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Coherence in HRM, a matter of rhetoric

One of the domains that a PR structure permanently keeps under its observation is human resources management. Just like in the case of other activities within the organisation - management, internal communication, etc. – observation or, better said monitoring the human resources management activity is carried out in order to avoid discursive side-slips, side-slips that can affect, even severely, the relation between the organisation and its various publics.

We give, as an example, an excerpt from *Logique et langage*, where the author in his own turn quotes one of the humorous “tickets” from *Le Monde*, signed by Claude Sarraute (Grize, 1990: 41-42). We also preserve the original text in French, in order to keep its humour intact (involuntary, but also inappropriate):

Monsieur,

Après avoir concocté une sélection, particulièrement rigoureuse, des candidatures propres à développer les carrières commerciales dans le cadre de notre expansion d’entreprise, notre intérêt spontané pour la vôtre nous a conduit, tout naturellement, à vous convier à un entretien pour pallier les éventuelles carences d’information réciproque et évaluer l’adéquation des profils respectifs.

Nonobstant l’éclectisme de notre mutuelle approche, il sied de vous informer que l’intérêt présenté par votre expérience professionnelle se conjugue imparfaitement avec la synthèse de nos desiderata. Il convient donc, *in fine*, d’infirmier avec regret notre intention première, tout en rendant hommage à l’attention dont vous avez bien voulu créditer notre société.

Il nous reste, cependant, à vous remercier derechef de votre démarche et à vous prier de bien vouloir agréer, etc.

Signé : le directeur du personnel¹.

¹ In English: After we have made a selection, an extremely rigorous one, of the appropriate candidatures for developing commercial careers within the development of our company, our spontaneous interest in your person led us, naturally, to invite you to meet with us in order to palliate the possible defaults in the reciprocal

The human resources managers are responsible for ensuring the staff resources necessary to the progress of the activities in the organisation and for preserving them permanently to an optimal state of efficiency and /or effectiveness². These are managers that permanently have both internal and external publics and who refer, for the establishment of the strategy and in taking the current decisions, to a different market, besides the one in which the activity of the organisation is inscribed: the job market. Besides their expertise concerning the skills that are specific to and necessary for the organisation and without listing all the instruments those managers are using in order to determine the optimal state we mentioned above, in HRM, an important place is taken by discursive activities (speech creation and reception / analysis). Or, this is the aspect that also raises the interest of the PR structure, which holds most of, and the most unquestionable communication skills.

This is why we intend to discuss some issues related to HRM, but from the perspective of Public Relations.

Some precisions concerning the PR

Information and knowledge are valuable only to the extent to which they can lead to action, in order to reach the objective that the organisation has established for itself. The control of the information flow and knowledge management have in view the same thing, namely that all the measures aim at satisfying the objectives of the organisations and at realising a good perception of the organisation within the social context.

It is a well known fact that the changes in the structure of an organisation, its management, the use of information technology, its own practices in professional training, as well as the *design* of the workflow, they all stimulate the cognitive changes that entail an evolving behaviour compared to the way in which every individual carries out his/her own work. All these influence considerably the changes within the organisation and the products / services

informing, and to evaluate the adequacy of our profiles. Despite the eclectic character of our reciprocal contact, we ought to inform you that the interest presented by your professional experience is imperfectly conjugated with the synthesis of our desiderata. *In fine*, unfortunately we ought to refute our original intention, rendering at the same time homage to the attention you granted to our company. Nevertheless, we have to thank you one more time for your demarche and please find...etc...Signed: the Staff Manager.

