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**Communication the Magic Tool in Exercising and  
Preserving Political Power**

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## **COMMUNICATION THE MAGIC TOOL IN EXERCISING AND PRESERVING POLITICAL POWER**

*“More than gold, lead changes the fortune  
of the world, and more than bullets, the  
lead of the compositor.”*  
*Georg Friedrich Lichtenberg*

The communication is omnipresent in the social process. It represents: interaction, connection, change, influence, control, power exercise, community life and any other human action.

At each level we have a similar active framework, taking into consideration the next common characteristics:

- a lot of “actors” - persons, organisations, states that "materialize" their intentions, plans of action, strategies with the help of the communication means.
- a limited space (a subject).
- many networks created and structured such as to allow and facilitate the communication flux.
- a common language.
- lots of rules and regulations that order in the communication process

**The society consists in the exchange of ideas, transactions and their results that are also mediated through communication.** Consequently, the social “knowledge” changes continuously and involves a variety of meanings: what is acceptable and what is right, norms and values, identity feelings and affiliation, attitudes and social action that must all be "translated" in different forms of communication such as to be

accepted and assimilated by the ones who are affected and interested in these propositions of change.

Max Weber defines the power, in general terms, as “the probability that one actor of a social network to be in a posture to impose his own wish against the ones who oppose it“.

From here, we can draw the conclusion that **the power of any time or space is concerned with the control of communication - as a major and essential tool to exercise and preserve power in order to impose and fulfil one's "wish"**. So, in any conditions, the power intends to control the communication with a view to its fulfilment.

The main channels to influence and determine the necessary attitude of the public opinion towards the changes or actions planned by the ones "in power"/ or "in charge" is the mass-media. So, the relationship between the mass-media and the institutions of power - either legislative, executive or representative is essential if the decision makers want to transpose successfully their initiatives into reality.

At the other end, mass media communication effects are much more difficult to control, as the messages have different target audiences, while the feed-back is either missing or not under official control. There are three most important elements that can work together for a fruitful institutional exercise of power: a professional, effective Public Relations team to build a constant and constructive relation with the press, the mass-media itself, working in accordance with the market rules and their interests, either ideological or economic, and the sociological research institutes that can catch the pulse of the public opinion, helping the power managers to adjust and shape their communication strategies and plans in accordance with the public agenda.

Anyway, the methods of communication are in a permanent process of development. We can send messages instantaneously at huge distances for billions of people. So, it is clear that the media – either traditional or the global Internet-work, influence people and the society, but what we don't know are all its effects and their duration, or, better to say, how to mould our messages and organize the communication activities such as to determine certain effects with a certain duration.

For example - We can see that despite the goal made public by the American government of expelling Saddam in order to turn Iraq into a democratic country, the thirty years of constant anti-American propaganda made through all possible media, shows its fruits during the

war, when neither the Americans nor the British soldiers are well-come by the Iraq population, even after more than thirty years of cruel dictatorship.

The evaluation of the mass-media communication is based on three main questions:

1. What are the social expectations concerning information and mass-media about the power's political, social or economic actions?
2. What is the impact of information and mass-media reports on people?
3. How to use the public communication means and tools such as "the power" to fulfil its aims and reach its publics, working independently and also with mass-media?

The answers to these questions give us the ideal strategy of public communication for any executives who are managing a system and want to preserve their position in power.

In a democratic state there are three leading powers: **legislative**, **executive**, **judicial**. Besides these, **mass-media** is considered as the fourth power, due to its surveillance function. Consequently, the fourth power happens often to get in a conflict with the other three, as its investigation work goes many times against the power wave and its duty to the public opinion is to inform and create attitudes that many times do not fit the power will or intentional trend. So, on one side, there is the power with its institutional structure that has to respect certain political engagements, a certain ideology and shape the legislation in order to create the premises for economic and social development, while on the other side, mass media has the power and the democratic right to reveal the achievements and failures of the power to the benefit of their audience, that takes implicitly to a bigger profit.

On its side, the power always wants to control the activity of both the political opposition, or the public or local administration structures and the civil society, and, if necessary, to censor their work in order to subdue and bring them to a common nominator. For these actions no to be taken as censorship or a non-democratic control, the institutions of power exercise need for themselves very strong communication skills, professionals in the field and a well defined strategy, as well as a clear plan of action and a budget for all of them.

Based on these idea as hypothesis, I will try to prove due to my working experience with the institutions of public policy, public administration and mass-media, that the main link of the political system with the public policy and the public administration network and mass-media is a coherent, constant and substantial communication process and a reasonable exercise of power illustrated with the means of public communication for the general public knowledge.

In order to get the best results from this proposition – “*a coherent, constant and substantial communication process and a reasonable exercise of power*” I forward to your attention the following scheme of work in the communication process that refers mainly to the interaction with the public, whether coming from the media or different segments of the public opinion.

<b>Inform Objective:</b> To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, and/or solution.	<b>Involve Objective:</b> To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently	<b>Consult Objective:</b> To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	<b>Collaborate Objective:</b> To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification	<b>Empower Objective:</b> To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will keep you informed. the decision. influenced the decision. possible.	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your device and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will implement what you decide.

		input		
<b>Example Tools</b> Fact sheets Web sites Open houses	<b>Example Tools</b> Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings	<b>Example Tools</b> Workshops Deliberative Polling	<b>Example Tools</b> Citizen Advisory Committees Consensus-building Participatory decision making	<b>Example Tools</b> Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decisions

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The right conclusion after consulting this scheme is that **the communication and Public Relations tools must be on the front line at each level of the power exercise (executive levels) and the two-way communication channels with the public and their sources of information (mass-media) must be always on, like a non-stop radio station.**

Taking all the previous information, regarding the scheme of "increasing level of public impact" and acceptance, I would add, we could work on any major decision or messages coming from the people in charge at any level of power exercise and confront them with the steps provided in the table in order to understand the breaking points at the communication level between the three main factors in the social area – decision makers (power level), mass-media (information sources), the general public/citizens (affected by decisions and the flux of information).

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