

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

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**Bachelor Thesis**

**Public Relations Campaigns in Telecommunication Business**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled “Public Relations Campaigns in telecommunication business” by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis.

In Prague on

.....  
signature

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank to Mr. Richard Selby, Ph.D for his useful advice and support during my work on this thesis.

**Kampaně pro vztahy s veřejností v telekomunikačním  
obchodě**

**Public Relations Campaigns in Telecommunication Business**

## **Souhrn**

Tato bakalářská práce popisuje základ public relations (vztahů s veřejností), jejich užití a důležitost každé v ziskové a neziskové organizaci. V teoretické části této práce jsou představeny hlavní cíle a filozofie public relations jako funkce managementu. Dále jsou popsány jednotlivé etapy PR kampaně.

Praktická část mé bakalářské práce je zaměřená na public relations v telekomunikačním obchodě v České republice. Hlavní pozornost je kladena na poskytování internetových služeb. Pomocí dotazníku jsou v konkrétní firmě zjištěny vztahy s veřejností. Na základě analýzy veřejného mínění je doporučena PR kampaň pro tuto danou společnost.

## **Klíčová slova**

Public relations, média, reklama, kampaň, veřejnost, management, marketing.

## **Summary**

This bachelor thesis describes the core of public relations, their utilization and importance of every profit and nonprofit organization. In the theoretical part of the work, the main objectives and philosophy of PR as a function of management are introduced. Further, single stages of public relation campaign are described.

The practical part of my bachelor thesis is focused on public relations in telecommunication business in the Czech Republic. The main interest is put on the internet providing. Through the use of a questionnaire, the public relations of a particular company in the telecommunication service are determined. Based on the public opinion analysis, a PR campaign recommendation for the company will be given.

## **Key words**

Public relations, media, advertisement, campaign, public, management, marketing.

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## **1. Introduction**

In today's life, it is very important for a company to look good in public, act in a trustworthy manner and create a good image. There are many ways of how to manage it, and one possibility is public relations (PR). The main philosophy of public relations is to build up and subsequently maintain trust in the public.

As will be explained in the following chapters, PR is a function of management and thus certain management rules are used in making up a PR campaign. Anyway, public relation is often wrongly associated with marketing and advertisement. Therefore it is not about propagation of goods or services but about understanding and aligning the interest part of the public through an information exchange.

Public relation is a complex problem that should be constantly worked on, no matter in which field of business. It includes today's competitive telecommunications market on which this bachelor's work has focused. If a company has support of the public, it becomes much more successful than without public disagreement.

## **2. Objectives and methodology**

The main aim of this thesis is the explanation of public relations philosophy, its objectives and practical application of public relations campaigns in telecommunication business. Other objectives, which complete the main goal are:

- Definition of public and focus groups
- Tools of PR
- Introducing PR as function of management
- Clarification of difference between PR and advertisement

The goal of literary survey was utilization of accessible literature as a basis to compile a public relation campaign, which can be used in practice. The content and layout of this part are matched with the thought methods applied in their processing.

In the practical part, I focused more on development of data communication in the Czech Republic and then, a certain telecommunication company is introduced as an example for improvement of public relations.

A survey is used as the primary source of the practical part of my bachelor thesis in the form of questionnaire which is targeted at a smaller group of people - customers of a particular telecommunication company. The main purpose of the questionnaire survey was to determine the customer's attitudes towards the company and their experience with services and communication.

The survey was carried out with questionnaires delivered to respondents in paper form or sent to them electronically. The planned number of respondents was 50. After returning the questionnaire I focused on the analysis of the data obtained and then processed the results graphically. Then I describe the situation and determine whether the company has a good relationship with the public or not. As an outcome of my

practical part, the PR campaign for the given company was developed according the ascertained data, and some advice for better communication with the public and especially with customers was given.

### **3. Literature overview**

#### **3. 1. What are public relation?**

##### **3.1.1. Development of PR**

Public relations (PR) are a constant relationship which exists independently of our requests, whether we realize it or not. The relationship concerns wished or even unwished communications. [1]

Public relations, as already indicated by the title, involve a process of mutual influence among different subjects, persons, organizations and government. Attempts of getting an assessment of public opinion and then forming it are as old as the organized society itself. The importance of public relations has grown dramatically since people got their right to vote and thus to choose their government. [3]

Under our conditions, PR has a much more difficult position; and one could say that it is considered to be more of a propaganda and agitation than a good will of an organization. In the past, public relations could be seen only at international trade fairs (expos) and similar events. It will be another several few years before the complex appreciation of PR is achieved. The growing number of public relations officers testifies the awareness of the independent media mission which is the once that go towards the public opinion and rights. However, most often this involves only a one-way flow of information. It is expected that in the future it will become a two-way flow, taking into consideration the response of public opinion. [1]

##### **3.1.2. The philosophy of PR**

The main philosophy of public relations is very easy. It is assumed that it is much easier to become successful in reaching set up goals in support of the public, than with a general disagreement and lack of concern. PR is instrumental to a number of institutions of our society as are boards, offices, hospitals, government and universities. But PR can also run in middle or small size companies which operate only in local areas. Certainly, an international concern will have more means to achieve their goals,

however good will in places where we act is always more valuable than good will in far-distance places. [1]

The public relations can be thus summarized into several key words. It concerns reputation, good will, sensation, credibility, harmony and looking for reciprocal understanding with the help of true and full information. [3] In short, it is about understanding the part of public's interest through information exchange. A department of PR constantly and systematically collects, sorts out and evaluates information coming from outside to inside of an organization. In some cases, human relations are part of the PR (boss and employees). Thus it is not merely an external relationship, as it is sometimes wrongly interpreted, it is internal as well. [1]

Public relations include:

- consulting service based on the understanding of human behaviour
- analysis and forecast future directions and their consequences
- survey of public opinion, attitudes and expectations
- creation and maintenance of two-way communication based on true and complete information
- prevention of conflicts and misunderstanding
- deepen mutual respect and social responsibility
- coordination of private and public interest
- fostering of good will between management, workers and consumers
- improvement of relations with suppliers, customers and other subjects of the economic sphere
- getting good workers and limit their fluctuation
- improving product and service quality
- projection and graphical representations [3]

One of many ways how to describing public relations is the hexagon model. Six sides of the hexagon represent the various factors that influence the role and scope of public relations.

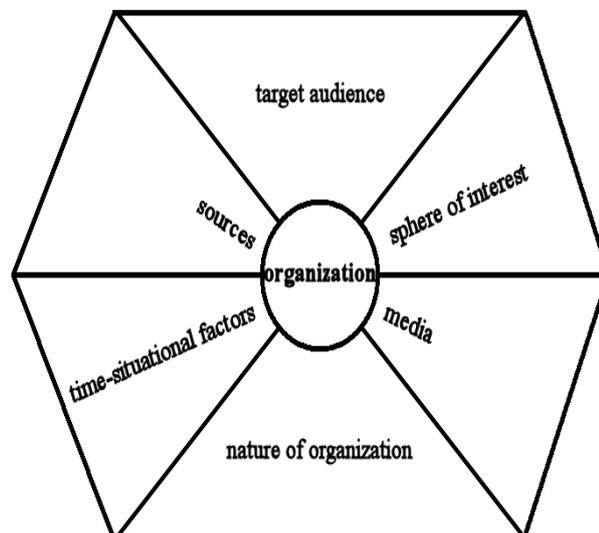


Fig. 3.1. Hexagon model[2]

### **3.1.3. Main objectives of PR**

The goal of marketing communications in public relations is to create a positive subconsciousness and to build trust and understanding given to the company and help to create the conditions and space for the realization of its marketing goals. The strategy must be used to achieve these objectives. Strategic success depends upon the choice of information which will be told, on the form which will be communicated and the choice of carrier. The strategic importance of public services which the company secures cannot be overlooked. Activities which are presented in the strategy must be distinctly closer to the targets of public relations. These are a positive company image, a created subconscious of a company and the goods and trying to share good relations with the public including the awareness that the part of the profit of the company was devoted to the benefit of society. [4]

The main goals according to [4] can be specified in various ways:

- Get support, public understanding of the mission, future events or activities of the organization
- Express interests of the organization to the public
- Inform and thus obtain public trust
- Persuade the target group about the usefulness or importance of intent
- Negotiate and communicate with the public
- Create or improve public image
- Align the interests of the public and organizations to ensure mutual understanding
- Reduce the possibility of mutual conflict and tension
- Modify the organization policy, its processes and actions that could be contrary to public interest and the organization's survival, to be mutually beneficial to the organization and its public.

