

PARABOLIC COMMUNICATIONS

BACKGROUNDER

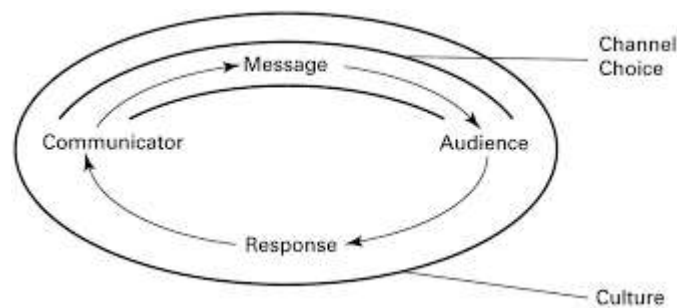
Hannah Wilson & Daveanne Williams
Parabolic Communications

June 7th, 2022

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FOUNDATIONS OF THE FIELD

Strategic communications is a specific branch of communication focusing on principles, strategies, and initiatives used to further an organization's goals, mission, or values. It includes disciplines such as public relations, mass communication, advertising, and organizational communication. Ib Gullbrandsen and Sine Just noted in their journal, *Strategizing Communication: Theory and Practice*, that strategic communication is a performative process by which an organization realizes its strategy through communication (2020). Betteke van Ruler of the University of Amsterdam states that strategic communication specifically focuses on the process of communication, which might take place over long periods of time and continue after a message has been transmitted. The role of the communicator is to send information that acts as the beginning of an exchange between a communicative entity and its stakeholders. This can lead to social, political, and organizational change or action. The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) highlights that the most important standards a strategic communicator could set for themselves are making values transparent, remaining truthful, and understanding the objective of the message.



The need for strategic communications has been around for a long time, however, it has only recently started to evolve and establish itself as a major player in other fields. In just 2018, Howard Nothhaf said the strategic communication field is only in stage 1, referring to Shneider's four-stage model. The first stage of a developing discipline focuses on building a language that is easily recognizable and routinely used by the practitioners of the field. Despite the field being somewhat juvenile in the eyes of researchers, the National Communication Association (NCA) reported in 2021 that employment in media and communication occupations is projected to grow 14 percent by 2030. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) advocates for employing strategic communications divisions as they create opportunities to maintain trust, inspire confidence, and build competitive advantage.

In the age of digital environments, it's more important than ever that organizations create solid frameworks for communicating. MSL, a public relations firm, found that one-third of

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employees who work from home say that internal communications from their companies have little to no impact on them. The field is expected to adapt to these changing environments.

Click the link below for a short interactive quiz.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1B2OP462EtkP5CDtmcRL7dpwbH_tgGjBd/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=102763003883905227736&rtpof=true&sd=true

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THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Theories have been around for centuries and act as proven phenomena; they are methods that have been tried and proven. The field of Communication has its theories that aids or informs practice and generates results that add value and bring about successful results. Four theories that confer this are the Uses and Gratification Theory, Systems Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Grunig's Excellence Theory.

Uses and Gratification Theory essentially views individuals as active consumers in the media they chose to utilize and why they use the media they choose. Most media theories state or imply that the media is the one that actively influences the consumer to choose what they want to view, however, this theory suggests that individuals choose what type of messages they consume based on their own interests. This Theory looks into the five reasons people use media and these are as follows: entertainment, social interaction, personal identity, information and education, and as an escape. In terms of social interaction, individuals use media as a tool to facilitate social interaction. This is so that they can relate to various social groups around them. Education and information are other reasons for the use of the media. The theory states that individuals use media for edification purposes and to stay informed. Subsequently, personal identity speaks to the idea that people are likely to seek out role models in characters portrayed in media. This tends to take place mostly in children, where they are likely to select celebrities as their role models. According to the Uses and Gratification theory, individuals use the media as a form of escape, and of course the most common reason is to entertain themselves. This theory can be applied to carry out research that will help us to gather information on what our consumers desire so as to deliver content, services and products that are directly cut to suit that.

