

Book reviews

Communication and the EU. A complex approach in times of crisis¹

Coordinators: Alina Bârgăoanu, Elena Negrea

Comunicare.ro Publishing House, București, 2011



Communication in the European Union. Theoretical Models and Practical Aspects is one of the recent titles published by Comunicare.ro Publishing House in Bucharest. It is a volume dealing with an interesting and well debated issue such as the communication in the EU and was coordinated by Alina Bârgăoanu and Elena Negrea from the National School for Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. In a challenged Europe facing the economic crises and the connected social problems, where the stability of the euro-zone was shaken, the need for professional communication is stronger than ever. As Alina Bârgăoanu stressed in the introduction to the book, the need for solidarity, for common institutional mechanisms to face difficult situations, the existence of common interests, sharing not only common values but also assuming common decisions are only few elements supporting the need for communication. The complexity of the development of the European public sphere, the challenges that the European construction has to face in the sense of the American philosopher John Dewey are only few of the endorsements for the need for communication in the EU.

The present book has nine chapters, each of them presenting a relevant aspect of the communication in the EU. The first chapter written by Paul Dobrescu deals with important economical, political and social aspects related to the present situation in the EU. The role of Germany as an economically strong member of the

The present book has nine chapters, each of them presenting a relevant aspect of the communication in the EU. The first chapter written by Paul Dobrescu deals with important economical, political and social aspects related to the present situation in the EU. The role of Germany as an economically strong member of the

¹ Original title: *Comunicarea în Uniunea Europeană. Modele teoretice și aspect practice.*

Union is also stressed. The redefinition of EU relations with global super powers such as USA and China is also subject of this first chapter.

Loredana Radu talks in the second chapter about the chronology of public communication in the EU, stressing the importance of introducing the eurobarometers and communication related to the EU treaties. She is looking for an answer to the question if there is a communication strategy for the EU or a set of communication actions.

Georgiana Udrea and Nicoleta Corbu are researching the European identity in the third chapter. Building a European identity is a long term challenge related to a positive perspective in a common future for its citizens.

The concept of public sphere is the main subject of the analysis made by Loredana Radu in the next chapter. She compared the two paradigms: the American approach towards public and public opinion and the European much ideologized approach on public sphere.

The fifth chapter, written by Alina Bârgăoanu and Flavia Durach deals with the Romanian public sphere and its attempts to become more Europeanized. An empirical research on the media reflection on the Romania's delay in becoming a *Schengen* space member was conducted by a team of researchers from the *Center for Communication Research* in Bucharest during December the 21st 2010 and January the 21st 2011. A part of the study consisted in applying content analysis to Romanian relevant news papers. The results are integrated in this chapter.

The sixth chapter, developed by Mădălina Boțan is presenting the results of a content analysis of online French, German, British, Hungarian and Bulgarian top three newspapers on Romania's and Bulgaria's delay in becoming a member of the *Schengen* space. There were several articles on this issue, having different perspective such as an insinuator British frame, a critical French one and a distant German approach.

Elena Negrea is the author of the seventh chapter, chapter also related to the research presented above. This time the focus is on the phenomenon of euroscepticism, its origins and the factors that influence it.

The Romanian on-line media discourse on European funds is subject of Adina Marincea's study published in the eighth chapter. The discourse is highly influenced by politics, the researcher has the impression that the issue is debated only superficial, much more in order to talk about other related political aspects.

The last chapter consists in Roxana Dascălu's perspective on the Regional and Cohesion Politics, as an integrated part of the process of bringing Romania closer to the EU by integration and transformation.

The authors of this book not only succeeded in making an excellent critical literature review on the development of the Communication in the EU, on the Euro-

pean public sphere and on European identity but presented excellent examples of how empirical research on those subjects has to be conducted. In a society where media is talking a lot on several subjects, among them also the EU, a scientific approach such as this is welcomed. This book is useful not only for students in several fields such as Communication Sciences, Political Sciences, European Studies, Sociology and Economics, but also for political actors and for any person that is interested in those issues.

