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RESEARCH COMMUNICATION

Just another business...

Why academic and SME research groups can benefit from the field of corporate communication

For decades, the business community has been using corporate communication in order to make it easier to achieve their business goals. European and national research projects can do the same.

Some university scientists might say that the concepts of corporate communication cannot be used in a research projects, because "we are not a business". Indeed, they are not, but this does not rule out the mechanisms and "natural laws" of communication. The challenges are basically identical.

Of course there are differences. The computer industry is different from the food industry, which is different from the NGO's. And the research community is quite different from all of those – but the dynamics of interaction with the world are basically the same. The main difference is that the product is knowledge, instead of sausages or mobile phones. But the dynamics of communication apply for all.

That said, the use of communication concepts in research projects, is a "subdomain" of the communications field, which has not yet been described very well, still lacking basic knowledge sharing. Let us name it "research communication" (RC), defined like this:

RC is the implementation of corporate communication in a research project. RC is a parallel to what you do in business: You aim to integrate the communication right from the start, analyze stakeholders, develop strategy, make plans for communication channels, etc. The only difference is: in research projects you are producing knowledge rather than physical goods.

It is a matter of course, that we want the relevant people to get the relevant messages at the relevant time. But using communication knowledge and experience will ensure that the communication tasks will be carried out targeted and systematically, supplemented with intuition and gut feeling.

Adapting RC concepts, research & business projects can benefit in means of added value at the final stage: In the means of well planned dissemination – but also because they will achieve increased interest and goodwill throughout the entire project period.

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