizes the response of all stakeholders. *4. Establish Notification Systems*: the means to reach our internal and external stakeholders using multiple modalities. *5. Identify and Know Your Stakeholders*. Who are the internal and external stakeholders that matter to your organization? Employees must be most important audience, because every employee is a PR representative and crisis manager for your organization whether you want them to be or not. *6. Anticipate Crises.* There are two immediate benefits to this exercise: realize that some of the situations are preventable by simply modifying existing methods of operation; begin to think about possible responses, about best case/worst case scenarios, etc. There is a more formal method of gathering this information - a "vulnerability audit". *7. Develop Holding Statements.* While full message development must await the outbreak of an actual crisis, "holding statements"- messages designed for use immediately after a crisis breaks - can be developed in advance to be used for a wide variety of scenarios to which the organization is perceived to be vulnerable, based on the assessment you conducted in Step 6 of this process. *8. Assess the Crisis Situation.* Assessing the crisis situation is, therefore, the first crisis communications step you can't take in advance. But if you haven't prepared in advance,

your reaction will be delayed by the time it takes your in-house staff or quickly-hired consultants to run through steps 1 to 7. Furthermore, a hastily created crisis communications strategy and team are never as efficient as those planned and rehearsed in advance. *9. Identify Key Messages*. The team already knows, categorically, what type of information its stakeholders are looking for. Have no more than three main messages for all stakeholders and, as necessary, some audience-specific messages for individual groups of stakeholders. *10. Riding Out the Storm.* Some of your stakeholders are not going to react the way you want them to. What do you do? Take an objective look at the reaction(s) in question. Is it your fault, or their unique interpretation? Decide if another communication to those stakeholders is likely to change their impression for the better. Decide if another communication to those stakeholders could make the situation worse.

According to Zerman, (2004) **masterly communications are:** *when we give to media the facts; use the right Spokesperson; match the message and media to different segments; segment your audience; select the most appropriate media.* **Audience segmentation is the basis of an Effective Communication Strategy,** identifies key market segments and unique concerns of each segment and then speak to each in a suitable way and through a medium most likely to create high impact.

Luecke, (2007) *describe the principle of audience segmentation* (community leaders; employees; customers and suppliers; shareholders; the general public) **using segmentation to create a systematic communication strategy** (Table 1).

Table 1

Segmented Communications Strategy (adapted from Luecke, 2007)

Segment	KEY Messages	Media	Timing	Spokes-person
Employees	Jobs in new place; Retraining program	Companywide meeting; Letter to each employee	Prior to press conference; Frequent follow-up	CEO
Investors	Full disclosure of the change	Letter to shareholders; Webcast	Immediately	CEO; Investor relation
Customers	Making changes to serve you better; Changes will make the company stronger; No disruption of orders or service	Letter to all purchasing managers; Industry trade magazine	Concurrent with press release	VP of marketing
Suppliers	Changes will make the company stronger;	Letter to all; Personal calls to suppliers	Immediately	Corporate supply-chain manager
Community leaders	Full disclosure of the change	Meeting with community leaders	Prior to press conference	CEO;
Regulators, Government agencies	Full disclosure of the change	Registered letter	Prior to press conference	CEO; Legal counsel

Turney (2007), submits the model of Crisis Communication plan according the six stages of preparation (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. The Model of Crisis Communication Plan (adapted from Turney, 2007)

According to Turney (2007), crisis planning is like buying insurance. Once you have decided to buy insurance or to prepare a Crisis Communication plan, another sensible precaution is to prepare for the worst case scenario. Be sure it meets your organization's needs. It will require thoughtful analysis of your organization, its environment, and its available resources (Table 2).

Table 2

Six Steps to Preparing an Effective Corporate Communication Plan at the moment of Crises
(adapted form Turney, 2007)

