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December 2011



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The Timeliness of the News Ombudsman

This story pursues two objectives: to add to the knowledge about the institution of the news ombudsman (so we will be able to act more efficiently) and to plead for ethical journalism—the only type that has a future in the author’s opinion—that can be ensured by a media ombudsman.

In Lieu of a Preamble

Ever since the media industry appeared, journalists have craved the public trust. Their credibility, however, depends on their professionalism, and over time the public’s trust has waxed and waned. No matter how much they would like to, journalists cannot say to the public, “Trust us, regardless of what we offer you.” Fortunately, citizens who read or watch our reports have heads on their shoulders and can decide for themselves to what extent they can trust us. A lack of correctness and accuracy in the media justifies a citizen’s reproach, but—*Nota Bene!*— can also anger a legislator ready to sanction everyone with laws. A law for the media implies the existence of irregularities. In other words, the need to regulate the media signals problems with self-regulation, and self-regulation is the ideal option both for the media and for society.

In 1947 after three years of investigations, the Press Freedom Commission¹, also known as the Hutchings Commission, published a report that formed the basis of the theory of the social responsibility of the press. One of the main conclusions in the report states: “If modern society needs a large number of media outlets, if the media as a result of concentration get so much power that they become a danger to democracy, and if democracy cannot solve this problem by breaking monopolies, then the media will either control themselves or will be controlled by the state. If they are controlled by the state, then we will lose our main protection from totalitarianism and will take a step towards it.” [1]

The very ardent discussion among the Hutchings Commission members, who were all famous professionals, focused on two approaches: the first stressed the moral side of the problem and the second the legal aspect. The commission’s conclusions raised a lot of debate and harsh criticism from American journalists. It was a preliminary reaction, however. Over time, American journalists appreciated both the moral and the material utility of self-regulation.

¹ Robert Hutchings, Head of the Chicago University, USA. (author’s note)

When journalists establish professional standards by themselves and bring them to the attention of society and, most importantly, follow them, the legislator has no reason to make laws for journalists. Laws appear when journalists stray. “A decline in professional standards not only allows the government to attack the press but also downgrades the reputation of journalism in the eyes of the public who will be even less prone to support the freedom of the press.” [2]

Regulations will always be more repressive and more drastic than self-regulation and could encourage excessive self-censorship and even censorship, a loss for both journalists and society because censorship and self-censorship impoverish the “free idea market.” Let us get used to the fact that poor countries are not those that have few natural resources but are instead those that have few ideas.

Currently we live under an increasing avalanche of information, but truly useful information is isolated in the midst of “information noise,” as scientists call it, or of “information trash” as we call it. How have citizens, especially children, had a negative influence on media space? The following outcomes answer that question: Recommendation 1882 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2009 “Development of Internet Media Useful for Minors”; the creation of the Federal Council for Supervising Offensive Publications for Youth in Germany; the adoption of the law protecting minors from negative influences in Georgia and from negative influences of public information in Lithuania and the establishment of the position of Inspector for Journalistic Ethics in Romania [3]—a job that would normally have been done only by journalists.

There are many other such examples, but Norway’s model is unique. In 1997, the Norwegian government dissolved the Commission for Complaints in Broadcasting in favor of the Norwegian Ethics Council, a fully self-regulated institution. [4]

We would like to reiterate that regulations appear when self-regulation is missing or operating poorly. In addition to ethical codes, ethics councils and so on, another possibility for self-regulation is a media ombudsman. It has different names in different parts of the world—news ombudsman, reader’s editor, mediator, public attorney—but the aim of all these institutions is (or should be) the same: to help the media protect society from itself. If you are bothered by this sentence, the recommended remedy is the “mirror test.”

Brief History

Often when we want to recreate a valuable institution of long standing, we have to start by studying its basic elements. The case of the ombudsman, especially of the news ombudsman, is no exception. The term is Scandinavian in origin and initially meant, "The person who ensures that the snow, ice and garbage are removed from the streets and that chimneys are cleaned." [5]

The position has existed for two centuries, and part of the initial meaning is still true today.

The first ombudsman appointed by the Swedish parliament in 1809 had the duty of resolving citizens' complaints against the government or against state institutions. In other words, the ombudsman had to mediate between state institutions and citizens and try to find solutions convenient for both parties to the conflict.

An ombudsman can work in government, in hospitals, in universities or in corporations. As a social institution, the ombudsman reestablishes the balance between the institution and the people it serves and protects people's rights and freedoms against abuses of power. The ombudsman is not a state or judicial official so does not have any of their duties or authority. Researchers characterize this institution as the "magistracy of conviction" since it uses transparency, criticism and the power of conviction to achieve balance. It may seem that the lack of power diminishes the importance of the institution; however, the philosophy of the ombudsman implies that the noble goal of redressing abuse and administrative coercion must be achieved by avoiding coercive measures.

The power of the ombudsman consists in the advantages of the position. Unlike a judge, the ombudsman is guided not only by legal norms but also by the principles of law, morality and justice. The petitioner does not waste time with a variety of procedures but needs only to file a complaint with a concrete person and not the abstract state. The ombudsman is the voice of reason and conscience.

In many countries, the institution of the ombudsman has become an integral means for protecting human rights. Ombudsmen exist in Moldova as well and are parliamentary lawyers who come together in the Center for Human Rights. A lawyer specializing in the protection of human rights has existed for some time in our country; however, it seems the idea of an ombudsman has stopped there. In other countries things are totally different. In the United Kingdom, for instance, an ombudsman responsible for healthcare has been in existence since 1972. In Canada, an ombudsman for monitoring the use of the two official languages has existed

since 1969, and since 1983 there has been an ombudsman for information. In Sweden, there has been an ombudsman for competition since 1951, one for consumers and equal opportunities since 1980 and one for monitoring ethnic discrimination since 1986.

Sweden is the reference point, and if we had enough patience and wisdom, we could explore their experience with maximum benefit to ourselves. Sweden is the country that adopted the Act on Press Freedom as far back as 1766; it became part of the country's constitution. With the advent of broadcasting, in 1992 Sweden adopted another law on the freedom of expression. Swedish legislation is the most liberal in this area. The media have few restrictions, and journalists have even fewer. Even pornography is not illegal except in extreme cases.

In other words, Swedish law protects the freedom of journalists and they, in turn, appreciate their freedom. They themselves established limits and mechanisms for influencing the members of their profession who might be tempted to abuse the public trust. As far back as 1916, the Publicists Club, the Association of Swedish Editors and the Union of Swedish Journalists founded the Press Club as a kind of a public tribunal. It developed and adopted the code of ethics for journalism still in force today (latest edition 1999) that is mandatory both for legal entities and for individuals in mass media. Moreover, in 1969 the Office of the Media Ombudsman was established on the same principles and funded by media outlets.



In the USA, news ombudsman appeared in 1967 when the newspapers *Louisville Times* and *The Courier Journal* in Louisville, Kentucky appointed them. In the same year, an ombudsman appeared also at *The Washington Post*. The first news ombudsman in Canada was invested

in 1972 at *The Toronto Star*. In Japan in 1922, the publication *Asahi Shimbun* created the Council for the Receipt and Review of Readers Complaints which was a sort of ombudsman, and in 1938, *Yumiuri Shimbun* created the Council for Newspaper Quality Control that in 1951 became the Council of Ombudsmen that "receives complaints against the newspaper from the readers and meets daily with the editors." [6]

At present, there are about 100 news ombudsmen worldwide. There is also the Organization of News Ombudsmen created in 1980 that meets annually to discuss media issues.

Who Is A News Ombudsman?

Arthur C. Nauman, the ombudsman for the American newspaper *The Sacramento Bee*, gave the following definition of his position at a symposium in Seoul, Korea in 1994: the ombudsman is a person who is paid a good salary to criticize his own colleagues and, many times, even his own friends. This American ombudsman often hangs out the dirty laundry in front of everyone. One of his colleagues wondered why a grown man would waste his life and conscientiously turn his friends into enemies, but Nauman thinks there is no reason to exempt the media, with all its influence, from the rigorous control that is exerted on other social bodies like government; the military; businesses or artistic, religious or financial institutions. Obviously, it is in the media's interest to take part in controlling itself. "If we don't do it, someone else will do it, possibly with much more stringent results." [7]

When American ombudsmen take the part of readers injured by newspapers, they know very well that there is no law in the country that would permit interference in the media's business unless it's a matter of licensing or taxation. So, the ombudsmen are regarded and perceived as instruments for building and maintaining a publication's reputation.

Usually ombudsmen have their own columns in newspapers or spots in the broadcast media in which they protect either the interests of the audience or of journalists. They also mediate and resolve complaints that would otherwise have to follow the complicated and costly road of lawsuits. Their contributions help the public understand how news is reported—a process that often is hidden and therefore inclines the readers to suspicion. [8]

Ian Mayes, former ombudsman at the British daily *The Guardian* and author of the weekly column *Open door* [9] says when he was ombudsman he was, "...holding an independent position at the newspaper, to collect, review, investigate and promptly respond to the readers' objections, criticism and complaints and, when necessary, to make respective decisions." [10] Ombudsmen do not censor; rather they deal with readers' complaints about articles already published. The same Ian Mayes said that the column in which corrections are made does not indicate a newspaper's mediocrity but instead shows the journalist's desire to make everything correct and qualitative. This enhances the newspaper's credibility. The names of the journalists are not included in the correction because it is not about specific persons but rather about correcting mistakes.

According to some studies in Great Britain, the work of the ombudsman has decreased the number of lawsuits by 30–50% every year. A complaint that used to take more than a month to resolve is now resolved in two or three days. The ombudsman not only listens to readers' complaints but also debates with them if necessary and explains the newspaper's position, in fact taking on the role of a moderator in a public debate on the newspaper's pages.

What qualities does an ombudsman need? Edmund B. Lambeth, former investigative journalist and professor at the Missouri School of Journalism in the USA, believes that the following qualities are necessary:

- in-depth understanding of the journalistic process; vast work experience in the position of journalist or editor; detailed knowledge of journalistic work;
- in-depth understanding of the specifics of the work of the journalistic community;
- a deep interest in people, the ability to listen to them without putting up a protective screen and the ability to be tactful and friendly in all situations;
- strong character able to resist the psychological pressure implied by this type of work. [11]

This is, perhaps, why in a world with tens of thousands of media outlets there are only 100 news ombudsmen.

According to Charles W. Bailey, the former editor of *The Minneapolis Tribune*, the work of ombudsmen does not make them or the editors they work for more popular or more balanced. Their mission is to regain and maintain the readers' respect because that respect will convince the audience to read, to believe, to support and finally to buy the newspaper.

Why Don't We Have An Ombudsman in Moldova?

A plausible response, and in my opinion valid for our reality as well, was given several years ago by Andrei Rihter, the director of the Informational Law Institute of Moscow, Russia. [12]

He identified three basic reasons for the absence of ombudsmen in post-Soviet space. The first is a tendency to reject the past. He used the example of the Soviet press, asserting that to a certain extent it functioned like a readers' ombudsman. For instance, the letters division of the newspaper *Izvestia* had nearly 100 employees in order to comply with the Leninist idea that the people's press had to be a "watchdog" (although one guided from one center either to supervise inefficient officers, as in 1930s, or to unmask "the people's enemies"). In the absence of sociological research (sociology was declared a pseudo-science), the letters received by the newspaper were the only barometer of public opinion and served as arguments for the authorities' actions, including those of the KGB. News-

rooms were obliged by law to register and answer each letter in 30 days at the most.

The authors of the letters often pointed out different kinds of irregularities, and the newsrooms had to forward the letters to those responsible for addressing those irregularities. Thus, responsible officers had to answer to the newsrooms, and the newsrooms had to answer to the citizens. It was a sophisticated, topsy-turvy and surprisingly efficient system that was nonetheless alien to the primary mission of the media. The USSR disappeared and soon thereafter so did the letter divisions; they were not replaced by, for instance, a news ombudsman. In order to establish an ombudsman, it was first necessary to gain experience in self-regulation while re-professionalizing the media.

The second reason in Rihter's opinion is the poor knowledge of the subject. We have taken the absolute freedom of Western media as a model without recognizing that the media can be free only to the extent that it is responsible. We have seen only a part of the equation—freedom—and have forgotten about social responsibility which is ensured by an ombudsman.

The third reason is an economic one. The independence of a media outlet is determined by its financial independence which in turn depends on its audience. Here is the problem in Moldova: a small advertising market cannot support over 700 media outlets—more than in some prosperous Western countries. Hence, the economic independence of the media in our country is also “ensured” by “pecuniary support” from outside.

Of course, there are other reasons as well, and we will speak about one more: the people's trust in the media. In Moldova, this trust is extremely exaggerated and unjustified. Something bizarre is happening. In the rest of the world, the media is losing credibility, but in Moldova it is gaining. Do our citizens really lack the ability to think critically, or, as the most harried in the world, do they not have time to use it? The reason for this phenomenon is still to be discovered, but we already have seen its effect: an unresponsive media. This saddens us. All the reasons listed are dangerous games that in the medium and long terms can have bad consequences both for the media and for society. We need change, and we need it now.

Some Moldovan media outlets have rejected socialist journalism principles and have adopted the values of democratic, socially responsible journalism. Self-regulatory mechanisms have been strengthened especially, for example, at Teleradio-Moldova where there are clear signs that in the past two years it has been recovering its public character and social vocation. Maybe not all basic conditions are in place for the appearance of a news ombudsman, but waiting is not the solution.

Concrete actions must be taken to promote this institution. For this very purpose, for the first time a national conference was held in the country on 11 and 12 July 2011 entitled “An Ombudsman for the Public Broadcaster.” The event was organized by the Broadcasters Association APEL with the support of the media program of the Soros Foundation Moldova. The conference was attended by two European ombudsmen: Dominique Burg from Radio France Internationale and Tarmu Tammerk from the Estonian Public Broadcasting Corporation.

Long, detailed discussions were held at Teleradio-Moldova about an ombudsman including duties and responsibilities, steps in establishing the position, the qualities that an ombudsman should have, remuneration, the internal legal framework (regulations) that guides the ombudsman's work and successful methods and practices for ensuring the ombudsman's independence. The discussions had a pragmatic goal: to establish an ombudsman at Teleradio-Moldova. Both the President of the Board of Observers and the company's management were strongly in favor of instituting such a service, and all the participants in the conference were firm in this regard even though the shape of the future position was not very clearly outlined.

This is normal, however, as there are only two ombudsmen in the world today with identical job descriptions. The essence of the position is the same: the ombudsman must wisely represent the public to the media and must secure justice for those who deserve it thus contributing to maintaining trustworthy relations between journalists and the public. We are hoping that Teleradio-Moldova will become a reference institution for the other media organizations in Moldova, including by hiring an ombudsman.

An ombudsman is welcome wherever the role is understood. From what we know at present, the Association of Independent Press and the Press Council have expressed their intention to establish such a position. Sooner or later, an ombudsman will surely appear. The strongest argument in favor of this is the conviction that only ethical journalism has a future; a news ombudsman plays precisely the role of watching over ethics in journalism.

[1] Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communications — Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Books*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947. P.5.

[2] <http://ijc.md/Publicatii/mlu/autoreglementarea.pdf>

[3] <http://medialaw.ru>

[4] <http://ijc.md/Publicatii/mlu/autoreglementarea.pdf>

[5] Nauman A.C. *News Ombudsmanship: Its History and Rationale // Organization of News Ombudsmen* (June, 1994).

[6] Organization of News Ombudsmen (2004).

[7] www.newsombudsmen.org/nauman2.html

[8] Organization of News Ombudsmen (2004)

[9] <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

[10] <http://www.medialaw.ru/publications/books/cc/00.html>

[11] Edmund B. Lambeth / Committed journalism: an ethic for the profession. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, 242 p.

