

# INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION IN PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*After nearly 30 years after the emergence of this concept, during which progress that has met its use in practice, studies and theorizing its demonstrated effectiveness and benefits indisputable to organizations that practice this type of communication, it seems there is still a lot of confusion about what is and how it is integrated communication. This paper aims to focus research and theoretical aspects of the concept and to consider how known and applied integrated business communication within private organizations in southern Romania. This approach is actually a picture of the realities of the business world although Romanian who is facing serious problems in carrying out daily activities must adapt to global developments.*

**Keywords:** integrated communication, business communication, strategic communication, management.

**JEL Classification** – D83; H830; M00.

## Introduction

Integrated communication is most often associated with advertising or marketing activities (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999:21), which proves confusion about this concept so vast.

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It is true that at the end of last century, first appeared Integrated marketing communication and the evolution of it has developed integrated business communication.

In the 80s, integrated communication campaign was defined as a specific communication tactics that were combined and vehicles of communication for the purpose of organizing communication in general (Niemann-Struweg I., A.F. Grobler, 2011:2). Very quickly, however, (this marketing tool that target a significant impact on consumer behavior, launching the same message all the promotional mix) at the beginning of this millennium is evolving and is defined by experts as a process of strategic management (Duncan TR, 2002:8) establishing profitable relationships between organizations, stakeholders and target audiences.

After the first decade of the third millennium, integrated communication which initially had links with marketing communication, reaching the sphere of strategic management and act for the overall goals of the organization is defined as a process of strategic management through which the organizational control of all messages by encouraging intentional dialogue based on concrete data in order to build and strengthen the long-term, profitable relationships with stakeholders (Niemann-Struweg I., A.F. Grobler, 2011:4). Here is how a concept so young that is developing expansive reach to harmonize practice all forms of communication (Argenti et al, 2005:86).

### **1. Literature review**

The fact that increasingly more researchers and research have focused on the study of integrated communication is the best proof that the concept was strong and their attention through its direct manifestations of business activity. This time he had taken before practice theory, and researchers ranged from the inclusion of this concept in the literature of the corporate communication or public relations (Kitchen et al, 2004: 20).

Formed a real need, for effective communication of the organization, integrated business communications solution, offered by the interaction and interdependence between means and vehicles of communication, being practiced seriously from the beginning of this millennium (Hallahan, 2004:161-164).

Although clear definitions given to the concept, formulated in the early 2000s have clarified what was clear, even now, researchers are striving to build various schemes of development and to give this concept different names by which to make the concept of its roots, ie integrated marketing communication which is in fact included the vast concept of integrated business communication. This appears to be another episode of the old conflict between management and marketing (Avasarikar, Chordiya, 2007:2-22).

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What is certain is that David Ogilvy as inferred since the early '90s, this new type of communication requires managers trained in all disciplines (Schultz et al, 1996:15).

Integrated communication business is more complex and broader than integrated marketing communication that tends to assume that integrate communication occurs only in marketing (Christensen et al, 2008:424), while communication integrated closely together areas seemingly distinct as: design, culture and corporate communications, marketing and public relations (Christensen et al, 2008:43).

There are voices who claim to independence integrated communication integrated marketing communication, arguing that in terms of integrating communication across the organization, started early. Thus within the organization, the roles were already divided: coordinate marketing organization formal communication, corporate culture was interested in managing informal dimensions of communication since the 80s (Schall 1983:559), and public relations focused on the integration of communication as a means to cultivate long-term positive relationships with special audiences such as governments, employees and interest groups (Hutton, 1996:155).

Problematic word seems to be "integrated" be it for marketing communication, brand communication, strategic communication or communication over the Internet the mere association of the word "integrated" creates great confusion.

Repeat to clarify what I said in the introduction: *"integrated communication is a process of strategic management which establishes profitable relationships between the organization, target audience and stakeholders and harmonizing in practice all forms of communication"* (Duncan TR, 2002:8) (Argenti et al, 2005:86).