Step 1. *Clearly state the Communication Team's Mission in a crisis.* *The communication unit's mission when the organization is facing a crisis is to ...*	Generally, the role of a communication unit in any organization at any time is to support and advance the organization's mission, and a fundamental tenet of strategic planning is each operating unit should have a unit-specific mission statement that is aligned with the organization's mission. *Remember, however, that communicators are not responsible for resolving crises. That's management's job.*
Step 2. *Identify your organization's most critical publics and themes to emphasize in communicating with each of them.*	Many crisis communication plans *target three to eight publics,* but there's no „magic number" right for everyone. Include whatever public best suit your organization's needs regardless of how many this is.
Step 3. *Determine where crisis communication team members will be needed and the location of any special operations centers.*	Depending on their size and management structure, many organizations will need crisis communicators in multiple locations: *Crisis site, Emergency operations center (EOC), Main administrative offices of the organization, Public relations or communication offices, Crisis communication center (CCC), Media center, Field offices, branch production facilities.*
Step 4. *Define task-related communication roles needed in a crisis.*	The number and variety of roles on a crisis communication team depend on the organization's size, location(s), and type of business as well as the nature of the crisis. *The roles: Crisis manager liaison* sits in on meetings of upper-level managers who make the decisions and direct the operations intended to resolve the crisis and keeps the rest of the communication team updated. *Employee liaison* keeps employees (and sometimes their families) fully informed of what's happening. *Spokesperson* publicly announces all new developments, explains the organization's positions, and handles all media interviews. *Media facilitator* assists reporters in getting to/from the crisis site, arranges interviews, provides background information, etc. *Investor & financial community liaison* may be needed by a publicly-traded company especially if its stock price is volatile or its financial future is uncertain. *Writer/researcher/fact checker* assists the spokesperson and media facilitator in gathering and preparing information for release. *Call and e-mail screeners* review and appropriately route crisis-related messages that come in to the public relations office, emergency phone lines or e-mail addresses, and the main switchboard. *On-site monitor* at the actual crisis scene observes and reports developments for the crisis manager liaison and the spokesperson.
Step 5. *Prepare a crisis communication team roster showing your „starting line-up" with contact information.*	Then *identify specific people who can fill each position*, but do so knowing that there will probably not be enough communication staff to cover all of them. It may be necessary to borrow additional staff from other departments or make arrangements for outside assistance.
Step 6. *Disseminate the plan and regularly update it.*	*Don't wait until a crisis to disseminate the plan.* It won't be much help unless those who need to use it are familiar with it and have it instantly accessible. Everyone listed in the plan should have copies of it as well as having additional fact sheets and contact lists relevant to their specific assignments.

Conclusions

Summarising the following conclusions can be made:

1. The understanding of Corporate Communication is focused on two methodological aspects: *to describe the relation of social environment and business expression – management of corporate communication system and maintenance of company's business strategy – implementation of practical decisions.* According to the first methodological aspect, this understanding explores the integration of Corporate and Marketing Communication in tomorrow's company, and discusses a model of the Corporate Communication system of managing. According to the second methodological aspect, it is necessary to explore the case for, and value of, Corporate Communication practice in professional development. According to that conceptual paradigm the Corporate Communication offers strategic management functions. Depending on the organization, Corporate Communication includes: public relations; crisis and emergency communication; corporate citizenship; reputation management; community relations; media relations; investor relations; employee relations; government relations; marketing communication; management communication; corporate branding and image building; advertising. Generalizing and conceptually basing it can be claimed that successful professional development of the next generation of Corporate Communication executives will focus on understanding of Corporate Communication functions and on strategic implementation capabilities.

2. A conceptual paradigm of the phenomenon under discussion is applied: Crisis Planning and Management Strategy within the business environment are analyzed, at the same time emphasizing the synthesis of social sciences. The analysis of this social phenomenon requires a multidisciplinary approach. In crisis planning process discussions and future perspectives are essential. In order to be able to strategically manage the crisis situations within business environment, it is essential to talk about the process of crisis planning, as well as strategy management within the organization. To achieve that an adequate training of staff is necessary, in addition to that the analysis of the situation and search for alternative solutions are required. To be able to properly get prepared for a Crisis Planning and Strategy Management processes, both scholarly discussions and practical solutions are necessary. Action planning enables management to not only evaluate the dynamics within a business environment, but also evaluate similar changes related issues. In this way, action planning may be helpful in integrating the constituent parts of a strategy process and developing the crisis management perspectives. Crisis Management requires collaboration with systems, efficient internal and external communication, setting the persons and their roles expressed by special duties and responsibilities, effective collective decision making, control and collaboration responsibility. Another important element is the managers' ability to communicate with the media representatives in crisis situations. The managers have to be prepared what to say, ho w to present information in order not to damage the company's reputation.

3. The most viable methodological approach in the cognition of Crisis Communication is systems approach. Theoretical studies and practical research of Corporate Communication Institute shows, that Communication and Mastering of the Media is an important tool for every crisis handler and in each active *stage of crisis management:* contingency planning, containment, and resolution. It is importance as an instrument of control and coordination. Audience segmentation is the basis of an Effective Communication strategy. *The Model of Crisis Communication Plan* emphasizes the six stages of preparation*:* the mission of organization; the stakeholders of organization; the specialists of communication and the place of special operations center; the role of crisis communication team; the composition of crisis communication team; the control of crisis communication plan.

