From the communication within the enterprise to the corporate communication

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Summary
In the managerial practices, the communication plays a major and acknowledged role. Linked to two areas of expertise of the company: the internal and external communication. They convey all the communication actions produced for its various publics.

The debate about “why communicate?” is already overtaken. The question today is rather about “how to communicate”. But well before this, the terminological problem of the business communication imposes upon our analysis: is it a question of corporate or commercial communication?

Ambiguities persist around these terms. For some authors, it indicates the same thing and can all be used to give sense to the corporate communication. Yet, in any communication, the vocabulary plays a key role and must be perfectly understandable for all, it would not be suitable to speak particularly about corporate communication unless we specify to whom, to what and why to do it.

The objective of this article is to highlight confusions around communication as well as its derivatives in the business world, drawing a model which conjugates the strategy of communication in the company to the corporate communication.

Keywords:
Enterprise communication, corporate communication, commercial communication, communication strategy, internal and external communication.

Definitory problem of business communication
"Communication: an attractive nebula" So had qualified it (J. Zaganiaris., «cequecommuniquerveut dire », 2013, p.14) to shed light on the ambivalences that the term possesses.

Communication is a complex phenomenon; it contains opposing and contradictory aspects. "A simple conversation involves at the same time mutual identification and opposition, fusion and distinction, inclusion and exclusion" (J.P. Meunier D.Peraya, « Introduction aux théories de la communication », 2010, p.32).

That is to say, the sense of the communication is infinite. It cannot be reduced to a single common denominator: thus, there is no single definition of the communication but every domain of knowledge has its own definitions which integrate rather the continuity than the disruption.

In the managerial practices, the communication plays an inescapable and acknowledged role" it is not defined any more as a simple business for two, but as a circular system, an orchestra where everyone is a part of, and where everybody plays according to an invisible partition"(Yves Winkin, « La nouvelle communication », 2014, p.5).

This is about the case of the orchestra that A.Mucchelli had named "collective communication-creation» in his book (« La nouvelle communication: épistémologie des sciences de information-communication », 2000, p98) He asserts that «the communication can be also a collective production of a group which "works " on this production, under the direction of an organizing leader of the performances ".

The concept of the communication indicates in this sense a concerted action; it includes at the same time the transmission of the information, the relation, the exchange and the agreement.

This joins the definition of the business communication given by (T. Libaert, «toute la communication d’entreprise», 2014,p.27) as” a process of listening and emissions of signs and messages intended for a particular public and aiming at the image improvement and the relations of the organization, the promotion of its products and services and the defense of its interests.”
By the image improvement, and within a commercial communication approach, Libaert means by corporate or institutional communication the promotion of products and services.

Having said that, ambiguities persist around the corporate-communication terms; institutional and commercial. For some authors, this indicates the same thing and can all be used to give sense to the corporate communication.

Yet, in any communication, the vocabulary plays a key role and must be perfectly understandable for all, it would not be suitable to speak particularly about corporate communication if we do not specify to whom, what and why we mean.

Thus, we attribute different meanings to these terms.

The commercial communication

The business communication is often reduced to the commercial communication because it is the most visible element. Indeed, the communication effort of the majority of companies is often limited to the trade communication.

It is the business of the producers or the distributors for purpose of promoting their sales out of marketing their products or services.

Most of the research on commercial communication leads us to think about advertisement. Moreover, it is recommended to distinguish between enterprise communication, product communication, advertisement communication and brand communication.

One has to note that commercial communication has historically invested in the field of the mainstream media in order to be linked to the consumers on mass markets. In other words, the advertising is only a way among others (media and non-media) to stage a product, a service, a cause ... or just to emphasize the mark.

Besides, when the commercial communication of products is applied to a product, to a service or to a range of products, it concerns the set of their characteristics (quality, performance, and mode of use ...) as for the brand communication; it tries to create a value: the brand personality, it would be only to set it apart from its competitors.

The institutional communication

The institutional communication, strictly speaking, is any communication emanating from an institution. In the broad sense, it is a communication which results from any public or private body behaving as an institution. Thus, it can result from either the State, a body belonging to it, a public or private enterprise positioning itself as an institution.

The institutional communication opposes the commercial communication and consequently tries to confer to the company the status of institution. The stake is to value the image of the company and to strengthen its reputation on the long term.

Various supports can be used: press and public relations, event, sponsorship, social networks, blogs, interventions of the leaders, annual report, institutional brochures as well as various means of the institutional advertising focusing on the social responsibility, the mission and the company values.

The corporate communication

According to the dictionary of the corporate communication (P. Morel, « Dictionnaire de la communication d’entreprise », 2006, p28); the corporate communication is also called institutional communication, its objective is to conceive, to develop and preserve not only the image of the company but also its brand and its product, this relies on all the techniques non-media except the use of messages with advertising or commercial connotation. Focusing on this definition allows us to wonder if the creation, the development or the maintenance of a brand or a given product, does not form part of a pure commercial philosophy!?

Likewise, and beyond the image, what stakes can we attribute to the corporate communication!? We shall retain the main idea of K. Johannes and T. Libaert, “to know that the corporate communication indicates the communication where the company refers to itself, to its identity, to its mission and to its values and appears as legal entity, beyond its products and services.”
The communication contributes therefore to the improvement of the company by emphasizing its values, its social utility and its ethical behavior; also by the constant assessment of its stakeholders, assuring the membership of its public, the credibility of the company and the coherence of its communication.