Another theory that would support our pitch is the Systems Theory. Systems theory in my opinion focuses on society as a combination of elements that are interconnected. *Davis 2007*, stated that the theory is characterized by its interrelations of elements. The theory posits the notion that systems are either open or closed. Open systems are often seen as those that share information and other resources, while a closed system does the opposite. Supporters of this theory pose the notion that social organizations cannot exist in a closed system (*Kast and Rosenweig 1972*), however some beg to differ and propose a balance of both systems is required to have success. On the flip side, some believe that a closed system could be advantageous to societal organizations, while others such as Broom and Sha stated that Public Relations cannot survive in a closed system. They support this argument by demonstrating how Public Relations need outside information to make informed and effective plans and strategy. I strongly support this argument as I deem it logical and necessary for the effectiveness of Public Relations and any other form of communication practice.

Stakeholder theory focuses on primary stakeholders whose actions are most impactful to an organization. These are employees, investors, customers, suppliers, government, and community members but organizations must be cognizant of what Coombs (1998) referred to as secondary stakeholders consisting of the media, activist groups, and competitors. The theory posits that it is more beneficial to consider stakeholders as it could be useful in decision-making. Nowadays due to technology, it is extremely easy to share information which has caused a trend of openness as well as it is easy to access information. Due to these advances, it would be intuitive to utilize such innovations, especially with multiple streams of communications available to send a variety of messages. The theory stipulates and recommends the ways by which the collective

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interests of stakeholders would be catered for by the management of an organization (Godam, Omega and Ochonogor, 2019). This perspective will be implemented so as to gather all the necessary information from various stakeholders after careful research in order to concoct a proper strategy for the client moving forward.

Lastly, Grunig's Excellence theory looks at the extent to which Communication contributes to organizational effectiveness according to a study conducted by the International Association of Business Communications. Similar to the Stakeholder Theory, Grunig's Excellence Theory also looks at utilizing stakeholders and validates Public Relations Practitioners being more effective when they assist stakeholders of an organization in developing and achieving their goals. It states that by doing so true returns on investments can be seen as well as it allows Practitioners to aid Organizations in segmenting the demographics, identifying potential stakeholders, and utilizing the proper communication methods to foster relationships with the right masses. The theory posits that organizations must operate in a certain way that ensures goals are being met.

These theories in my esteem are some of the most valuable theories that help to inform communication practice. As a Junior Account Executive working from either of these perspectives will aid in formulating messages that will achieve the organization's goals and desired outcomes as well as they will help to facilitate internal stability and control. Communication practitioners, with the use of theories that have been supported by sufficient empirical study, will be applied strategically to bring about organizational growth and goal attainment. Subsequently, Parabolic Communications will partner with NazarOps to strategize their brand messages and products in the best way moving forward.

See the attached Infographic for a summary of the details mentioned in this section.

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ETHICAL AND LEGAL EXPERTISE

Ethics and human interaction commonly overlap. Tyler Biscontini notes that ethical communication has three primary categories: heterogeneity, interconnectivity, and historicity. Heterogeneity includes the virtually limitless number of situations that can occur when two or more people communicate. Interconnectivity refers to the connections forged between people when they communicate, and the necessary role played by communication in all human interactions. Historicity refers to the role that ethical communication plays in historic events. Common rules for communicating in an ethical manner are speaking honestly, working to understand other people, and respecting boundaries (2020). These components are heavily relied on when crafting a company's communication plan. Hassan Bakar and Stacey Connaughton conducted a study in early 2022 with results suggesting that leader-member ethical communication may enhance organizational citizenship behavior, meaning, that employees respond better to honest communication from their leadership.

One clear example of unethical communication can be seen when dealing with certain health crises. A 2021 article from the Media Ethics Initiative outlines how far health campaigns are willing to go for the sake of creating emotionally evoking advertisements. Many anti-obesity campaigns promote moral disgust through upsetting visuals to discourage unhealthy eating habits. The World Health Organization (WHO) found that "globesity – an escalating global epidemic of overweight and obesity" affects 200 million adults and another 18 million under-five children worldwide (2013). Since then, public health campaigns have shifted much of their focus to quickly rising obesity rates. This tactic is unethical as it tells a dishonest story.