Reviewed by **Delia Cristina BALABAN**

Babeş-Bolyai University

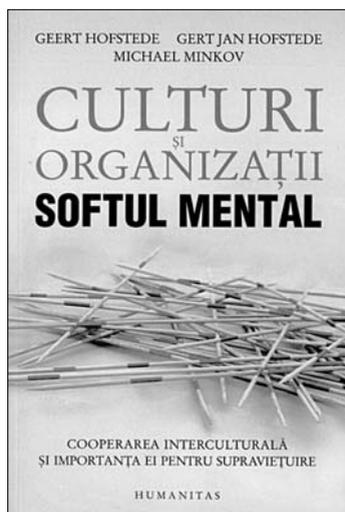
E-mail: balaban@fspac.ro



Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival

Authors: Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov

Humanitas Publishing House, 2012



An important editorial appearance in the field of management is the book entitled *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind - Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*, published in Romanian (translation in 2012 by Humanitas publisher (the book was originally published in English in 2010))

The authors of the book are Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov. While the other two authors may be less known to the Romanian readers, Geert Hofstede is one of the “classics of organizational culture analysis”. Hofstede’s international study on national and organizational culture put his name among the best known authors of

managerial theories.

The beauty of Hofstede’s model lies in the possibility of conducting comparative analysis based on six cultural dimensions. Romania is included among the countries in the study, with interesting results from a managerial reform perspective in all types of organizations: public, private, and non-profit.

The book is structured in four main parts: the concept of culture, the cultural dimensions of the national culture, culture in organizations, and the effects of cultural differences. The book is fundamental for both researchers and ordinary readers who are interested in deciphering the elements that make up an organizations culture or a nations culture for that matter.

The authors argue that culture is a type of mental programming that affects the behavior of human communities in general, in a more or less predictable manner. Mental programming is structured along three hierarchical levels: personality (specific to the individual), culture (specific to groups or communities) and human nature (a universal level). The authors are focused on both the representations and manifestations of culture at different depth levels: symbols, heroes, rituals, values, and practices.

The analysis of culture is based on six dimensions of culture: power distance, individualism / collectivism, masculinity / femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term / short term orientation, permissiveness / austerity.

At organizational level, the analysis is applied by interpreting and putting into context classical organizational theories like those of Henry Mintzberg, Douglas McGregor, or Peter Drucker.

The analysis of cultural consequences is of particular interest, the authors being focused on the consequences of organizational culture connections, interactions and exchanges. The mental software influences (more or less consciously) a series of societal elements like the level of cultural conflicts, level of contact between groups, communication, education, multinational structure (structure must follow culture), international marketing, international politics and even economic development.

Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov's book is a welcomed addition to the initial theory developed by Geert Hofstede in analyzing organizational culture and represents an essential reading for those interested in the field management in Romania.

Reviewed by **Cristina MORA**

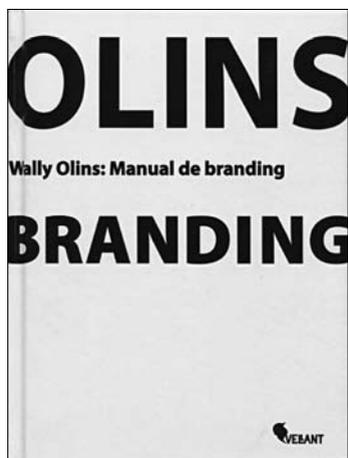
Lecturer, Public Administration Department
Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences
Babes-Bolyai University
E-mail: cristina.mora@gmail.com



The Brand Handbook

Author: Wally Olins

Vellant Publishing House, 2009



“In an irreligious world, brands provide us with beliefs. They define who we are and signal our affiliations”²

Nowadays one of the most used terms in the field of communication, the concept of “branding” comes from the anglo-saxon term which generically defines the creation, recreation or consolidation work of a brand, designating, by means of collections of graphic symbols, experiences and associations of cultural and personal type, the complex identity of a company, institution, person, service or product in relationship with the consumer. The brand is, therefore, an association of names and symbols, directly

linked to a set of recognized benefits and values, which is addressed to the public’s mind and heart.³

The aim of the present review is to present a book that can be considered as an essential, extremely concise guide to a successful branding and brand management activity.

The book has three distinctive parts, each of them attempting to describe and explain, both from the theoretical and practical point of view, essential aspects and elements of branding.

Thus, the first part introduces the reader some of the most important basic notions of branding, such as the definition of branding, brand visibility with its specific idea, tangible and visual elements, brand architecture, branding as a corporative resource. It also tries to offer a pragmatic answer to one of the most important and also difficult questions for a PR specialist: “Why and when should a brand be introduced or created?”, analysing different types of brands: new brands, reinvented brands, reasons for a change and so on, all of them being accompanied by real examples in branding industry.

2 Olins, W. – www.wallyolins.com - Who’s wearing the trousers, reprinted from The Economist, September 8th, 2001

3 Irimieş, C – Basic notions of branding. Definition, history, architecture, Journal of Media Research, vol 5, no. 3 / 2012

The second part of Olins' research tries to explain how branding works, going presenting facts related to brand implementation, work stages, costs, timing and control.