## **3.2. Types of focus groups**

### **3.2.1. Definition of public**

Before the focused groups are determined, definition of public has to be set. Conceptually, a public is a social group, which is usually understood as a summary of the members of a particular organizational, residential, territorial, state or supranational figure. In the sociological term, from the marketing communication point of view it is very important that the common sharing of social, economic or even geographical conditions creates public opinion. By that, the public can efficiently respond to every publicly expression or opinion.

The basis of public relation is the public. Thus it is what citizens think about the organization. The public's estimation can be called the public opinion. A lot of research shows that in recent decades, the importance of public opinion has grown rapidly. This is mainly due to the following factors:

- a steadily growing awareness of people
- constant growth of people's education
- level of economy
- enhanced process of democratization
- preferred style of the democratic procedure before authoritative proceeding
- by the motto: "Our customer - our master"

All communications with public consist of objective informing of citizens, effective communication with media, managing possible criticism of public and in the successful operation of all expert communication activities generally. A correctly set communication in "time of peace" can make it possible that in a critical moment, the public can accept even unpleasant information much more easily. If a company operates in a field in which the chance of a problem occurrence is high, it has to be much more open and friendly to its stakeholders and eventually inform about all possible problems and difficulties. [4]

### **3.2.2. Focus groups**

For an organization there exists a large number of individuals and groups with which the company wishes to be in touch. In each time period it is necessary to identify which part of the public is the most important for the organization. The public interest is usually both internal and external. The internal public of a company includes internal and external staff, management, trainees, etc. The external public is more complex. The long list includes customer care, suppliers and distributors, the central and local government, financial stakeholders, an advocacy group on the environment and other issues, media, trade and career associations, academic and research institutions and ultimately the general public. [3], [7]

The following figure 4.1. represents an extreme range of the public that might interest a typical company or organization. Although it is necessary to maintain all these groups as the greatest possible asset, it is not possible to be focused simultaneously on all of them. [3]

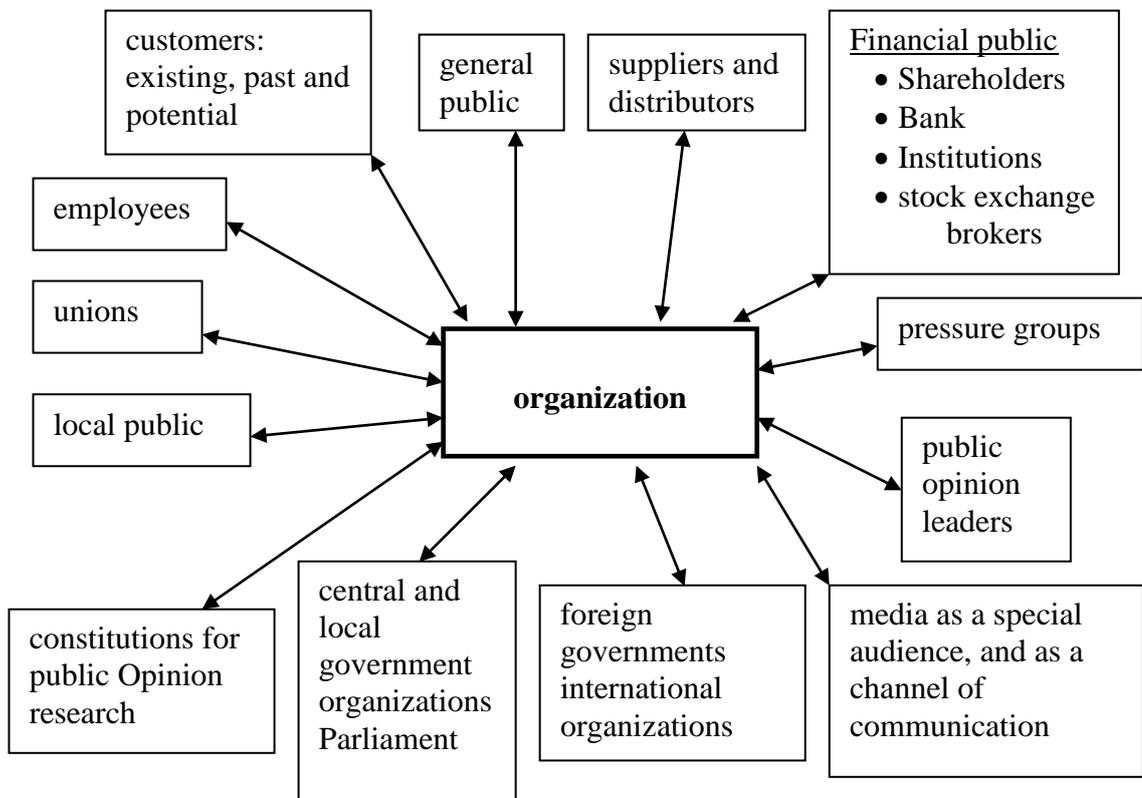


Fig. 4.1. Range of potential organization's public [3]

### 3.3. Tools of public relations

#### 3.3.1. Tools influencing focused groups directly

A communicator speaks to recipients through a certain channel (instruments). This could include interpersonal communication to what may occur in a personal interview and at the most important meetings with certain groups, for example in the form of seminars, conferences, meetings, as well as in informal meetings (business lunches, dinners, etc.) Or it may be a categorized communication, in which the communicator and the recipient are not in direct social contact: for example, through specialist publications or magazines for clients, customers, shareholders, etc. Unlike regular publications they are not aimed at a broader public. A very important advantage of using these tools is in that we can see the feed-back directly. [4]

### 3.3.2. Tools of indirect communication

Communication takes place through the help of the media and opinion leaders, in other words, the persons or bodies whose views are crucial to the creation of public opinion. Both options have their advantages. Opinion leaders allow us to undertake a particularly credible information package. The means of mass communication allows a wide distribution of information, but there is a danger of becoming lost in the flood of others. The media scene can be divided in need of PR into three groups:

- Press media
- Electronic media
- Agencies

#### **Press media**

- Journals: evening newspapers, tabloid newspapers, seasonal press, specialist press
- Weekly papers: family, information, specialized
- Monthly magazines: family, specialized
- Press with other periodicals

In terms of advertising in printed media the press media can be divided regardless of their periodicals into following groups:

- Dailies and weeklies with updated information
- Magazines
- Popular magazines
- Advertising Periodicals

#### **Electronic Media**

- Broadcast: public, private
- Television: public, private
- Other media: Internet, teletext, etc. [4]

Nowadays, a great number of companies and organizations use interactive social media outlets, such as blogs, Twitter and Facebook, for example Czech University of Life sciences in Prague. [<http://www.facebook.com/CeskaZemedelskaUniverzita>, <http://twitter.com/CZUvPraze>]

### 3.3.3. Other important tools of PR

#### **Purpose-built campaigns – event management**

Purpose-built campaigns alias events try nothing more than to attract and get customers for business and brands through compelling experience such as a thrilling adventure, exciting sports events and other events. As a rule, they create emotional and

psychological stimuli that promote the image of companies and products and thus the business goals.

