Specificity of Public Relations in the Youth Audience

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Abstract: PR as a social phenomenon has some specific features in the different socially determined audiences (due to (stereotypes of thinking; stereotypes of perception and evaluation; stereotypes of response) of these targeted groups. This fact is circumstantially described in the article on the example of the Youth audience. The authors gives the practical recommendations for enhancement the process of PR communication in the Youth audience, according to the interests of the targeted group.

Key words: Youth audience • Public Relations • Mass consciousness • Social stereotype
• Targeted social group

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Russian legislation defines Youth as the group of people aged from 14 to 30 years old. Therefore, we consider the problem of our interest according specifically to this age gap.

Youth has clearly expressed differences with the other age groups on ways of thinking, mentality, level of curiosity, etc. This fact is reflected on any field of Youth public life (political, socio-economic, spiritual, cultural, etc.). So, the Public Opinion in the Youth audience is also sharply differs with the Public Opinion of the other social groups on the same objects of interest.

The studying of Public Relations in the Youth audience is the very important, because concrete this targeted social group will be the main social actor for the country’s development in the nearest perspective (during 15-20 next years).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of comparative analysis was used in distinction of varieties of stereotypes, circulating different age groups.

Functional analysis as a method of scientific research was applied by the authors in order to reveal the essence of the society’s structure (age groups).

The method of qualitative analysis of scientific sources and literature was also used in the given study, as well as scientific method of system analysis.

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RESULTS

Obviously, such a vague age limits of the Youth category (from 14 to 30 years old) presuppose the existence of several social groups (more or less homogeneous by psychological characteristics) inside it. According to G.S. Abramova [1], we can distinguish the following targeted groups inside the general aggregate (14-30 years old): teenagers (up to 17 years old), younkers and maidens (from 18 to 22 years old), maturing (from 23 to 30 years old).

During PR-campaigns in the Youth field these conventional boundaries, must be taken into account undoubtedly, selecting form and content of PR-messages. Besides the psychological and age-sensitive specificity of different segments of Youth audience, the characteristics of gender determination of audience, its social status, level of urbanization, etc. are also very important. All signs of the selected segment of the Youth audience (in which PR-campaign or action is planned) must be ascertained before any activity in this field. It can be realized by using sociological study of targeted Youth group.

Considering the Youth policy on the national (non-regional level), we have to mention, that also as the other kinds of policy, it is directly based, firstly, on the nominal activity of the basic actors of PR-communication in this area (relevant executive authorities) and secondly – on targets, which basic actors define by indicators for evaluating of the effectiveness of own activity.

The specifics of the current state of the Government’s Youth policy (GYP) in Russia is primarily characterized by the fact of the absence of appropriate law on the federal level (there is only Federal GYP Strategy that identifies the most common vectors and directions in this area). The concrete laws, concerning the Youth policy, exist on the regional levels, that strongly actualizes the task of identifying targets of this policy.

Defining the term of “Government’s Youth policy”, we based on the regulation of “Strategy of Government’s Youth policy in the Russian Federation”, that describes it as “the system of formation of priorities and measures, aimed at creating conditions and opportunities for Youth’s successful socialization and effective self-realization, developing its capacity for Russia, … socio-economic and cultural development of the country, ensuring its competitiveness and enhancing national security” [2]. Regional Youth policy, as a part of GYP, is intended to carry out the above functions on the level of regions of Russian Federation.

Targets must meet certain criteria of their adoption by the executive authorities of different levels (regional and municipal). Such a criteria in GYP are determined in Recommendations by Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth policy of Russian Federation “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Russian Federation in connection with the improvement of the legal status of state (municipal) institutions” [3]: 1) choose quantifiable indicators, such as the number of conducted activities; 2) establish indicators characterizing goals, which the Founder gives agencies; 3) use indicators, characterizing customer’s satisfaction; 4) the main indicator of the quality of work, operated by agencies of Youth Affairs, must be the number of young people, participating in relevant activities; 5) considerable importance have indicators of Youth’s involvement in the process of performing these activities on a voluntary basis; 6) the percentage of completion of schedule may be used as an additional indicator.

It is necessary to mention that the other subjects of Youth policy: Youth’s and children's public associations; organizations and individual entrepreneurs, which activity aimed at the implementation of work with Youth, etc. for effective PR-communication with the Youth also must focus on targets of the efficiency of their activities.

During the sociological study “Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention efforts in mass Youth audience” (Russia, Volgograd region, 2011), one thousand young people from 15 to 22 years old were interviewed about the sources of transferring socially significant information, they consider the most effective. The given results were obtained: 39.4% of respondents prefer TV (boys – 39.7%, girls – 39.1%; 15-17 years old - 39.4%, 18-19 years old – 43.9%, 20-22 years old – 36.2%); 36.8% - Internet (boys – 36.8%, girls – 36.8%; 15-17 years old – 41.6%, 18-19 years old – 35.9%, 20-22 years old – 32.7%); 13.2% - SMS messaging (boys – 13.4%, girls – 13.0%; 15-17 years old – 8.4%, 18-19 years old –
According to the obtained results, the most effective sources of transferring socially significant information to mass Youth audience (in PR-communication as a kind of mass communication) are TV, Internet and SMS messaging (totally – 89.4% of the given targeting group).

Also we have to mention that main methods of socio-psychological impact are used in PR-communication: persuasion, suggestion and manipulation of consciousness [4].

Persuasion as a method of influence on the consciousness of the recipient is based on providing the latest information in its pure form, so-called "zero" version of the text, where the meaning of the transmitted statements are not changed when it is received. This method contacts exclusively with the conscious in the mind to the recipient, causing him make choices in a rational way, real needs and a clear motivation of installation.

Suggestion is such an impact on the recipient, which gives him (against the will) certain feelings, states, behaviors that “are not directly connect with his norms and principles of action” [5. p. 120-121], but in any case not contrary to them.

The method of suggestion implies that recipient has at least the minimum interest in committing the act, which is programmed by the inspiring.

Manipulation of consciousness, as opposed to the suggestion and persuasion, is a kind of exposure, leading to a “hidden excitement of recipient’s intentions do not coincide with his true existing desires” [6, p. 59]. It is urgent to notify that manipulation of consciousness is not a deception of recipient. Information that gives the manipulator, almost always is truthful, but it’s interpretation by the manipulable leads him to commit the act, that he did not intend to commit earlier (before the manipulation).

The impact on the recipients in PR-communication may be verbal (by texts), visual (by visual images), auditory (by sensation of timbre and tone of voice, etc.). But texts in PR-messages is the main component, because, firstly, it is present (in one way or another) in all PR-messages and, secondly, in fact it is the only element of advertising messages, responsible for it’s rational perception by respondents.

In Youth audience, especially in the younger age groups (up to 17 years old and from 18 to 22 years old), due to the specificity psychology, the most effective impact on the recipients will be achieved by the method of manipulation of consciousness [7].

CONCLUSIONS

- The general Youth audience (14-30 years old) may be separated for the following targeted groups inside itself: teenagers (up to 17 years old), younkers and maidens (from 18 to 22 years old), maturing (from 23 to 30 years old). The PR-communication should be done in light of this factor with some differences in any of the above subgroups.
- Priority should be given for using of the following instruments for information campaigns, targeting on transmission PR-messages to mass Youth audience: TV, Internet, SMS messaging.
- The most effective impact on the young recipients will be achieved by the method of manipulation of consciousness, especially in the younger age groups (up to 17 years old and from 18 to 22 years old).
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REFERENCES