

**ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL
ENGAGEMENT**

ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Redefining the Way
Organizations Engage

BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2019

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78973-438-6 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-78973-437-9 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78973-439-3 (EPub)



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Acknowledgments

I wouldn't be able to write this book without a support and intellectual stimulation of my family, friends, and colleagues. Thank you all; and especially Rolf, Lutz and Christophe; for sharing your wisdom, encouragement, and patience while I was "suffering through" a creative process. Without you this journey wouldn't have been possible. And of course, special thanks to Aline the first reader and critic of this book whose valuable advice and comments made it much better.

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List of Abbreviations or Acronyms

AIDA	Awareness Interest Desire Action
AMEC	The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Consumer
CC	Corporate Communication
CCO	Chief Communications Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CMO	Chief Marketing Officer
COP	Conference of Parties
CR	Corporate Reputation
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSP	Corporate Social Performance
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EACD	European Association of Communications Directors
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GSMA	GSM Association
HR	Human Resources
IGO	Inter-governmental Organization
IO	International Organization
ISO	International Standards Organization
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PA	Public Affairs
PESTEL	Political Economic Social Technological Environmental Legal
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PR	Public Relations

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RACI	Responsible Accountable Consulted Informed
ROE	Return on Engagement
ROI	Return on Investment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WOMM	Word of Mouth Marketing
WTO	World Trade Organization

Prologue

This book is a summary of research and reflection about advocacy. I am an advocacy and communication consultant with an interdisciplinary background from social sciences (ethnology and cultural anthropology), media studies, and finally management. My career started in advertisement, passed quickly through market research to land in communication and advocacy consultancy. Ever since I started, I was fascinated to what extent communication and engagement can have a transformative role on the organizations. Not to preach too high, I would claim that communication and advocacy can positively change the lives of many. The issues that once were just short news snap-shots somewhere far away are brought home through digital and traditional media requiring global action. At the same time communication and advocacy change the organizations. The companies need to act in a way that responds to the requirements coming from their stakeholders. This changes the business models and also shifts the role companies have in the society and broader system.

Influence is the most natural thing people do. We want to have “better deal” for us, for our families and for those about whom we care. In order to get what we want, we need to win the argument or convince the others about our points and to do what we want. We do it all the time and in many circumstances. This is why advocacy is accompanying us throughout our lives. We advocate for ourselves, for our families, for organizations that we represent. Paradox being that oftentimes, we do advocate without knowing that we advocate. Similarly, organizations and companies need to permanently advocate for themselves in a busy multi-media and multi-stakeholder environment. Making people care about the issues important for them and making people support their organizational brand and activities becomes a *sine qua non* requirement for an organizational license to operate. Without license to operate businesses and organizations vanish. So, we can claim that organizations can’t exist without effective advocacy.

At the same time, the ways of influencing are changing. Social media, virtual reality, big data analytics – all these new tools and technologies change the way organizations and individuals communicate with each other. With a personalization of communication, companies and organizations are more and more often humanized – they are seen almost as human beings. Corporate citizenship requirements make companies build personalities. The companies behave, act, and are perceived as individuals. This changes dramatically the way they see themselves and the way they engage with the external environments. Organizational engagement is driven by these new requirements and redefines the role both advocacy and communication play.

This book is a combination of research, theoretical modeling, and personal experience. It aims to discuss the newest trends in the organizational engagement from a managerial perspective. There are many books that focus on corporate

communications, and there are several books focusing on the grassroots engagement and campaigning. However, there are very few that look at advocacy from a holistic perspective. In this book, I claim that advocacy is equally relevant for non-for-profit and corporate sectors. I try to also sum up the key trends impacting advocacy and define “so what” from an organizational perspective.

I was pretty frustrated by the lack of models for strategy development and functional management of advocacy during my time as Co-Director of Executive Certificate in Advocacy – one of the first (if not the first) executive education training in the field. Strategic models lists of considerations as well as recommendations included in this book are response to this frustration. They are developed in a way that favors customization and avoids cookie-cutter approaches in the implementation. This last point is extremely important from an advocacy perspective. In management practice, we often suffer from “best practices” approach. The “best practices” in communication and advocacy are everywhere. They create a safety net for those who design organizational engagement strategies. Companies follow the best practices of the previous campaigns in their marketing and influencing approaches. However, the landscape and stakeholders are changing at a pace that nobody can really keep up with. Therefore, a past success is no guarantee of future good performance. We do forget about it far too often and embark at repetitive campaigns that don’t necessarily correspond to the organizational objectives. Moreover, the fact that something worked well for another organization is no guarantee that it will work for ours.

Advocacy professionals can be divided into two main groups. The first one encompasses professionals with business or legal background who see advocacy, public affairs, and lobbying as the key organizational activities linked closely with the core business of the organization or company. The second group presents much more mystical view on advocacy. They want advocacy to be a mysterious activity not scrutinized at a corporate level. For them advocacy is almost like a magic. And magicians are not supposed to report or show how they do their magic. This attitude unfortunately still shared by many advocacy professionals destroys its internal perception. Advocacy brings value to the organization and those managing advocacy need to stand up and measure and report the effectiveness of their activities. This will upgrade perception of advocacy to the level it deserves.

Finally, both communication and advocacy are very often not considered to the core of the business by the companies and organizations. It is true that advocacy professionals in the global international non-for-profit and international organizations benefit from a better statute than their corporate counterparts. But still, in many cases many organizations don’t realize that advocacy might be their “raison d’être.” Without advocacy they cease to exist. Here we can think about trade associations. Their job is to represent the interests to their members and there is no more obvious way than advocacy.

Yet often companies and organizations don’t support these activities with the sufficient budgets. Enough is to compare the EU lobbying budgets of the multi-nationals (published in the EU Transparency Register) with their regional or

even local marketing budgets. Yet the decisions taken in Brussels that are lobbied for or against can define business success or completely destroy a business model.

I would love this book to become for some a simple (simplistic) guide on how to design advocacy strategies. I would love to start a discussion on the organizational positioning of advocacy as a function. At the same time, I would like that advocacy gains the place it deserves among the executives of the organizations. In today's environment many factors impact the business operating environment. Whether we want it or not many people and organizations have a stake in the business of virtually any organization and company. Having a compass to navigate this environment becomes paramount for the future of business. And as I will claim at the end of this book the landscape is set to change and evolve further. This evolution both from a social perspective as well as from the perspective of the advocacy tools and strategies will elevate an importance to engage with even broader ranges of audiences and stakeholders.

Creating engagement means bringing people closer to the organization. While we need to be strategic in both advocacy and communication, we cannot forget about an emotional component. People and stakeholders alike need to believe in the values and purpose of the organization in order to support it. Without this belief the organizations fail to deliver on their promises. As a result, these organizations fail to obtain their license to operate. Being strategic about emotions might sound like a dichotomy but is not, and I hope this book will convince the readers. This dual rational-emotional approach requires though a transformation of the way we think about the role of organizational engagement.

Let's start the journey and make advocacy strategic ...