### **Lobbying**

Lobbying is an area influenced by the apparatus of state and local governments with the ultimate goal to support or hinder, modify or revise any legislative or regulatory proposals or regulations. Lobbying includes a range of activities which concern representing and presenting its views when dealing with legislators and policy, acquisition or passing on information, promote the objectives of interest groups.

### **Fairs and Exhibitions**

Fairs and exhibitions can be utilized to support sales and the public relations. Since fairs and exhibitions nowadays don't fulfill the function of sale but they are more about the affair and prestige, we can tend to include them in PR. Organizations have an opportunity to present this way in public.

### **Sponsoring**

A targeted giving of a gift is another option in public relations. Companies make themselves visible by this way, promote their products and thus emphasize their roles in the business sphere and also in social and daily life. Sponsorship is a means for creating relationships with the public, enabling companies to communicate with some of the public that is difficult to combine with conventional marketing methods. [4]

## **3.4. PR as a function of management**

Public relations represent work for the public, with the public and on the public. It must inform about all the major changes, tactical and strategic goals of the organization. PR proposes, prepares and implements actions, with which an organization presents itself to the public. It provides feedback and evaluates results, which help the leadership as a basic service of base for further decisions.

The authors of manuals, textbooks and PR practitioners may vary in their opinions on this or that area of the field. But they agree with one statement: the PR is not function of marketing, but a management function.

Only management can use complex information about the "image" of the company for its long-term role in society, take action, approve budgets and determine guidelines for the work in public relations. However, this means that part of the employees responsible for PR monitors the advertising department and is responsible for the fact that the advertisement will not harm the interests of the organization and destroy its work in PR, for example, false promises or exaggerated claims. This is especially true for large and perhaps medium-sized enterprises. In the case of small

enterprises either free counsel, or occasionally deployed agency are envisaged. But even in these cases, the agent must be a partner of organizations, rather than subfolder. [1]

### 3.4.3. Comparison of PR, propaganda and advertisement

In a certain sense, public relations, propaganda, advertisement and marketing, all are a target for similar aims: change people's attitudes, affect public or private opinion or promote the sale of goods or services. However, the methods which are used to achieve their results vary. Although these four movements have common factors, their ideology is totally different. In certain moments it is possible to use a combination of some of them, in spite of that they remain separate specific variables, and they should be interchangeable.[3], [8] Lucien Matrat, pioneer in building relations with the public in France suggested as early as in 1971 how public relations should be distinguished from propaganda and advertising.

- Advertising tries to accelerate the sale of products or services, it is a wish strategy.
- Propaganda is a strategy of conditioning. The aim of propaganda is to create a collective strength. Its assertion is not based on verifiable facts in most cases.
- In contrast, the strategy of public relations is based on trust and mutual understanding[3]

In the following table (3.1), the difference between advertisement and public relations is describes according to certain criteria.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Advertisement</b>	<b>Public Relations</b>
Use of mass media	Buying time or space	On basis of getting influence in media
Control of announcement	tight control of content and timing	Relatively small control
Credibility of announcement	Relatively low credibility	Relatively high report acceptance
Type of audience	narrow range of audience focused on trade	specific part of the public or audience
Focus of activity	focused on trade or sale	oriented on attitudes or situations
Time scale	relatively short-term goals	both short and long term
Rating	implemented evaluation techniques	relatively limited evaluation techniques
Payment	paid according to the rate of media	Contractual fees paid by time or annual advance

Table 3.1. Comparing the characteristics of advertising and PR [3]

It is crucial that the public relation is not focused on one or more product (service) of organization, but always on the entire organization.

In other literature, the following criteria for distinguishing PR from advertising are described:

- Advertising: to help sell the product or service  
PR: heading to mental sphere, their goal is information, and integration adaptation
- Advertising: The marketing function  
PR: It is the function of management
- Advertising: It concentrates the attention on individual products or services and aims at exactly defined target groups  
PR: focuses attention on the entire organization and its involvement in social life by objective information
- Advertising: works in the short-run or medium-run  
PR: works in long-run [1]

### 3.4.4. Marketing and PR

It is clear that PR have much in common with marketing. In some literature, the function of public relations is considered as part of marketing. However, this statement finds little foundation. Possible confusion could be clarified by some official definitions. The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as follows:

The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as follows:

**“Marketing is the process of leadership that is responsible for identifying, adopting and satisfying customer’s requirements, resulting in profit.”**

The Institute of Public Relations defines practice of relation with public as:

**“Planned and sustained effort to create and maintain goodwill and understanding between the organization and its audience.”**

Based on the comparison between these two definitions we can find out that public relations field is wider than the field of marketing, although both obviously have certain characteristics in common.

Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations have many denominators in common, which is not an excuse for attempts of mutually taking over the role. Large organizations will certainly have both a marketing department and a public relations department. Their functions are sometimes connected and sometimes quite different. [3]

### 3.5. Campaigns

The organization always turns aside the relatively independent PR campaign, to find a mismatch in relations with certain types of public. It is therefore necessary to launch a campaign aimed at target groups to better understand the intentions of the organization. [2]

A campaign strategy sets targets and suggests the best ways to achieve them. Each campaign has its own unique and incomparable purposes and objectives, which already in themselves affect the form and method of the campaign. It is therefore necessary to specify the requirements and explicitly express the expectation which the campaign should achieve. [2], [8]

The strategy is also a detailed analysis of direct and indirect competitors and their marketing activities. Likewise, the strategy should define the target group, which has a campaign to reach out and make a number of other surveys and searches. [11]

The specialists now look on Public Relations events like they do upon every other solution of the problem. What are then four main stages in solving problems related to the public? See table 3.2.

<b>Campaign stage</b>	<b>Answering questions ...</b>
1. analysis of the situation (defining of PR problem)	What is happening?
2. formation of the Campaign	What should we do and say? And why? How we are going to do it and say it?
3. implementation of the campaign, communication	
4. Evaluation of the campaign	How did we do it? What are the implications for next time?

Table 3.2. Four main stages of public relation campaign. [2]

#### 3.5.1. first stage: Analysis

What is a problem analysis for, does it explore a situation? Isn't it an useless intellectual exercise? What can the analysis bring overall?

- It helps to test any of the basic attitudes of target groups, thereby improving the planned announcement,
- detects the real opinion of the group and helps determine who the real leader of the public is,
- reduces cost of a campaign which can focus on primary objectives and most important groups,
- verifies the efficiency in planning and communication channels before they will

- be used for real,
- provides a two-way communication between the target group and the body of PR. In doing so it affects their relationships,
- detects public attitudes on potential conflicts and threats even before they get into press and television.

The main result of situations research is the overview which summarizes what was found about the problematic situation. It should be expressed in the present time and in writing form because that gives rise to pressure on the precision expressed and the conclusions. It provides answers to questions such as:

- What is the source of problem?
- Where is the problem?
- When it comes to a problem?
- Who is involved?
- Why it becomes a problem of our organization and of the public?

Effectiveness of a campaign is, of course, subject to the condition if the organization has good information about the partner in communication - the target group, its size, composition, motivation, etc. In an extreme case, a lack of flashback communication leads to rise of a pointless communication about things which do not exist, with the public that is not there.

Therefore, a number of ways of how to collect relevant information are used. The methods can be divided into two groups:

- a) formal, which all have certified and fixed-rational form - e.g., sociological research of organizations image at the public,
- b) informal, whose rules are loose, flexible, uncertain, without need to be detrimental to the quality of outcome

On the following pages, suspiciously informal way of methods will be discussed. An invaluable source of information are **personal contacts** with representatives of target groups. Deep interviews with them can bring early signals about serious matters.