Integrated communication can be applied by the following factors (Kerr, Patti, 2015:319-320):

- Connecting communication objectives for achieving company goals (Duncan, 2002), (Wells et al, 2005).
- Strategic decisions requiring tactics to achieve organizational objectives (Holm, 2006).
- Contributions to the corporate mission of promoting the company objectives based on corporate design elements (Schultz and Schultz, 2004).
- Budgeting common communication, communication evaluation measures and results (Eagle et al, 2007).
- Concentration of all forms of communication, using all ways and channels of communication in order to achieve the organization's objectives (Belch et al, 2012).
- Involve the target public, internal and external stakeholders (Kliatchko, 2008).
- The creation and use of any contact you have with people interested in your product / service (Belch & Belch, 2011).
- Leadership powerful integrated communication supports the CEO and top executives as integrators (Kitchen et al, 2007).

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- Multifunctional teams entrusted with responsibilities and resources to coordinate communication activities (Christensen et al, 2008).

Integrated communication includes and uses all communication activities (Hallahan, 2007: 320-324) for strategic success of the organization by applying concepts of communication in various fields (Stuart et al, 2007:154-155) thus managing almost instantaneous connection providers services, companies and corporations with consumers and the general public (Weinberg, 2009:2-3) and establish emotional connections with the adoption of important public causes (Mangold, 2009:363-364).

Regarding integrated communication, everything related information, knowledge, innovations and improvements, all of which meet rapid changes and the efforts of organizations to reach audiences B2B and B2C, can be simplified through better knowledge of current realities and especially by continuously upgrading the technological developments.

Integrated communication refers to communication with one voice and is a matter of organizational culture, power and decision management (Prensky et al, 2013:168).

There are many reasons for companies to move to integrated communication: the need to reduce the cost of doing business, strengthening organizational dynamics to increase employee productivity. The target audience, competition, community impact are factors that may cause any organization to adopt the concept of integrated communication, to maintain and increase its position in the market. Each of these factors, as well as impact factors of the internal environment of the organization by specific events, directly affects how the organization intends to meet the new challenges of the business environment.

### **2. The research methodology**

The research subject of this study fall into the category of surveys conducted by survey, using a questionnaire with 36 closed questions, each having organized five different response from the minimum level of quality at the maximum quality.

The survey conducted among managers of private organizations in southern Romania, wants to get a clearer picture on how known and applied integrated business communication.

The identified problem that made us start our research is the confusion with the marketing integrated communication and the low use of integrated communication.

The purpose of this research is to identify the level of knowledge about integrated communication and to determine the extent to which managers are interested in practicing this type of communication.

### 3. The Results of the Research

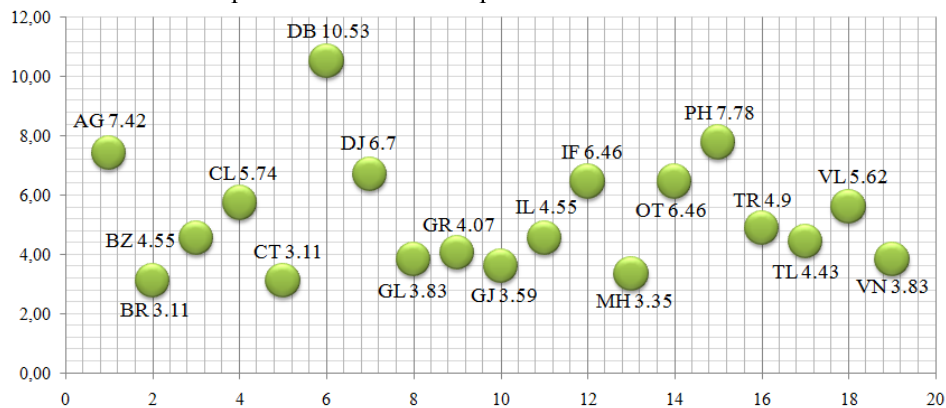
The research was conducted on a sample of 836 managers of private organizations in southern Romania after following segmentation variables: gender, age, education level and region and is part of a wider research.

Our survey respondents are in proportion of 23.44% and 76.56% women men being aged 20-30 years and 60 years.

Most of the respondents (26.67%) were aged between 30 and 40 years and the fewest are those aged 20-30 years (10.65%) and those over 60 (11%). After the training, most have university (95.22%), 3.35% have postgraduate studies, but there are managers of the private sector and a rate of 1.44% that education.

