COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR A PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT DEPARTMENT

Cristiana POP¹

Abstract
Communication strategy of physical education and sports departments in an institution of higher education is, ultimately, a form of adaptation to new and changing environmental conditions (legal, political, internal organization and financial) in which they operate. Developing a communication strategy is an approach that is based on the research group aims to be influenced and on the effort to build a message, an image and emotional state to determine a change in perception, attitude and behavior considered favorable for all students involved.
The study case discussed in this paper is eloquent for specialist involved in promoting physical activity and competitions in universities. It provides very specific and useful communication means and aims, some analysis samples and evaluation methods for physical education and sport teachers.

Keywords: analysis, student’s involvement, physical activity, message

JEL classification: I 20, I 21, I 29

Introduction

Institutional communication strategy aims to identify and recognize the organization in its external environment. It will be focused especially towards partners who exercise an influence on the achievement of organizational targets. Important groups for physical education department are:
• Students like target group of communication recruitment for physical education activities, organizing and participating in masse sporting events, in competition or recreational.
• Institutions, student associations, and professional sports, public, as target groups for opinion communication (as a type of institutional communication that seeks a favorable opinion of the department and its projects in those environments).
• As wide range of people and institutions likely to procure or provide additional financial resources

The communication aims can be divided into two categories:
1. Notoriety, or informational - are easier to obtain, but the effects are harder to measure. Examples: "To increase the awareness of department of physical education and sport from Economic Studies Academy by 10% in the next

¹ Cristiana Pop, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, crispotir@yahoo.com
academic year" or "To increase by 15% the awareness of students on programs proposed by the Department of physical education and sport”.

2. Objective of motivating attitudes and behaviors - are harder to reach, but more quantifiable. Real Example: "The Government of Canada intends by 2010 to increase the involvement of citizens in physical activity by 10 percentage points in all provinces and territories" fictional example: "Department of Physical Education from Academy of Economic Studies aims as the academic year 2013-2014 to attract 30% of second year students in optional classes."

State the objectives of the communication strategy will take into account:
- What do we want to change? or types of changes wanted to be pursued: to grow, to inform, to educate, to lead, to draw, to induce, to maximize, and so on;
- Who we address? Or who are our target groups;
- What results are expected? Or the degree of change that is expected, stated in measurable terms, so that every goal can be measured based on different indicators. Each lens is good to be focused on one type of result, expressed in percentile or numbers.
- Time necessary for an objective to be achieved. As usual classes or sports competitions take place in stages over time, so the communication goals and planning steps to achieve them will be in accordance with that timetable. A poster competition, including as many elements of effective communication must be developed within three weeks of competition and thus be sure that you appear in places billboard about two weeks.

Means of communication within reach of a university department of physical education and sport are:
- Posters, leaflets, brochures presentation;
- Presentation sites on the Internet and Intranet;
- Diplomas, medals and other materials to promote the image of the department and the message it wanted;
- Attending as many sporting events with university teams and represents with honor the institution image;
- Trophy windows or forms of recognizing sports performance of students in these teams;
- Advertising in newspapers, radio and television for special events within the department, of university or higher education institution;
- Teacher participation in professional reunions (scientific sessions, congress committee and sport commission) and exchanges.
The aims of communication and its means are appropriate to the needs of those we work with and taking into account the resources available. A company that wants good and lasting effects should be based on data from studies and objective analysis.

1. Message suitability with community needs

In the first two years of study are enrolled in day classes of Economic Studies Academy more than 8,000 students, which exceeds the total number of students in some smaller universities. This large student community, to which we added the senior sports enthusiasts, is served in terms of physical activities by the 15 teaching staff of the department of physical education together with a variable number of associates. The desire to adapt our physical activities offer and to harmonize the requirements with the possibilities of space, time and density it took a series of studies and analysis.

My study case illustrates this requirement by solving a real situation in which we used three analysis tools by which we come to know the needs of the student community:

- quantitative analysis
- qualitative analysis
- SWOT analysis

The Research subjects are students of the Bucharest Economic Studies Academy. The SWOT analysis covered resources and opportunities available to currently, at physical education and sport department.

**Quantitative analysis**

- 75% of all students at the Academy of Economic Studies are young women
- 75% of girls prefer aerobics and fitness
- 84% of young men prefer sports games
- 52.5% of girls think they have health problems
- 63% of girls are not happy with their body image.