For collecting information for profit and nonprofit organizations **advisory councils** are commonly created. Their talks, however, must not become a formality, where it is not possible to apply the critical remarks about the organization.

In the Western world, a popular institution of **ombudsman** has been created. The Ombudsman first appeared in Sweden in 1713. In today's world, there is a rapid expansion of "ombudsmaness". It is so fashionable that a number of producers called an ombudsman the officer, who is in charge of the company on consumer's complaints and disapprovals from workers. The devaluation, however, no longer has much in common with the ombudsman as original importance of the defenders of human resources.

Much information can also be obtained if a **free telephone line** with a prefix 0800 is offered to a target group. The so-called green line is, of course, not free for the organization. The operator of the line charges for the allocation of numbers and for a monthly fee, depending on whether the user chose the number itself, or it is assigned to him/her. Then it is still necessary to pay for the usage of the line. It is not a cheap matter and without a sponsor no company could probably afford it.

Also, solid **analysis of the correspondence** reveals much about the behaviour and intentions of the public.

Long-term content **analysis of media** can bring an immense amount of information about the new phenomena, which is emerging in different areas of life.

And last but not least, there is an **opinion survey** in the external public (for example customers). Although, this method is very costly but is often used. Public survey is an appropriate means of communication with the public because of an authentic position intended by the people or the institution to the organization. It helps to measure the awareness and image by the public, feasibility of some plans, level at which any of the public accepts or at least tolerates a specific project, etc. In addition, there is a strong indication of interest of the client and the views of target groups and also promotes its image. [2]

Based on these analyses, specialists can recommend the appropriate tools, techniques and procedures of the campaign, making the campaign successful, address potential and existing customers and use the most current market potential. [11]

### **3.5.4. second stage: Project creation**

The procedure of planning event in PR responds to any other planning. Summing it into several steps

1. Problem is defined based on analysis. A number of concrete problems in public relations can be grouped into three broad categories:
  - A. It is necessary to overcome the negative image of organization by public.
  - B. The goal is to strengthen the positive attitude and the public, e.g. write reports at regular intervals about its activities that the organization retains the subconscious to the public as a functioning institution and legible.
  - C. Position of the public is neither positive nor negative, but in principle running an indifferent campaign is to attract public attention, to concentrate its interest in the organization and its services and encourage the desirable response - this is closest to the goal of marketing, but at this stage the emphasis is not on selling a product, but rather on the image of the organization.
2. Determining communication objectives. What we actually want to achieve by communication? What should public think and do after our plan realization? In terms of formulation and evaluation two types of objectives can exist: information and motivation. Admittedly, communication goals should be realistic, time fixed, measurable if possible (or at least specific) and formulated so that the way how to reach them can be inferred.
3. Establishing a plan of actions. At the latest here is worth to consider a comprehensive campaign for the project, which has a beginning, middle and end. [2]

### **3.5.5. third stage : Campaign realization**

Campaigns are so diverse that it is difficult to find and describe common procedures. Here are some insights that should work for each campaign:

- Arguments for the public should be bigger than the organization itself. The first goal is to sell the idea and second is to raise funds for its implementation.
- Printed material must address both the intellect and the emotions. Must operate at both rational and emotional. Neither one of them may be in extreme or ridiculous position.
- Any communication should have its continuation, connected development. It develops and thus maintains communication with the target group.
- Arguments should be kept in a positive rather than negative way.
- The correct selection of promotional materials. The quality is very important here.

Nonprofit organizations often use the campaign to collect donations. Certain principles have to be fulfilled. Perhaps the basis of the entire case is to attract donors for the idea, programme or help. If interest in ideas is aroused, the money will come much easier. An organization does not come to donors to take their money, they come to them in order to make the donors familiar with the project. [2]

### **3.5.6. fourth stage: evaluation**

Evaluation does not consist of a simple summary of what has been done. Recording of daily activities is only a necessary monitoring activity of the organization. Evaluation is generally a qualitatively higher level on which particular questions are asked: How are specific targets being met? How do given activities correspond with the mission? How is the service needed and useful to target groups?

Every PR campaign is an educational experience for the organization. It would be a shame not to use it. Evaluation of the campaign is therefore considered as an integral part. What and how to evaluate? Above all, achieved and expected goals should be compared.

When evaluating the success of the campaign, the following questions can be asked:

- Were all objectives of campaign met?
- Did the people understand what the organization wanted to convey?
- What unwanted effects occurred during the campaign?
- Was it a good campaign plan?
- Could it be purchased cheaply, with less expenditure of energy?
- How to do that the next campaign will be even more effective than the last one?

The evaluation criteria must reflect the nature of goals. If information goals were determined - for example, to create a subconscious, strengthen the image, to inform customers, etc.- assessment should show how successful the communication was with the relevant public. Therefore to choose a technique that allows comparing progress of awareness after the campaign. It isn't usually simple and inexpensive so the organization is satisfied with the impression gained by its members.

A very simple technique to determine how successful the campaign was is the so-called **clipping**, that is monitoring of the selected press and cutting out articles which relate to the organization or its campaign. There are professional clipping services, often on the base of computer monitoring. The result is of course only an indirect indicator of efficiency, because organization still does not know how many people saw the article, how many of them understand its essence and how many are follow it.

Another indirect technique is a conclusion about a part of informed people by using data on media audience. This audience is nationally ensured by Mediaproject STEM / MARK, GfK Ultex. Unfortunately, the purchaser pays for it, and it does not say anything more about whether and how many people noticed just that statement.

Flashback can be also find out by already discussed green free line, correspondence, public opinion survey and other tools of communication. [2]

Meeting the public relations objectives is not a very easy issue. The nature of the objectives itself has a large influence on the type of PR campaign needed, what is to be achieved, and therefore how should be the campaign evaluated. [9]

## **4. Case study**

### **4.1. Telecommunication service in the Czech Republic**

#### **4.1.1. Development of data communication service in the Czech Republic**

The first attempt at a network connection was taken by the EARN network in the Czechoslovakia 1990. This connection was only for universities and thus it was used just for academic needs. The official connection of Czechoslovakia into the internet was on 13. February 1992. In the same year, the so called CESNET (Czech Educational and Scientific Network), the first internet connection was built, but again only for academic purposes. In 1995, the internet connection by analog transmission was finally opened for commercial purposes. Till this time, Eurotel operated as a monopoly of data services.

The first web portals appeared in 1996(Seznam.cz, Neviditelný pes, etc.) and in 1999, use of the phone network to provide internet access began. Thus, this period can

be considered as the beginning of the usage of internet service by private individuals. The first internet suppliers were Czech On Line, Contactel and Telecom (which was that time still a state organization). Telecom had a very big advantage as it had an extensive coverage of cable connections, however it was not able to provide technically and commercially cheap internet connection to its end-users. This was the real reason for starting small or medium size firms, which resolved WiFi internet connection without data counting. As was mentioned before, Telecom used analog transmission, which has lot of disadvantages when the amount of data downloaded or time of connection was counted. This had to be changed and thus in 2005, the new ADSL technology started to be used by Telecom. This connection was far more reliable and faster than the old one. In 2007, another type of connection began to require a change in infrastructure – fiber optic network. This network had been built already in 90s by Telecom, but only as backbone connection between cities. This time, the cables were extended to the end-users. [12]

Current technology, whether for ADSL or WiFi is at the upper limit of its capabilities. ADSL no longer allows higher speeds and with the growing number of WiFi radios, there is no place for more and more frequency bands, and the waves cancel each other constantly. In the future, the only remaining possibility is the fiber optic cable, whose transmission potential is much greater than the mentioned technologies.

