TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION PR STRATEGIES IN SHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

In the digital age, social media has become an essential tool for public relations (PR) and organizational image management. Organizations are no longer limited to distributing information to their audiences; they are increasingly expected to engage in dialogue, respond to public concerns, and build long-term relationships with stakeholders. This paper examines the role of two-way communication in shaping organizational image on social media and identifies key PR strategies that contribute to audience trust, engagement, and organizational reputation. Drawing on established public relations theories, particularly the two-way symmetrical communication model, the study explores the importance of feedback, transparency, responsiveness, and audience participation in digital communication. The paper also outlines practical approaches that organizations can adopt to strengthen their image in the digital environment.

Keywords: public relations, organizational image, digital communication, social media, two-way communication, audience engagement, trust, reputation management.

The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly transformed the nature of communication between organizations and the public. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and LinkedIn have created new opportunities for organizations to communicate directly with their audiences, distribute information rapidly, and receive immediate feedback. As a result, digital communication has become an important component of contemporary public relations strategies.

Organizational image refers to the perceptions and impressions that individuals form about an organization based on its activities, communication, values, and interactions with stakeholders. A positive organizational image can contribute to public trust, customer loyalty, stakeholder engagement, and long-term competitiveness. However, maintaining a positive image in the digital environment requires more than publishing promotional content. Organizations must also listen to their audiences, respond to questions and concerns, and demonstrate accountability in their communication.

In this context, two-way communication represents an important approach to digital public relations. Unlike one-way communication, which primarily focuses on transmitting information, two-way communication involves an exchange of information between an organization and its audience. This paper aims to examine the role of two-way communication PR strategies in shaping organizational image on social media and to identify practical approaches that can improve the effectiveness of digital communication. The theoretical foundation of two-way communication in public relations is closely associated with the work of James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt. In their book Managing Public Relations (1984), the authors presented four models of public relations: press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical communication, and two-way symmetrical communication.

The two-way symmetrical model is particularly relevant to contemporary digital PR because it emphasizes dialogue, mutual understanding, and the exchange of information between organizations and their publics. Within this model, communication is not simply a means of influencing public opinion; it

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also enables organizations to understand public expectations and adapt their behavior accordingly. Social media provides practical opportunities to implement this approach. Comments, direct messages, online surveys, live broadcasts, and interactive discussions allow organizations to establish continuous communication with their audiences. These tools can help organizations identify public concerns, clarify misunderstandings, and develop communication strategies that reflect stakeholder needs. Kent and Taylor (2002) also emphasized the importance of dialogue in computer-mediated communication. Their work on dialogic communication provides a useful theoretical perspective for understanding how organizations can develop meaningful relationships with online publics. From this perspective, effective digital PR depends not only on the availability of communication technologies but also on how organizations use them to encourage dialogue and build relationships.

Several communication strategies can contribute to the development of a positive organizational image in the digital environment.

First, active audience engagement is essential for establishing meaningful relationships with stakeholders. Organizations should encourage questions, respond to comments, conduct online surveys, and organize live discussions. Such practices demonstrate that public opinions are acknowledged and valued. Consistent interaction can also help organizations better understand audience expectations and improve the relevance of their communication.

Second, transparency and credibility are fundamental to maintaining public trust. Organizations should provide accurate, clear, and timely information about their activities, decisions, and responsibilities. Misleading statements, exaggerated claims, or inconsistent messages may damage organizational credibility, particularly when users can publicly challenge information or share negative experiences.

Third, feedback management enables organizations to identify public concerns and respond constructively. Monitoring comments, questions, complaints, and discussions can help PR professionals recognize emerging communication problems. However, monitoring alone is insufficient. Organizations should demonstrate that feedback is considered and, where appropriate, used to improve services, communication practices, or organizational decisions.

Fourth, responsive communication and digital crisis management are important for protecting organizational image. Negative comments and inaccurate information can spread rapidly across social media platforms. Organizations therefore need clear procedures for responding to criticism, correcting inaccurate information, and communicating during crisis situations. Responses should be timely, respectful, evidence-based, and consistent with the organization's values.

Finally, consistency across digital platforms helps organizations maintain a recognizable identity. Although the format and tone of communication may differ between platforms, the organization's core values, factual messages, and public commitments should remain consistent. A coherent communication approach can strengthen recognition and contribute to a stable organizational image. These strategies are most effective when they are integrated into a broader PR plan rather than implemented as isolated social media activities. The development of digital communication creates significant opportunities for organizations in Uzbekistan, including businesses, higher education institutions, public organizations, and nonprofit entities. Social media platforms provide accessible channels for communicating with local audiences, explaining organizational activities, and receiving public feedback. For example, a university can strengthen its image by responding to prospective students' questions, sharing accurate information about educational programs, and inviting students to participate in online discussions. Similarly, a

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company can improve stakeholder relationships by addressing customer complaints transparently, publishing updates about its activities, and explaining how public feedback informs its decisions. To evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies, organizations can use indicators such as response time, the proportion of questions receiving answers, audience engagement, recurring concerns, and feedback-related changes in communication practices. These indicators should be interpreted carefully: a high number of likes or comments does not necessarily demonstrate public trust or a positive organizational image. More comprehensive evaluation may combine social media analytics with surveys, interviews, and analysis of audience feedback.

A useful direction for further research would be a content analysis of selected Uzbek organizations' social media accounts. Such research could examine how frequently organizations respond to comments, whether their responses encourage dialogue, and how they address criticism. This approach would help identify effective practices as well as weaknesses in current digital PR activities.

Two-way communication is an important component of public relations strategies aimed at shaping organizational image in the digital environment. Social media has expanded opportunities for direct interaction between organizations and their audiences, but the effectiveness of these platforms depends on the quality of communication rather than the mere presence of an organization online.

Dialogue, transparency, responsiveness, feedback management, and consistency can help organizations strengthen public trust and maintain constructive relationships with stakeholders. The theoretical principles of two-way symmetrical communication provide a valuable framework for understanding these processes.

For organizations in Uzbekistan, the strategic use of social media should involve not only the distribution of information but also active listening, meaningful responses, and the consideration of public feedback. Further empirical research into organizational social media practices could provide a stronger evidence base for developing effective digital PR strategies and improving organizational image.

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