² In order to understand what we mean by the difference between efficiency and effectiveness, see: Dan Stoica, "Costurile informatizării într-o bibliotecă centrală universitară", in *Biblioteca*, vol.VII, 1996, nr.8, pp. 211-213

provided to the community. A positive reaction from the community leads to the increase in the motivation of the individuals within the organisation (irrespective of the level at which they act) and the result is increasingly improving (we are referring here to performance, quality, productivity, costs, and efficiency). This interdependence (individual performance / performance of the organisation) is supplemented by another one, situated on the interface between the organisation and its external publics (represented either by the entire community, or by a part of it), publics that evolve, in their own turn, together with the organisation and the world which is external to it: it is the interdependence between what the organisation has to offer and the reaction of those who benefit from that offer. Both interdependencies emphasize a continuous process of communication. This communication process involves the decoded information (knowledge), which is shared, evaluated, increased, modified, both at an intra-organisational level and at the wider social level of community.

This is the context in which the Public Relations activity (the PR activity) of any organisation is placed and this is the place this complex activity occurs: the (virtual!) interface between the organisation and its publics. If we define marketing as the management of the exchanges between the organisation and its external publics, there is also a “transmission belt” of marketing within the organisation³: quality management⁴. At the level organisation / publics, where the PR structure carries out its activity, the bidirectional flow of information and intentionality is realised. By the various methods and means pertaining to the marketing mix, an organisation promotes an image as favourable as possible, so that the target public is conditioned to receive positively the product or the service offered by the organisation, and the staff of the organisation is permanently motivated by the quality management speech in order to support the strategy of the managers. From what has been said above, we can already detach a characteristic of the Public Relations activity, characteristic which is to be found also in various definitions given to this activity: that is, we are dealing with a **predominantly discursive activity** (speech creation and reception/ analysis). We also have to say that it is an **activity which is carried out on a permanent basis** and, since we are talking about “targeted” speeches, it is doubled by another activity which is also permanently carried out: **publics’ segmentation**.

³ Cf. Andriaenses, Ingham & Vankerkem, *Marketing et qualité totale*, Paris, 1993

⁴ See also: *Adapting marketing to libraries in a changing world-wide environment*, IFLA – Saur Vlg., München, 2000

The speeches specific to a PR structure are:

1. the marketing speech oriented towards the external publics, speech cast on the marketing economic activity (without being confused with it) and which is refined by “the four Ps” composing the latter;
2. the quality management speech, oriented towards the internal publics, speech cast on the organisational management activity (without being confused with it) and which is refined, in its turn, on two levels: one speech addressed to the managers (the managers counselling speech) and one addressed to the other publics which are traceable within the organisation (formative speech).

As far as the managers counselling speech is concerned – the one that can raise our interest within the economy of the present paper – it is a permanent concern of the PR person. And we are referring here to a non-normed activity (if necessary, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), taken to the most unexpected places and moments and where the failure – when there is such a case – can only be associated to the PR communicator. It is an activity that begins with simulations – like most of the discursive activities pertaining to the field of Public Relations – and continues with successive approaches, consisting of various contextualisations and of content restatements, until the desired reaction is obtained from the manager/ managers.

We were saying (see above) that another activity permanently developed by a PR structure is the publics’ segmentation⁵. This is also performed in the quality management speech (with the managers counselling component and the personnel motivation component), and in the marketing speech (taking into account that two of the marketing mix components are endogenous – the product and the price – while the two others are exogenous – placement and promotion). On the other hand, one should bear in mind the fact that the internal publics belong to the external publics (the employee, besides the working hours, is a member of the community like any other member of the community, with family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances, with human needs and desires, with no connection to the internal policy of the organisation, the values promoted within it, and its interests). The employee reads the newspaper, (not only the company newspaper, where there is one), borrows ideas, develops expectancies, shows a behaviour induced by the private life, by his/her experience as induced

⁵ An example of segmentation is given in “Segmenting the workforce to improve communication”, by Mandy Thatcher, in *Strategic Communication Management*; Oct/Nov 2006; 10, 6; ABI/INFORM Global pg. 26, ssq.. See also G. Lagneau, *La sociologie de la publicité*, Paris, PUF, 1977.

by the life in the community. Impregnated with all that, (s)he returns everyday within the organisation, where (s)he is confronted to the organisational culture. Since the experiences of the life outside the organisation are different, and the individuals are even more different (from one another), the multitude of employees will not seem homogeneous to the PR specialist. (S)He will try to build human typologies within which (s)he will situate the staff members, in order to group them by similitude (constituting groups starting from their distinctive features) in order to produce speeches as adequate as possible, and, thus, as competitive as possible. On the other hand, in the community, there are persons who wish to become members of the organisation's personnel, and also, persons that the organisation wishes to attract among its members.