In general we can say about the new optical network will be built smaller and by more local operators. Often it is the current Wi-Fi providers, who rightly suspect that WiFi has reached its limits and the only prospects for the future for them is the fiber optic network. [13]

The following table show the development of single data connections in the Czech Republic.

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>DSL</b>	280,000	493,402	613,220	697,000	750,000
<b>Cable</b>	133,000	229,780	309,000	382,000	460,000
<b>WLL(FWA+WiFi)</b>	210,000	370,000	520,000	610,000	680,000
<b>Fiber optic network</b>	17,000	36,000	55,000	100,000	125,000
<b>CDMA+UMTS</b>	70,000	119,000	183,000	277,000	370,000

Table 4.1. Development of single data connections [13]

## **4.2. About the company SpeedNET-CzechComm s.r.o.**

Before the company is introduced, it is necessary to explain some important facts. Due to requests from management about confidentiality, all names in the following practical part of my work whether names of companies and individuals are made up. The organization made this decision mainly due to the intense competitive nature of the telecommunications market and to preserve its identity. However, I can confirm that all data used here is true and the firm still operates in today's market.

### **4.2.1. Establishing of CzechComm.cz**

2002, Czech Republic. A small family company CzechComm.cz was established to provide wireless internet connection. The main initiative was the minimal amount of competition. At that time, the internet was served only by Telecom company through dial-up, thus with the help of a modem. This connection tends to be slow at first (max. 56kb/s) and very unreliable. In addition, the price for the service was for each minute of connection. During the day, the connection was much more expensive than in evenings or at weekends. The fixed payment tariff cost the customer 500 CZK/ month plus the fees per minutes. If it was a wireless network, always data were counted.

The primary aim of CzechComm.cz was to provide wireless internet connection in residential units thus to get one hundred percent penetration in each of these tower blocks, then set up the access point to which individual flats and other residential units could be connected. To find out if there was public interest about basically a new service, information leaflets containing possible questions with the replies relevant to potential customer were sent out. Based on positive feedback people were invited to information sessions to explain the issues. Many people at that time didn't have internet connection and if they did, the connection was paid according to time used or amount of data downloaded. Therefore, most people were interested in this offer.

The owner therefore made a central server, which was responsible for the beginning of everything, namely the central router and net firewalls, network management, mail server, web server and many other features that were needed for the operation and management of the network. Furthermore, a Trade Certificate had to be obtained, the telecommunication concession for the provision of services and a few other necessary confirmation, including confirmations by the Czech Telecommunications Office. Primary internet connectivity, including eight public IP addresses was provided by Nextra company. The connectivity of speed 256 kilobytes per second cost about 17,000 CZK.

The initial investment in this company, besides the already mentioned connectivity, embedding in a wireless device, server and technical material (cables, antennas, etc.) was around 150,000 CZK. Payment for mediation services was by customers who paid with the help of SIPO (formerly called collection), which turned out to be an excellent solution. SIPO is based on a treaty with Czech Post, which collects for a fixed amount from each customer.

After calculating all the costs and benefits, the break-event point was calculated to be 50 customers. The initial interest was not high, but once the company entered the subconscious of the general public, the number of customers grew rapidly.

#### **4.2.2. SpeedNET – CzechComm s.r.o.**

In 2008, a new limited liability company was formed which owned majority of shares of the joint stock company. There was a transfer of all customers from the previous business form (natural person) to the new company that continued activities. The major reason for the emergence of the new company was the rising number of competitors on the telecommunication market and the growing need to shift to new technology and thus the related high investment costs.

The company is primarily engaged in telecommunications service, namely internet and telephone connection. Then sale and servicing of computers and it has also been working recently on a setting up TV connections.

This time, the company has five employees plus one brigade-worker, the number of customers is around 1300, the turn-over is around 10 million CZK and the yearly capital investments are raising. It is necessary to think about the future and the only feasible future for telecommunications companies is a fiber optic network, on which the SpeedNET-CzechComm s.r.o. tries to focus as much as possible.

#### **4.2.3. PR and Advertising**

In terms of PR and advertisement, the company has never used much advertising, PR actions or campaigns. At the beginning, it was very important to provide information about new technology, thus the advertisement was in the form of small leaflets explaining the new possibilities provided in telecommunication service. There were none or very few competitors and so the increasing number of customers was satisfactory.

Due to the predicted increase in the number of competitors, the company had to focus more on its marketing. Leaflets, rental of advertisement space and website had to address potential customers as well as and maintaining the current customers. Also the first public relation activities had to take place. The company started to sponsor charitable organizations and began to act as the main provider of internet connections at the most prestigious annual festival which is one of its kind in the Czech Republic.

## 4.3. Public Opinion Research for the needs of public relations

### 4.3.1. Purpose of research

Research into public relations is usually carried out with three functions in mind. Commonly it **confirms assumptions** and symptoms of the state of public opinion in relation to solving the issues facing the service or organization. Also it has the benefit of providing feedback on large upheavals in the world we are faced with and can be compared to the control system and quality control in manufacturing process in business.

Another feature of the research is **clarifying questions** about which there is little information or for which there is contradictory or conflicting data. Research helps to distinguish what people mean when they say that they like or dislike. This also applies to their relationship to the organization.

The third function of research is the eventual **reorientation** of thought and opinion on the issue of public relations. [6]

## 4.4. Questionnaire and its evaluation

### 4.4.1. Questionnaire evaluation

A questionnaire was used as the tool to analyze the current situation from the customer's point of view. Emphasis was placed primarily on the quality of offered services and communication with customers. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions which were systematically divided into such categories as service, communication, website and suggestions for the future. Furthermore, there were several options for the customer to comment or post ideas for changes. Since the questionnaire was focused only on the customers of SpeedNET – CzechComm s.r.o., the number of respondents was restricted to a finite number of completed questionnaires of 70. Of the total number of 70 respondents, 42 were women and 28 men. Their age was divided into four main groups: 20-30 years, 30-40 years, 40-50 years and over 50. The biggest representation of 51 people were in the category 20-30 years and the second highest were of 40-50 old with 10 customers. The whole age distribution is shown in figure 4.1.

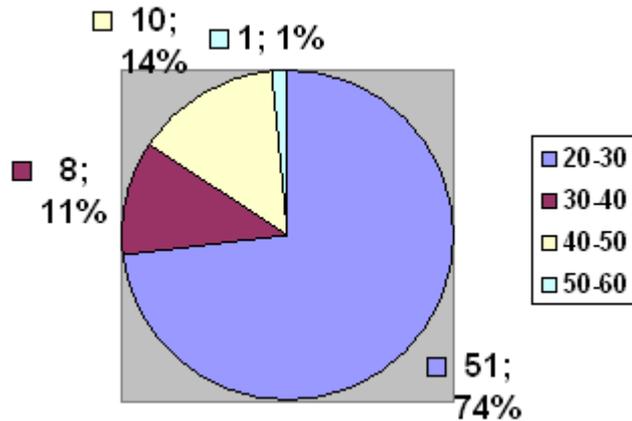


Figure 4.1. Age represented

In accordance to the firm’s previous findings of a slowing down in the growth of new customers and the increasing trend of contract termination, the expected outcome of questionnaire was negative.

As was mentioned, the main goal of this questionnaire was to find out whether the customers were satisfied with the services offered or not. The first question on this topic was divided into three parts according to the type of service: internet connection, service or sales of computer technology, phone service. The biggest number of customers - 94.44% used internet connection and on a scale of 1-5 (best -worst) rated this service with an average mark of 2.13. It was found out, that almost half of the people who used internet connection also used computer servicing and the average mark for this service was calculated as 1.72, which is a very good result. Only 11% of respondents marked the possibility of phone service and this option obtained the worst average mark (2.44).