[12] <http://www.medialaw.ru/selfreg/5/02.htm>.

Ion BUNDUCHI



Journalists participate in the workshop “Demand Dignity in Moldova Campaign.” Chişinău, 25 October 2011.

The Viability of the Television Business in Moldova at Present

Television is undoubtedly the most expensive media business, but at the same time currently in Moldova it is by far the most popular source of information. It is the main source for 70–90% of the population and is viewed daily by 85% of our citizens¹. Obviously, an investment in this business is justified given the impact of television on public opinion.

1. Costs of a Television Station

A television station needs a license to broadcast (except when it is limited to Internet broadcasting), and this costs money. That fee is, however, insignificant compared with operating costs. The greatest expenditures are for staff and equipment. The investment in equipment and sets varies depending on the ambitions of the investor, but we can roughly speak about amounts between US \$50,000 for a station with a small, basic studio and several million dollars for a station with several studios and equipment for live broadcasts. Theoretically, the investment in equipment is made once if we do not take into account the fact that it will depreciate significantly and that breakdowns are inevitable. In order to keep up with new technologies and to maintain competitiveness, it is therefore necessary to periodically modernize it.

Beyond these expenses are broadcasting costs which vary widely depending on the way the signal is transmitted. Stations that broadcast over transmitters and towers enjoy the biggest audiences; they can invest in them or rent them from the state company Radiocomunicații. The costs vary depending on the coverage of the channel but are generally high, reaching tens of millions of lei per year for national coverage. Public station Moldova 1, for instance, cannot afford to broadcast 24 hours a day even though it could do so at its current level of technological development because renting the telecommunication network from Radiocomunicații would be too costly.

With the advent of cable television or IPTV, stations can break into the market by sending their signals via satellite and/or exclusively via cable. Even though broadcasting via satellite is getting cheaper like the cost of other technology, we are still talking about monthly costs of thousands of dollars. Cable is cheaper, but in practice and despite regulations of the Broadcast Coordinating Council (BCC), some cable distributors request fees from local broadcasters. It is known that the biggest cable television company in Chisinau requests \$5000 from

¹ *Public Opinion Barometer*, May 2011, http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/Prezentare_2011-1_ed.pdf

new stations and then requests \$2000 each month. This fee is negotiable and applied selectively.

For a station that produces its own content, the biggest expense is payroll. First of all, a TV program cannot be made by just one person like a print article can be. The number of staff required can vary, but as a rule we need one producer/author, one presenter/reporter, one or two camera operators and one video editor. It may also be necessary to involve producers including a sound producer, a light producer and perhaps a stylist. A one-hour broadcast is thus the work of many people who all must be paid. Depending on its complexity, a TV program could involve up to dozens of specialists. The number of staff is determined by what will be broadcast and for how many hours. Moldovan television stations employ from ten to several hundred employees, and after Publika TV and Jurnal TV entered the market their salaries have increased considerably. They say some professionals are paid several thousand euros per month though of course there are many employees who work for 3000–4000 lei per month.

Rather than producing their own products, a cheaper solution is for stations to buy serials or other ready-made products. Their costs vary from hundreds to hundreds of thousands of dollars per hour. Re-broadcasting a serial from Latin America, for example, could cost \$100–200 an hour; prices could be higher for programs from other countries.

In addition to the above, a television station incurs other costs as well: administrative (office and sales staff, drivers, vehicles), communication (Internet and telephone), subscriptions to various information services (local and international news agencies, weather forecasts) and payments to copyright protection associations and regulatory fees (to BCC, National Agency for Regulations in Electronic Communications and Information Technologies) In short, launching and maintaining a television station is a major investment with very high recurrent costs.

Until 2009, Moldovan television stations produced very little. To avoid incurring costs, they preferred to re-broadcast foreign programs which was a successful business model but which deprived local TV consumers of programming with a local interest. A serious effort was made to change this state of things by introducing legislation requiring stations to produce significant percentages of their own products.

2. Revenues of a Television Station (or Lack Thereof)

The usual revenues of a station come from advertising and sponsorship though some also sell production services (clips, ads, programs on order) and rent studios. There are also programs produced with the support of foreign donors and so-called classified ads (telephone numbers, SMS, paid congratulations). Income from copyrights and related rights is rare.

Overall, advertising is the main source of income, or at least it should be. In Moldova, however, the operations of the vast majority of stations are covered by sponsors. In other words, Moldovan television stations are not businesses. We have one reliable and uncontested sponsor for public station Moldova 1 (the state) and private sponsors (more or less well known) for the other stations. There are also stations that seem to fund themselves and make a profit mainly by selling advertising time instead of their own products. TNT, Pro TV and TV7 would be in this category.

Stations that want to fill their schedules with significant local programs or purchased ones cannot, however, cover even a small part of their costs with advertising. Examples are Publika TV and Jurnal TV. Both are truly Moldovan stations broadcasting 100% of their own or genuinely purchased programming.

There are several reasons why certain stations cannot attract sufficient advertising. One is that Moldovan advertisers rely on AGB Nielsen² data when making decisions about placing ads. The Nielsen system calculates basic peplemeter ratings using electronic devices that show what people whose TV sets have the devices installed in them for a year are watching. The problem is that this company has only about 300 devices, so in certain towns ratings can be based on the preferences of one or two persons. The peplemeter ratings are thus a painful problem for most Moldovan stations. Additional efforts involving independent experts are required to clarify the credibility of the data from this company, especially for stations that do not have national coverage. In addition to the problems with the rating system, the lack of advertising can be attributed to the precarious condition of the economy and to the small market and broadcast area in our small country.

3. What Do We Want in the Moldovan TV Market?

Starting in the 1990s when most frequencies were used only for re-broadcasting and the few local products of private stations were broadcast in Russian, there was a clear demand for 100% local programming mainly in Romanian. This was reflected in the Broadcast Code adopted in 2006 as well as in the broadcast development strategy subsequently adopted by the BCC. So while we would like to have stations that produce local programs of good quality and in sufficient quantity to

meet the needs of viewers for local information, let us list what we have instead.

- We have relevant legislation and strategies to stimulate local production.
- We have a small country with a precarious economy.
- We have restrictive legislation on advertising.
- We have a lot of competition among various companies in the TV market.

With the simultaneous and surprising appearance in the local market of Publika TV and Jurnal TV offering high-quality, 100% original programming, suddenly a level was reached that seemed unachievable in the past 15 years, but another problem surfaced. However great the demand for such stations, they are not viable in the local market. The BCC could have facilitated their development by offering them ground frequencies, but they did not do that. Frequencies have become available from time to time, and others could be withdrawn from the current holders due to their failure to observe the legislation in force, but the BCC preferred not to involve itself and instead passively watched the new televisions face the tough local reality. In despair, Jurnal TV switched from a news-based format to a general one hoping that its audience would grow. However, TV experts expect that the investors will soon give up and that these televisions will close down. The transition to digital ground TV could offer these stations another chance because the multiplexes will mainly be national and competition for them will be fair; however, judging by how fast the authorities move, it seems that this will not happen before 2015.

So on one hand we have an unreceptive BCC, and questionable data from Nielson plus a small country with a precarious economy which on the other hand makes it impossible for television stations to become businesses even if they try to produce something of good quality and quantity. Not only are such stations unprofitable, they can't even begin to cover their costs. Accordingly, we can conclude that at present in Moldova, stations that follow all the rules must be subsidized. In other words, if we have a sponsor, we have Moldovan television, and if we do not have a sponsor, we do not. This is a sad conclusion but it shouldn't worry us because anyone who invests in an unprofitable television station is undoubtedly pursuing other interests as well.

4. Can Legislation Develop TV as a Business?

Normally, a station should recover its costs from advertising, from sponsorships and eventually from the sale of its products. We do not doubt that stations with big audiences manage to do this, but the question arises, what does a big audience mean? Television costs are similar everywhere in the world. The same TV equipment is necessary in Moscow, Bucharest,

2 See <http://www.agbnielsen.net/whereweare/moldova.asp>.

Paris or Chişinău, and the same professionals are necessary though their salaries will vary according to the realities of their local economies. Moldova is a small, poor country, but we also can produce television programs, and we want to do just that. Can the law somehow help? Let us examine the regulations on advertising as that's where the money is.

We have three acts that establish advertising standards: the Law on Advertising³ of 1997, the Broadcast Code⁴ of 2006 (Chapter III) and the European Convention on Cross Border Television⁵ (Convention) in force in Moldova since 1 July 2003. The last one is tough, i.e. full of restrictions, but for the most part, they are justified by virtue of the values promoted and interests pursued. As there are so many rules, they are rather hard to remember and are known only by a very narrow circle of persons directly involved in this area. Meanwhile, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive⁶ of 10 March 2010 appeared in the European Union to regulate advertising, teleshopping and placing products. Unlike the Convention, it is much more permissive. Despite its appearance, however, no attempt has been noticed from the BCC to liberalize the rules for Moldovan broadcasters.

3 Law on Advertising No.1227-XIII of 27 June 1997, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova* no. 67-68/555 of 16 Oct 1997.

4 Broadcast Code of 2006 of the Republic of Moldova No.260-XVI of 27 July 2006, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova* no.131-133/679 of 18 Aug 2006.

5 European Convention on Cross Border Television, adopted in Strasbourg on 5 May 1989, in force in Moldova since 1 July 2003, published in the official edition *International Treaties*, 2006, volume 38, pag.133.

6 Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on coordinating various provisions established by acts having the power of law or administrative acts within the member states on providing audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive)

It is well known that Russia did not signed the Convention because the restrictions it imposed were not suitable at the time. Thus, we can see various programs on the Russian stations, some of which are very popular, that Moldovan broadcasters cannot afford due to the risk of sanctions for violating advertising legislation. In our country, no one has ever wondered the effect a specific advertising provision might have on the viability of local broadcasting. Such provisions have been either observed or ignored but have never been discussed from the perspective of their timeliness. (A small note here: we are not obliged to blindly ratify any and all conventions; we can abstain if we have sound reasons for doing so.)

Paradoxically, the BCC has not started discussions about the necessary measures and solutions to enhance the profitability of broadcasting businesses but is always ready to sanction the broadcaster who advertises a company more than twice during an hour (which is forbidden under the Law on Advertising), or who exceeds the maximum of 12 minutes of advertising per hour.

We must realize that Moldovan broadcasting has reached a new stage of development. Under current conditions, the issue of freedom of expression is not so acute, but the issue of financial survival is which directly affects pluralism and the freedom of expression albeit from a different perspective. Civil society needs to reorient itself from the big topics of the past ten years to new challenges, one of which is identifying ways to have an independent national press that is economically viable. In particular, research and debates on the provisions in the law on advertising that can be excluded without significant damage to society must be initiated. Also, the current system for rating programs must be reviewed in order to determine what can be done to make the data accurate and credible.

Olivia PÎRȚAC

The Political Advertising Game

The sporadic appearance of political advertising in Moldova in the last decade has not drawn too much attention from civil society. Neither ordinary citizens nor politicians have hurried to start discussions about the benefit of this means of communication. From the very beginning, legislators have not shown any interest in regulating it stating instead that the Law on Advertising adopted in 1994 did not refer to political advertising.

I don't think that political advertising was understood at the beginning but was instead accepted as something normal and extremely necessary for the newly independent country or as something lacking seriousness and a future. Deliberately or not, political advertising was left to its fate. It would be easy to justify this negligence by saying that society needs solutions for much more important problems, but still, the phenomenon of political advertising deserves not to be overlooked. Although initially politicians categorically rejected this means of communication asserting it was just a waste of money and would not influence the decisions of the voters, in the end at various time they felt the need to try out this magic wand.

Why has advertising become an indispensable element in all electoral campaigns in Moldova since 1991?

Political advertising also existed during Soviet times although it had a different name and was basically propaganda for communist ideology. The need to develop a new method of advertising in the political sphere in Moldova came with the establishment of the multiparty political system that in turn resulted in the creation of the party press and the diversification of the media. The same principles as in Soviet times, however, governed the party press because it served political power. Many publishers were former members of a political party and propagated the party's message thus assigning their newspapers the role of propaganda platforms.

Political products in independent Moldova were also advertised on radio and TV. Politicians believed in the power of the media, especially since in Soviet times the media was seen as an important factor in the successful political indoctrination of the public by the government. In the transition period after the fall of the Soviet Union, citizens showed a special interest in everything that could be considered new in society. Thus, in the first years of independence, political symbols and messages were easily overlooked during mass meetings, and the population continued to digest long speeches on state-owned and independent media. The main issue was the confrontation

between those who looked for a political renaissance and those who wanted the return of the former regime.

Little by little, however, the position of the public about politicians has been changing. Hopes for rapid transformations and reaching higher living standards have faded away under the pressure of difficult economic conditions. New economic and market influences have influenced not only the political sphere but also other social spheres where an increasingly important role is played by public opinion.

Despite the recent economic (and the political) crisis, party representatives continue to use political advertising to convey their messages in public speeches or in print or audiovisual media during meetings, on the air, in literary and artistic works, caricatures, photographs, posters, leaflets, cartoons or memorabilia. The ads during the electoral campaigns from 1991 to 2009 were pretty complex. Politicians tried to offer as many declarations, arguments, solutions, questions and announcements about themselves and the parties they represented as they could in the brief time allotted for campaigning. In most cases, the text was accompanied by images. Some managed to find the right image for each word or expression while others, especially representatives of small parties, associated text fragments with an image.

Visual communication was more frequent than verbal communication and was used especially at the beginning or end of ads where most of the symbolic elements were placed. The ads were usually accompanied by loud noises to attract the voters' attention and to convince them to make a decision. From 1991 to 2009, images gradually replaced text or text was reduced to a word or two. This method was used to influence voters subconsciously, especially in negative ads.

Political ads generally contain symbolic elements, promises, pleasant words or criticism and especially emphasize the merits of the candidate or leader of the political entity. They typically mention the support for the candidate of ordinary or famous persons and present the candidate as a defender of human rights. They also make calls for national unity and promise support for national minority values as well as national and European values and further encourage or discourage voter participation and stress the candidate's power, presenting him/her in action either as an ordinary citizen or as a super human character.

Promises to protect the values of national minorities were made in the ads of all candidates with few exceptions in the campaigns for local elections of 2003 and 2007. Most in 2007 also focused on Moldova's integration into the European Union. The candidates also tried to draw attention to their ads with optimistic slogans and promises of a beautiful future, but few were successful. Even though they could be easily understood, most were difficult to remember because they contained long sentences that did not synthesize a single idea.

The slogans and the texts were not much influenced by political dogma. Compared with the former ideological approach, the messages tended to have a general or vague character and allowed voters to interpret them as they wished.

Since independence, Moldovan politicians have been trying to use more and more advanced tricks to create a memorable image of themselves for voters. Each candidate in part models his or her advertising message in order to give it an evocative and reasoned character, but in the end they adopt the classical strategy either for the candidate or against the opponent. Messages in favor of the candidate are used not only to encourage voters but also to influence undecided ones by offering information that conveys feelings of pride, fear, honesty or patriotism. Often symbols are used for this purpose, the so-called images with a semantic load that allow politicians to manipulate public opinion.

Among the symbols used by Moldovan politicians in their ads, the following were successful: the heart, the sun, the sickle and the hammer, the rose, the lion and the dove. Voters identify these symbols with a specific political party whether they sympathize with it or not. Politicians also use symbols that do not emphasize their ideological affiliations like the European stars, a bell, the bell tower, the Moldovan flag and the sky. Nothing, however, can be taken for granted as even the most successful symbols sometimes can work for or against a candidate.