Nevertheless, there is a huge confusion around three expressions: business communication, institutional and corporate communication.

(J. MarcLehu, « l’encyclopédie du marketing », 2012, p.28) even goes far as to say that "Sometimes and without true foundations, we attribute specific characteristics to the institutional communication in relation to the corporate communication."

For the consultant and the trainer in corporate communication (P. Morel, « Communication institutionnelle », 2012, p.28) "it is the content or the subjects discussed which make the corporate communication institutional. This one applies, apart from the general public or its specific targets, to institutions to deliver information about the long-term values, their socio-economic role, and so on."

In this regard, the corporate communication manages the institutional image of this one. The corporate would be wider than the institutional: corporate communication contains all the perspectives of the company while the institutional communication implores the corporate citizenship as a valuable vector.

In any case, the domains which the corporate recovers remain unclear.

For T. Libaert, it is only a question of naming 'business communication' that remains even frequently used: it is the corporate communication that has the advantage of gathering all the communication forms of the company.

In his opinion, the corporate communication is the global approach of the business communication, it addresses the various stakeholders (stakeholders: all the public concerned, involved by the activity of the company; illustration below) internal and external with the aim of asserting the personality of the company, ensure an identity to the company to manage its image and its reputation.

« who are the recipients ? »

Figure of (T.Libaert, « toute la fonction communication », 2010,p23)
In doing so, and far from the subtleties of these distinctions, we define the corporate communication (or communications) as being a creation of an interface and production of information at the internal level as well as at the external level.

It is a communication tool integrating all the types of communication as well as the various domains of its application in a company.

The business communication would be:
- Institutional if it addresses 'externally' the institutions to value its image and its reputation.
- Corporate to bring up values of the company alongside the other internal and external public.
- In a commercial perspective by addressing the various external public of the enterprise and close to which it is commercially engaged (consumers, distributors, suppliers).

Certainly, these forms of communication present various market approaches for the company, but they follow additional purposes.

We can define it by the following formula:

**Internal and external strategies of the communication**

The communication or 'voice of company' is bound to two fields of competence of this one: external Communication of the company aimed at its various public, (except for employees being internal public) and internal communication formalized by all the communication actions produced within the company. It serves as compass for the company aiming at an informative and relational balance set simultaneously with the internal HR policy.

From internal to the external communication, the debate on why communicate, being already exceeded, the question now is rather on how communicate?

As any form of communication, the design of corporate communication joins in a strategic approach. This one relies on an analysis macro-micro environment of the company and results in the formulation of the strategy; in terms of objectives, targets and means.

**Illustrative plan of the strategic approach**
According to the same reasoning, the stages of elaboration of an internal communications strategy are in accordance with those of the external communication. The board below illustrates the key elements of an internal and external communications strategy providing a reconciliation statement between the two:

**Table: « Plan of a communication strategy »** (L.Demont, A.kempf,M.Rapidel et C.Scibetta, « Communication des entreprises :stratégies et pratiques »,2005,p.311)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External communication</th>
<th>Internal communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the marketing plan: product, price, distribution. - analysis of the attitude and the behavior of the consumer. - analysis of the environment: competition, market. - analysis of previous communication.</td>
<td>analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis - strength/weakness - threats/opportunities</td>
<td>diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Develop the fame; arouse an interest; develop the positioning; develop loyalty … While the competitors is lively; that the mark does not present a competitive advantage; that the image is not good</td>
<td>Problem to solve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the image of products, brand, institution which we wish develop in the public mind? This image must be credible, attractive and specific.</td>
<td>positioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives Make known, make like, make do. Targets Clients/consumers; - Influential /specifiers; - leaders of opinion/relay of information; - Distributor/force of sale … CWP or copy-strategy Promise; support; tone; constraints.</td>
<td>Communication strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the approach is similar and the difference between internal and external tends to fade for the benefit of logic of the stakeholders, the employees being so included in a public, the nature of the target, as for it, is very different.

It is about the staff or about the external public; with whom the communicator (internal or external) has to strengthen the links of trust and cohesion in the company; to promote its image and its values, to make known, like or urging him simply to buy its products or services.

**Conclusion**

To avoid falling into the subtlety trap of its distinctions, we consider the corporate communication as all the communication emitted by the company towards its stakeholders various. The corporate communication would be:

- Institutional if it addresses 'externally' the institutions to value its image and its reputation.
- Corporate to bring up values of the company alongside the other internal and external public.
- In a commercial perspective by addressing the various external public of the enterprise and close to which it is commercially engaged (consumers, distributors, suppliers).

Certainly, these forms of communication present various market approaches for the company, but they follow additional purposes.

For lack of a reflection on the specificities of the target, internal or external communication is ineffective.

The internal or external communication strategy can assure an added value to the company only if its public has confidence, perceive the communication as source of their motivation and membership to the company project, and not a form of propaganda or manipulation.

In addition, that the communication strategy should be the result of an analysis of the overall policy of the company and this is in coherence between the internal and the external.

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