Perhaps one of the most delicate aspect of brand management, TRUST, is approached in the last part of the book. Here, the author obviously talks about courage, risks and brand value, elements that are essential when we are talking about managing a valuable and trustworthy brand.

Every theoretical section of *The Brand Handbook* is accompanied by practical examples that help the reader, no matter how ignorant he / she may be, understand and visualise the branding activity as it really is.

As the author itself says, anyone working for an organization has a role in designing and implementing its brand. Every person living in the present world is involved in branding⁴.

As a final conclusion *The Brand Handbook*, the latest book written by Wally Olins, chairman of Saffron Brand Consultants, is a very well structured, convincing and easy to read book that can guide almost anyone into the field of successful branding. It looks like a manual written by a true professional that masters all the practical details and secrets of brand management, so it must be considered as a compulsory for anyone interested in the field of branding.

Reviewed by **Cosmin IRIMIEȘ**

Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising
Babes-Bolyai University
Email: cosmin.irimies@ubbcluj.ro



4 Olins, W. – The Branding Handbook, ed. Vellant, Bucharest, 2009

A theoretical and empirical approach on Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Relations in Romania⁵

Author: Veronica Ioana Ilieș

Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012



There are only few books published in Romania and in Romanian language that deal with CSR and extremely few books that deal in CSR in Romania. *Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility: Theory and Social Action* is a unique approach towards those two very important elements of our social and economic life nowadays. The book started from the idea that there is an overlapping between corporate social responsibility and public relations within the activity of a company. Moreover, the author, Veronica Ioana Ilieș assumed that the CSR and PR are working instruments of the same whole. It is an interesting perspective to be analyzed, especially in a world where corporations tend to deny any that CSR is related somehow to PR.

The book started with a well structured bibliographical review from an analytical point of view. The first chapter of the book is dedicated to the theoretical approach toward CSR. Thus CSR together with sustainable development and *triple bottom line* represent at present processes and actions considered to be important in the management strategy of companies. According to Veronica Ioana Ilieș CSR practices are well spoken: a socially responsible activity will place the company among the most desired businesses, both production and services. At the same time, the social involvement of companies is seen as a necessity in the context of their operating in communities that they influence profoundly. CSR is widespread in developed countries. In the second chapter the author is dealing with public relations and in the third one with both concepts.

The most important scientific contribution of the author is the empirical part of the book that has established several sets of research questions that addressed aspects linked to the connections between CSR and PR. Using a complex mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, Veronica Ioana Ilieș chooses to collect data

5 Original title: *Relațiile Publice și Responsabilitatea Socială Corporatistă. Teorie și Acțiune Socială.*

using: content analysis, semi-structured interviews and a questioner applied to Cluj-Napoca inhabitants.

Using content analysis on articles published in relevant Romanian newspapers *Adevărul*, *Jurnalul Național*, *Gândul* and *Cotidianul* the author proved that the concept of corporate social responsibility appears quite summarily presented. Moreover, there is an overlapping between the CSR and PR. Using the same method she analyzed also CSR activities in Romania that are reported on the specialized site www.responsabilitatesociala.ro.

The opinion of public relations specialists regarding the connections between corporate social responsibility and public relations is subject to the second method: in depth interviews with eleven experts in the field of PR. The research revealed the fact that there are no major differences between the opinions of PR specialists regarding the CSR and PR overlapping. The majority of interviewees agreed with the fact that the two overlap within the activity of the company, being work instruments of the same whole.

The third part of the empirical part consists in a questioner that referred to the opinion of Cluj-Napoca inhabitants regarding the involvement of companies in social life. One of the conclusions of the author was that there is generally a high interest in social life and problems, and the involvement of companies in society is considered by a majority of respondents as welcome. The opinion poll also proved that the visibility of the already carried out CSR activity is quite low.

Veronica Ioana Ilieș book is a relevant publication on CSR and on the PR in Romania. The author not only succeeded in making an excellent literature review at the beginning but she showed how an empirical research on those subjects has to be conducted. This book is useful not only for students in several fields such as Communication Sciences, Sociology Economics, but also for the practitioners and for any person that is interested in those issues.

Reviewed by **Delia Cristina BALABAN**

Babeș-Bolyai University

E-mail: balaban@fspac.ro



Nonverbal communication⁶

Author: Magor Kádár

Kriterion, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, 96 pages



The paper 'Nonverbal communication' written by lecturer doctor Magor Kádár is in its essence a textbook about nonverbal communication. The theoretical information is avouched by examples and easy to apply exercises. As even the author affirms, the book has an 'user friendly' structure, to be able to be used in classes, during trainings or as an online textbook.