Moldovan politicians have taken the first steps in political advertising, adopting ideas and characters recognized around the world. Their images crystallize especially because of how they convey their opinions and also because of their appearance though that is usually considered to be of secondary importance. Candidates of course prefer to use only the positive aspects of their lives in their ads. References to their family lives are very superficial only mentioning that they have families. If there are any problems with their relatives, they prefer to avoid spreading information about them.

What voters learn from ads is not necessarily true

Prior to 2009, political advertising in Moldova primarily used

images with symbolic or invented elements that promised a better future. These were projected images and not cognitive images that could offer the voter useful information for making a decision. In order to promote their political images and to help voters value their potential and their power, Moldovan politicians resorted to presenting their own personalities and features, often in idealized form.

The image of a party has often been made via the image of its leader so voters can transfer identity. The following images have also worked: the leader-president, the temporary people's defender, the long-term people's defender, the fighter, the politician capable of reuniting the country, the politician open to dialogue, the nation's savior, the alliance breaker, the politician who is not capable of understanding his fellow citizens, the traitor, the human rights defender, the honest leader, the national political leader, the reforming leader, the representative of the middle class i.e. "one of us," a good person, good householder and a good family person.

Although the principles of political marketing are in use in our country, the level of professionalism in political communication leaves a lot to be desired. For example, in western countries, political advertising campaigns are not considered efficient when they are oriented toward promoting the image of a party, while in Moldova this is still a frequent reality, although trends for carrying out image campaigns for politicians can be noticed here too. Political marketing principles must be carefully applied if we want to keep the country democratic because when the political system is more and more directed by marketing, there is a danger of favoring images over essence, political persons over society's requirements and sound bites over collective dialog.

As researchers say, political advertising as a means of communication aims at influencing people's concepts about political issues and about politicians. Political advertising is always developed for one purpose: to convince. During election campaigns, images of the candidates stand apart from their political messages and the voters' opinions about these messages. Voting then takes place taking into account the political images that are created from the public's concepts, positions and feelings.

From the consumer's point of view, understanding the essence of voting highlights the real importance of the electoral process. Political advertising, however, does not offer the voter a clear vision about the country's future but simply gives the candidate the possibility to say and do everything possible to be elected. We can deduce that political advertising does not inform Moldovan society about the options citizens have as consumers of political products but rather gives priority to politicians to serve their personal needs.

Building trust and informing voters in this instance is undoubtedly under the control of politicians and not of the media. In fact, advertising is considered to be the only means of mass communication over which politicians have full control. Within the limits of the legal framework and of principles of fair play, the producers of political advertising in Moldova are free to say what they like, to change journalists' priorities, to emphasize the positive elements of their clients and to emphasize the weaknesses of their opponents.

The practice of influencing voting decisions through political advertising can be questioned because the ads are of interest to voters especially if they are entertaining. The results of the survey conducted in Moldova one week before the parliamentary elections of 6 March 2005 proved that voters did not take political advertising seriously because they did not consider it an adequate source of information. They instead claimed that political advertising can manipulate public opinion because it contains false information, it is hard to understand, it is frivolous or it is extremely critical.

It appears that politicians' appeals to voters are a game at the end of which the voters must accept what is suggested to them: to vote for the candidate. Most of the candidates are more interested in obtaining votes than in investing in the future, i.e., they don't spend their time and money to create a stable

platform for their supporters. We thus get a situation in which for various reasons society cannot have stable values. At the same time, many of the discussions in the extremely politicized and polarized media impede examining the experience of the politicians and their parties in detail.

We could conclude that political advertising in Moldova remains on vulnerable ground. Some ads disfavor politicians because they contain fragmented and incomplete information. Communication between candidates and voters through political advertising also becomes difficult due to the manner of presentation and to the coding of information. Furthermore, many politicians do not manage to find the right key to unlock voter interest. Most of the time, the expected effect is not achieved because political advertising usually does not engender strong positive or negative feelings.

Political advertising in Moldova could disappear as quietly as it appeared, or it could evolve. Obviously, things must change if the latter is to happen. If before voting for one candidate or another citizens would make more persevering efforts to be informed about the programs they offer to improve their living conditions in the near future, they would undoubtedly have a greater chance of not letting themselves be convinced by the messages of deceitful ads.

Rodica SOCOLOV



Participants in the training "Death Sentence versus Democratic Society Values." Chişinău, 18 November.

Promoting Personal and Institutional Images Case Study: Facebook vs. Odnoklassniki

In a world with over seven billion people, it is more and more difficult to find one's place. People want to declare who they are, but not all succeed in doing so. In this study, we take one more step and analyze the culture of using online social networks.

Social Network vs. Online Social Network

The term *social network* has become very popular in recent years, and although it seems to be a new phenomenon - the result of our fast-paced lifestyles - it is really only a new form of an old idea. A social network is the platform and the environment in which all social relations that are normally established among people take place; it is also possible to create one on the web. The online platform offers the possibility to transform a limited social network into an unlimited one.

A comprehensive definition of what a social network is was presented in the article "Social Networks: Definition, History and Research" in the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*: "Social networks are Internet-based services that allow individuals (1) to build a public or semi-public profile in a restricted system; (2) to select a list of other users with whom to maintain relations; (3) to see his own list of connections and to have access to the lists of other system users."¹

Your Profile - Your Business Card on the Internet

The profile in any online social network expresses just who the individual is. Opinions, photographs, notes and comments all help to create an image. Your name is your signature. To work as part of a team, we must show our potential and prove who we are. If social networking offers us this opportunity, why not use it strategically? We all believe we are important, and we want to share how we believe we are better or how we know how to do something better than others. A personal image is not, however, only what we want it to be nor is it based only on the elements we carefully select to put us in favorable light. It is rather the sum of all the impressions that others have of us.

There are a number of principles underlying the efficiency and growing popularity of online social networks. First is people's desire to be important, to be appreciated for their true value followed by the desire to be like everyone else. In his book *How*

To Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie says that each individual is interested first of all in his or herself. The individual's desire to be important was identified by Sigmund Freud as the most important human need in Abraham Maslow's Pyramid. In his book *Learning How to Learn*, the Indian writer and philosopher Idries Shah says there is also the need to pay active attention. We can pay, receive or share attention depending on the importance of the people and things around us.

I have mentioned these ideas because social networking makes it possible, facilitates and stimulates expressing personal identity. Rating systems whether they be stars, likes, grades, commentaries on pictures and ideas or any other form are designed to fulfill the desire of people to be appreciated by and interesting to others for what they have to say and who they are.

Registering on a social networking website is not based only on curiosity. It is also our desire to publicize ourselves, to show others that we exist and how interesting and original we can be. Each social network has its specifics. What unites them all is the fact that they offer visibility to persons, events and institutions.

In addition, most of these websites have become gateways to others. This phenomenon has two aspects. The positive one is that it is not necessary to access every site to find information - it finds us. The negative one is that the spectrum of knowledge and information to which we have access is reduced so that we form our opinions and perceptions based on what reaches us and not on all the information available.

A leader in a social network work is a person who has managed to bring together more friends than others have and who thus benefits from more attention. A person can become a leader by supplying information and opinions about what is happening in the government, by counseling a party leader or by working for a controversial TV station. One person becomes a leader thanks to the multiple hits on his/her posting while another becomes one thanks to objective opinions expressed on a blog. Following trends established by network leaders, we can forecast the reactions of the others to events in society.

The media are not the only generators of information anymore because users of social networks are getting more and more

¹ Boyd, D.M., Ellison, N.B. Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship, in *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, nr. 13 (1), art. 11, 2007, [citat 12.11.2010] at <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

involved. They post video clips and pictures, and they write notes about events they have attended, witnessed or organized. The level of interest in certain subjects and their importance can be estimated by the number of postings on a topic on a social network.

Civic education campaigns were truly successful in the elections of November 2010. Among the most popular ones were those organized by CNTM - *We matter, so we vote* -, the National Democratic Institute and the Central Electoral Commission (CEC). A number of video ads featuring Valera also appeared on Facebook and YouTube. Ads from the series "You Still Have Time" and those by the CEC with the slogan "People, vote!"² were also disseminated on these sites.

Although they offer free advertising, social networks were ignored for a long time by politicians and by the electoral staff of parties. When social networks first appeared in Moldova, most politicians denied constructing the profiles with their names. The media published news about friendly relations between candidates with opposing political views and those in the opposition. In contrast, today a profile on a social network brings political leaders closer to the younger generation and helps them understand their concerns and interests. Only in the campaign of 28 November 2010 did I notice a greater presence of candidates on these sites.

Social networks increase the audience for bloggers and for other types of websites. Most visitors to a website or blog come from social networks, especially from Facebook. The website of the campaign *Hai, Moldova!* - www.hai.md - had the most hits on 15 April 2011, a day before "National Cleaning Day" (16 April 2011). Monitoring showed that over 60% of those visitors accessed the website from Facebook, 7% from Odnoklassniki and 10% from torrentsmd.com. Others came from websites that published news or articles about *Hai, Moldova!* or that posted the banner of the campaign, in other words, from advertising.

Social networks compile relevant articles and information, and users choose what to read. I made an experiment in this regard with the website bloguvern.md, and I noticed that the articles published only on the website in the first months after its launch brought a smaller number of visitors compared with those posted on Facebook. The difference was 90% in favor of text that also had references on Facebook.

The role of social networks should neither be ignored nor exaggerated. The popularity of a person, idea, institution or campaign is maintained by its content and capacity to extend

2 CEC urges the electorate to vote with the sad song "People, people..." [quoted 10 Nov 2010]. Available at <<http://www.azi.md/ro/story/14407>>

itself, to go beyond the limited and virtual framework of the social network. Ideas must be promoted through other media also to have continuity and to be supported by coherent messages and an efficient, long-term communication strategy. The public moves very easily from one idea to the next, especially when no commitment is involved. Those initiatives that continue, that become part of real life and that bring benefits of any kind (experiences, ideas, money or relationships) are successful.

According to www.wikipedia.org, there are 200 active social websites in the world today. The most popular ones judging from the number of pages they post according to website www.alexa.com are Facebook (2nd in the top 500 most-visited sites in the world), Twitter (9th) and LinkedIn (17th)³. The same website shows that the most popular social network in Moldova is Odnoklassniki which ranks 4th in the sites most accessed by Moldovans. The second is Facebook (6th), followed by Vkontakte (14th).⁴

Facebook vs. Odnoklassniki

Taking Moldovan preferences into account, we made a comparative study of Facebook and Odnoklassniki with respect to available tools and means of sharing profiles. These two websites have the highest number of Moldovan visitors and have the most information about the work or life of a person and best capture the Moldovan sense of identity.

Facebook appeared in February 2004 on the campus of Harvard University. Its creator is Mark Zuckerberg who was a student when he started it. In September 2011, Facebook registered 759 million users worldwide.⁵ This means that every tenth person in the world has an account on this site and that 4.73% of the Earth's population is on Facebook. In Moldova, 204,000 users were registered on Facebook⁶ as of 23 Sept 2011; 56% were women. Facebook is especially popular with people aged 18 to 24 (39%), followed by those aged 25 to 34 (30%). Currently in Moldova every 16th person has an account on Facebook. These data place Moldova at 119th by the number of users. The top three countries on this list are USA, Indonesia and India. Note, however, that the data change periodically and are valid for a very short period of time.

Facebook has successfully promoted itself on all continents while Odnoklassniki has limited itself for the time being to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. This website was created by Albert Popkov, a Russian programmer. He started Odnoklassniki with his own funds as a hobby and

3 *Top Sites*. [as of 13 March 2011] at <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>

4 *Top sites in Moldova*. [as of 13 March 2011] on the Internet at <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/MD>>

5 <http://www.socialbakers.com/>

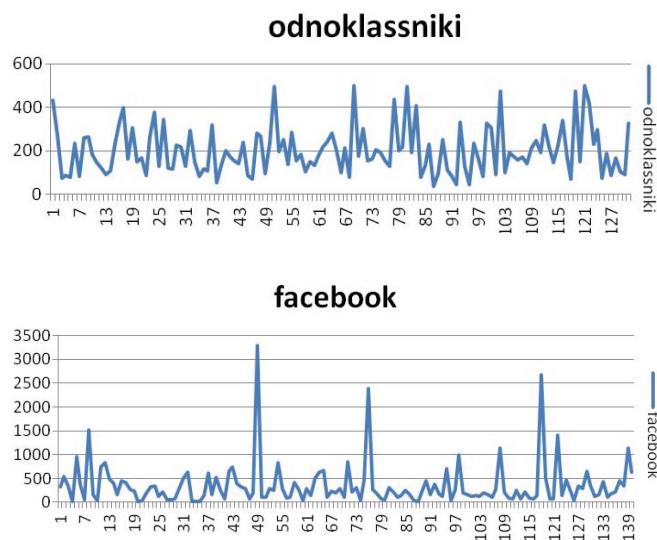
6 <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/moldova>

worked on it in his free time. In March 2006, the site was launched as a social network to find school and university mates, but in the past two years it has registered as many as 9 million users.

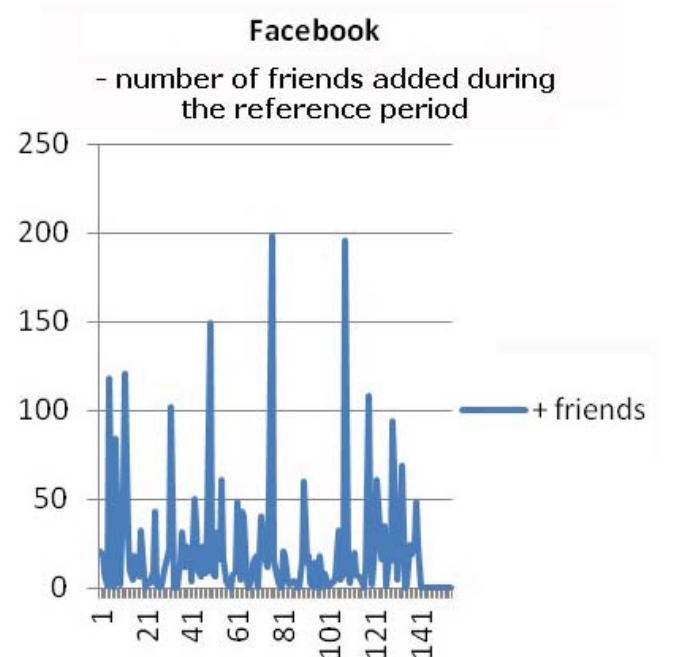
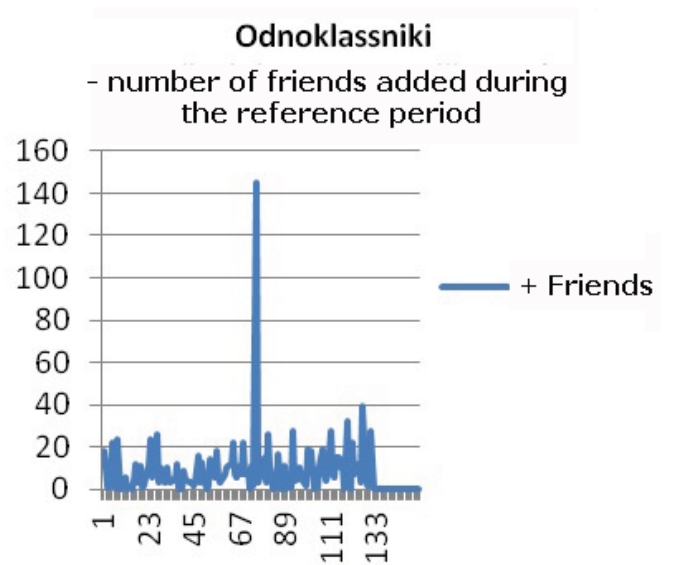
According to data provided by Promo Plus, the company in charge of posting advertising on odnoklassniki.ru, in April 2011 this site registered 1 million Moldovan users. Disaggregating the data by age showed that most (37%) were in the 18 to 24 age group and were both men and women. The age group over 45, which is the smallest but still numerous enough, accounted for 10% of Moldova’s membership on this site.