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Asta Valackienė

Efektyvi korporacinė komunikacija: krizių vadybos sprendimai

Santrauka

Straipsnyje, taikant sisteminę mokslinės literatūros analizę, aptariamas mažai Lietuvoje tirtas socialinis reiškinys – korporacinė komunikacija. Šiam reiškiniui analizuoti reikalingas multidisciplininis požiūris. Plėtojant mokslines diskusijas socialinių mokslų sandūroje, siekiama atsakyti į klausimus: kaip priimami strateginiai krizių vadybos sprendimai?, kaip sprendimų priėmimą įmonėje sąlygoja vidinės ir išorinės verslo aplinkos?, kaip komunikuoti krizės laikotarpiu?, kaip kvalifikuotai parengti krizinės komunikacijos planą?

Korporacinė komunikacija pristatoma kaip strateginė vadybos funkcija, telkianti šiuos nūdienos iššūkius: būtinybę sukurti įmonės vidinės ir išorinės auditorijos pasitikėjimą, aktyvinti verslą, formuojant atsakingą korporacinę kultūrą.

Daugelis verslo lyderių pripažįsta, kad su krizėmis faktiškai susiduria kiekviena įmonė, tačiau dauguma jų nesiima produktyvių veiksmų, kad jas įveiktų. Krizės problemos sprendžiamos ne pirminės raiškos stadijoje ir dažniausiai chaotiškai, t. y. neturint *strateginio krizių valdymo plano.* Dar painesnė situacija susidaro tuomet, kai reikia apie tai informuoti įmonės darbuotojus, vidinę ir išorinę verslo aplinkas, taip pat palaikyti realų organizacijos reprezentavimą, parengti žinių vadybos specialistus, modernios organizacijos lyderius. Pasaulinė vadybinė praktika rodo *naujos vadybos srities - korporacinės komunikacijos - atsiradimą.* Pasaulinės verslo konfederacijos (European Confederation of PR ir CERP) rengia ryšių su visuomene verslo aplinkoje rekomendacijas, kurias verslo įmonės sėkmingai pritaiko atlikdamos strateginį planavimą, taip pat mokslinių tyrimų institutuose (Corporate Communication Institute, New Jersey, USA; BNFL Corporate Communication Research Unit, Salford, UK; MBA Corporate Communication Concentration New Jersey, USA; Annenberg Strategic Public Relations Center, USA) atliekami užsakomieji vbiešųjų ryšių srities longitiudiniai įvairių verslo kompanijų tyrimai. Mokslinės ir praktinės diskusijos publikuojamos tęstiniuose recenzuojamuose mokslo žurnaluose (Theory, Culture, Society, USA; Evolution of Communication, Netherlands; European Jornal of Communication, UK; Corporate Communications: An International Jornal, UK). Pasaulio universitetuose (Scotland University of Sterning; University of Alabama, USA; Viena Institute for Communications Management ir kt.) rengiami specialistai pagal „Korporacinės komunikacijos vadybos" studijų programą.

Mokslinė problema. Šiame straipsnyje taikoma konceptuali tiriamojo reiškinio paradigma: analizuojami krizių vadybos sprendimai, išryškinant efektyvios korporacinės komunikacijos reikšmę krizių planavimo ir strategijos valdymo įmonėje procese. Nagrinėjamu kontekstu efektyvios korporacinės komunikacijos problema išlieka aktuali socialiniu, ekonominiu ir vadybiniu požiūriais.

Mokslinė problema aktuali dėl šių dienų aktualijų verslo aplinkoje, kai įmonės patiria transformacijos pokyčius: susijungia įmonės ir kuriasi tarptautinio kapitalo įmonė, plati įmonių geografija, darbuotojų mobilumas, išryškėja atskiros krizinės situacijos, globalios krizės. Todėl reikalinga mokėti valdyti komunikacijos procesus versle, gebėti generuoti komunikacijos idėjas, kaip atlikti krizių prevenciją ir jas valdyti. Lietuvoje aptariamojo socialinio reiškinio reikšmė labiau taikomoji. Veikia krizių valdymo konsultantų komandos, komunikacijų agentūros, kurios teikia ryšių su visuomene paslaugas šiais klausimais: korporacinės ir rinkodaros komunikacijos, krizės komunikacijos strategijos kūrimo, ryšių su valdžia, ryšių su žiniasklaida, krizės vadybos. Pasigendama gilesnės mokslinės diskusijos.

Straipsnio objektas - efektyvi korporacinė komunikacija.

Straipsnio dalykas - efektyvios krizinės komunikacijos planas.

Straipsnio tikslas - pagrįsti korporacinės komunikacijos efektyvumą krizių vadybos aspektu.