We can point out, starting from the issues discussed above, that the mission of the PR specialist can be fulfilled only by keeping a holistic perspective on reality, within which the organisation is not presented as being opposed to the community, but rather as a part of it, the members of the organisation being at the same time members of the community; it is a perspective within which the public image of the organisation is not only an image proposed unilaterally (from the organisation towards the environment), but also an image which is permanently negotiated both with the external and with the internal publics. From this, we can infer the importance of the relationship between the organisation and press, the latter being the most important image vector and also the one with the greatest impact on the various publics, be they internal or external. And again, this can also allow us to infer the concern of any PR structure towards the content and the form of the speeches produced by the organisation, at any level and on any component.

We can see therefore how the speech of the HRM gets to become a permanent and extremely important concern for the PR structure of an organisation. If we have in view the fact that the HRM speech comprises press announces for the vacant jobs, recruitment interviews, correspondence with possible employees, employment contracts, job descriptions for each employee, promotion and/or demotion regulations, regulations concerning sanctions given in various situations (even to dismissals) etc., then we realise that for the HRM speech – as a whole – coherence is essential.

Some precisions concerning coherence

Trying not to lead the discussion to a very deep level, or to useless particularisations for the economy of the present paper, we will limit to the essential issues concerning speech coherence. This issue comprises aspects related to textual coherence, but we are interested especially in the coherence of a speech seen as the totality of verbal speeches and actions of the same actor.

Ensured by the textual redundancy and by the presence of some elements (isotopies) favouring a certain reading of a given text, textual coherence must be seen as an internal non-contradiction and, at the same time, as the quality of the text to keep its reference to the extratextual world through an oriented reading. From the two-valued logic, coherence preserves the principle of non-contradiction and the one of the excluded third party. In other words, we cannot confirm and deny at the same time and under the same circumstances a characteristic of a certain thing, that is we either confirm or deny a predicate for a certain thing, a third option being excluded.

According to the so-called “metarules”⁶, by repetition, by progression, by non-contradiction and by the relation of a pragmatic nature, the correlation of the enunciations composing a speech is realised in such a way that the local meanings are naturally integrated within a global meaning, relevant compared to the communication situation and to the accepted dominant function of each speech. The inferences (Cf. Sperber, 1995), the hidden meanings and the implicatures (Cf. Grice, 1991), the conversational maxims (Cf. Grice, 1991), the isotopies (Cf. Greimas-Courtés, 1993), the presuppositions (Cf. Grice, 1991, Ducrot-Schaeffer, 1995), all these can explain the textual and discursive mechanisms which are used in creating coherence. It is not intratextual cohesion, but rather coherence, that quality of the speech that “guarantees the continuity and the progressive integration of the meanings around a topos, which presupposes a reciprocal adaptation of the concepts determining the configuration of the textual universe conceived as a mental construction” (Ducrot-Schaeffer, 1995), ensuring thus the coreferentiality of the enunciations composing the speech and validating the speaker’s intention, as surprised right from the beginning, and in a rather intuitive way, by the interlocutor.

⁶ See, on this issue, Roventă-Frumușani, 2005.