In addition to this information, we offer the results of quantitative and qualitative research conducted from 1 to 28 February 2011 on a sample of 140 persons registered on Facebook and 131 persons registered on Odnoklassniki which is precisely the number of friends I had at the time of the study. As each of the two sites has its own system for registering, as a basis for comparison we used elements similar in form, essence and content and will describe the impact of each on the image of the person or institution.

Facebook, users have an average of 353 friends while on Odnoklassniki the average is 202



You can note from these graphs that on Odnoklassniki users in general have fewer friends but that the base is stable and varies between 39 and 300 persons whereas the Facebook diagram is less uniform. Although the highest number of friends there is 3,301, we can see that there are only 7 persons with more than 1,000 friends and that most users have between 10 and 600.



Another indicator of activity on social sites is the number of friends added. On Facebook in February, users added an average of 26 friends while on Odnoklassniki the average was 11. While this will change depending on users’ needs to ensure their acceptance, taken as a whole the data enable us to state that Facebook facilitates socializing while Odnoklassniki focuses more on communication among people who already know each other, i.e., it has more features characteristic of a local social network.

Your profile is one of the main elements for identifying you on

social sites. The picture we choose to post is an integral part of what we are or want to be - of our image. I have studied this aspect from quantitative and qualitative points of view. We will start with the quantitative.

During the reference period, Facebook users in the sample changed their profile pictures four times on average, uploaded five pictures and were tagged in three pictures. On Odnoklassniki, on the other hand, users uploaded an average of three pictures, were tagged in three pictures and changed their profile pictures six times. So while Facebook users uploaded more pictures, Odnoklassniki users updated their profile pictures twice as often.

Social network	Pictures uploaded	Tagged someone	Changed profile picture
Facebook	5	3	4
Odnoklassniki	3	3	6

Pictures can create an image of a user that does not always correspond to reality, and while most pictures posted on social networks follow generally accepted standards, there are cases of pictures that do not. During the election campaign of November 2010, one such picture attracted the attention of many social network users. It was a picture with a fancy border of Marian Lupu that he took of himself in the bathroom mirror with his mobile with his torso bare. The newspaper *Jurnal de Chişinău* published it in an article about election technology.⁷ Posting pictures taken in the bathroom mirror with a mobile which started on the whim of a public person thus became an amusing pastime for many others.

One means of communicating and promoting yourself on social networks is to post your status and update it. This displays people's ability to express ideas in a few words, to communicate something and to express themselves in writing. Posting your status reveals not only your writing style but also your knowledge of Romanian and grammar.

According to my study, in February Facebook users posted status updates an average of 15 times compared with 4 times for Odnoklassniki. In both cases, the number was directly proportional to the number of friends. On Odnoklassniki, the person with the highest number of friends (500) also posted the most updates (19 times) as did the person with the highest number of friends on Facebook (3,301), who posted 241 updates. The big difference is due to the specifics of the sites. Facebook encourages posting opinions in different forms whereas Odnoklassniki has developed a system for assessing

⁷ Corobceanu, Svetlana, „Electorală cu semințe de pătrunjel și fete îmbrăcate suma”, in *Jurnal de Chişinău*, no. 86 (1 000), 23 November 2010, p. 16.

opinions and is less interested in generating and expressing personal ideas.

The links to sites outside the networks that users find and share are indicative of their interests and of what seems normal and nice to them or what they consider absurd and unattractive. Links can identify musical preferences, political affiliations or the level of education of the person who posted them. The average number of links posted on Facebook in February was 21, 13 of which were accompanied by comments, while on Odnoklassniki the average was 2. Posting links from outside the network helps to popularize them and is interesting from a promotional point of view. Links are not considered spam because they are inoffensive unlike ordinary advertising.

Monitoring revealed that Facebook users shared an average of 9 links within the network and that Odnoklassniki users shared 11. We can therefore conclude that Odnoklassniki does not encourage sharing personal ideas and views by finding and posting outside links but instead encourages conformity unlike the freedom of expression promoted and supported by Facebook.

Liking (joining) a Facebook page is a way to express one's preferences and interests and to define one's self. In February, the persons I studied joined an average of six pages per user; the record was set by a person who joined 48 pages that month. Assuming that many of the page topics on Odnoklassniki are similar to those on Facebook, a comparison is possible. Odnoklassniki users joined an average of three pages in February, half the number joined by Facebook users.

Pages can express solidarity and sympathy. On 10 April 2010 when Poland's political elite headed by Lech Kaczynski and his wife Maria died in an airplane crash in Smolensk, Facebook users in Moldova created a solidarity page to express their sympathy and immediately posted all the information they could find including pictures, details and official and unofficial reports. For two or three days, the “Sympathy for the Polish People” page brought together nearly 1,500 supporters, and another page created by Moldovans during the same period—Poland, we are with you. Please have our condolences!—brought together over 3,500 users. The Polish Ambassador to Moldova later sent a message to Moldovan Facebook users thanking them for their support.

From the point of view of communication, Facebook provides free public relations that if approached correctly offers only benefits. Unlike other forms of public relations when a company pays to publish information or sponsors events of general interest to reach its target audience, the media factor is not so apparent on social networks. We found that many institutions did not create a page but instead created a profile

like an ordinary person would. We think it is more efficient for a commercial entity to have a page as it is more accessible, joining it is simpler and traffic will be higher. In addition, ordinary users have reservations about adding TV stations, publishing houses or other institutions to their friends list as they don't know who is behind the profile, and there are no safeguards for personal data. On a page, the administrator cannot view the profiles of those who liked it (fans) and can only invite them to events and see their names or profile pictures and any other data that the user has posted to be viewed by others.

Creating pages on Facebook and other networks that allow it is becoming increasingly popular with media outlets in Moldova and in the rest of the world. Why do these outlets need a channel of communication if they themselves are channels? Facebook allows them to post links and news from their websites, for example, pages from the newspapers *Adevărul* and *Timpul* or those of *Jurnal de Chişinău* or *Jurnal TV*. They post links with the titles of the stories and when the links are accessed readers are transferred to their websites and read the story in full. Although this does not increase sales, it does enhance the publication's popularity, and the more visitors to the site, the greater the chance of attracting advertising at an advantageous price. Today more and more people prefer to get their information from the Internet, and social networks are like traffic signs showing what is interesting and deserves attention. There is even a slogan describing this phenomenon: "If it has not appeared on Facebook, then it is not important."

There are also pages that are purely for entertainment. At the end of November 2010, a page appeared with the name "I drink tea" that brought together around 2,600 fans. They were encouraged to write about their tea preferences and what they liked to have with their tea. The page "Songs Free of Charge" was created in summer of 2011 and has over 1,500 fans. Instead of sharing links that only their friends can see, fans instead post them on this site with a dedication thereby creating a high-quality music collection to which each member has easy access.

Another form of public relations more common on Facebook is announcing events using a standard structure regardless of its scope. Facebook asks, "What are you planning?" The answer is the first step in publicizing the event, and users then indicate whether or not they plan to attend. The advantage is that the organizer will be able to estimate how popular the event will be though not all who say they will come will actually do so. In any case, posting an event page enhances the event's importance. An example is the flashmob we organized with volunteers as part of a civic education campaign in Soroca in November 2010. The title was "Youth Conquers the Fortress." Although only a few of those who had agreed to participate

came to the fortress, their virtual presence enhanced the importance of the flashmob.

One of the most original events I saw while doing my research on Facebook was a birthday party called "Loading 30%." The organizer invited over 130 persons. In the description, he presented the agenda for the party, the time, preferred attire and the present expected (a book). In this case, a "yes" was a commitment while a "no" required an explanation that guests had to write on the event page or send directly to the organizer. Explanations for "maybe attending" were amusing but plausible. The party took place in February 2011 and was attended by over 100 guests. In addition to the Facebook page, the organizer also called his guests a day before the event, and four days ahead of it he sent invitations by email with the logo of the party. Thus, announcing events on Facebook not only helps with organizing them but also helps to keep public/guests up-to-date and encourages them to RSVP.

The event "Boring. Break IT" organized by TedxChişinău in Moldova on 7 May 2011 was the first public event of its kind created on Facebook in the country. The description listed the speakers and presented information about the organizing institution (its website) and the conditions for attendance. Would-be participants had to register on a website and answer several questions. Participants were then selected and invitations were sent to them by email. Facebook thus offered everything necessary to create the event. The room was full even though attendance was not free.

Odnoklassniki also offered a unique event in 2009 when users invited each other to have a cup of coffee. After they accepted, a cup of Jacobs coffee appeared in the bottom left-hand corner of their profile pictures. The campaign had an impact not only because it was the first of its kind but also because it proved people were open to communicating. Accepting an invitation to drink coffee was not interpreted as advertising but as additional proof of the desire to strengthen relations among friends.

Based on this study, we can identify two preferences of Moldovan social network users. The first is to present themselves in a positive light, convincing relatives and friends that they are well. For many users, this is the only way to find out in pictures and messages what their relatives abroad are doing. Others find their former classmates and reconnect with them regardless of where they are or how often they have communicated in the past. This type of communication is typical of Odnoklassniki users. Facebook users, on the other hand, are typically people who have gone abroad either to study or to work and are very computer literate and good at expressing themselves electronically. They prefer communicating on this social network as it is quite informal so even friendships

between managers and their staff are possible because this site supports cooperation and stimulates socializing at various levels.

Moldovans choose between these two social networks depending on their needs. The popularity of Odnoklassniki has grown due to its capacity to satisfy users' curiosity. People register to see how their neighbors, friends, former colleagues or relatives abroad are doing and to communicate with them. In contrast, Facebook creates a favorable environment for socializing and expressing opinions, helps promote ideas and intellectual capacity and pays less attention to the physical appearance and living standards of users.

Social networks in Moldova have not been used to their full

capacity yet. While some personal events are promoted, most users see them as only a means for posting advertising. With one million Moldovan users spending time on Odnoklassniki and 200,000 registered on Facebook, these sites are currently the most sought after and visible way to promote people, companies or products.

Social networks in the author's opinion offer a way to observe human behavior from a psychological point of view as well as a means to further develop information technology, mass media, communication, marketing and social sciences. This study is only the start of research that can be extended to election campaigns or institutions or to marketing and advertising techniques.

Tatiana CASTRAȘAN

The Logos-Press Business Model: Inexorable Entrepreneurship

This November the weekly publication *Ekonomiceskoie obozrenie Logos-Press* will turn 21. *Logos-Press* was one of the first private publications in Moldova and at the same time was a pioneer in a new trend in local journalism—the specialized press, in this case for businesspeople.

In Moldova's emerging economy, this was a very important and necessary step. In the early years of independence, *Logos-Press* was a messenger bringing new economic ideas and solutions. The newspaper has helped public officials and businesspeople learn about new realities and trends in economics and even new economic terms. In its first year of operation, the newspaper actively participated in analyzing legislation, developing a new regulatory framework for the economy and offering explanations of market mechanisms. As such, *Logos-Press* rapidly became the handbook for all serious businesspeople, company managers, accountants and public officials. That's when the rather ambitious but at the time accurate slogan appeared: "We are read; we matter!"

Many analysts and experts have wondered what the secret of success of this publication is and what has attracted the attention of readers and the respect of Moldovan businesspeople for over 20 years. The answer seems to be simple and obvious. Democracy and freedom of expression have contributed to the creation of various media organizations, many of which have declared themselves to be "independent," but in reality very few are genuinely financially and politically independent, impartial and unbiased; *Ekonomiceskoie obozrenie Logos-Press* is definitely one of them. The main characteristics of the publication—and the reason it is so widely respected—are impartial coverage of the most current issues in the country and the obvious distance from all political groups and ruling bodies.

Ask any journalists or editors if they wished to be fully independent and serve only their profession and not anyone else's interests. The answer will surely be affirmative, but later you will certainly hear something like, "It is unrealistic for something like that to happen in Moldova," followed by a number of well-known arguments such as the underdeveloped advertising market; the poverty of a population that does not feel like reading; competition from television and Internet in gaining the readers' interest and increasing circulation and so on. For the most part, such statements are true, but if you want to you can find many counter arguments. According to the most careful estimates, the advertising market in Moldova

is about 30–40 million euros a year. While modest, this is enough to cover the financial costs of a dozen quality newspapers and a similar number of TV and radio stations. The same can be said of the other arguments related to the "conditions in Moldova."

This brings up the well-known dilemma: which came first, the chicken or the egg? For starts, you must offer readers a good, useful and interesting product and only after that demand their attention. The same is true for money from advertisers. In Moldova, however, commitments to and relations with the boulevard press and sensational journalism are justified by citing a lack of money and the need to attract the public's attention. Readers do not, however, fall easily into this trap.

The positioning of *Logos-Press* as an independent and impartial supplier of information has been the basis of the newspaper's prosperity. Readers and advertisers have come to trust this publication despite the fact that in the early years its primary resource was the enthusiasm of people united around the idea. They worked for a long time to earn their credibility and reputation, patiently waiting for the crucial moment when their brand would work for them.

Conceptually, the secret of the success of the business model of *Logos-Press* is simple and coherent: correctly identifying an information niche, working painstakingly to gain the readers' trust based on professionalism and fairness and selecting and training staff capable of presenting the most difficult economic phenomena in an interesting and accessible manner. A separate article or even a PhD thesis could be written on each of these components—how to choose a niche correctly, what one should take into account, what are the methods used to gain the readers' trust or how to work with staff—but each publication chooses its own marketing strategy and has its own recipe for success. Instead, I will try to explain in detail the distinctive characteristics and work style at *Logos-Press* as they have to a great extent determined the success of its business model.

Specializing as a weekly economic publication: The positioning of the newspaper in this market segment is advantageous but also implies a certain risk. The advantages are due to the fact that *Logos-Press* from the very beginning identified its potential readers and offered them exactly the information they needed. These are the most progressive representatives of the business community, company managers, accountants and

public officials. In addition, the format of a weekly edition guarantees an in-depth and detailed approach to current issues in the Moldovan economy as well as an analysis of the phenomena taking place.

Unfortunately, most Moldovan newspapers limit their coverage of economic issues to statistics and short news items. Analytical journalism in general and economic analysis in particular are areas that have only started to develop; hence, *Logos-Press* for a long time has been the only supplier of analytical information on economic issues, and this has contributed to maintaining its readership. On the other hand, the average reader does not feel the need to read the paper on a daily basis which reduces the growth potential of its circulation and accordingly, the possibility to increase its revenues. This is the risk.

Specialized journalists and creative newsroom organization: The editorial policy of most social-political newspapers in Moldova (and of the broadcast media too) depends on the event covered, so 70–80% of these publications are filled with news and reports from various press conferences, seminars or meetings or with public statements of officials or party leaders. In addition, journalists frequently are randomly assigned to topics based on what is happening at the moment regardless of whether or not they regularly write about those issues.

In this context, *Logos-Press* takes a totally different approach. The paper has regular columns, and journalists work according to a plan coordinated in advance; changes are allowed only in exceptional cases. As a rule, events do not serve as an excuse to write a detailed report or to repeat statements made but are instead used only as information for an in-depth analysis and detailed study of the issues. Only in *Logos-Press* can readers count on finding columns like “The Art of Winemaking,” “The Securities Market,” “Consumers Rights” or “Foreign Economic Relations” in each issue regardless of whether an event has taken place in that area during the week or not.

