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ADVANCES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND
COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT
VOLUME 5

**JOY: USING STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION TO
IMPROVE WELL-BEING
AND ORGANIZATIONAL
SUCCESS**

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	vii
<i>About the Authors</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	xvii

PART I STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Love Wins: A Love Lens Approach to Cultivation of Organization–Stakeholder Relationships	3
<i>Mark Badham</i>	
Values-based Communication: A New Impulse to Communication Effectiveness	21
<i>Erik Kosteljik</i>	
Outside-in- versus Inside-out-content: Introducing a New Approach to the Origins of Content in Strategic Communication	37
<i>Olaf Hoffjann</i>	
Quantifying Organizational Trust on Twitter: A Communication Perspective	55
<i>Alla Kushniryk, Stanislav Orlov and Natalie Doyle Oldfield</i>	

PART II INTERNAL AND EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

Internal Communication and Employee Engagement as the Key Prerequisites of Happiness	75
<i>Danijela Lalić, Bojana Milić and Jelena Stanković</i>	

Communicative Leadership on Internal Social Media: A Way to Employee Engagement?	93
---	----

Vibeke Thoís Madsen

Employees as Corporate Ambassadors: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Perceived Benefits and Challenges from Three Perspectives	115
--	-----

Jana Brockhaus, Laura Dicke, Patricia Hauck and Sophia Charlotte Volk

PART III JOYFULLY PRACTISING COMMUNICATION

The Pursuit of Happiness in PR: Joy, Satisfaction and Motivation during Working as Communication Manager on Purposeful Cases	137
---	-----

Lars Rademacher and Kathrin Stürmer

The Dancing CEO. New Perspectives on the Leader: Performer, Chief Happiness Officer or Seducer?	155
--	-----

Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen

Incorporating Cultural Diversity, Nation Building and Social Cohesion When Teaching Communication and Relationship Management	169
--	-----

Magrita N. Wiggill and Gerrit van der Waldt

Using Education as a Strategic Communication Tool – A Case Study of Raising Financial Literacy and Voluntary Pension Fund Promotion	183
--	-----

Andrea Lučić, Dajana Barbić and Dijana Bojčeta Markoja

Health Professionals' Communication Competences Decide Patients' Well-being: Proposal for a Communication Model	201
--	-----

Cristina Vaz de Almeida and Célia Belim

<i>Index</i>	223
--------------	-----

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.	Sternberg’s Triangle of Love.	8
Figure 2.	Emotions (in Public Relations Research) and Brand Love (in Relationship Marketing Research) Tend to Flow in One Direction.	10
Figure 3.	Reciprocity in Organization–Stakeholder Affection.	11
Figure 1.	Personal Values as Moderator in the Relationship between Goal Attainment and Well-being.	26
Figure 2.	Personal Values as Moderator in the Relationship between Context and Well-being.	27
Figure 3.	Personal Values as Moderator in the Relationship between Brand Values and Brand Attachment (Kosteljik, 2016).	27
Figure 4.	The Value Compass (Kosteljik, 2016).	30
Figure 5.	Model for Values-based Communication.	32
Figure 6.	Communication Enriches the Context.	33
Figure 1.	Ideal Types of Inside-out- and Outside-in-content.	43
Figure 1.	Visualizing Trust for @Airbus.	66
Figure 2.	Visualizing Trust for @BoeingAirplanes.	67
Figure 3.	Visualizing Distrust for @BoeingAirplanes.	68
Figure 1.	Research Model.	79
Figure 2.	The PLS Analysis of the Research Model.	86
Figure 1.	Framework for Analyzing the Role of Corporate Ambassadors within an Organization.	125
Figure 1.	Overview of Research Focus and Research Question.	139
Figure 2.	Structural Equation Model: Overall Job Satisfaction of Communication Management Professionals (Zerfass et al., 2018 Based on Berger et al., 2017/Plank Center).	142
Figure 3.	Overview of Millennial Generations.	143
Figure 4.	Overview of Research Design for This Study.	147

