

PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROJECT NAME

International Corporate Communication Compass (ICCC) for Europe
(formerly: "Framework for international communication in Europe")

DATE

2010/02/01

PROJECT ENERGISER

Sievert, Dr. Holger, *Visiting Lecturer*

Different Departments for *Communication and Business Studies*

Zeppelin University / TU Munich / University of Muenster

Kreuzbergstr. 7f

Duesseldorf, 40489

Germany

holger.sievert@googlemail.com

+49-211-4056776

www.holger-sievert.de

Name, First Name, Title

Department

University/Organisation

Street, No.

City, ZIP-Code

Country

E-Mail

Phone

Skype

Website

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

Research question or educational challenge

The significance of international corporate communications is growing rapidly, and the complexity associated with it is increasing almost exponentially. But systematic understanding of international corporate communications (ICC), even in the corner offices of the PR industry's top management, is not well developed.

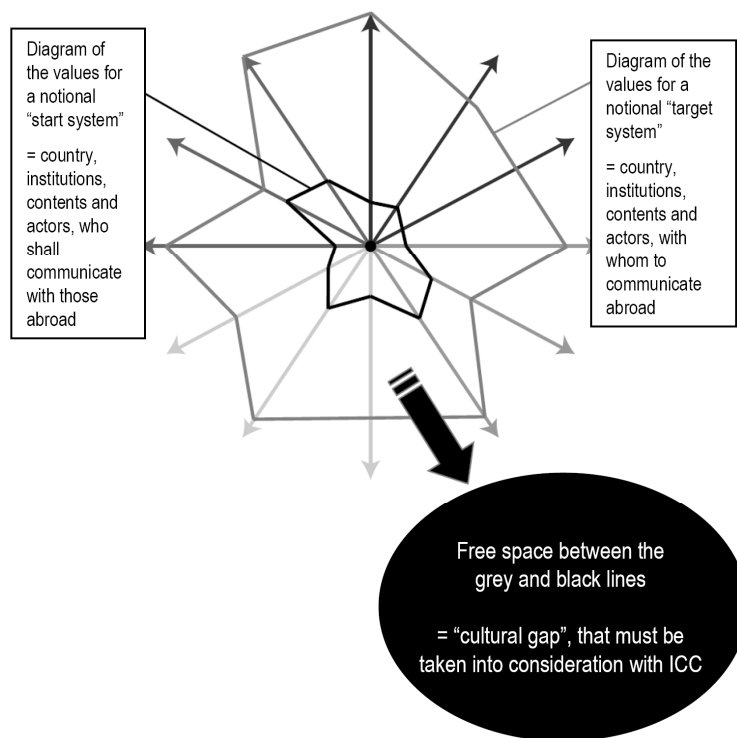
There is no comprehensive interlinking of PR knowledge with relevant expertise derived from other disciplines. Anyone who wants to position specific content through specific institutions by means of specific people in specific media in a specific country has one overriding need: specificity and expertise on all those levels. Similarly, anyone who tries to do this on the internet cannot simply rely on English as the "lingua franca", but must likewise consider many communicative specifics of individual target countries - even if he or she perhaps ultimately decides on one "single" English-language version.

This project will be built on an already proposed heuristic analytical grid, along with its interdisciplinary application using the example of Media Relations. Its aim is to continue to develop that grid, but even more to offer a kind of "European Communication Compass" that can be used by academics and professionals to tear their attention to important differences within PR in Europe – and beyond between specific European issues and other continents.

Goals of the project

The discussion above illuminates the complexity of the context within which international corporate communications occur. It illustrates how important it is for a globally-engaged corporate communicator to be knowledgeable about the levels of target countries, target institutions, target contents and target actors (or why he or she should ensure that employees or service providers have the necessary knowledge). With the right information at hand, PR professionals are in a position to create a kind of ECC compass with regard to dichotomies in all four contexts presented.

How many and which particular compass axes should be selected for an individual strategic communications goal depends upon the situation. In any case, however, by combining the points on the individual axes, a kind of rough map emerges. When the cultural expressions of the individual contexts for all axes are compared to the map, the biggest cultural differences between the systems in which a communications project originates and those of the target system become apparent. This background knowledge seems quite useful for professionals directing cross-national and cross-cultural corporate communications. Seen in this light, this essay can also be understood as what Günter Benteles calls “a contribution to an as yet underdeveloped subdiscipline of public relations research: international comparative studies in public relations or communication management” (Bentele 2004: 492).



This project intends to make evident the potential usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches in international comparative PR research and show examples of European countries where it will be applied. This is only possible in an international team – just using the existing knowledge as a proposal for going much further.

The wheels need not, however, be reinvented. To use a metaphor, we can clearly see that as a vehicle. This vehicle is a whole unit, built around the controlling capacity given by the dashboard, is of paramount importance. The vehicle required to navigate the tricky path of International Corporate Communications is not a sports car, where speed and haste is of paramount concern, nor is it an ‘old-timer’, where aesthetics rule the roost. The most effective vehicle for Global PR is the humble family saloon: of greatest importance is a safe, calculated, effective, considered and calm passage from A to B.

Overall timeline (start and end of the project – month and year):

March 2009: First Presentation at EUPRERA spring symposium in Berlin
July 2009: Presentation of the theoretical framework at Bledcom (awarded with IPR price)
Sept. 2009: Presentation of methodological context at EUPRERA in Bukarest
Nov. 2009: Presentation of the whole framework adopted to Mediterranean in Catania
Febr. 2010: New Presentation at EUPRERA in Ghent with focus of team members
March 2010: First European Results presented at IPRRC in Miami (accepted paper)
Oct. 2010: Invited Research Meeting of Working Group/Team Members in Dusseldorf
March 2011: Full European Results presented by group at EUPRERA spring symposium
after that: continuation on global level within IPR Global Commission (proposed)

Milestones (i.e. setting up the project team, meetings, conferences, surveys, papers, ...)

see above

Resource planning (finances, other resources and support)

Mainly necessary is the knowledge and the research will of the members. No special resources are needed so far – perhaps later some for travel expenses and/or publication. We are very hopefully to get this ones either by sponsoring or by joint cooperation with other activities.

How can Euprera members join the project? Who should join the project?

Requirements and benefits for potential team members

EUPRERA members can join the project whenever they are interested and some of them have already promised within the framework of MEDCOM their close cooperation.

The idea is a centrally managed project, but with individual and equal contribution of everyone interested. All work done so far is only to be understand as possible input that can, but needn't to be followed. However, a lot of modification on this base on empirical data results are anyway possible.

Therefore, these are the possibilities of co-operation for EUPRERA members:

- in discussion the key indicators used so far in the "compass" and the common development of an own common and further one;
- the collection of empirical data for all contries concerned and all key indicators;
- the re-discussion of compass indicators and its final definition; including the formulation of general consequences for PR practice, research and education in Europe.

For more information and former research papers, please go for the moment to www.holger-sievert.de or join the CERPMED community within the online network XING.