This principle for organizing the newsroom enables journalists to always be up-to-date, to know their subjects as professionals, to have reliable sources of information and to be able to present various opinions from a specialist’s point of view. In addition, specializing allows journalists to follow economic trends and processes and not get sidetracked by covering unrelated events. *Logos-Press* readers know their favorite columns and are always sure to find the information they need. It is rare for readers to not find articles by their favorite authors even if they are sick or away on assignment. (The Internet has made this practice widespread but it was common at *Logos-Press* 10 or 15 years ago). This is especially important taking into account that just one journalist is responsible for each column.

The special annex (part II): This is where the most important legal acts and their explanations are published which is important for businesspeople and sometimes for public officials too. A rather large number of subscribers remain dedicated to the newspaper thanks to this supplement. During the 2008 crisis, sometimes both parts of the newspaper were combined in the main edition which is something that has been done before.

The column “Exclusively *Logos-Press*”: Here readers find comments on major international political and economic events by world famous scientists, economists, politicians and officials of international organizations including Nobel laureates and heads of state. These items are prepared as part of the Project Syndicate, in which the publication has participated since its creation.

Advertising: This important component contributes to ensuring the financial stability of *Logos-Press* as it is its main source of income and guarantees the profitability of the publication and its progress. It is therefore a priority in editorial policy. Everything is interdependent in journalism. The quality and professionalism of journalists enhance the readers’ interest and increases the publication’s circulation. This in turn has a direct impact on attracting the attention of advertisers. The reputation of *Logos-Press* brings in the most important advertisers because its target audience is clearly defined and because the newspaper enjoys consumer trust. Although it does not have the highest circulation in Moldova, at approximately 10,000 copies, it is still impressive for a newspaper specializing in business.

There are negative factors in the advertising market in Moldova, namely selling ads below cost to undercut competition (dumping) and ignoring elementary standards of corporate solidarity. We have already noted that very few newspapers and magazines operate as independent media businesses, but the party or “pocket” press that belongs to magnates and financial groups still tries to obtain outside funding.

With regular funding from their sponsors, these publications often perceive advertising as a secondary business. In such cases the price of advertising is more or less irrelevant and bargaining is possible. Often after reading the advertising pricelist, the clients of *Logos-Press* cannot hide their surprise: “Why are you so expensive? In newspaper x or y, advertising costs ...” and they name prices that are sometimes five to seven times lower. Dumping of course has a strong negative impact on newspapers that have to fund themselves. In addition, there are a number of advertising publications distributed free of charge to the offices of business companies and the mail boxes of Chisinau’s residents. One of the advantages of such publications is their high circulation while another is their low price

for advertising space. It is very hard to compete with them and with papers that practice dumping. *Ekonomiceskoie obozrenie Logos-Press* is therefore always in search of ways to convince potential advertisers to post their ads in the weekly.

In short, the work of *Logos-Press* is not anything out of the

ordinary; rather, from the very beginning, it was organized according to the generally accepted standards of professional journalism and of a profitable business. The newspaper is not sold as a product made up of several sheets of paper; instead it offers the information its readers need. This is the key to its success.

Dmitrii CALAC



Laureates of Award Gala "Ten Journalists of the Year," 17th edition. Chișinău, 15 December 2011.

The Territorial Administrative Unit Gagauz Yeri Needs a Fair and Interesting Press

At present, ten newspapers are published in the Territorial Administrative Unit (TAU) Gagauz Yeri; six of them appear regularly and the others are published at random depending on the political situation in the region.

Most of the publications, however, are funded from the public budget. These are the regional newspaper *Vesti Gagauzii*, the district publications *Znamea* (Ceadăr-Lunga) and *Panorama* (Vulcănești) and the municipal newspaper *Capitala* (Comrat). Obviously, all of them must cover the events supported by those who fund them.

The weekly *Vesti Gagauzii* with a circulation of about 4000 has been published since 1996 and was founded by the People's Assembly of the TAU Gagauz Yeri. The editor-in-chief of the publication himself, Vladimir Marinov, recognizes that the newspaper reflects more the position of the People's Assembly and less that of the executive branch that many times does not share the same point of view. The situation is similar at the municipal newspaper *Stolița* which covers the personal opinion of Mayor of Comrat Nicolai Dudoglo and neglects the opinions and suggestions of the council members who approved the funding for this publication from the municipal budget.

Of the ten papers, three are considered "private": *Ayin Achyk*, *Edinaia Gagauzia* and *Focusî nedeli* which has recently appeared in kiosks and post offices. The founder of the first publication, Liubovi Kasim, is also the manager of a local TV station. *Ayin Achyk* is four pages with a circulation of 1,100 and has been in existence for three and a half years. This newspaper in general covers the most important events in the district of Ceadăr-Lunga, repeats TV topics, publishes entertainment stories and has an advertising page. In the opinion of local journalists, *Ayin Achyk* is reasonably fair in its coverage.

We did not manage to find out who the founder of the second newspaper is. One of the journalists who works for *Edinaia Gagauzia* told us, "De facto, it's the body of a civic movement but de jure it belongs to a commercial company," but the journalist couldn't find out what company that is. As a matter of fact, the readers do not care who the newspaper's founder is. For them it's more important to search for interesting information as *Edinaia Gagauzia* addresses a political audience even when it analyzes social or cultural subjects. This "private" newspaper is far from being fair, and it is not very likely to be considered interesting.

Also, it is unlikely that *Focusî nedeli*, previously called *Achyk Gez*, could qualify as an independent and fair publication. Although we haven't managed to find out who founded the news-paper, everyone knows that the publication is subsidized by the Communists Party of Moldova and covers virtually the same events as the other publications but from the point of view of that political entity.

Natalia Gazarean, director of the post offices in the districts of Comrat and Vulcănești, says that one can read anything in the regional newspapers but never anything of interest to the local population. Proof of this is first of all in the level of subscriptions. Two years ago the post office had subscriptions amounting to more than 1,500,000 lei, but currently they are half that amount. The publications that were in vogue two years ago - *Stolița*, *Vesti Gagauzii*, *Edinaia Gagauzia* - now have many fewer subscribers, and most of them are either pensioners or administrative institutions.

"Sometimes I open these three newspapers and see the same information only expressed in different words, and I don't find it interesting to read all of them unless I want to compare journalistic styles. As a result, subscriptions to local publications have been dropped," Ms Gazarean said. "Găgăuzia needs a newspaper that covers not only political events in the region and the country but also those from villages stressing the lives of people in the countryside, of farmers. There should be a newspaper with a different approach; it must be interesting, looked for and read," she concluded.

Since there is no publication in Găgăuzia that truly satisfies the interests of media consumers, the population prefers to read the national or the Russian press. For example, there is stable demand for the newspapers *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, *Argumenti i Fakti*, *Trud* and *Nezavisimaia Moldova*. Another reason for the decrease in the number of subscribers is the reorientation of readers from hard reading to soft reading. The Internet enjoys increased interest; there people can find soft issues from many newspapers or other information of public interest. The population prefers this also due to the fact that the monthly subscription to the Internet is relatively cheaper than that for newspapers.

Stepan Piron, Director of the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) of Gagauz Yeri, thinks that it is the high number of electronic publications in Găgăuzia that is the main reason that there is no local interest in print media in the region,

though the digital transmission of information compared with analog is not limited only to the Internet. From a financial point of view, it is more profitable today to present an event on TV, radio or online than to publish it in a newspaper, Mr. Piron thinks. Thus, after writing their stories, many journalists prefer to publish them online and on several websites.

He agrees that local newspapers funded from local or regional budgets publish almost the same items and don't try to raise the interest of readers by offering them diverse information. In general they write about the activities of local and regional authorities and never about what would interest villagers, i.e. subjects of local public interest. Moreover, the publications take a lot of information from the Internet, and this, he thinks, is the biggest problem. He also thinks it is time to publish a newspaper that would serve the interests of the target audience based on analyses and research on what people want.

In Găgăuzia, the first attempts to create a private, independent newspaper were made in 2001 when two issues of *Novây Vzglead* were published with a circulation of 10,000. The founder of the newspaper was Mr Piron himself, and he says he realized after starting that business that it was not going to work because the region was not developed enough to support a profitable newspaper. "I realized that the promotional stage for a newspaper lasts too long. After calculating the costs of publishing two issues I understood that I would have to spend at least 100,000 lei per year to reach my initial goal. Then I tried to attract donors. I explained to them that I didn't pursue any commercial interest and that I needed at least partial support for a year until the newspaper could cover its costs. No one responded, and it was beyond my means to go on by myself."

Later, attempts to create an independent, private newspaper were made by others, but due to financial and political circumstances they were not successful. Some of these publications still appear but only occasionally.

A private newspaper that serves the political or commercial interests of its founder must rely on advertising, but the total value usually does not cover production costs. At present, *Ayin Achyk* is considered private and apolitical but founder Liubovi Kasim cannot imagine how the newspaper could exist without help from the television station she manages. *Ayin Achyk* does not cover its costs with advertising, so frequently revenue from the television station is used to make up the shortfall. According to Ms. Kasim, the newspaper business is absolutely unprofitable in Găgăuzia, but she maintains the newspaper for those who are old fashioned and used to reading a printed page as well as for those who don't have access to the Internet. Mr. Piron thinks that it makes sense to publish a good private, fair newspaper in Găgăuzia because the readers want one, but

there are no enthusiasts with the courage to invest in such a business.

Vera Crețu, editor-in-chief of the local newspaper *Panorama* in Vulcănești, has the same opinion. "To publish such a newspaper, it is necessary to have a rich sponsor," she said. "Vulcănești is not developing, there is no advertising and it is impossible to maintain a newspaper on subscriptions without support from the administration."

The dream of Vladimir Marinov is to publish his own newspaper; however, there are financial difficulties. "At present, *Vesti Gagauzii* has found its readers, has a more or less stable circulation and has asserted itself in the market. In every issue we try to publish interesting information because our circulation depends on this as well as on whether we will or will not have readers. Hence, creating an image for a newspaper, attracting advertising and gaining readership take many years and require big investments," he concluded.

When asked: "Would you like to publish your own private newspaper in Găgăuzia?" a well-known journalist in the region who wanted to remain anonymous said the following: "I would like to, but I won't do it. I know the situation. I will have a circulation of not more than 500 and I will not cover my costs. In that case it is better to work in Kaluga at the car production plant for \$1,000 per month than to work hard here to incur losses and make enemies."

According to local IJC Director Piron, a solution would be to establish cooperative relations among the local newspapers. "Two or three newspapers could cooperate, regardless of whether they are private, public or district as is done in Poland. Such cooperation will diversify the information in the print media and will attract more readers," he said. "It would be a common newspaper in which each publication would have two or three pages. For example, one newspaper would write about politics, another one about the economy while a third one would analyze social subjects and a fourth would write about culture. Such a publication would have its target group and would be in demand so advertisers would be interested in promoting their products in a paper read by everyone," he concluded. But who should support such cooperation—the regional administration, a sponsor with a lot of money or a donor for the initial stage?

Mr. Marinov has a different opinion. He thinks that the idea of creating a cooperative newspaper is unreal and impractical. "First of all, each newspaper has its own editorial policy and its own manner of presenting certain information. In our case, we represent the People's Assembly and obviously we will cover their position even if the executive thinks differently. Everything depends on who the founder is. Creating a single

newspaper seems to me to be an unachievable idea,” he concluded.

Mihail Formuzal, Governor of TAU Gagauz Yeri, expressed his opinion on this issue. In a recent speech he stated that the journalism community should also change its manner of cooperating with the authorities. First of all, no state media should exist in the region. All publications should be self-sufficient, i.e., be on their own, because when they benefit from significant subsidies from the regional budget (i.e. from the taxpayers), newspapers become the ideological agents of the authorities, and this must be eliminated. “I would like to decree financial autonomy for all media, but the parliamentarians will not allow us to do it. So, we spend about 600,000 lei per year to support them.” The governor also proposed another

solution, namely to fund the regional newspapers by allowing them to win tenders. “That would be a modern European solution, but unfortunately we still have a conservative mentality, we are always afraid of change and we hope the old system will suffice.”

Anna Harlamenco, President of the People’s Assembly of TAU Gagauz Yeri, agrees that the print media of Găgăuzia is not yet ready for such a step.

Will the print media of TAU Gagauz Yeri become independent politically and financially? Will a private, independent newspaper appear in the region as has happened in Bălți and Ungheni? It seems that this issue will remain unresolved for a long time.

Valentina CEBAN

The First Year of Dnestr TV: Surmounting Difficulties to Reach Viewers

Creating new, independent media organizations in Transnistria has always been a difficult task.

In 1998, journalists Grigorii Volovoi and Andrei Safonov founded *Novaia Gazeta*, the first independent regional weekly. Over the years, this publication has been persecuted by regional security services, and there have even been attempts to shut it down through lawsuits. Despite these efforts, the newspaper survived until December 2010, and the Court of Arbitration obliged the Ministry of Security to reimburse the costs of lost circulation. So far, this has been the only case of a publication operating independently and sustaining itself with advertising, subscriptions and sales without depending on donors.

Over time, however, the popularity of print media has declined and a number of broadcast media have appeared that have raised and increased the interest of Transnistrian readers. As a result, in 2005 the broadcast outlet *Novaia Volna* was registered in Moldova with the possibility to operate on both banks of Nistru—Moldova and Transnistria—while respecting the rules of the game. In 2006, this outlet started the radio station *Novaia Volna* which today is the only one that produces and airs news both in Transnistria and in Moldova.

Listeners can enjoy Russian, Ukrainian and Western pop music as well as Moldovan and Romanian folk music and can also listen to analytical programs about the issues and possible ways of solving the Moldovan-Transnistrian conflict. News is broadcast every hour daily from 9:00 to 18:00, and at least four original programs are broadcast monthly. “*Țecoul Transnistriei*” (Echo of Transnistria), “*Moldova-Transnistria—doar vești bune*” (Moldova-Transnistria—only good news), “*Știrile fără politică*” (News without politics) and others enjoy a great deal of popularity. *Novaia Volna* cooperates with *Europa Liberă* and *Deutsche Welle*. Thanks to an original musical approach that combines modern music with that from the past, *Novaia Volna* has succeeded in attracting both young and old audiences.

In 2010, *Novaia Volna* started Dnestr TV, the region’s first non-cable television station. In Transnistria, the vast majority of the population watches the cable TV station that is owned by a company called Sheriff. Thus, the Internet has become the means for broadcasting videos on the websites <http://www.youtube.com> and <http://dnestr.tv>.

On 30 August 2010, the first televised reports about professional training for journalists appeared, and in one year of op-

eration Dnestr TV has produced 300 news items and programs and has made several films about events in Transnistria.

Radio and television have been supported by the Soros Foundation Moldova and Press Now, and the Independent Journalism Center has facilitated internships for journalists at Chisinau-based radio and TV stations. *Novaia Volna* and Dnestr TV are members of the regional broadcasting media network of Moldova and members of the broadcasters association Meridian. There is now a regular exchange of news and programs, and a precedent has been established for sharing information so residents on both banks of the Nistru River can obtain objective information not only about the situation in Transnistria but also about the lives of people in Taraclia, Basarabeasca, Dondușeni, Edineț, Nisporeni and other districts. Thus, journalists have managed to do much more for harmony than politicians have done since the Transnistrian conflict 1991.

Today Dnestr TV is known not only to Moldovans who use the Internet to get information. There are also visitors from Russia, Ukraine, USA, Spain, Israel, Germany, Poland, and many other countries. According to statistics, in August the websites <http://www.youtube.com> and <http://dnestr.tv> were accessed 234,118 and 24,695 times, respectively. The TV station has over 100 subscribers on Youtube, and the number is increasing. Most are people between 18 and 54 years old with smaller percentages aged 13 to 17 and 55 to 64 and older. Most subscribers (83%) are men.