The redundant character of the human language, its metalinguistic function within communication, the tandem condensation / expansion, noticeable in the functioning of the articulated language, are just a few of the linguistic constructions dimensions, meant to ensure speech coherence. Nevertheless, it is also important to bring into attention also the importance of context, as an ultimate element in shaping the sense of the discourse. Let us not forget \ what Ducrot called “the situational component” in constituting / analyzing speeches (see Stoica, 2000). Only on its basis can we understand the story told by Roman Jakobson about that Russian actor who, during the examination that was to decide his admission in a famous theatre company in Moscow, was to utter the same sentence in 40 different ways, and saying each time something else (Jakobson, 1987: 67). Only on its basis are we able to understand communication strategies foreseeing the utterance on a certain tone, in the presence / absence of a certain third person, with a certain expression, etc., of a phrase which, in other circumstances would have other different meanings. The reading contract (belonging to Eliseo Veron, and subsequently turned into “communication contract”) contains both the sender and the receiver as well as the relationship between the two – seen from both directions – the transmission medium, and the position of each communication participant towards the content of the message, and it even allows us to take into consideration the general context in which the discursive instance is produced. Speech is action; or the actions acquire a meaning within the frame in which they are produced. Therefore, the situations identified by the analysis of the linguistic material must be referred to the context, to the situational component, in order to reveal the meaning of the speech.

Finally, we should also clarify the image we propose for the idea of “someone’s speech” seen as a whole. For a clear explanation of the need to discuss these issues, we make use of an excerpt from a text on the sociology of human interactions (Goffman, 1974), with the mention that the reading focus should be, this time, the term “to save”:

“The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value actually claimed by a person by means of the action line that the others consider as being adopted by that person during a contact. The *face* is an image of the self, shaped according to some social attributes proved by someone, and that the others share altogether”. [...]

[...] “An individual *saves face* when the action line (s)he follows shows a consistent image of the self, that is based on the judgements and indications provided by the other participants, and confirmed by the facts revealed by the impersonal elements of the situation. It’s now obvious that the *face* doesn’t reside inside or at the surface of its possessor, but that it is spread in the flow of the meeting events, manifesting itself only when the participants are trying to decipher in those events the appreciations expressed on this occasion.

The action line of a person towards other persons has in general a legitimate and institutionalized nature. During a contact, any individual who interacts, and whose personal attributes are familiar or visible, may believe that, from a moral point of view, it is normal and justified to be helped to *save a certain face*. Having in mind his/her attributes and the conventional nature of the meeting, the action lines, thus the *faces* he/she may choose from, are just a few”.

And, further :

“Moreover, by possessing some familiar attributes, the individual is able to have many other faces. The other participants are rarely aware of the nature of these attributes, except that situation in which their alleged possessor somehow discards himself/herself openly through his/her acts. In that moment, the others become aware and realize that this person has consciously feigned to possess those attributes. Consequently, even when the concern of *saving face* concentrates the attention on the activity in progress, in order to succeed, we need to take into account the place we have in the social world in general. A person who succeeds to *save face* in the situation in progress is someone who in the past had refrained from some actions that would have been difficult to deal with later on. [...]

The last sentence of the text given above draws attention on the very matter we are discussing here: in the life of a social entity (individual, organisation, etc.), it doesn’t matter only what happens in the concrete present of the action’s progress, but also the past events and even those that people expect to occur in the future. Or, this is a matter of coherence: “Coherence as historical memory” (Michel Foucault, 1971: 24, apud Roventă-Frumușani, 2005: 98), as

transition and co-presence of the “*déjà dit*”, “*dire*” and “*à dire*”, coherence ensuring thus the correlation of the enunciations (Rovența-Frumușani, 2005: 98). No individual and no organisation can say something and then act otherwise, just as they can do / say something that would affect in the future the possibility to undertake a contradictory social face, only with the risk of losing face or giving a bad impression.

If, for instance, an organisation announces some vacancies, publishing a text in which it specifies, among others, that it provides “career opportunities”, in the internal regulations and in the budgetary engagements on the HR component, there should be some provisions in this respect: ensuring the time and the means that allow the members of the staff to participate in various courses, trainings, conferences on domain specific themes, etc., rewards for those who completed / diversified the skills necessary within the organisation with their own means, promotions for those who update their skills on a regular basis and other ways for providing career opportunities. If these things don’t occur, there is a contradiction between what is announced with respect to the vacancies and the reality familiar to the members of the staff, reality that can become a topic of discussion both within the organisation (as a result of the frustration felt by the staff members), and in the exterior, in the community, where the staff members live their lives, together with the other people. If revealed, the effect of such a contradiction can be fatal to the image of the organisation, or the image crisis is the worst possible type of crisis.