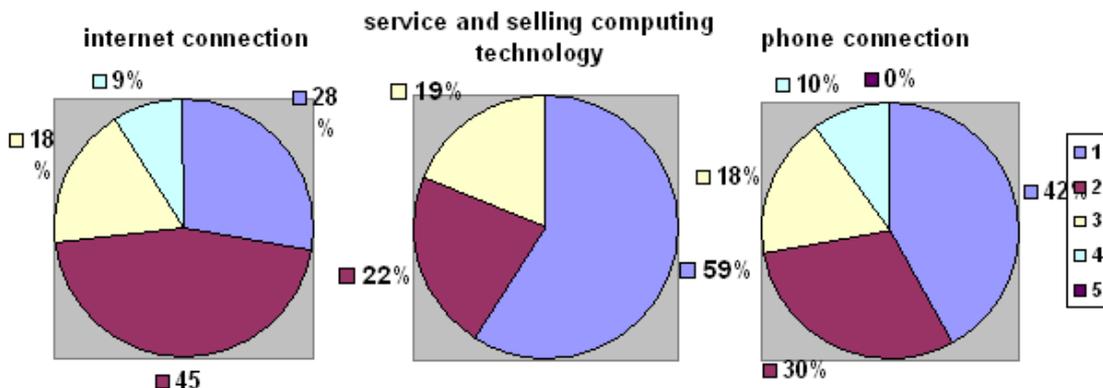


Figure 4.2. Satisfaction with different types of services.1-5, best-worst)

On one of the crucial questions about the service: “Do you think the price corresponds the quality?” barely 60% of customers tagged a positive answer. However, if we divided the customers according to their gender, we can see significantly different opinions. From the results, it can be deduced that the men more demand a better quality. 47% of them didn’t think the quality corresponded to the price. On the other hand, only 33% of women answered negatively.

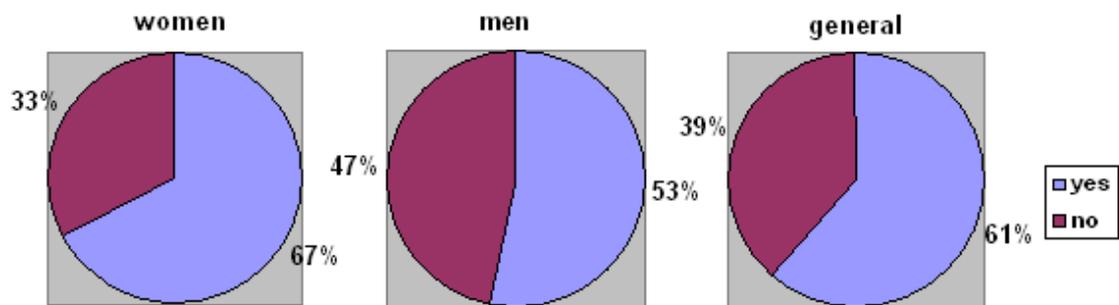


Figure 4.3. Do you think the price corresponds the quality?

The most important role of public relations is communication with the public, therefore such a question was asked: “How would you evaluate communication with the customers?” For evaluation, the scale 1-5 was used again. The three most represented marks were 1, 2, 3, which was a very satisfying result. 43% of respondents gave the mark 1 (best) and the average mark was 1.88.

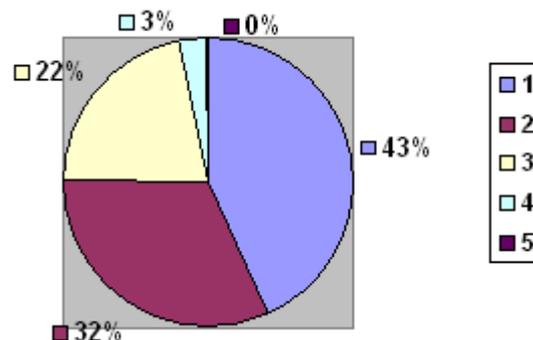


Figure 4.4. Communication with customers

The next part of the questionnaire was devoted to the company’s website, which is one of the most important tools of indirect communication. The results of this section were very alarming. 40% percent of all respondents had never visited the webpage and

the people who had; evaluated their overall impression within an average mark of 2.7, which is high.

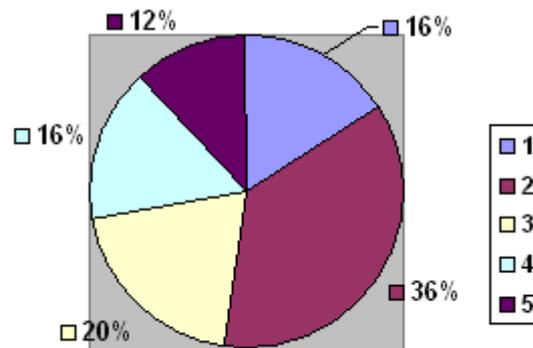


Figure 4.5. Website evaluation

For question 7, only the people who had ever visited the website of the company were requested to answer. Respondents were asked to make written comments about this page, what they would like to be changed, what they disliked and their ideas about possible solutions. A lot of very interesting suggestions were made. However, the most frequent was – better design and lack of information. There were also lots of comments about the chaotic arrangement. A very interesting idea about the content of the webpage was mentioned, namely e-shop. This would provide the website and the whole company a new dimension. The suggestions about more frequent updates and overview of ongoing events and news shouldn't be omitted. Very interesting ideas about publishing news about company developments and goals for the future were mentioned by few people.

In answer to the following question: “In your opinion, how could the company improve? (for example in service provided)”, people had the chance to point out the disadvantages of the company and recommend some improvements and changes. Since only one third of all respondents answered this question, the overall impression is only outlined. However, the most discussed topic was communication with customers, which is very crucial part from the public relations point of view, and the price versus speed of the internet connection. Customers pointed out that the speed of this service is very slow in relation to its price or that the speed should be more constant.

“The company is preparing another service: television connection (IPTV). Which of the listed programmes would you welcome the most? This question was asked to find out the field of interest of the customers and thus to locate the type of supply for the future. The most popular category among the listed programmes was films (75% of all respondents). The second most popular were documentary programmes with 55% and third most popular was news (44%).

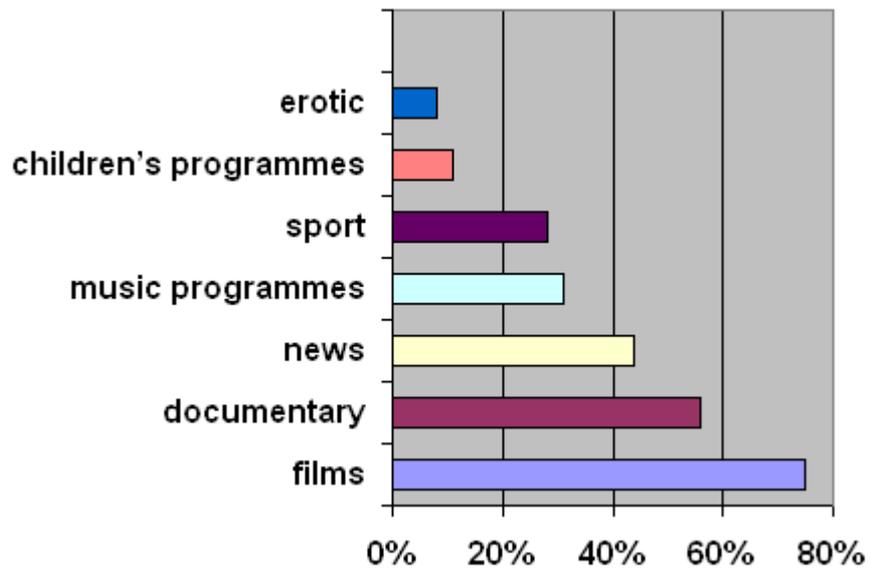


Figure 4.6. Programme interest

The last question was whether the customers would recommend this company to their friends or relatives. The result was very positive. 50 people, which is 71% of respondents answered favourably and only 5 customers out of 70 replied that they wouldn't recommend this company. The rest of the respondents didn't know.