**Qualitative analysis**

- 97% of students were between 18-20 years
- 98% of students come from urban areas
- 23% of first year students did not participate in any physical education class last year
- 4% of students are medical exempt
SWOT analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-strengths</th>
<th>W-weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A solid material base</td>
<td>• Lack of time - only 24 hours in a day and a lot of constraints and possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A large number of students</td>
<td>• Absence of a strategy for attracting students in physical activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively varied activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A good attitude for physical activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O-opportunities</th>
<th>T-threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ General current of opinion in favor of physical exercise</td>
<td>✓ Almost all activities are indoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Students energy, creativity and enthusiasm</td>
<td>✓ Financially constraints are limiting the programs variety and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Easy access to sport facilities (short distances)</td>
<td>✓ Student’s unhealthy life style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(sedentary and stressfully)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following this analysis can be defined the general group to which we will address:

- young, educated people, aged between 18 and 22 years;
- predominantly female group, concerned about their own appearance;
- with preference clearly defined and distinguished by gender in terms of physical activities;
- young people with an urban lifestyle.

The choices they make girls different from boys, and require different messages: girls are expected to resonate better to concepts like **beauty** and **health**, and those young men like **competition** and **strength**. To check the correctness of this conclusion, we can discuss with students whom we consider opinion leaders who will spread the message among the students. Young people will easily adopt an opinion informally and coming from someone with the same aspirations and concerns. Energy, enthusiasm, creativity and knowledge of students are qualities that should not be ignored, but combined with teachers experience can find most striking means of communication.

Verbal message structure and wording is good to be customized for each of these target groups. It was found that men generally do neither need nor the patience to listen more explanation about physical beauty, or the need to exercise care. It is, therefore, preferable a simple and concise speech, going straight to the point and to suggest tangible results. If we make a comparison between this kind of discourse and coffee, we can call speech type "espresso".

Women talk a lot about beauty, care, silhouette, and their interest is exploited by all the women's magazines, advertising programs, television and so on. The image used in communication has its significance; therefore is recommended explicit icons and logos. Speech, even if it's longer, it is advisable to be meaningful, focused on the benefits they can bring a better image and its perception by rail and by others. Continuing the comparison we can say that for women "cappuccino" type speech is preferable.
Communicating the objectives related with the practice is inducing a favorable exercise behavior, cognitive goals, an understanding of personal benefits and it can function like an internal motivation for physical effort. Also we must not lose sight of the effective objectives of this communication process. We have a message we want to convey and formulate it in words, it can be (and often is) filled images that define a symbolic area in harmony with the verbal message, but the emotion (state affective) that accompanies these means of expression draws attention and increases aunt final effect. Verbal communication is predominantly present at cognitive level, but in the information society in which we live almost continuously exposed to a storm of visual communication, the message power is given overwhelmingly by image that is more percussive and persuasive.

2. Evaluation methods

Speaking of communication effects, they must be measured and as a consequence better predict. Among the means of evaluation, which will give us the extent to which we achieved what we initially planned can mention:

- The number of visitors of the site that promotes activity, ongoing programs and projects of the department of physical education and sport. The web site address will appear on all promotional material issued by department leaflets, brochures, posters, invitations, diplomas, and with the consent, even on courses and books that department members are authors.
- Number of students who applied to optional physical education and sport course that is the ultimate goal of the whole endeavor. Failure to achieve this goal has concrete consequences on teachers: a small number of students can fit into a smaller number of groups, which means a smaller number of lessons to be taught fewer teachers.
- Evaluation of the questionnaires that apply direct beneficiaries of our activity – the students. Anonymous questionnaires applied randomized can provide reliable feedback on the quality of communication not only institutional type, but also of the staff. Following this type of evaluation may obtain more nuanced on the different aspects of communication and therefore can introduce necessary corrections to bring efficiency of the process.

3. Conclusions

Communication strategy of physical education and sports departments in an institution of higher education is, ultimately, a form of adaptation to new and changing environmental conditions (legal, political, internal organization and financial) in which they operate. Developing a communication strategy is an
approach that is based on the research group aims to be influenced and effort to build a message, an image and emotional state to determine a change in perception, attitude and behavior considered favorable for all students involved.

REFERENCES

5. www.olimpiadelecomunicării.ro. (acessed Aprilie 2009)