Let us also take an example from the world of politics: if a politician announces that he is going to resign from the position he holds and then he keeps the position, announcing that (s)he won’t give up to it, we are facing again a contradiction between what was said in the past and what is said in the present, between what is said and what is done.

We were saying (see *supra*) that the speech of an entity does not measure its coherence “locally” that is in the place and at the moment of its production, but on a “historical” route, comprising what the entity has already said before, what it says now, and what we suppose it might say later. Thus, the connection between the published speech of the vacancies and the speech during the recruitment interview, and also the other speeches specific to the HRM, is justified, as we have shown before. Coherence is ensured only if the offers and the demands presented in the job descriptions for the vacancies are also to be found in the themes of the recruitment interview, in the criteria established for employment, in the employment contract,

in the job description, in the internal regulations, etc. For the political persona – persons or organisations – the issue is the same: announce something, do what you announced and do not contradict yourself by a new speech that states the exact opposite. A party with a certain electoral platform cannot, for example, promote ideas that are contradictory to the ideological essence of the platform which it was validated for during the elections: you cannot be a liberal and propose social-democratic measures, just like you can't be a social-democrat and propose liberal measures, inscribed in the ideology of the type “each, by him/herself!”.

And still!...

Skills of the PR specialist

Since the PR activity is, as we have already seen, a mainly discursive activity (speech creation and delivery, but also speech reception and analysis), the PR communicator is necessarily a specialist in the art of discourse. (S)He knows that communication is a continuous and dynamic process, (s)he knows that in the human society, no matter what we do, it is impossible to avoid communication (Watzlawick already told us that), (s)he knows that we don't communicate only by means of an articulate language, but also by non-verbal language, and the use of the verbal language finds a great support in the paraverbal. The PR person knows (from Saussure) that language is not data storage and that the occurrence of a linguistic sign does not constrain to any kind of syntagmatic succession, as sequel; the PR person also knows (from Peirce) that the sign, in its relation to the other sign, does not represent a simple reference, and that the meaning of a sign is, in fact, the sign by which it has to be translated. Finally, the PR person knows that the formal logic cannot account for what is happening in the linguistic communication between the individuals, which led to the modal logics (closer to the nature of the communicational interactions between people), to the natural logics (as proposed by Jean-Blaise Grize, in Grize, 1990), and to the neo-rhetoric belonging to Chaïm Perelman, and known as argumentation theory.

In the simulation made in order to synchronise the speech with the target public determined by segmentation, the PR communication specialist analyses both the linguistic content of his/her future speech, and the contextual frames (s)he chose for the actual production of the speech, and also those elements which, if necessary, will allow him/her to contend something else later, without giving the impression that (s)he denies, (s)he contradicts him/herself and

therefore, that (s)he diminishes the consistency of his/her speech as a whole. If we use Toulmin's scheme in the analysis of our own speech in some circumstances we already know that we will have to state our position, the greatest attention will be directed towards the qualifier (Q) and the backing (B). Ready to refer to another backing than its publics would expect and supported by the presence of a well chosen qualifier, the PR communicator will be able to "explicitate" his/her own speech by means of another speech, apparently a contradictory one, but in fact unquestionable. Starting from this model, we can imagine that a good counsellor for the imaginary politician from the incoherence example given above would advise him to say "I also consider resigning", rather than "I will resign", and a HR manager could be advised to use vague terms (good, bad, exceptional merits, etc.) when building the message composing his/her speech, both to the exterior of the organisation, and toward the interior. Let us consider a brilliant example of the use of the qualifier: who could contradict the assertion from the slogan used in the commercial for the Carlsberg beer ("Carlsberg, **probably** the best beer in the world")? The highlighted word makes the discourse unquestionable.