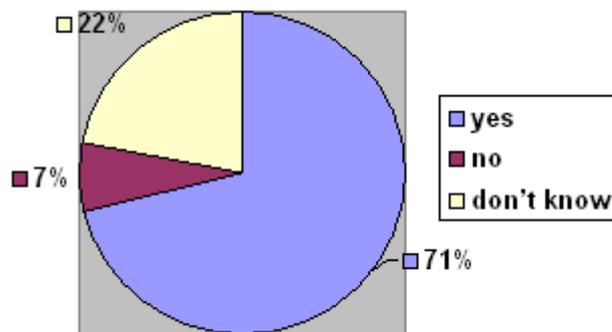


Figure 4.7. Recommendation of company

Summarizing the results from the questionnaire, the general opinion of the observed company was confused. Most of the answers were favourable; however the crucial points about public relations were a little bit negative. To conclude, the company needed to improve or even build up better relationship with the public and this can be achieved by good public relations campaign.

#### 4.4.2. The proposed public relation campaign

Based on analysis, in this case the questionnaire, the problem has to be defined. It must also be taken into account that the group focused on were present customers of SpeedNET – CzechComm s.r.o. As mentioned in the questionnaire evaluation, the main features of public relations – communication itself is not as positive as it ought to be. The company should therefore focus on this crucial factor when assembling the PR campaign, because effective communication is the basis of all public relations.

Besides public opinion, we should not omit the following important facts about the customers base that the number of new customers is declining and the number of terminations of existing contracts is increasing. The table 4.2. shows the exact numbers of installations each year and the yearly number of customer contract terminations from the beginning until 2010. In the third line, the total number of customers at the end of each year is calculated. This situation can be better illustrated graph in the graph placed right below the table. As can be clearly seen from the graph, the number of installations is increasing, however at the same time; the number of terminations is also increasing. This makes the final line more flat. It is important information to note that since 2007, the number of competitors has grown rapidly and this is reflected strongly in the development of the number of customers'. The line representing the growth is very steep until 2007, from this time; the curve is not as steep. The number of new customers decreased slightly, but the number of terminations due to moves to a competitor grew much faster than in previous years. This situation is intended to sketch the need for an analysis of market competition. Obtaining basic information about competitors, their weaknesses and their strengths, will help the company in the competitive struggle.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of installations	38	123	347	523	717	922	1049	1197	1290
Contract terminations			1	4	22	25	81	97	111
Total number of customers at the end of each year	38	123	346	519	695	897	968	1100	1179

Table 4.2. Numbers of customers

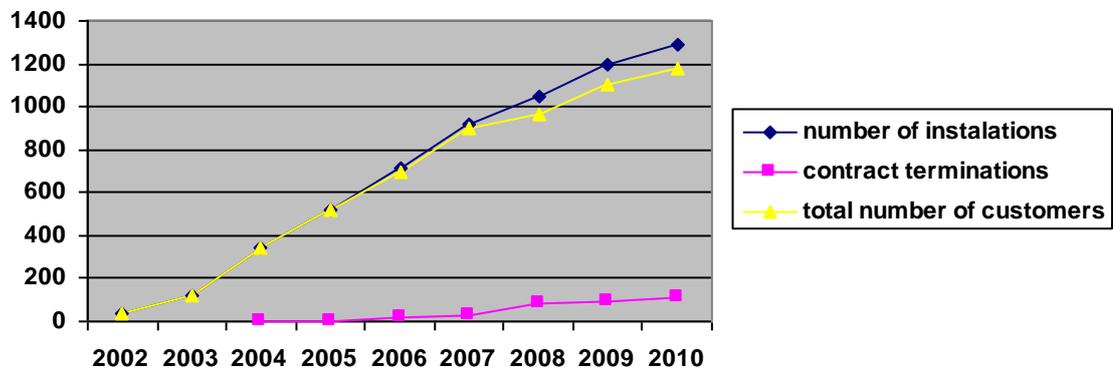


Figure 4.1. Numbers of customers

According to the literature referenced, the second point in the project creating stage is to determine the communication objectives. The main question is what we want to achieve with the communication. And the answer could be pretty simple- better public relations. As was mentioned, the company has never really focused on this management function and thus the relationship with the public and especially with customers is much poorer than the organization should have. There are many tools to manage good public relations. The company could use **information emails** to communicate with customers directly. In these emails, customers would receive actual information about the company's activities, current and coming events, discount events and other important announcements, in which customers would be interested. Electronic communication is very important these days. People spend a lot of time checking their emails and searching the internet. Therefore, the company should focus on this media channel. Nowadays, social networks (facebook, twitter) are very popular, thus the organization should established its profile on one of these networks and communicate with its customers this way.

As was found from the questionnaire, a big weakness of the company's communication strategy is its **website**. Not only do people not like the design of the webpage and miss a lot of relevant information, but many customers had never visited the site. Therefore, the crux of the matter should be to get this fact into the publics' subconscious. As already mentioned informational emails could consist of a link to the website. Each invoice sent should also have this link and every customer could be given an information leaflet with a visible web page link with every purchase. Last but not least a place to display this link is a necessary promotional item. In terms of he webpage itself, fundamental changes should be made. The home page should attract visitors mainly with its clear and attractive design. This title page should contain well arranged links thus a customer is able to easily and quickly find what he/she is looking for. The content of this webpage must be enriched by important information about the company, actual and coming events, discount events and other relevant announcements which would help the customer know a lot about the organization. If the site contains link to an e-shop then the procedures have to be agreed by all parties. The company should decide after consultation with the accountant, if it is cost effective and how it should be

addressed. Videlicet, there are many ways to manage an e-shop. As was mentioned in the questionnaire, customers would like to know both the short and long term business goals. This should help them to make them stay loyal customers of the company.

In terms of service provided, the questionnaire has shown that the customers evaluate it mostly positively; nevertheless, some people are unhappy with the internet and phone connection. This is mainly caused by today's high levels of demand placed on the internet providers. People want a faster and faster connection with lower and lower prices. Therefore the company should implement some way of **gathering requirements and complaints** from its customers and accordingly respond to them by focusing on the main trouble spots. This could be managed by having guestbook on the organization's webpage or Facebook profile, through having a free telephone number to ring or by responding to emails. A box for questions and comments should be placed in branch office as well.

In the next few months the company wants to launch a new service - TV connection (IPTV). This could also be a good opportunity to build a deeper relationship with the public. Various **seminars** should be organized, for the general public, schools or businesses. People should have the chance to acquaint themselves with the new service as much as possible. The questionnaire showed that people are most interested in films, documentaries and news, so the company should focus primarily on introducing these three types of programmes.

It is a fact that the organization is not really engaged with the public and this could be taken as a big company's disadvantage by potential customers. Lots of **charitable events** are organized in the town and local area, where the company could take the opportunity to show themselves. Also **local media** could help the organization make itself more visible for example by printing an article about using their existing technology.

As with every communication, communication with the public should be long-term. As already noted, public relations is a long term relationship with the public and any company should keep working to improve it.

## 5. Conclusion

Public Relations is a branch which started to apply in our conditions only a few decades ago. Very briefly put, is simply a complex of methods and procedures, whose goal is to develop and continue to maintain good reputation of different subjects, organizations, persons and government. It is not only about big national and international concerns, but also about middle and small size companies should maintain their good will. For nonprofit organizations, PR plays very important role and is often the only possible way of financing. The main philosophy of PR is that an organization reaches set up goals much easier with public support than with disagreement and unconcern. Usage of true and full information about a company should help to maintain good image, sensation, credibility and reciprocal understanding. PR is not only external relationship, which is sometimes wrongly interprets, but internal as well (boss and employees).

