

THE SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A PART OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE PROMOTION OF SPORT

(Professional paper)

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Abstract

The social networks as a communication tool of the public relations contribute to the promotion of the sport among the citizens. The activities on the social networks related to the sport are getting people closer together, people who have different characters, professions, age, religions, nationalities and they give the possibility for communication and exchange of experiences, cultures, meeting friends, and most important, they promote healthy life-styles. The social networks as a factor in the society give contribution to the process of mutual respect for the values of the sport and they promote the values of the sport as the asset for social cohesion. The use of the social networks has a big significance in the maintenance of the relation and information sharing between the citizens and this brings us to the final conclusion that the social networks present an excellent tool for the public relations in the communication activities for promotion of the sport.

Keywords: *values of sport, media, interact with the public, social information, clubs, handball clubs, basketball clubs, sports fans, sports organizations, Facebook, Twitter, Google*

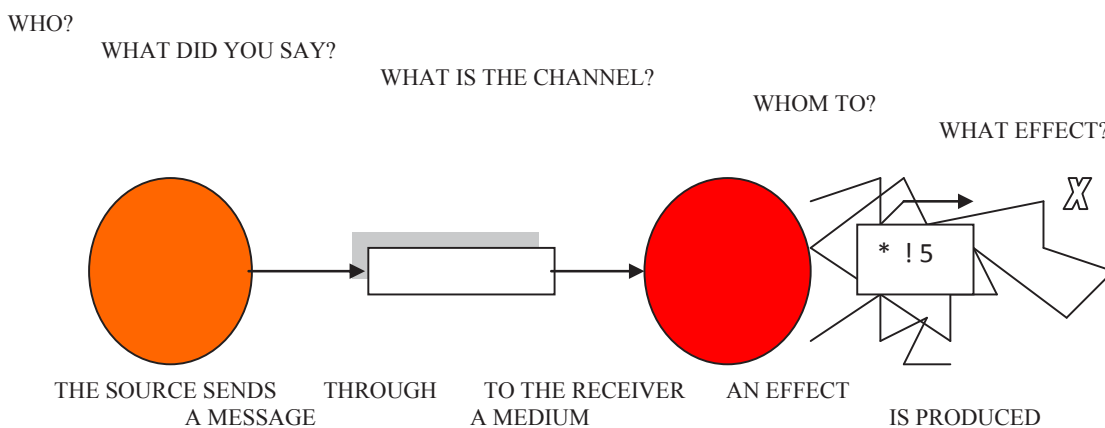
The public relations present an essential element in the management of any organization. With their implementation in the work, a positive reputation is gained and the image of any organization is built. The permanent two-way communication with the citizens and the media represents an obligation and a challenge for any organization whose task is to timely, truly and openly inform the citizens about their work, and thus enabling the gain of their trust and support. Thanks to the public relations and their use in the informing process, the citizens take an active participation in the process of creation of policies in the society.

According to Public Relations News (PR magazine published for 67 years) the definition for practicing the public relations represents a managerial function that impacts the public behavior, identifies the policies and procedures of the individual or the organization with a public interests and executive programs with action at the public understanding and acceptance. The social networks as a part of the public relations have become a very powerful informative and communication channel

in the past 6 years and they represent a communication tool of the new era in which we live. The social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ are the leaders who constantly introduce changes in order to meet the clients' needs for information.

One of the main elements of the social networks is the community or the unity and it is related to the idea that the social media enable continuous cooperation regarding an idea that lasts for a longer period and to be performed from different locations. It is well known that the unity or the community should have a part of members who are strongly related to each other and have frequent communication. The community that lacks these features is not as good as the previously mentioned one. The impact of the social networks can be identified through Harold Lasswell's scheme. According to Lasswell (1948) the communication is a transmission of a message from one subject to another respectively from the source to the receiver and the more we communicate the more we are reaching bigger efficiency.

His communication scheme is made to answer the



Picture 1. Harold Lasswell's scheme (1948)

following questions.

According to Comscore.com, one of the leading technological media companies, a global leader in the processing of the digital world towards the end of 2011, most of the users and a leader in the social networks was Facebook, the social network with almost 1, 5 billions of users.

Worldwide	Total Unique Visitors (000)
Total Internet : Total Audience	1,438,877
Facebook.com	792,999
Twitter.com	167,903
LinkedIn.com	94,823
Google Plus	66,756
Myspace	61,037

Picture 2: Users of social networks according to Comscore.com

In the sports part, the social media have enormous impact in the promotion of the sport. According to the official statistic that is maintained on the internet website Social bakers, one of the most famous football clubs in world frames FC Barcelona from Spain has 29.023.383 registered supporters on Facebook. FC Real Madrid from Spain at its Facebook fun page has 26.420.948 supporters; FC Manchester United from England has 23.844.898 supporters whereas the NBA has 12.594.182 registered Facebook supporters. In view of the sportspeople the most popular on Facebook is the footballer Christiano Ronaldo from FC Real Madrid who has 42.222.087 supporters, David Becham has 17.408.664 supporters and the legend of the world basketball Michael Jordan has 17.417.008 supporters.

Among the social networks in the Republic of Macedonia, Facebook is the one used the most with 936.000 users. This ranks the Republic of Macedonia on the 81st place in a range of 213 countries. The youth aging 18-24 are the biggest users with a registered number of 299.616 users (32%). This statistics paves the way for the possibility to influence the youth towards the right direction using the social networks. The analysis of the supporters of the Macedonian sport at the social network Facebook shows that there is a large interest among the citizens who support the Macedonian sport.

The Macedonian football brand FC Vardar has the support of 3.686 Facebook fans, FC Rabotnicki has 8.207 members, the basketball club MZT Skopje has 14.459 fans, the basketball club Rabotnicki has 5.019 fans, the handball club Metalurg has 3.641 members, the national football team of Macedonia has 17.310 members, the basketball national team has 15.319, the handball national team – 4.082 members, the biggest multi-functional sports arena “Boris Trajkovski” has 9.125 members and the state institution responsible for sport and care of youth in the Republic of Macedonia – The Agency for Youth and sport has 2.576 members.

The analysis separately conducted at the above-stated social pages on Facebook network in the area of sport in the Macedonia shows that the biggest number of users at the above-state pages on the social network Facebook is aging 18 to 24 years. This concludes that there is a need of this type of promotion of the sport, especially among the youth in the Republic of Macedonia.

The numbers registered on the social networks shows that the impact of the social networks in the promotion of the Macedonian sport is very big. The advantages can be felt on both sides: the citizens and the fans on one hand, and the sports organizations and the sportspeople, on the other. The supporters and the fans receive timely information for the activities and the

events in the sport organization, whereas the other side has a bigger number of fans and supporters of the sports organization.

Ultimately, we can conclude that the impact of the social networks in the promotion of the world sport is enormous, and by constant development of the internet, this influence of the social networks will increase in the promotion of the Macedonian sport.

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