Tikslui pasiekti iškelti uždaviniai, lėmę straipsnio struktūrą: 1) pristatyti korporacinės komunikacijos koncertą, išryškinant korporacinės komunikacijos vietą vadybos mokslo struktūroje; 2) pristatyti krizių planavimo konceptualias išraiškas atskirų socialinių mokslų sandūroje, aptariant krizių strategijos valdymo procesą įmonėje; 3) pateikti efektyvios krizinės komunikacijos planą.

Darbo metodika - sisteminė mokslinės literatūros analizė, dedukcinė logika – praktinis teorinės perspektyvos konstravimo metodas.

Pirmojoje dalyje teoriškai grindžiamas korporacinės komunikacijos konceptas, išryškinant korporacinės komunikacijos vietą vadybos mokslo struktūroje. Atlikus mokslinės literatūros sisteminę analizę, išryškėjo, kad *korporacinės komunikacijos samprata formuluojama remiantis dviem metodologiniais aspektais:*

- *socialinės aplinkos ir verslo santykio raiškai apibūdinti – korporacinės komunikacijos sistemai valdyti;*
- *įmonės verslo strategijai palaikyti – praktiniams sprendimams įgyvendinti.*

Atlikus JAV Korporacinės komunikacijos instituto studijos (2005) analizę „Corporate Communication Practice and Pedagogy at the dawn of Millennium" (Corporate Communication Institute, New Jersey, USA), patikslintas „korporacinės komunikacijos" terminas. Šis terminas vartojamas strateginių vadybos funkcijų įvairovei apibrėžti ir pristatomas kaip procesas. Atsižvelgiant į įmonės dydį korporacinė komunikacija apima: viešųjų ryšių sistemą, krizinę ar nenumatytą komunikaciją, korporacijos piliečių ryšius; reputacijos vadybos sistemą; bendruomenės ryšius; žiniasklaidos ryšius; investuotojų ryšius; darbuotojų ryšius, vyriausybės ryšius, marketingo komunikacijas, korporacijos prekinio ženklo ir įvaizdžio valdymo sistemą, reklamą. Aptariamos įmonės išorinės ir vidinės komunikacijos sistemos.

Antrojoje straipsnio dalyje aptariamas krizių planavimo ir strategijos valdymo procesas įmonėje. Atlikta mokslinės literatūros analizė parodė, kad veiksmų planavimas įmonės vadovams leidžia ne tik įvertinti vidaus dinamikas, bet ir numatyti panašias problemas, kurios susijusios su išorinės verslo aplinkos pokyčiais. Reikia pažymėti, kad šiuolaikinės krizės ignoruoja stabilaus valdymo modelį. Atsiradę nenumatyti trikdžiai sutrikdo organizacijos funkcijas, sukelia krizines situacijas. Pokyčiams atsirasti reikalingos ne tik techninės priemonės, bet ir šiam darbui pasirengę specialistai, taip pat reikalinga valdyti informaciją. Apibendrinant teorines įžvalgas, prieita prie išvados, kad *krizių valdymas yra multidisciplininis procesas*, kuris neturi būti vien tik viešųjų ryšių skyriams prerogatyva. Šis socialinis reiškinys nagrinėjamas susidūrus skirtingiems mokslams: personalo vadybai, psichologijai, vadybai.

Pateikus šias teorines įžvalgas, galima teigti, kad *krizei valdyti reikalinga bendradarbiauti su atskiromis nagrinėjamo socialinio reiškinio sistemomis*: efektyvia vidine ir išorine komunikacija, asmenų nustatymo ir jų vaidmenų, išreikštų specialiomis pareigomis ir atsakomybe apibrėžimo, kolektyvinio sprendimo kontrole, bendradarbiavimo atsakomybe ir komunikacija.

Trečiojoje straipsnio dalyje, taikant dedukcinę logiką, pateikiamos praktinės rekomendacijos – „efektyvios krizinės komunikacijos planas. Mokslinėje literatūroje aprašoma krizinės komunikacijos kūrimo sistema. Įvertinus pasaulinėje vadybos praktikoje (Corporate Communication Institute, New Jersey, USA; BNFL Corporate Communication Research Unit, Salford, UK; MBA Corporate Communication Concentration, New Jersey, USA; Annenberg Strategic Public Relations Center, USA) taikomas praktines efektyvios komunikacijos rekomendacijas, straipsnyje pateikiama efektyvios krizinės komunikacijos metodika - dešimt krizinės komunikacijos veiksmų. Pažymima, kad pagrindinė efektyvios komunikacijos strategijos ašis yra auditorijos segmentavimas, aprašomi auditorijos segmentavimo principai ir informacijos sklaida. Pateikiamas krizinės komunikacijos plano rengimo modelis.