Main objectives of PR can be summarized into some key points such as public understanding of company's activities and future plans, negotiate and communicate with the public to obtain their trust, create and improve organizations good image, ensure the mutual understanding between company and public and thus to reduce possible conflict or misunderstanding.

The basis of public relation is the public, a social group which is understood as summary of members of particular organization, territorial, residential or supranational figure. From the general public, company selects its focus groups which might interest the organization the most. There are internal (employees) and external (customers, suppliers, government, etc.) focus groups witch which the company has to maintain good relationship. For managing this relationship it is necessary to use certain tools, there can be direct or indirect. To the indirect tools belong press media, electronic media and agency. Other important tools such as different types of events, lobbying, fairs, exhibitions and sponsoring form an integral part of every public relations.

As is sometimes wrongly interpreted, PR is a function of management, not the function of marketing. Only management can use complex information about the "image" of the company for its long-run role in society. That does not mean that PR is not connected with marketing. In some cases, even the department of PR works with the marketing department and have lot of characteristics in common. Specifically, PR and advertisement have in a certain sense same aims, but the way how to achieve them vary. It is crucial that the public relations is not focused on one or more product or service, but always on the entire organization.

If a company wants to improve or even build up its public relations, it has to have a good PR campaign. Every campaign is unique and has different purposes and objectives according to target group, but the process for all of them is the same. All four stages of the PR campaign hav to be fulfilling to reach successful and effective campaign. These stages are: analysis, project creation, campaign realization and evaluation. For the next successful PR campaign, the evaluation stage is integral and the most important. It has educational experience for the organization and it would be a shame for the company to not use it.

As was already mentioned, public relations are used in every business sector. This bachelor thesis is focused on public relations in telecommunication business, namely data communication. This type of connection in our country firstly appeared in 1990, but only for academic purposes. Approximately ten years after, internet connection began to be used publicly. From cable connection through WiFi and ADSL till today's fiber optic network, internet connection has undergone many changes.

In my bachelor thesis, I have chosen SpeedNET – CzechComm s.r.o. as an example of telecommunication company and with the help of questionnaire, found out the customers attitude to the company, their experience with services offered and communication. On basis of analysis of obtained data, I proposed a PR campaign for given company. First of all, it is very important to mention that the company has never really focus on public relation and thus the expected negative result was confirmed by the survey.

As the company's main weakness, poor communication with customers (which is core of public relation) has been identified. Precisely, a good communication can help the company establish and maintain good relationship with public. Therefore, some advice how to improve the communication was given. For example, though informative

emails, the customers could receive topical information about the company's activities, current and coming events, discount events and other important announcements. Then I would recommend the company to establish its profile on one of the social networks, which is very popular nowadays.

The organization should mainly give good account of itself through its own website. Precisely the webpage was another negative point mentioned by customers in the questionnaire. They don't like its current design, miss lot of relevant information and updating. Thus a new website should be established. The homepage could be more attractive to draw visitors; it also should contain well arranged links to allow the customers quick and easy searching, important information about the company, actual and coming events and relevant announcements. In the questionnaire, some people mentioned the founding of an e-shop, which could be also profitable for the company among others.

Some customers have complained about the service provided, especially internet and phone connection. This is mainly caused by people's constant higher demand on these types of services. Therefore, the company should implement some ways of gathering requirements and complaints and accordingly to the results, focus on the trouble spots.

In the next few months, the company wants to launch a new service – TV connection (IPTV). Via various seminars about this type of connection, people would have a chance to gain more information and acquaint with this service as much as possible and by this way the organization would get into the general public subconscious. The result of the questionnaire showed that people are interested most in films, documentaries and news, so the company should focus primarily on introducing these three programmes.

Another way, how to draw attention is to take part on any charitable events, which are held annually. Writing paragraphs e.g. about using technology or telecommunication market into one of local press could be also feasible opportunity for the organization to make itself more visible.

On the other hand, customers opinion wasn't only negative. When people were asked whether they would recommend this company to their friend or relative, over 70% of them replied affirmatively, which is a very good sign and means that customers are satisfied with the company. Therefore, the organization should have the respect, provide satisfaction and continue to maintain good results. After all, good friend's recommendation is the most trustworthy advertisement.

Meeting the public relation objectives is not very easy, therefore the company should somehow evaluate its public relation campaign, if it has been successful or not, if there is something to be changed, if any unwanted effects appeared during the campaign and how to do the next campaign to be more effective than the last one.

To conclude, public relation is complex and sustainable function of management on which the company should constantly working on and improving it. As every communication, the communication with public should be long-run. No matter in what kind of business does the company operates; it always needs to have good relationship with general public and its customers. This attitude can help to build the trust of the public and thus company's success.

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## 7. Supplements

Supplement 1: Questionnaire

Supplement 2: The questionnaire results

# Questionnaire

**Questionnaire about service of SpeedNET – CzechComm s.r.o. This questionnaire will be used as the basis for a bachelor’s thesis at CULS Prague.**

Gender:

Age:

1. How did you find out about SpeedNET – CzechComm s.r.o..?

2. Do you use any service of this company? If so, circle which ones.

No

Yes : internet connection

phone service

service and selling computing technology

3. How are you satisfied with listed service? Evaluate like in a school. (1-best, 5-worst)

internet connection	1	2	3	4	5
phone service	1	2	3	4	5
service and selling computing technology	1	2	3	4	5

4. Do you think the price of services provided by this company corresponds to the quality?

Yes

No

5. How would you evaluate communication with the customers? 1-5

1 2 3 4 5

6. Have you ever visited the website of this company?

Yes

No

If so, please evaluate according to general impression (design, well-arrangement, content, up-to-date etc.). Again from 1-5.

1 2 3 4 5

7. What would you change on this website? You can suggest several more possibilities.

8. In your opinion, how could the company improve? (for example in service provided).

9. The company is preparing another service: television connection(IPTV). Which

of the listed programmes would you welcome the most? Circle.

- News
- documentary
- films
- children's programmes
- music programmes
- sport
- erotic

10. Would you recommend this company to a friend or relative?

## The questionnaire results

1. How did you find out about SpeedNET-CzechComm s.r.o.?

leaflets	9%
friend or relative	80%
another possibility	11%

2. Do you use any service of this company? If so, circle which ones.

internet connection	94.44%
service and selling computing technology	44.44%
phone connection	11.11%

3. How are you satisfied with listed service? Evaluate like in a school. 1-5

internet connection		service and selling comp. technology		phone service	
1	28%	1	59%	1	42%
2	45%	2	22%	2	30%
3	18%	3	19%	3	18%
4	9%	4	0%	4	10%
5	0%	5	0%	5	0%

4. Do you think the price of services provided by this company corresponds to the quality?

men		women	
yes	no	yes	no
	53% 47%		67% 33%
together			
yes	no		
	61% 39%		

5. How would you evaluate communication with the customers? 1-5

1	2	3	4	5
43%	32%	22%	3%	0%

6. Have you ever visited the website of this company?

yes	61.11%
no	38.89%

Website evaluation

1	16%
2	36%

3	20%
4	16%
5	12%

7. What would you change on this website?

design, structure, good arrangement, e-shop, more information

8. In your opinion, how could the company improve?

better communication, slow service, more information

9. Which of the listed programmes would you welcome the most?

News	44%
documentary	56%
films	75%
children's programmes	8%
music programmes	31%
sport	28%
erotic	11%

10. Would you recommend this company to a friend or relative?

yes	71%
no	7%
I don't know	22%

age

20-30	73%
30-40	11
40-50	14,6
50 and more	1,4

gender

women	42
men	28