Figure 5.	Overview of Collected Data for This Study.	148
Figure 6.	Participants' Answer 'I Feel Overall Joy in My Job', Regarding Jobs with and without a Moral Background.	149
Figure 7.	Participants' Answer on Experienced Joy in Context with Their Salary.	150
Figure 8.	Satisfaction of Individual Categories in Current Job.	151
Photo 1.	The CEO of LEGO, Jørgen Vig Knudstorp Presenting the Results of the Year 2014.	160
Photo 2.	The LEGO CEO, Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, Presenting the Results of the Year 2015.	166
Figure 1.	Announcement of the Project 'Finance for Everyone'.	191
Figure 2.	Educative Articles in the Media Together with the Education Report and Impressions of Participants.	192
Figure 3.	ZSE Academy Award Media Coverage.	193
Figure 1.	Assertiveness, Clear Language and Positivity Model.	214
Table 1.	The Value Types of the Value Compass (Kosteljik, 2016).	30
Table 1.	Self and External Thematization in Journalism and Strategic Communication.	42
Table 1.	Frequencies of Trust and Distrust Messages.	62
Table 2.	Trust Categories.	63
Table 3.	Frequencies of Unique Tweets, Retweets and Unique Users.	63
Table 1.	Sample Demographics.	80
Table 2.	Latent Variable Statistics.	83
Table 3.	Correlations between First-order Factors.	85
Table 4.	Second-order to First-order Loadings (Bootstrap Anal- ysis with 5,000 Samples).	85
Table 5.	Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratios.	86
Table 1.	Various Communicative Leadership Roles on ISM.	100
Table 2.	Formal Leadership Communicative Acts on ISM.	105
Table 3.	Coconstructed Leadership Communication Behaviour on ISM.	108
Table 4.	Peer Leadership Communicative Acts on ISM.	110

Table 1.	Roles of Communication Professionals in Interaction with Corporate Ambassadors.	126
Table 2.	Typology of Corporate Ambassadors.	128
Table 1.	The Main Functions of Dancing.	161
Table 1.	ANOVA Knowledge – Before and after Education.	195
Table 2.	ANOVA Attitudes on Retirement Savings Knowledge – Before and after Education.	195
Table 3.	Financial Attitudes Answers.	195
Table 5.	Financial Behaviour Answers.	196
Table 4.	Behavioural Control Answers.	196
Table 1.	Highest Scores to the Components of the Assertiveness, Clear Language and Positivity.	212
Table 2.	Recommendations or Components of the Three-factor Model of Communication Competences: Assertiveness, Clarity and Positivity.	215

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INTRODUCTION

As I write the introduction to this latest book in the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) Congress series for Emerald, I cannot help but hold some sense of irony. Our excellent Congress in Zagreb – held during early October 2019 – was another annual celebration of international exchanges of research and new ideas in the scholarship of public relations and strategic communication. The theme of the congress was ‘Joy’. And yet, as I compose these introductory thoughts and reflections for the book, my fellow editors and I are each sitting in our home offices as many of you will have done. All of us experiencing for the first time in our lives an extraordinary, enforced lockdown during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis in the spring of 2020. As such ‘joy’ may not be the first emotion academics and research students think of when reflecting on this challenging period of our lives, but it is perhaps poignant to recall the discussions and debates we held in Zagreb and the fascinating papers we shared during the Congress. Whilst many of the papers touched literally on the issue of joy, others explored related emotions and in some papers the flip or opposing sensations to positivity. In essence the theme of the 2019 Congress is perhaps never more appropriate than in times of stress, international emergency and genuine societal challenge. We need to be able to understand how and where we can sense happiness, well-being, social cohesion, togetherness, appreciation of others and, arguably, attributes of joy.

Even before this exceptional year of 2020, it would have been possible to argue that we are living in an era of societal pessimism. That challenging viewpoint appears only to have been reinforced and heightened by the international experiences of the COVID-19 crisis. As we observe our everyday academic worlds, it is possible to see that everyone potentially has a voice, and in the contemporary climate it is very often used to criticize. Publics see problems and discuss them in multifarious ways and on a plethora of platforms and media outlets. And, in turn, academic research reflects this and often views the world through a negative lens and focuses on difficulties, issues and bad practices. With this meeting of the international public relations and strategic communication research community, it was the ambition of the Congress organizers from the University of Zagreb and the EUPRERA Board to encourage and promote some optimism in both the public discourse and academic research about the discipline.

The conference call proposed that public relations and strategic communication could be used for cultivating a positive environment. This means communicators could accept that one of the biggest competitive advantages in today’s business world is a positive and engaged public. Satisfied participants are at the core of any successful relationship. To succeed in the future, public relations will

have the aim of keeping various stakeholders not only informed, nor even satisfied, but happy. Whether they are employees, customers or business partners, only happy stakeholders will ensure long-term organizational success.

The success of relationships with publics is mostly based on how people are valued and treated, which in turn affects their self-perceptions and level of performance. Both of these elements are correlated with life happiness. So it seems logical that public relations should put additional effort in fostering happiness and joy among their publics and by improving both organizational success and the well-being of people. These were the thoughts and aspirations to encourage academic papers to join in the debate about ‘joy’ and its implications for strategic communication and public relations.