One of the advantages Dnestr TV offers to Internet users is access information other than that presented by the official Transnistrian media. The newsroom of Dnestr TV daily produces two informative reports and in addition offers two TV programs per month. Perhaps many Internet users have seen the film “I am not able to answer your questions” that was broadcast online. Dnestr TV journalists filmed a Tighina police officer taking money from a driver without writing a ticket. The officer requested that the shooting stop and got into a long argument with the journalists. The film has been watched by over 320,000 users, and 1,200 of them have also commented on it.

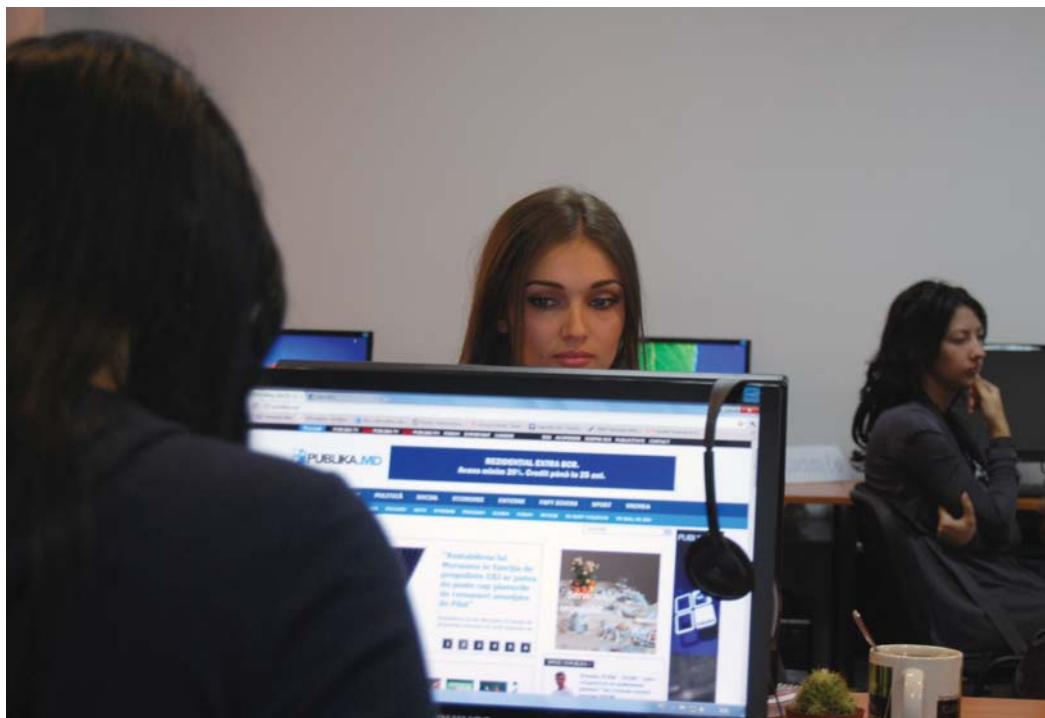
Obviously, the work of journalists at *Novaia Volna* is not easy or carefree. There have been attempts to impede their filming, to seize and destroy their materials and to threaten them. The staff always appeal to the law and defend their rights and are

not afraid to post controversial subjects. Dnestr TV has started receiving videos shot with mobile phones and photo cameras and posting them on its websites as examples of civic journalism.

In the near future Dnestr TV plans to start broadcasting online

to guarantee access to information in the region. Preparations are also under way to transform the website into a portal; the staff is searching for the necessary means and specialists. It can definitely be said that Dnestr TV has become an integral part of the media space not only in Transnistria but also in all of Moldova.

Grigorii VOLOVOI



Students of the Advanced Journalism School, class of 2012. Chișinău, September 2011.

Audience Survey of Media Consumption in Moldova

I. Introduction

At the request of the Independent Journalism Center, the Institute for Marketing and Surveys (IMAS-INC) in Chişinău conducted a study of TV, radio and print media audiences in Moldova from 13 September to 10 October 2011. The research pool was made up of persons aged 15 and older living in non-institutionalized dwellings in both the urban and rural areas of the country. Data were collected on a random sample of 1,735 persons by age, sex and occupation on a daily basis for four weeks (Table 1). The communities included in the study were divided into four distinct categories: municipalities, urban communities of more or less than 15,000 residents and rural communities, and the distribution was balanced geographically by urban and rural locations. To report on the nation as a whole, the sample was weighted to reflect the official urban-rural population distribution (42.2% urban; 57.8% rural).

The media audience was measured using the day-after recall method which asks respondents in home-based, face-to-face interviews to remember what TV stations they had watched, what radio stations they had listened to and what publications they had read the day before. In order to register data as accurately as possible, respondents were given a list of TV channels and radio stations and were prompted to recall their main activities during the day in question, and then their watching intervals were registered. The full audience study can be found on the IJC website: www.cji.md.

Table 1: National Audience Surveyed by Age, Gender and Occupation

Urban	Male	Female	Total
15-19 ani	4,1%	4,0%	8,1%
20-29 ani	12,5%	13,2%	25,7%
30-44 ani	12,3%	13,4%	25,7%
45-59 ani	11,4%	14,8%	26,2%
60+ ani	5,8%	8,6%	14,4%
TOTAL	46,1%	53,9%	100,0%

Rural	Male	Female	Total
15-19 ani	5,8%	5,3%	11,1%
20-29 ani	10,6%	10,2%	20,8%
30-44 ani	12,2%	12,2%	24,5%
45-59 ani	11,9%	13,4%	25,3%
60+ ani	7,3%	11,1%	18,3%
TOTAL	47,8%	52,2%	100,0%

Average	Working (%)	Non-working (%)
Urban	49,9	51,0
Rural	41,2	58,8

II. Rating Categories for Radio and Television

Daily reach (DR) (% and thousands of people) presents the number of individuals who watched/listened to a TV/radio station for at least 15 minutes in one day. Individuals who watched /listened to TV/radio programs more than once on the same day or for a longer period of time were taken into consideration only once regardless of the duration of watching/listening. This indicator is expressed in percentages from the weighted sample and thousands of people from the research pool.

Weekly reach (WR) (% and thousands of people) presents the number of people who watched/listened to a TV/radio station regularly at least once a week for at least 15 minutes. It is calculated by counting the individuals who watched/listened to the respective TV or radio station in the past seven days. This indicator is expressed as a percentage of the weighted sample and thousands of individuals from the research pool.

Market share (MS) represents the total number of 15-minute intervals watched/listened to for each TV or radio station divided by the total potential audience in the sample. It is expressed as a percentage.

Average time spent (ATS) is the average duration of watching/listening expressed in minutes and represents the average time spent by a viewer/listener to one channel/station. It is calculated by dividing the number of 15-minute intervals watched or listened to by the number of viewers or listeners of the TV or radio station.

Average Quarter Rating (AQR) represents the percentage of the population that watches/listens to a certain TV or radio station in an average quarter of an hour. This indicator is expressed as a percentage of the weighted sample and in thousands of individuals in the research pool.

A. Audience Indicators for Television Stations

Table 2: Audience Indicators for TV Stations Nationwide

	DR (%)	DR (pers)	WR (%)	WR (pers)	MS (%)	ATS (min.)	AQR (%)	AQR (pers)
Total	82,1	2436995	94,6	2808730	100,0	209,4	13,0	386627
Doi Plus	3,1	91954	20,1	597072	1,6	91,2	0,2	6354
Acasa TV	1,5	45964	7,0	207779	1,0	106,2	0,1	3699
Alt TV	0,6	17994	4,1	120517	0,2	52,5	0,1	716
Aici TV	0,1	3325	2,0	58028	0,1	45,0	0,1	113
Animal Planet	1,6	46814	9,2	274003	0,5	56,9	0,1	2019
TV DIXI	5,2	154261	20,5	608820	2,4	80,3	0,3	9387
Discovery	3,3	98681	15,9	471107	1,3	68,0	0,2	5084
Euro TV	2,5	73471	18,1	536542	1,4	100,5	0,2	5595
Euronews	1,7	51377	7,2	212289	0,5	46,7	0,1	1817
Euro sport	2,6	76280	10,2	303006	1,1	74,1	0,1	4282
Jurnal TV	5,1	151554	20,7	615035	1,9	63,0	0,2	7230
GRT Comrat	1,1	32791	0,7	20340	0,4	67,4	0,1	1675
Minimax	2,2	64576	7,8	232166	1,1	85,0	0,1	4160
Moldova 1	28,9	856744	62,6	1859113	11,6	69,3	1,5	44999
MTV	3,8	114253	9,9	293546	1,6	73,0	0,2	6323
MUZ TV MOLDOVA	7,3	217266	21,6	640325	3,8	90,4	0,5	14877
N4	3,4	101775	12,9	383693	1,5	74,1	0,2	5714
Nase chino	2,2	66535	8,2	243224	1,2	92,0	0,2	4638
National geografic	1,5	45964	9,6	284366	0,5	58,5	0,1	2039
NIT	18,9	560875	47,0	1395241	7,3	66,3	0,9	28157
PRIME	42,5	1262865	71,5	2121359	24,4	98,6	3,2	94336
PRO TV CHISINAU	19,4	576443	21,5	637436	6,7	59,6	0,9	26007
Publika TV	9,0	267508	38,9	1153456	3,8	71,6	0,5	14512
REALITATEA TV	0,9	27970	3,8	113376	0,3	54,5	0,1	1154
Telesport	1,8	54600	4,8	143692	0,6	55,3	0,1	2286
TNT	11,1	330099	25,5	756457	5,6	86,9	0,7	21723
TV7	7,0	208113	23,8	706188	3,0	72,7	0,4	11469
TVC21	1,4	42999	7,4	218811	0,6	76,9	0,1	2506
TV2 Comrat	0,1	3944	1,2	37096	0,1	113,4	0,1	339
India TV	1,2	35729	3,9	116443	0,9	124,7	0,1	3376
REN TV	3,6	106828	16,7	494309	1,4	68,2	0,2	5520
RTR PLANETA	6,6	195688	25,5	757748	3,1	79,6	0,4	11805
TV3	1,7	49418	7,2	214661	0,7	69,0	0,1	2582
Another channel	13,3	395606	15,7	466317	7,8	100,6	1,0	30136

Prime Time (PT) measures the interval in which TV channels enjoy maximum viewing. The impact of advertisements broadcast in this period is high, and the fees charged are also higher. For TV programs, prime time is between 19:00 and 22:59 with variations from one country to another.

Table 3: National Prime Time Audience Indicators for TV Stations

	PT DR (%)	PT DR (pers)	PTMS (%)	PT ATS (min.)	PT AQR (%)	PT AQR (pers)
Total	77,0	2285930	100,0	130,1	41,8	1239500
Doi Plus	2,0	59292	1,6	80,9	0,7	19985
Acasa TV	0,8	22428	0,3	45,9	0,1	4289
Alt TV	0,4	11833	0,2	44,2	0,1	2180
Aici TV	0,1	1108	0,1	60,0	0,1	277
Animal Planet	1,0	29079	0,4	42,9	0,2	5198
TV DIXI	2,9	85998	2,1	71,1	0,9	25490
Discovery	1,5	44597	1,0	68,6	0,4	12743
Euro TV	1,8	52023	1,1	63,7	0,5	13800
Euronews	1,0	30187	0,4	39,9	0,2	5020
Euro sport	1,6	47562	0,8	48,7	0,3	9641
Jurnal TV	3,4	101285	1,8	54,2	0,8	22863
GRT Comrat	0,7	20340	0,5	68,3	0,2	5786
Minimax	1,3	38823	0,7	54,9	0,3	8881
Moldova 1	23,7	703178	13,4	56,9	5,6	166651
MTV	2,5	73213	1,2	48,4	0,5	14767
MUZ TV MOLDOVA	3,0	88602	2,0	66,3	0,8	24485
N4	2,1	60993	1,3	65,3	0,6	16603
Nase chino	1,6	48052	1,1	68,1	0,5	13629
National geografic	0,7	19592	0,3	46,2	0,1	3773
NIT	14,6	433320	7,6	52,5	3,2	94794
PRIME	36,9	1094167	28,0	76,1	11,7	346888
PRO TV CHISINAU	16,5	489826	8,7	53,0	3,6	108234
Publika TV	6,8	201462	3,4	50,8	1,4	42622
REALITATEA TV	0,7	21319	0,4	57,0	0,2	5061
Telesport	1,1	32043	0,5	43,4	0,2	5792
TNT	7,5	223271	4,9	65,9	2,1	61297
TV7	4,9	146760	2,6	52,4	1,1	32053
TVC21	1,0	30806	0,6	55,5	0,2	7123
TV2 Comrat	0,1	3944	0,1	96,6	0,1	1587
India TV	0,7	21809	0,7	94,5	0,3	8586
REN TV	2,2	66535	1,1	50,9	0,5	14107
RTR PLANETA	4,5	134077	2,9	63,6	1,2	35522
TV3	1,2	36477	0,6	49,2	0,3	7471
Another channel	10,0	296150	7,4	74,8	3,1	92300

B. Audience Indicators for Radio Stations

Table 4: National Audience Indicators for Radio Stations

	Total		
	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)
Total	54,0	1602762	100,0
Radio 21	1,0	28460	1,0
Radio 7	0,5	14539	0,5
Radio Alla	2,9	84916	3,1
Radio Aquarelle	0,4	10595	0,4
Radio Arena FM	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Auto Radio	1,5	45474	1,7
Radio Europa Liberă	0,4	12322	0,5
Radio Europa Plus	0,9	27970	1,0
Radio Fresh FM	1,1	32894	1,2
Radio GRT FM	0,4	12193	0,4
Radio Hit FM	9,9	292824	10,8
Radio Jurnal FM	0,4	11704	0,4
Radio Kiss FM	5,5	162047	6,0
Radio Maestro FM	0,8	25134	0,9
Radio Megapolis	1,8	53594	2,0
Radio Moldova	10,8	319739	11,7
Radio Noroc	20,4	605681	22,3
Radio Plai	1,3	39313	1,4
Radio Prime FM	2,2	65943	2,4
Radio Pro FM	1,9	56198	2,1
Radio Publika FM	0,9	25263	0,9
Radio Retro FM	4,2	124951	4,6
Radio Polidisc Russkoe Radio	7,7	228867	8,4
Radio Serebrenii Dojdi	1,2	34750	1,3
Radio Stil (fostul Radio Chanson)	6,2	184991	6,8
Radio Univers FM	0,1	2217	0,1
Radio Vocea Basarabiei	1,8	53492	2,0
Another channel	5,6	165759	6,1

Table 5: National Audience Indicators for Radio Stations by Gender

	Masculin			Feminin		
	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)
Total	58,5	822980	100,0	50,0	780631	100,0
Radio 21	1,1	15630	1,0	0,8	12858	1,1
Radio 7	0,6	9062	0,6	0,4	5507	0,5