Using, in what follows, other examples also, we will bring into discussion other aspects of the skills that a good PR person has to prove. We are referring here to linguistics and stylistics, to the good knowledge of the value of the linguistic terms in use, to the intratextual significance, which, together with the context of their actual use, will decide the adequacy of the speech to the communicative intention.

We will therefore start from two examples, taken from reputed authors in fields related to communication sciences.

We find for example, in a work (Milner, 1989) a sentence made by Pascal (1) and an antiphrasis by Valéry (2):

(1) "Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie"

respectively

(2) "Le bavardage intermittent de nos petites sociétés me rassure".

Comparing the two, we can actually see that they say pretty much the same thing. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that someone within an assembly of any kind (group of friends, gathered family, members of a club...) runs the risk of offending the others when uttering the second phrase and, on the other hand, (s)he can make a good impression (of a sensitive and cultivated individual, “visited” by philosophical interrogations) if (s)he chooses to say the same thing but using the first formula.

Moving to another author (Eco, 2008: 235-236), we choose an excerpt that, ultimately, can be interpreted as exaggerated, but which serves as an example for our demonstration:

“within the French environment at Oulipo, tracing Queneau’s teachings, it was suggested that the starting formula from Proust’s *Recherche* – Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure – could have been just as well reformulated in terms of an inference: *It was extremely difficult for me to convince my parents to let me stay up later than nine o’clock.*”

Umberto Eco himself further comments: “It is obviously an extreme case of “I wanted to say that”, but it cannot be reduced to the metatextual warning “Proust said in French the following” (loc. cit.).

With a natural inclination towards inferences, the human brain “adds” what it considers as missing from the message explicitly received, in order to understand the communication intention of the sender. The PR person knows that and depends on this functioning of the mind of his interlocutor. Questions such as “What do you mean by that?” or “I wonder what X meant to tell me” reveal the way in which our minds work within the communicational interactions. It is not about the fact that the addressee (or the occasional receiver of the message) would not understand the meaning of the phrase, but about the fact that (s)he has difficulties in understanding the sense of the utterance having as linguistic content the respective phrase, utterance produced in the given context. Taking the second example as a model (the one from U. Eco), we understand that a professional of paraphrasing (as highlighting of the metalinguistic function of language) can explicitate his/her own sayings in the most unexpected ways, avoiding at the same time the digression from the necessary discursive coherence. The use of metaphors, the use of the long debated sophisms, the alteration of the type of discourse expected in a given communication situation are just a few of the resources of the (neo)rhetoric, which are available for a good specialist in Public

Relation communication. To prefer secondary uses for building speeches (cf. Morris, 1946, apud Stoica 2004) means to increase the performativity of the respective speeches, and, therefore, their efficiency; knowing when and how to deviate from the theme of the argumentation (*ignoratio elenchi*) can even be a moral way to support an idea or to counteract an idea proposed by an interlocutor. Certainly, we are dealing with manipulation, but manipulation is, ultimately, present in any discursive utterance. Manipulation, as internal force of the discourse, is amoral: it means influencing (also cf. the theory of the speech acts); only it is characterised by the fact that it is realised without the addressee being aware that (s)he is the object of that influencing. We currently meet, in common discourse, sophisms such as “no one takes care of that nowadays” or “everybody knows that”. They are meant to daunt the interlocutor, that is to keep him/her away from the idea (s)he intended to promote. In terms of ethics, the discussion is held on the finality of the use of such a manipulative speech (especially by the presence of sophisms). Nevertheless, considered in its absolute value, the suggested manipulative speech is neither moral, nor immoral. It is preserved at an instrumental level and cannot be judged in terms of ethics. In an intelligent utilisation, the sophistic speech can be defended by subsequent speeches which will be paraphrases adapted to the context and, therefore, kept within the coherence area of the global speech.

Another great help for the PR person is the verbal tense, and the correct use of the adverbs and of other connectors. I met for example, in a paper written by a PhD student, a construction of the type: “in this case, one resorts to newspapers, radio **and** television”, when in fact, the author wanted to say that “one resorts to newspapers, radio **or** television”. It is obvious that, in the first case, the solution would be to resort to all the means evoked, while the second formula leads us to think that we have a choice among newspapers, radio and television.