The Zagreb Congress was the 21st to be organized by The European Public Relations Education and Research Association. EUPRERA is an autonomous organization with nearly 500 members from 40 countries interested in advancing academic research and knowledge in strategic communication. Several cross-national and comparative research and education projects are organized by affiliated universities. In order to spread new methodologies and research results, EUPRERA organizes its Annual Congress each autumn in collaboration with a selected university or college in Europe. The organizer of the 2019 Congress was one of my co-editors, Professor Ana Tkalac Verčič, from the University of Zagreb. The Congress attracted 60 full papers, and this book is a selection of the best papers that were not included in the special issue of the *Journal of Communication Management*.

The book is divided into three parts. The following pages provide a summary for each part of the book and a flavour of the chapters within each section.

Part I: Strategic Communication and Organizational Goals

Not all contingencies named ‘societal development’ add to joy – some have positive some negative effects. Questioning the role of public relations in society and a strategic approach to communication can induce the spreading of positive human and corporate behaviour that contributes to joy. How can public relations contribute to the communication of social change through ethical persuasion and promotion of public interest? Additionally, measuring the effectiveness of communication is vital for understanding its value and for shaping future plans in a way that contributes to greater effectiveness. If joy is a part of successful communication, how can we measure it? Can joy be measured through results and performance indicators and consequently integrated into strategic communication plans? In order to be precise, we need to first define the role of joy and its related constructs in the process of communication.

In his paper ‘Love Wins: A Love Lens Approach to Cultivation of Organization Stakeholder Relationships’, Mark Badham’s chapter draws on the theory of brand love developed in relationship marketing research and the theory of love from psychological research to build a theoretical framework of organization–stakeholder love (OSL) that can be applied to organizational relationships with

publics and stakeholders. Badham argues that OSL is important as it has the potential to contribute to addressing public relations' image problems (e.g. relating to terms such as *spin*, *fake news* and *corporate greenwashing*). It also offers a new love orientation that guides organizations towards a focus on the primacy of stakeholder needs and values, which in turn may shape the way organizations initiate and manage their relationships with stakeholders. The chapter concludes with practical ways OSL can be implemented and offers a research agenda.

Erik Kosteljik takes the view that people decide what is good or bad, or what they should or should not do, based on the values they cherish. Someone's values create the feeling that something is important for him or her, and then motivate him or her to take action. Titled 'Values-Based Communications: A New Impulse to Communication Effectiveness', Kosteljik's chapter explores the use of values in communication and introduces mechanisms through which values can be used to stimulate communication effectiveness.

In 'Outside-In- versus Inside-Out-Content. Introducing a New Approach on the Origins of Contents in Strategic Communication', Olaf Hoffjann introduces the concept of outside-in-content, which facilitates a new perspective in the decoupling of discourse. Outside-in-content encourages decoupling for three reasons: (1) like a lighthouse, it draws attention away from negative issues. (2) As neither-true-nor-false-content, it encourages non-committal and arbitrary strategic communication. (3) If organizations no longer talk about themselves, or do so less frequently, talk and action can also no longer be examined using the standards of tight or loose coupling.

In 'Quantifying Organizational Trust on Twitter: A Communication Perspective', Alla Kushniryk, Stanislav Orlov and Natalie Doyle Oldfield draw on both theoretical and empirical literature on trust and discuss the role of trust in strategic communication. They examine the importance of trust for organizational success, the dimensions of trust and distrust, and discuss quantifiable proxies to measure trust and distrust on social media. They use theoretically driven dimensions of trust and distrust as a framework to examine how Boeing and Airbus use Twitter to communicate with their stakeholders and publics. Two separate lists of words and phrases were created, one for proxies of trust and one for proxies of distrust. In addition, trust building actions that organization can engage in on Twitter were identified: listening and engaging in dialogue by following users, mentioning users in messages, replying to inquiries, providing and encouraging feedback.

Part II: Internal and Employee Communication

Strategic internal communication is a part of the organizational context in which employees are engaged or disengaged, while strategic external communication is an antecedent of a company's image on the market which designates consumer engagement. Both are vital in the digital era in which employees prioritize on fun working environments awakening positive emotions including happiness, joy and

enthusiasm. How can we use communication to attract and preserve engaged employees – employees that believe that working is fun? Are lucrative communication activities such as employer brand communication, innovative organizational communication initiatives and open channels of communication helpful? How can we use communication to secure customer loyalty? Are extensive communications with diverse external stakeholders, especially on social media platforms, the right solution?