Radio Alla	3,6	51021	3,4	2,2	34041	2,8
Radio Aquarelle	0,5	7322	0,5	0,2	3304	0,3
Radio Arena FM	0,0	0	0,0	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Auto Radio	2,7	38480	2,6	0,5	7223	0,6
Radio Europa Liberă	0,6	9062	0,6	0,2	3304	0,3
Radio Europa Plus	1,0	14644	1,0	0,9	13345	1,1
Radio Fresh FM	1,2	17370	1,2	1,0	15547	1,3
Radio GRT FM	0,6	8932	0,6	0,2	3304	0,3
Radio Hit FM	11,0	155529	10,3	8,8	137521	11,3
Radio Jurnal FM	0,7	9555	0,6	0,1	2203	0,2
Radio Kiss FM	6,4	90487	6,0	4,6	71744	5,9
Radio Maestro FM	1,6	21966	1,5	0,2	3304	0,3
Radio Megapolis	3,1	43309	2,9	0,7	10527	0,9
Radio Moldova	10,6	149480	9,9	10,9	170230	14,0
Radio Noroc	22,2	312461	20,8	18,8	293561	24,1
Radio Plai	1,7	23706	1,6	1,0	15676	1,3
Radio Prime FM	2,4	33521	2,2	2,1	32453	2,7
Radio Pro FM	2,5	35130	2,3	1,4	21183	1,7
Radio Publika FM	1,2	16384	1,1	0,6	8939	0,7
Radio Retro FM	6,0	84152	5,6	2,6	41135	3,4
Radio Polidisc Russkoe Radio	9,0	126371	8,4	6,6	102737	8,4
Radio Serebrenii Dojdi	1,2	16384	1,1	1,2	18365	1,5
Radio Stil (fostul Radio Chanson)	7,5	105391	7,0	5,1	79838	6,5
Radio Univers FM	0,2	2233	0,1	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Vocea Basarabiei	1,6	22096	1,5	2,0	31351	2,6
Another channel	6,1	85528	5,7	5,1	80325	6,6

Table 6: National Audience Indicators for Radio Stations by Age Group

	15-29 ani			30-44 ani			45-59 ani			60+ ani		
	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)	DR (%)	DR (pers)	MS (%)
Total	56,6	549484	100,0	54,5	414684	100,0	54,2	412706	100,0	47,9	239539	100,0
Radio 21	2,1	20089	2,1	0,7	5698	0,7	0,4	2837	0,4	0,0	0	0,0
Radio 7	1,2	11218	1,2	0,3	2279	0,3	0,1	1109	0,2	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Alla	2,3	21946	2,3	4,7	35856	4,7	2,5	19107	2,8	1,8	9074	2,8
Radio Aquarelle	0,5	5055	0,5	0,1	1140	0,1	0,6	4435	0,7	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Arena FM	0,0	0	0,0	0,0	0	0,0	0,0	0	0,0	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Auto Radio	2,3	22436	2,3	1,2	9249	1,2	1,3	10108	1,5	0,8	3978	1,2
Radio Europa Liberă	0,5	5055	0,5	0,3	2279	0,3	0,5	3945	0,6	0,2	1118	0,3
Radio Europa Plus	1,4	13926	1,4	1,1	8109	1,1	0,8	6163	0,9	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Fresh FM	2,5	23906	2,5	0,4	2915	0,4	0,8	6163	0,9	0,0	0	0,0

Radio GRT FM	0,5	4436	0,5	0,4	3419	0,4	0,3	2218	0,3	0,4	2236	0,7
Radio Hit FM	16,6	160897	16,5	11,6	88433	11,6	5,4	40922	6,0	1,0	5096	1,6
Radio Jurnal FM	0,5	5055	0,5	0,4	3419	0,4	0,3	2218	0,3	0,2	1118	0,3
Radio Kiss FM	9,0	87269	9,0	7,0	53214	7,0	2,4	17999	2,6	1,0	5096	1,6
Radio Maestro FM	1,1	10599	1,1	1,4	10388	1,4	0,4	3326	0,5	0,2	1118	0,3
Radio Megapolis	4,0	38451	3,9	1,4	10388	1,4	0,3	2218	0,3	0,6	2860	0,9
Radio Moldova	4,4	42294	4,3	8,1	61456	8,1	13,5	102578	15,1	23,2	116117	35,4
Radio Noroc	16,7	161774	16,6	23,4	178536	23,4	24,3	185170	27,2	17,2	85905	26,2
Radio Plai	1,7	16273	1,7	1,6	12164	1,6	1,2	8999	1,3	0,4	2236	0,7
Radio Prime FM	2,7	26511	2,7	2,4	18498	2,4	2,3	17509	2,6	0,8	3978	1,2
Radio Pro FM	2,2	21817	2,2	2,2	16855	2,2	1,7	12945	1,9	1,0	5096	1,6
Radio Publika FM	0,9	9000	0,9	1,0	7473	1,0	1,2	8999	1,3	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Retro FM	4,0	38709	4,0	6,6	50298	6,6	4,2	31794	4,7	1,1	5590	1,7
Radio Polidisc Russkoe Radio	9,2	89513	9,2	9,4	71208	9,3	7,2	54486	8,0	3,2	15782	4,8
Radio Serebrenii Dojdi	0,9	8381	0,9	1,6	12164	1,6	1,2	9489	1,4	1,0	5096	1,6
Radio Stil (fostul Radio Chanson)	6,8	65839	6,8	5,7	43329	5,7	8,3	62996	9,2	2,8	14170	4,3
Radio Univers FM	0,0	0	0,0	0,1	1140	0,1	0,1	1109	0,2	0,0	0	0,0
Radio Vocea Basarabiei	1,2	11837	1,2	0,8	6334	0,8	3,3	25399	3,7	2,0	10192	3,1
Another channel	5,4	52145	5,4	6,1	46377	6,1	4,9	36977	5,4	6,4	31824	9,7

III. Rating Categories for Print Media

A. National Print Recall

Brand recall shows the level of recognition/popularity of a brand among the public and is a measure of fame or celebrity. This indicator is expressed as a percentage of the total population that recognizes the brand.

Spontaneous recall is the ability of a respondent to recall names or events without the interviewer's help. It is expressed as a percentage of the individuals who spontaneously mention the brand without prompting.

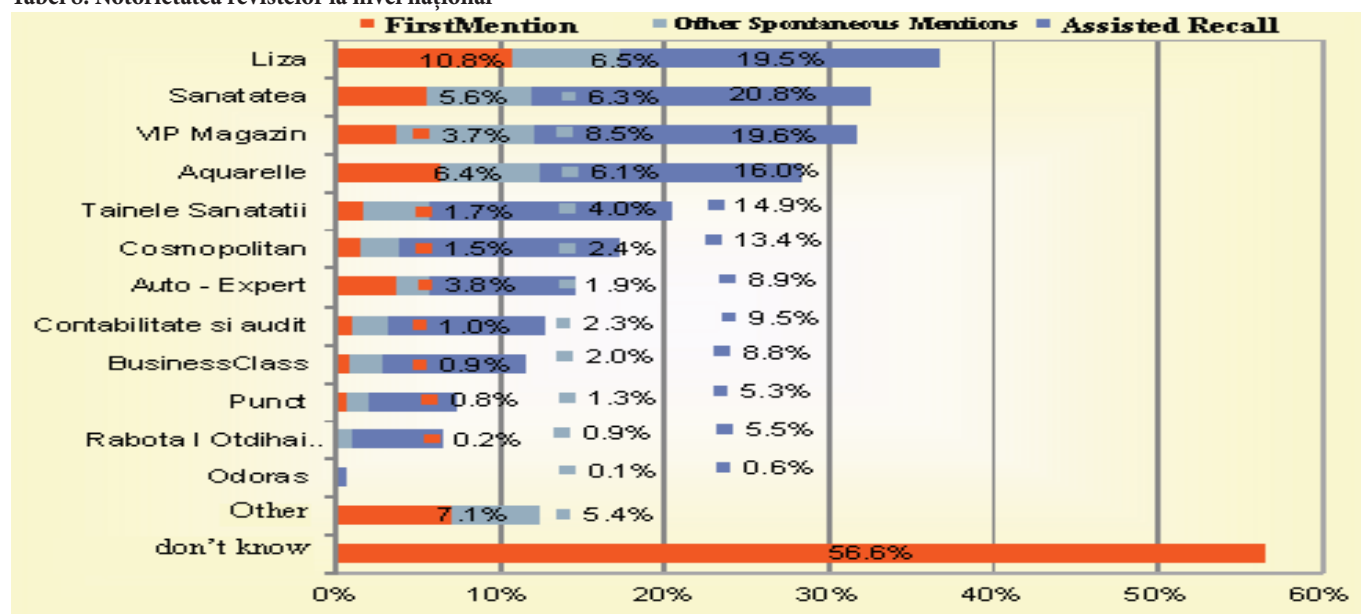
Assisted recall is a research technique in which the respondent is to a certain extent prompted to recall a brand. It represents the percentage of individuals who recognize the brand from a list of various brands offered by the interviewer.

Table 7: National Audience Recall of Newspapers

	Spontaneous Recall		Assisted recall	Total recall
	First mention	Other spontaneous mentions		
Makler	13,6%	19,5%	37,3%	70,4%
Komsomoliskaia Pravda	14,9%	22,1%	32,7%	69,7%
Antenna	6,2%	11,8%	32,7%	50,7%
Argumenti i Fakti	3,8%	14,6%	31,9%	50,3%
Săptămâna	2,7%	10,6%	25,0%	38,3%
Comunistul	3,4%	5,9%	28,8%	38,0%
Moldova Suverană	1,5%	7,7%	28,6%	37,9%
Adevărul	4,4%	8,0%	24,8%	37,1%

Timpul	5,0%	9,4%	22,4%	36,7%
Jurnal de Chişinău	2,3%	8,9%	24,4%	35,6%
Flux	1,7%	6,7%	26,3%	34,7%
Trud	0,5%	5,1%	24,5%	30,0%
Nezavisimaia Moldova	0,4%	4,2%	20,5%	25,1%
Literatura şi Arta	0,6%	4,9%	19,6%	25,0%
Moldavskie Vedomosti	0,5%	2,1%	11,1%	13,7%
Ziarul de gardă	0,0%	2,5%	10,1%	12,6%
Sport Curier	0,7%	2,0%	9,5%	12,2%
Economiceskoe Obozrenie	0,3%	2,2%	7,9%	10,4%
Gazeta de Sud	0,9%	1,1%	7,6%	9,5%
Cuvântul	0,3%	1,5%	7,0%	8,9%
Unghiul	2,2%	2,4%	3,9%	8,5%
Capitala	0,0%	1,3%	7%	8,4%
SP (Spros i Predlojenie)	0,7%	2,7%	4,9%	8,3%
Observator de Nord	1,3%	1,1%	4,0%	6,4%
Cuvântul Liber	0,2%	1,1%	4,8%	6,1%
ECO magazin economic	0,0%	0,9%	4,8%	5,8%
Expresul de Ungheni	0,2%	2,5%	3,0%	5,7%
Cahul Express	1,5%	1,7%	2,1%	5,3%
Vesti Gagauzii	0,5%	0,8%	2,3%	3,5%
Azin Aciik	0,0%	0,3%	2,1%	2,4%
Altele	6,7%	10,2%	-	-
Nici unul / Nu ştiu	22,7%	-	-	-

Tabel 8: Notorietatea revistelor la nivel național



B. National Audience Indicators for Print Media

Average Issue Readership (AIR) indicates the number of readers per issue.

Market Share (MS) is the percentage or proportion of the total available market or market segment serviced by a company. MS is the most systematic audience indicator. It reflects the comparative performance of each daily/weekly/monthly publication and in this study was calculated based on the number of individuals who had read a certain daily/weekly/monthly in a specific period of time divided by the number of individuals in the sample.

Table 9: National Audience Indicators for Daily Newspapers

	Total		
	AIR (%)	AIR (pers)	MS (%)
Total	7,9	234614	100,0
Adevărul	0,9	25624	9,8
Komsomoliskaia Pravda	3,2	93526	35,9
Makler	2,0	59137	22,7
Moldova Suverană	0,1	3325	1,3
Nezavisimaia Moldova	0,6	16885	6,5
Timpul	2,1	61741	23,7

Table 10: National Audience Indicators for Weekly Newspapers

	Total		
	AIR (%)	AIR (pers)	MS (%)
Total	37,4	1109041	100,0
Antenna	7,1	210588	11,7
Argumenti i Fakti	4,6	136164	7,6
Ayin Aciik	0,0	1108	0,1
Cahul Express	1,8	53981	3,0
Capitala	0,5	13431	0,7
Comunistul	3,3	99353	5,5
Cuvântul	0,5	15158	0,8
Cuvântul Liber	0,1	3944	0,2
ECO magazin economic	0,5	15777	0,9
Ecomomiceskoe Obozrenie	1,0	29697	1,6
Expresul de Ungheni	1,3	37457	2,1
Flux	2,2	65453	3,6
Gazeta de Sud	0,9	25882	1,4
Jurnal de Chişinău	4,1	120646	6,7
Literatura şi Arta	1,7	49418	2,7
Moldavskie Vedomosti	1,1	33152	1,8
Observator de Nord	1,5	45835	2,5
Săptămâna	6,7	198448	11,0
SP (Spros i Predlojenie)	1,2	36090	2,0
Sport Curier	1,2	35859	2,0

Trud	1,2	34621	1,9
Unghiul	2,8	82570	4,6
Vesti Gagauzii	0,4	11833	0,7
Ziarul de gardă	1,7	51764	2,9
Others	13,2	392436	21,8

Table 11: National Audience Indicators for Magazines

	Total		
	AIR (%)	AIR (pers)	MS (%)
Total	14,6	432777	100,0
Aquarelle	2,0	59137	10,3
Auto - Expert	1,9	55090	9,6
BusinessClass	0,6	18973	3,3
Contabilitate și audit	1,2	34260	6,0
Cosmopolitan	0,9	26243	4,6
Liza	3,3	97831	17,1
Punct	0,3	9976	1,7
Rabota I Otdihai (Работа и Отдыхай)	0,1	3944	0,7
Sănătatea	1,7	50398	8,8
Tainele Sănătății	1,7	50785	8,9
VIP Magazin	2,4	72336	12,6
Odoraș	0,2	5053	0,9
Others	3,0	89711	15,6

The full audience study can be found on the IJC website: www.cji.md.

The National Audience Survey of Print and Broadcast Media was conducted under the project “Developing Capacity of Moldovan Media, including in TAU Găgăuzia,” implemented by IJC in the period from January to December 2011, with the financial support of Civil Rights Defenders (former Helsinki Committee for Human Rights from Sweden).

“If You Are Neutral, You Can Make More Money”

Interview with Dumitru Ciorici, editorial director of the news portal Unimedia

1. You set the standard for this type of activity six years ago. How was it at the beginning? Did you believe from the very start in the success of this business, or did you start it as an adventure?

I did not expect it to be so hard, but my efforts have been rewarded as a Latin maxim says: “The result crowns the effort.” In the beginning, we were driven only by the enthusiasm for bringing something new to the media market. With time, however, I came to understand that this project could exist only if it had a business component as a basis. Thus for about four years, the slogan “the press is a business” has been at the top of our agenda. We further strive to be the first with regard to innovations. Speaking about Unimedia, I can say that we are only warming up the engine. Day by day we try to maintain the unconventional energy that has made us leaders in the online market. Initially, we were labeled political and classified as frivolous; however, we later proved that we are a strong team with a new vision.

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of an online publication?

The online market offers more flexibility and possibilities. The main strengths of an online publication are timeliness and the various forms of interaction that are possible with readers (text, photographs, videos etc.). Interactivity is a very important element in popularizing the brand as well as in building consumer loyalty. It is already clear to everyone that the online press has a number of advantages compared with traditional TV, print and radio media. Unfortunately, there are also some less pleasant aspects, e.g., in the race to be first and exclusive, many mistakes of various types can be made that can have an impact on the quality of the news. Nonetheless, I am sure that as time goes by, the online media will try to compete more based on quality and less on the quantity of superficial articles



published.