The survey area was composed of counties related development regions of Romania, opting for organizations operating in the south. According to the area, 42.88% are in the South; 25.78% are in the South West; 25.16% are in the South East Region and 6.18% in Bucharest-Ilfov activated. Distribution of counties is shown in Chart 1:

Graph 1 - The share of respondents on counties



Source: my own projection

This paper presents the results of research regarding the extent to which the organizations studied, integrated communication concept is known ( $H_1$ ) and the degree to which integrated communication is used ( $H_3$ ).

The questionnaire was elected a coding system type (-2, -1, 0, 1, 2). If all responses for institutions large as this sample tends toward normalization, then the answer appears concentration NO / NO encoded 0. Therefore, the scale has been moved into the space  $R^+$  scale codes.

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By coding, was obtained private sector matrix Spr (h,k) cu h=1,...,836, k=1,...,kmax.

It was calculated the average score on each question according to the relationship Q:

$$Q_{j,i} = \left( \sum_{i=1}^{830} S_{pr(i)} \right) / 836 \quad \text{where } j=7, \dots, 42.$$

Formula is an adaptation averaging  $Ma=(1/n)*\sum x_i$ .

A first action was to approach the analysis processing of inter-how inside assumptions.

Media each hypothesis, was calculated according to the following formula:

$$M^{H1} = \frac{\sum(Q1, Q3, Q4, Q7, Q8, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q26, Q28, Q34)}{11}, \quad \text{where } Q1, \dots,$$

Q34 are averages questions;

$$M^{H3} = \frac{\sum(Q19, Q20, Q21, Q24, Q31, Q35, Q36)}{7}, \quad \text{where } Q19, \dots, Q36 \text{ are}$$

averages questions.

By associating each hypothesis with a set of questions was aimed to achieve consistency of the questionnaire and research objectives:

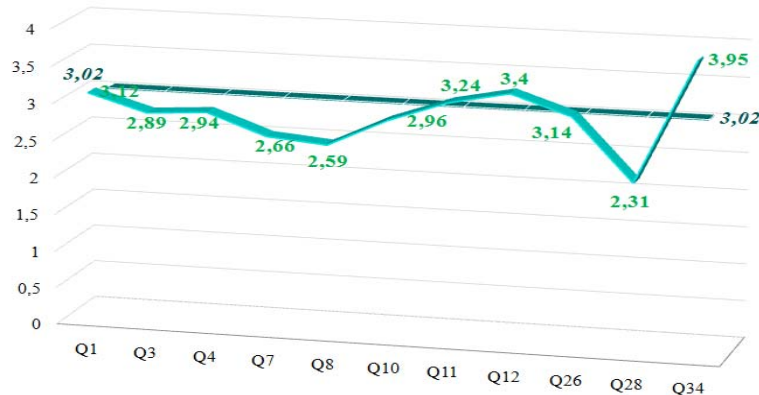
Hypothesis 1: questions Q<sub>1</sub>, Q<sub>3</sub>, Q<sub>4</sub>, Q<sub>7</sub>, Q<sub>8</sub>, Q<sub>10</sub>, Q<sub>11</sub>, Q<sub>12</sub>, Q<sub>26</sub>, Q<sub>28</sub> and Q<sub>34</sub>.

Hypothesis 3: questions Q<sub>19</sub>, Q<sub>20</sub>, Q<sub>21</sub>, Q<sub>24</sub>, Q<sub>31</sub>, Q<sub>35</sub> and Q<sub>36</sub>.

**H<sub>1</sub>** - Integrated communication concept is known in the area researched organizations with questions Q<sub>1</sub>, Q<sub>3</sub>, Q<sub>4</sub>, Q<sub>7</sub>, Q<sub>8</sub>, Q<sub>10</sub>, Q<sub>11</sub>, Q<sub>12</sub>, Q<sub>26</sub>, Q<sub>28</sub> and Q<sub>34</sub>.

Analyzing responses to questions designed to verify this hypothesis and calculations made to determine the average scores I made the comparison between the average score on hypothesis and the average score of each question (Graph 2).

**Graph 2 - Comparison between the average score on the hypothesis 1 and the average score on questions**



*Source: my own projection*

Values mean scores of questions that are above the average line hypothesis, that are typical and representative eşationului can be seen in five of the 11 questions subordinated to this hypothesis (Q1, Q11, Q12, Q26 and Q34).