The information provided in this book are based on a significant and specialised on communication and psychology bibliography: Ekman-Frisen, Argyle, Griffn, Berne, Maslow, Atkinson-Hilgard, Forgács.

The author begins with a really interesting premise: the need to build a 'bridge', with solid piles, on which we can get about safely in the area of verbal and nonverbal communication. In Magor Kádár's vision this solid 'bridge' can be reached through consolidating the professional knowledge and the improvement of the skills with the help of exercises.

The first pile of the bridge is, as the author declares, the verbal communication – the fundamental benchmarks of it will be presented in a separate book.

The second pile is represented by the nonverbal communication and it is treated in this book.

The first chapter of the book is dedicated to the communication theorie's framework and it briefly refers to the ways of communication, to basic notions and to the chanel of communication's system.

The second chapter deals with subjects like: ways of nonverbal communication and the system of verbal and nonverbal communication. The information is easy to follow and understand, the author respecting in this area the concept of 'user friendly'. At the end of this chapter we are presented with seven possible exercises for improving our nonverbal communication skills (pages 50-52).

The third and last chapter, named 'Interpersonal Relations', presents us synthesized information about: perception and impression, filters of interpretaion, assignment, the process of interpretation, projected personal image, the proces of reading the signs. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to presenting some exercised used to imprpove our perception and analyze skills (pages 93-96).

6 Original title: *Comunicare nonverbală*

Magor Kádár's paper is, beyond doubt, a successful attempt of transforming students and other interested people in this field, in valuable fans of nonverbal communication.

Reviewed by Assist. Prof. **Corina ROTAR**, PhD

Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising
Babes-Bolyai University
E-mail: rotar@fspac.ro



Social Research Methods

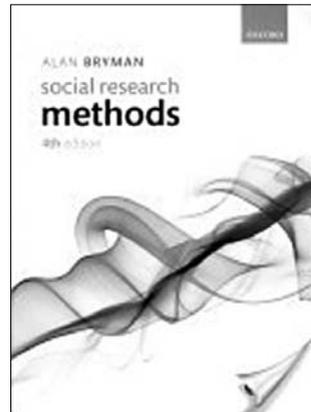
Author: Alan Bryman

Oxford University Press, 2012

Professor **Alan Bryman** currently teaches Organisational and Social Research at the University of Leicester. His focus on research methods and particularly on multimethod paradigm is well known. Among his most popular publications on this field are *Quantitative Data Analysis with SPSS 12 and 13: A Guide for Social Scientists*, in cooperation with Duncan Cramer and *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. They have had a significant impact in the field of research methods.

Other fields of interest for Alan Bryman are: leadership, organizational culture and management. The influence of Disney and McDonalds phenomena on modern society is one of the recent topics of his work.

Social Research Methods addresses individuals studying a social science degree, those developing research methods abilities in order to apply them in their specific work fields, as well as anyone interested in social science methodology. The encyclopaedic introduction to social research methodology is completed with a broad range of qualitative and quantitative methods. The broad range of examples and practical hints helps the reader identify and evaluate his/her specific research needs. Throughout the four parts and 29 chapters, Alan Bryman guides the reader through all aspects of the research process: research design and strategy, performing a quality literature review, choosing the most appropriate research method, securing best sampling procedure, data analysis and interpretation techniques, in-



cluding computer-assisted qualitative and quantitative data analysis and dissemination principles. This fourth edition adds a new perspective: ‚supervisor experience‘, providing helpful tips, and the new chapter on issues faced by qualitative researchers regarding the selection of the individuals in the target group in a more systematic manner than in previous editions. All the other chapters have been updated. There is a marked difference especially in the internet research section which integrates the most significant developments. The Online Resource Centre that accompanies the text includes a useful toolkit for both students and lecturers involved in the process of social science research: Student experience podcasts, Self-marking multiple choice questions for revision, Annotated web links to useful articles, reviews, models and research guides, A guide to using Excel in data analysis, A lecturer’s guide including lecture outlines, reading lists and teaching activities, and several customisable PowerPoint slides Figures and tables from the text Case studies.

Social Research Methods is a comprehensive research methods book that can guide individuals with more or less social science background in conducting social research. The crystal-clear scientific style plenty of relevant examples recommend the book among the best in the field.

Reviewed by **Raluca ANTONIE**

Babes-Bolyai University

E-mail: ralucaantonie@gmail.com