In the chapter, ‘Internal Communication and Employee Engagement as the Key Prerequisites of Happiness’, Danijela Lalić, Jelena Stanković and Bojana Milić investigate internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement as prerequisites of employee happiness. The outcomes of their study reveal how organizations can employ an internal communications strategy in order to enhance engagement of their employees and their happiness as the ultimate goal.

Vibeke Thøis Madsen explores interactions on internal social media (ISM) in a Danish bank in order to understand how communicative leadership is enacted in social media dialogues within an organizational context. The chapter titled ‘Communicative Leadership on Internal Social Media – A way to Employee Engagement?’ identifies three types of communicative leadership: Formal communicative leadership, coconstructed communicative leadership and peer communicative leadership. Madsen argues the findings help us understand leadership as a complex set of interactions in organizational contexts and know that empowering communication on ISM can therefore enhance employee engagement.

The research team of Jana Brockhaus, Laura Dicke, Patricia Hauck and Sophia Charlotte Volk explores corporate ambassadors in their chapter, ‘Employees as Corporate Ambassadors: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Perceived Benefits and Challenges from Three Perspectives’. The goal of this qualitative study is to analyze the communicative engagement of employees within an organization and explore the expectations towards ambassador communication from three perspectives: the communication department, other departments such as marketing or human resources, and corporate ambassadors themselves. The chapter lays the groundwork for further discussions about corporate ambassadors in the field of corporate communications and outlines directions for future research and implications for practice.

Part III: Joyfully Practising Communication

The world is definitely going through a transition, and strategic communication has to participate in the debate on major issues and help shape values and beliefs of the society as a whole. Through shaping communication, public relations experts help shape core values. Is satisfaction a prerequisite of good communication? What is the role of communication professionals in discussions about a society in transition? What is our professional responsibility? Are we (at least partially) in charge of satisfaction in society? When and why does communication foster health, happiness and well-being?

In 'The Pursuit of Happiness in PR: Joy, Satisfaction & Motivation during working as Communication Manager on Purposeful Cases', Lars Rademacher and Kathrin Stürmer explore the job satisfaction of communication managers. This chapter discusses the connection between a good cause and job satisfaction and the difference it makes when it comes to working in communication management over time. Unlike other studies, the focus in the chapter is on purpose-driven projects as a change in business routine to stay motivated.

If you reach this part of the book and you are not already elated, then after the next chapter you will be. Aarhus colleagues Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen take us on a whirlwind journey across the corporate dance floor in the riveting chapter 'The Dancing CEO: Perspectives on the Leader: Performer, Chief Happiness Officer or Seducer?'. The chapter is a riveting case study about the Danish CEO who suddenly began to dance in front of journalists while singing *Everything is awesome* from the LEGO Movie. Why did he do it? Was it out of spontaneous joy? Or was there a strategy behind his actions? And what were the reactions of the media and LEGO employees? These are questions handsomely answered in this chapter that contributes to a broader understanding of strategic communication and leadership and adds a dramaturgical and multimodal perspective.

In 'Incorporating Cultural Diversity, Nation Building and Social Cohesion When Teaching Communication and Relationship Management', Magrita Nicolene Wiggill and Gerrit Van der Walldt reflect on the necessity of incorporating practical and experiential learning modalities in higher education to prepare communication and relationship management students for engaging others in potentially conflicting socio-cultural heterogeneous settings. The case study illustrates students' general anxiety to engage people from different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. The authors recommend innovative teaching strategies are developed to foster harmony, tolerance, understanding and cultural sensitivity in communication and relationship management education.

Andrea Lučić, Dajana Barbić and Dijana Bojčeta Markoja develop an interesting case study chapter in 'Using Education As a Strategic Communication Tool – A Case Study of Raising Financial Literacy And Voluntary Pension Fund Promotion'. The chapter has the purpose of showing how purposeful content-based valuable information can be created with the aim of influencing attitudes and behaviours in the field of personal and pension savings. A quantitative study was conducted in order to investigate the effectiveness of education on the attitudes and knowledge related to pension fund savings. The results of the quasi-experiment indicate that the education has increased respondents' knowledge and positive attitudes towards retirement savings.

To conclude the book, Cristina Vaz de Almeida and Célia Belim Rodrigues explore health professional's communication competences. The chapter, 'When the Health Professional's Communication Competences Decide Patient's Health: Proposal of a Communication Model' focuses on the impact of health professional's communication competences on patients. The study is a response to the lack of consensus in the literature on what specific and operative communication competences the health professional should perform in clinical encounters

with patients, and how these competences can improve, in the final instance, health and well-being.

I hope you enjoy reading these valuable contributions to our research community and share them with your peers. I look forward to seeing you soon at one of the forthcoming EUPRERA Congresses held every autumn.

Professor Ralph Tench, April 2020