As far as the verbal tenses are concerned, it would suffice to remind that the indicative mood is the mode of certainty, while the conditional is the mode of probable actions (or, even, the past conditional is also known as “the tense of the missed actions”!).

The use of vague words (good, bad, etc.) or of terms that are difficult to define (such as “normal”) also draws the attention of the PR person. It can prove to be useful in counselling the HR manager to produce a speech whose sense could be “betrayed” when necessary, without leaving the impression of general inconsistency of the discourse as a whole. We could also consider here the use of the corporatist wooden language, that no one translates anymore,

and that everybody knows that it is better to use. For instance, considered in their deep meaning, *career* and *team* are opposed terms. Career is an individual construction, while a team is made of at least two persons. They appear nevertheless, in a HRM speech, and nobody seems to be bothered by the fact that they are used at the same time, in order to promise the realisation of two realities that logically exclude one another. The technique is simple: a carefully constructed language is needed, which, by excessive use, decays to the status of wooden language (Cf. Stoica, 2007). From that point, it doesn't matter what the speech says; what matters now is not to forget the keywords which are compulsory in a "modern" HRM speech. If necessary, if an employee complains about the fact that (s)he is not satisfied with the way (s)he can build a career, (s)he can be told that everybody is satisfied with the way in which (s)he works as part of a team. And the reverse is also valid: an employee that complains about the lack of team spirit at the workplace can be told that the right of each employee to build a career sometimes requires the temporary sacrifice of team spirit, but that in the end, the whole team will be able to take pride in the others' success.

We choose to put an end to this listing of techniques and tricks used by the PR specialist, right before approaching the issue of metaphor. Our choice can only be explained by the fact that the subject is too vast and too important to be reduced to a single paragraph in the economy of the present paper. We will nevertheless remind the fact that the metaphor, as the weakest form of defining reality, is extremely useful in preserving the impression of coherence necessary to an organisational speech, such as the HRM. "Taking a metaphor seriously means taking off all its possible suggestions, not transforming the metaphoric vehicle in a technical term", says Umberto Eco (Eco, 2008). Whenever (s)he feels that it is necessary to modify what has been said before, the PR person can advise the human resources manager to resort to metaphors. This technique will allow him/her to subsequently interpret what (s)he said in such a way that it will seem the exact opposite of the things initially presupposed (inferred). Coherence is saved, and the global HRM speech consistency remains intact.

And getting back, ...

...we will remind that the PR speech on the quality management component also contains a form called "managers counselling speech". It is maybe the most difficult type of PR speech: it demands 100% devotion to the wellness of the organisation – ignoring one's own interests and even the interests of the managers! – and it takes place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, its

end being decided by the moment when the objective is reached, that is the moment when it can be stated that the manager/ the managers adopted the basic idea pursued.

The counselling speech of the HR manager can also be placed here. The latter, just like most of the persons holding important positions, usually has opaque reactions to the suggestions (s)he receives concerning the way in which (s)he is supposed to do his/her job. The talent of the PR person lies precisely in finding a way to highlight the discursive component of the HRM and show his/her highly developed skill in rhetoric, hence, the importance of the help (s)he can provide in HRM speech building / analysis. If (s)he manages to gain the HR manager's attention, then (s)he will have no problems in helping to build speeches that, without being by no means wrong, could subsequently allow changes in attitude, optics and problem approaches.

The idea is not new, but it has been waiting for too long to "catch". The PR schools (in Romania or abroad), the available tutorial literature in this field, speciality literature, all manifest the same lack: they don't show a correct understanding of the discursive dimension of Public Relations, and, consequently, they fail to understand the importance of rhetoric (see Skerlep, 2001). On the other hand, the managers still seem to ignore the benefits of specialised counselling that a PR communicator can bring. Not worldwide...

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