It's not only important to communicate ethically, but legally, as well. In the 2022 case study, "The Ethics of News Organizations Suing Press Watchdogs", Scott Stroud explains how TV Today Network (TTN), India Today's parent company, filed a civil suit with the Delhi High Court. According to TTN, several videos and articles published by Newslaundry defame their employees and brand. Comparatively, the Committee to Protect Journalists, an organization dedicated to freedom of press and journalism, argues TTN must respect the right to freedom of speech and should drop the lawsuit. Should the lawsuit stick, it could cost Newslaundry \$267 thousand in fines.

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APPENDIX

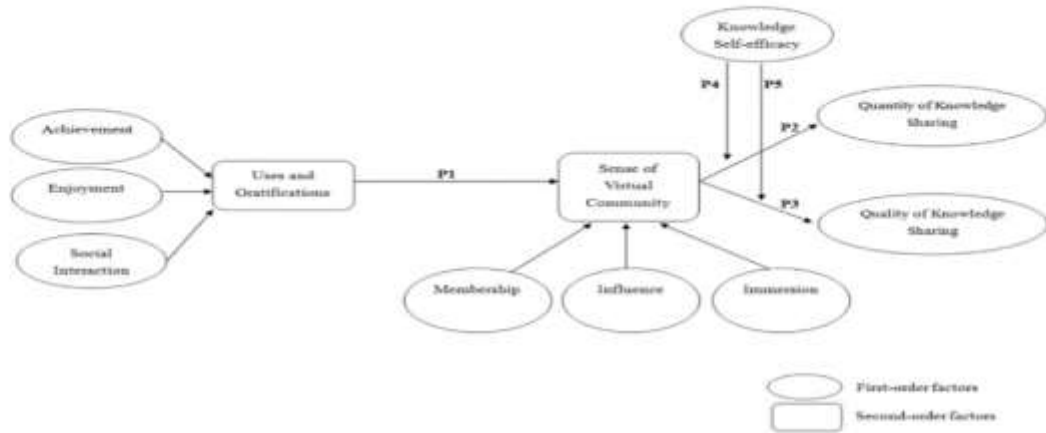
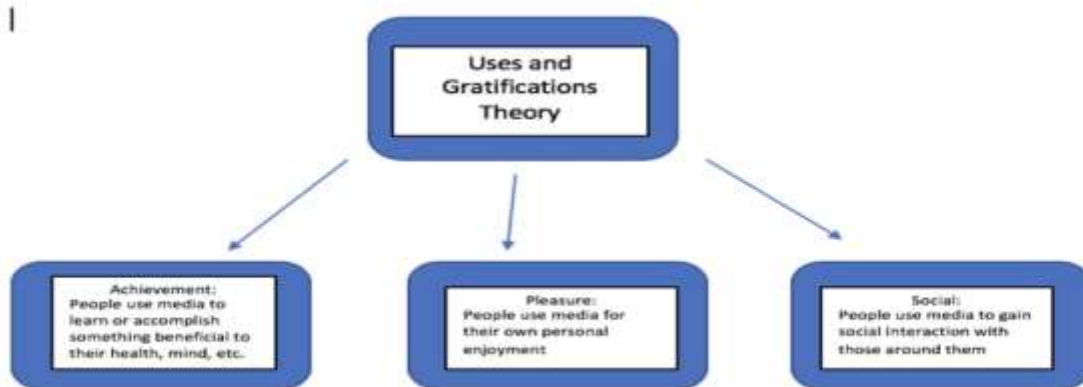


Fig. 1 The Conceptual Model (Chaung 2015, p. 474).



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ADDITIONAL SOURCES

https://kdpaine.blogs.com/files/encyclopedia-of-communication-9781405131995_chapter_399.pdf

<https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/stratcommwriting/chapter/code-of-ethics/>

https://thebusinessprofessor.com/en_US/communications-negotiations/ethics-in-communication

<https://paradoxmarketing.io/capabilities/knowledge-management/insights/ethical-communication-the-basic-principles/>