3. Unimedia.MD has been accused many times of political partisanship. What is in fact your political affiliation?

I will answer you with a question: Is there a media outlet in Moldova that has not been accused of political partisanship? Regretfully, in our country the launch of any new media publication is always shadowed by the question, “Whose is it?” which is sometimes justified but often is only based on rumors. Unimedia has not been able to avoid political labeling. For

instance, in 2005 rumor had it that we were a project of the People’s Christian Democratic Party (mostly because we had a slogan similar to that of the newspaper *Asta Da*). In 2007 we were supposedly with the Liberal Party (the year when Dorin Chirtoacă became mayor of Chişinău), while in 2009 rumor had it that we favored the Liberal Democratic Party (because this party had bought a large amount of advertising from us). And now for the past several months the word is that we have two sponsors: Igor Dodon and/or Vlad Plahotniuc. The fact that each party places us in the lap of their political competitors tells me that we are heading in the right direction. The editorial policy of Unimedia is decided by the editorial director. This implies balance and impartiality in editing the news. For more than a year I have been the only one responsible for this work and traffic numbers show that the public trusts us and the information we publish more and more (20,000 one-time users in 2009 and 33,000 in 2011). This is our main stimulus. We take rumors lightly and often even make fun of them. Unimedia is a product with a substantial monetary value. We would be idiots if we let ourselves play with fire and risk our name. I leave insinuations and rumors to the people who don’t speak of what they know; I appreciate the people who know of what they speak.

4. Sometimes you have suffered because of politics, especially between 2005 and 2009. I remember the case when the General Prosecutor’s Office “asked” you to “offer” them data about visitors. How did those events influence you?

We had some fears the first time we had to deal with the Prosecutor's Office and the Information and Security Service, but we reacted decisively and protested as loudly as we could. I rather think that the clout of Unimedia diminished the zeal of those institutions to pursue us. It is interesting that we faced such problems during the rule of both the communists and the democrats. With the support of our colleagues and media outlets in the country, we managed to overcome these hard times. In fact, these incidents definitely made us even more prominent on the public scene and earned us more sympathy from readers and consequently allowed us to have a bigger impact. What we have done is to manage with care the treasure of public trust we have been awarded.

5. What is online journalism all about? Is it a different type of journalism insofar as format, manner of writing, presentation or topics tackled?

Unimedia was the first online news portal in Moldova. We were the first to offer news in real time, live text comments and interviews with politicians, and we consistently supported bloggers. We did a lot of things that had not been done before in Moldova and that later on were taken up by other media publications. As to an online journalism formula, I can say that we entered the market with our own standards for writing news which became very popular between 2007 and 2010; in fact I have sometimes found it amusing that our news style has been copied by many Moldovan press services. Online journalism is the same as classical journalism but has more tools available and, most importantly, is not constrained by too many rules. Taking into account the requirements of the journalist's professional code, additional requirements are simple: be as creative and original in your approach as you can be, keep it simple, be polite to visitors and always surprise them with how you post information.

6. Unimedia.MD has remained mainly a news aggregator even though you have stated several times in the past that you would start producing more content of your own. Are we to understand that your own content is not really wanted/accessible, or is there something else going on?

I would like to offer some clarifications. In 2005, our own news accounted for 1% of the website's content, and in 2007 it reached 15%. Now in 2011, about 70% of the website's content is produced by the staff of the editorial department. So to me, the opinion that we are a news aggregator is for the most part wrong. We still have to cover foreign news, modern life, culture and information technology ourselves, and then our own content would exceed 90%. We incur huge expenditures monthly and we regularly invest in the organization. An online news publication does not only require good reporters but also enormous investments in the technical platform, domain

hosting, new technical adjustments etc. There are many details that must be tackled with care and in time, otherwise you risk losing ground to your competitors. I think that as soon as the market redirects more money to online media, we will be able to offer more of our own content in an even more diverse and attractive form. Everything is strictly interdependent. It is important to always be in motion. This requires work, patience and time. It is harder than it seems at first, but we try to live up to what Winston Churchill said: "Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm."

7. What kind of news do those who access Unimedia.MD prefer, and why is this news the most read?

The most read news is political followed by social and economic. Surprisingly, though, news about modern life is sometimes on top. I would like to think that we perform well in these areas. Lately, our country has been mentioned often in the foreign press, so we hired a reporter to be in charge of the column "Moldova in the foreign press." It is good and useful for us to know how we are seen from outside and statistics show that we were not wrong when we invested in launching this column. By the way, it is the only one of its kind in Moldova.

8. "Shocking!" "Unbelievable!" "Devastating!" These words have appeared more than once in the headings of Unimedia.MD articles. Is this a first step towards the so-called tabloidization of Unimedia, or is it a strategy to attract more visitors?

If you carefully study the headings of news articles on Unimedia in the past five or six months, you will notice that this type of wording has been excluded or appears more and more infrequently. This is a step to put more emphasis on the quality of information and headings even if we run the risk of losing a certain number of visitors. I personally am tired of reading headings like "Find out here," "Shocking" or "Click here." I have forbidden using such wording at our institution. "We do not wish to offend the intellects of Unimedia visitors." This is a rule we learned from our colleagues at *The Economist*. Because of it, we gave up publishing nudes and shocking videos and photos.

9. By the way, how do those working at Unimedia.MD earn their bread? Are we to understand that Unimedia.MD is indeed profitable and can survive exclusively on advertising?

In Moldova there are only a few online media outlets that are 100% self-sufficient based on advertising contracts. I can proudly say that Unimedia is one of those three or four outlets. Some of the others are still funded occasionally while others will always remain dependent on interest groups. The facts that the number of Unimedia visitors is increasing and that the

amount of advertising has increased four times this year are two important indicators that speak about our results. By the way, unlike other sources of information, we do not accept political advertising. We did it in 2009 and faced a serious image problem. That was a good lesson after which we categorically refused any such offers. Our conclusion was that if you are neutral, you can make more money.

10. More and more voices say that new media, especially the Internet, is a “newspaper killer.” Is this a battle that traditional media have lost or a victory that new media have won?

My view is that the online press has won the battle for timeliness. The news is a rather perishable product, and newspapers have never had the capacity to deliver it in due time. This is especially true now in the era of the Internet. I think that newspapers should reorient their content to analysis, interviews, reports, investigations and interpretations of information. I'd abstain from stating that the online press is a “newspaper killer.” Modern technologies will make themselves known in this area too, and print publications may reach people's homes in a new form. I still do not know how this will look, but I can say that the idea that newspapers will disappear in the next five years is premature.

11. In recent years you have developed several new products and ideas for the site. Should we expect more pleasant surprises of this type in the future?

We have an internal document entitled “Strategic Development” that we fill with new ideas each day. I hope I am not mistaken, but now we have over 10 or 15 items in this “to do” list. The most daring one is the idea to launch a new local version of the news portal Unimedia in various districts of the country. This step requires big investments. We also have other ideas; we collect money little by little and also need time. You will notice changes every month. We try to be “the one, not just anyone.”

12. What will Unimedia.MD and the online media in general be like in three to five years?

In five years I see Unimedia this way: about 20–30 staff members, elements of TV online, more exclusive content, 95–100% original content, programs produced in a video studio of our own and quality news, but all this is provided the same team continues to be in charge of management. As for online media in Moldova, I think it will continue to be a dynamic area in the future. Possibly we will witness new media models and projects in other niches, and why not? Information services can work in parallel with news websites. I will welcome any media projects that are useful to the public.

Thank you for the interview.

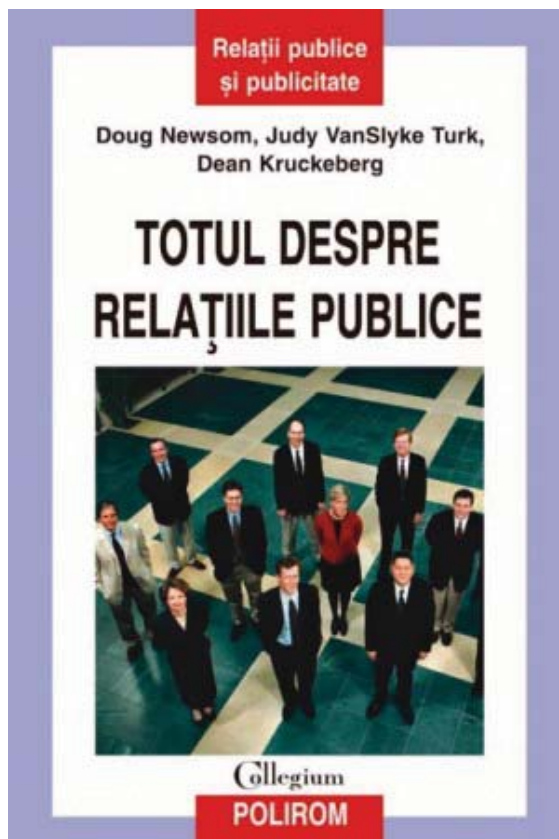
Victor GOTIȘAN

Everything about Public Relations By Doug Newsom, Judy Van Slyke Turk and Dean Kruckeberg

Everything about Public Relations by journalism and communication professors and specialists Doug Newsom, Judy Van Slyke Turk and Dean Kruckeberg is impressive teaching material for journalism and communication students but is also a guide for professors specializing in public relations, communications and advertising. The authors provide a broad picture of public relations starting from its inception until now and examine its role in modern society including perspectives on its development. The book is addressed both to the reader who intends to study and learn about public relations from the start and to one who already knows the subject but who needs practical advice. Although bulky (684 pages in four parts and 15 chapters), the material can be covered more easily if read/studied in parts according to areas of interest.

Part one is entitled "Public Relations: Role, Origins and Trends" and includes three chapters in which the authors document the appearance and development of the phenomenon of public relations. Before answering the question, What are public relations?, the three American professors warn us in Chapter 1 - "Realities of Public Relations" - that obligations and stress are part of the public relations environment. If this statement does not discourage us, we further discover that the Public Relations Society of the USA defines 14 activities associated with public relations: (1) public information, (2) communication, (3) public affairs, (4) problem management, (5) government relations, (6) financial public relations, (7) community relations, (8) relations with industry, (9) relations with minorities, (10) advertising, (11) press agent activities, (12) promotional activities, (13) relations with the media and (14) propaganda. It is important that public relations practitioners remember these key topics to which others can be added later.

Listing the activities associated with public relations may help



to define the term as only in 1978 was a consensus reached regarding its definition. At the first world meeting of public relations associations, the practice of public relations was determined to be "the art and social science of analyzing trends, of forecasting consequences, of advising organization leaders and of implementing planned action programs that would serve both the organization and the public interest."

In the same chapter, the authors present associated activities such as a press agent's role, promotions, public information campaigns, research, graphics, advertising, marketing and merchandizing. All these activities can intersect at some point, i.e., they can have certain elements in common, but nonetheless, in the end they represent separate trades and should not be confused. To bring more clarity to this topic, the authors further explain what the personal characteristics and educational background of a public relations practitioner should be and even present a list of the subjects to be studied by a future specialist in this area (courtesy of Sam Black). The chapter ends with an overview of the main functions of public relations for businesses and for society (controlling the public, responding to the public and creating mutually beneficial relations among the public and institutions).

Chapter 2, "The Origin and Evolution of Public Relations," provides the history of the appearance of the term. Several famous names are suggested by the authors as representative in this context. Some historians attribute the first syntagm "public relations" to Thomas Jefferson in 1807. Other researchers claim that this term was invented by the lawyer Dorman Bridgman Eaton in a speech he gave to the graduating class of 1882 at Yale. The syntagm was not, however, used in its modern sense until 1897 when it appeared in the *Annual Guide of the United States Association of Railways*. Without ignoring the impor-

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tance of this information for the interested public, we think that the term is indissolubly linked with the name of Edward Louis Bernays who titled himself a “public relations councilor” in 1921 which is when the concept of public relations became established. There are also researchers who consider Ivy Ledbetter Lee to be the first modern practitioner.

Chapter 3 is on trends and refers to the practice of public relations globally, to the need to rethink the role of public relations, to potential future problems and to teaching the subject. This chapter is very useful for professors and students.

Part two is titled “Research in Public Relations” and tackles several essential issues in communication sciences. Chapter 4 concentrates on public opinion—a subject that often causes confusion and debate. In presenting this chapter, the authors focus on the following: identifying and describing the public; distinguishing between public and audience; internal and external public; the terms target public and priority public, media research, perceptions and public opinion; understanding public opinion; fundamental elements of public opinion; measuring public opinion and studying public opinion and its connection with public relations. This is an important chapter especially for the theoreticians although it may also be useful for practitioners.

Chapter 5 deals with storing and organizing data, with research sources and with using research for planning, monitoring and final evaluation and Chapter 6 explains types of research like informal, formal quantitative (content analysis, investigation) and qualitative (historiography, case studies, journals, in-depth interviews, focus groups) as well as audiovisual research (journals, interviews and mechanical devices for recording public reactions) that are extremely useful for public relations specialists and also for social science researchers.

Part three, “Theories, Ethical Standards and Laws Affect Public Relations Practice,” offers detailed presentations of the most interesting of these aspects. Chapter 7 focuses on theoretical models that underlie the practicing of public relations (communications, behavioral symmetric process), as well as on persuasion and its contribution to change. In Chapter 8, “Ethics and Responsibilities in Public Relations,” the authors suggest analyzing this subject at two levels: the individual behavior of the specialist and that of the institution that he/she represents.

Public relations is often considered to be the “conscience” of management, but it cannot fulfill this function if the organization’s management lacks a conscience. That is why public relations specialists encounter ethical issues and why the ethical and responsible practice of public relations is a personal option. Chapter 9 tackles the thorny, difficult, contradictory

and often very subjective issue of legislation. The authors use terms and expressions known to the reader from other contexts to present and analyze public relations and legal processes; the responsibilities of the practitioner as a private person; the observance of consumer’s rights; copyrights; defamation, calumny and insult and the right to privacy. In this connection, *Everything About Public Relations* presents sample forms, permissions or guides on the topics discussed. Since they deal with such a complex subject, these examples are extremely welcome in our opinion for facilitating the understanding of the reader.

The final section is “Public Relations in Action” and includes the most chapters and topics. They are dissected and explained from A to Z so that those interested can understand what being a “PR specialist” means. This is the practical side of the work and includes many tips, applications and examples. Chapter 10, “Problem Solving Strategies: Public Relations Management,” teaches us the role of public relations in general organizational planning, how the planning and management of public relations activities takes place and problem solving strategies and the obstacles to solving them. In the same context, the authors present PR departments as sources and resources. The information, sometimes abundant, is welcome for PR practitioners, especially those who manage large institutions.

The authors organize lab lessons in chapters 11 and 12. “Media Channels of Communication” teaches us to choose adequate media; how to choose the message correctly (whether we prefer advertising or public information) and how to prepare advertising messages. “Tactics and Techniques: Details That Make Public Relations Strategies Work” refers first of all to advertising.

Practical tips for PR specialists follow and focus on the step-by-step organization of events including speeches and special events; developing video and audio presentations including producing institutional tapes and films; public information through the media and preparing for interaction with the media like promotions, interactions with journalists, press conferences and media tours among others. Space is reserved to make the connection between public relations and the Internet.

We especially recommend the section on examples of mistakes and omissions (pages 564-569) because it includes tips that are extremely useful.

Lab lesson number 3 is in Chapter 13, “Public Relations Campaigns.” It describes successful PR campaigns, explains the types of PR campaigns, the characteristics of successful ones, step-by-step planning for one and the final implementation

and evaluation.

Another strength of *Everything About Public Relations* is the three case studies presented and analyzed in Chapter 14. The analyses are a very good source for understanding the phenomenon in depth. The final chapter, "Crises," considers

communication during a crisis and the role of spokespersons. In addition, the glossary includes 322 terms and expressions related to PR, communication, journalism and the new media. The glossary synthesizes the subjects tackled in the work and strengthens its content.

Aneta GONȚA