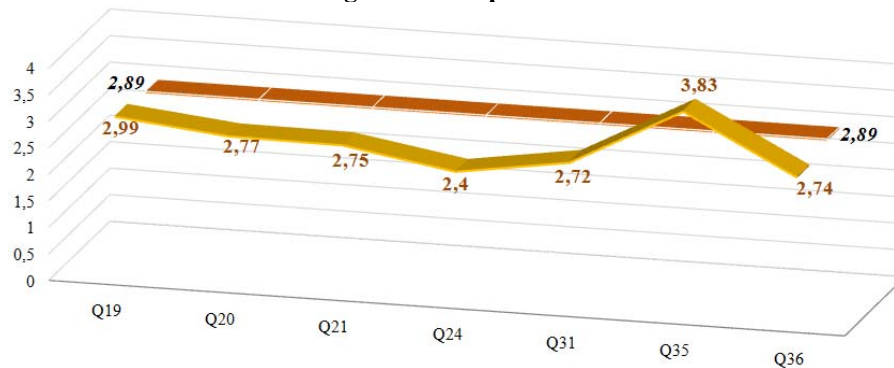
We distinguish two average scores of questions that are above the average line hypothesis, namely Q1 and Q11 and clearly highlight the high value of the average score, and the high values that exceed the average line hypothesis 1, Q34.

The averages and the assumption of responses, are not much different and characteristic indecision is within the range of issues related to the hypothesis put.

**H<sub>3</sub>** - There is a high degree of utilization of integrated communication with questions Q19, Q20, Q21, Q24, Q31, Q35 and Q36.

Analyzing responses to questions designed to verify this hypothesis and calculations made to determine the average scores I made the comparison between the average score on hypothesis and the average score of each question (Graph 3).

**Graph 3 - Comparison between the average score on the hypothesis 2 and the average score on questions**



*Source: my own projection*

Values mean scores of questions that are above the average line hypothesis, that are typical and representative eşationului can be seen in four of the seven questions subordinated to this hypothesis (Q19, Q31, Q35 and Q36).

It clearly shows the high value of the average score, and the high values that exceed three lines hypothesis averages, Q32.

Like the previous hypothesis and the hypothesis averages of responses, they are not much different and characteristic indecision is within the range of issues related to the hypothesis put.

### **Conclusions**

The main conclusion which has emerged from this scientific approach was that in the organizations surveyed there is interest for integrated communication.

The study achieved its objectives by identifying the level of knowledge related to integrated communication managers and identify the level of interest in the use and implementation of integrated communication within the organizations surveyed.

The analysis produced the following results:

**Hypothesis 1** - Integrated communication concept is known in the area researched organizations - invalidated.

Specifically, we can say that investigated the space organizations, integrated communication concept is not too familiar.

High scores subordinate control questions this assumption, proved managers confusion about the concept of integrated communication. They found that the activity of public relations is one that covers all the communication needs of the organization



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and task managers that is exclusive to convey messages that impact the organization:  
Q<sub>34</sub> - mean score obtained 3.95.

The average score of 3.14 obtained at Q<sub>26</sub>, places limits results from indecision or indifference, but it can not change the positive overall result.

Even though one of the most important tasks of the manager is communication, it can not cover all situations need for communication across the organization.

A manager can be an exceptional strategist for example, but a very poor communicator and regarding external communication of the organization is essential to be done by specialists in communication manager having rather the role of symbol of the organization (Iacob, Cismaru, 2010:158).

Unfortunately, the managers we surveyed have proved that they are not knowledgeable about the concept of integrated communication and does not know the importance of integrated communication contribution in achieving organizational objectives.

**Hypothesis 3** - There is a high degree of utilization of integrated communication - **invalidated**.

The third hypothesis tested in this study, it can neither confirmed.

The values obtained from this hypothesis averages, falls, just like in other circumstances, within indifference to the subject.

It features a full agreement regarding the role of specialist communication about managers participating in the study believe that the communicator is without discretion: Q<sub>35</sub> - mean score obtained 3.12. This is the question of control of the set of questions subordinated to this hypothesis the replies showed that there can be no use of integrated communication within organizations participating in this study.

To achieve the expected results from integrated communication is absolutely essential that communication specialists to join the top management of the organization (Gayeski, Woodward, 1996), not to be employed in internal battles for resources and credibility and to be very well informed situation and the real needs of the organization.

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