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**MULTIMEDIA IN COMMUNICATION MIX**

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

This essay shows the multi-media use as an strategic option of public communicators, companies, political parties, institutions, etc, within their communication mix.

Spain is the spatial reference of this analysis, whose political, social and economic evolution has to be taken into account in order to achieve an adequate understanding of the spanish communications.

The underlying hypothesis is that, precisely, the progressive opening of the spanish socio-political system, offering new contexts and interchanges, guides the change of spanish operators' communicative strategies and, therefore, their communication mix.

In the following paragraphs this evolution is thoroughly analyzed through three of their most significant stages, and so, we will be able to appreciate how the MM arise in the last of the stages, playing a clearly defined role: act as a showcase and attention call of spanish modernization process. Three punctual experiences: The Universal Exposition of Seville; The Olimpic Games of Barcelona and Madrid's Strategic Planning, illustrate this interpretation.

The reader has to excuse the simplicity of the exposing structure for the benefit of the necessary place allocation economy.

## **II.FROM AUTARCHY TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The firm, taken as an open system (Woodward, 1965) (1), and generally, the Systems Theory application to the sphere of Public Communication opened a new perspective, allowing us today, to consider companies as communication systems continuously interacting with their environment.

Thereby, communication has become into a social interaction mean having to be managed by company's board (2).

Time, capital, and professionalism assigned to the company's communicating activity, their products and services, come not only from managing styles, but also, and principally, from environmental demands.

Taking this perspective we will analyze the spanish corporations' communicative strategies as a consequence, or better said, as a requirement of the jump from a closed system to an open one.

### **Stage I: The AUTARCHY, 1940-1959.**

In a quiet environment, as characterizes an isolation economy, without international competence nor labour conflicts; with monopoly, oligopoly or market restrictions situations; with a production-oriented economy and a typically administrative managing style, it makes sense the lack of communicating need of the spanish companies.

A closed system does not arise a communication sensibility, the whole effort is aimed towards the production. The engineer figure becomes the king in an under-supplied market where all the production capacity was allocated beforehand.

This lack of sensibility towards communication and, in general, to "soft" aspects of the company, as well as the belief of "The silence is profitable" principle are still present in some spanish industrial sectors.

It could be concluded that during this 20 years, political propaganda filled all the communicative public arena with a mixed strategy of property and control of the mediatic system (previous censorship etc).

### *Conclusions Stage I.*

Industrial silence and monopolized political propaganda.

## **Stage II: The DOMINANT ADVERTISING**

As Prof. García Echevarría points "in 1959, spanish economy and particularly, spanish corporations initiate a modernization process (...) though, not achieving the entrance of Spain in the European Community in 1962, the pointed modernization of spanish economy and industry was characterized by a clear orientation towards home market". (3)

The emphasis, so, changes from production to selling, at the same time the multinationals carry with them into Spain the marketing concepts and tecniques, among them advertising.

Marketing was quickly assimilated, though for many countries it was just a nominative change from commercial to marketing manager; not necessarily understanding nor the philosophy nor the principles that determine the "marketing" concept.

However, spanish entrepreneurs receive advertising with a first sense of distrust, or to put it in other way, as a multinationals' eccentricity. During the sixties, I was a privileged witness of this first repulse to advertising from my workplace in the multinational agency "LINTAS", of the UNILEVER group.

In the seventies, and even more, in the eighties, the market's impulse makes to react the spanish managers, and in an imitative process, they start communicating with their consumers, just exclusively, through advertising.

Advertising's efficacy as marketing's communication system carries:

- a) Investments in advertising take off in the late seventies, achieving a sustained growth in the 1980-1990 period, called the spanish advertising's prodigious decade, with annual growths going from 18% to 37%. Exceeding in 1990 the limit of the million of million pesetas in advertising investment.

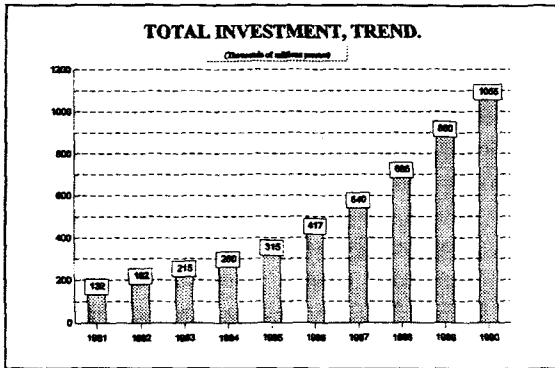


Figure 1



- b) Spain becomes in 1987 the EC's country with the greatest investment in advertising as percentage of GNP, with a 1,9%.

**INVESTMENT ON ADVERTISING ON  
EC COUNTRIES. 1987**

	Local Currency (Millions)	USA \$ (Millions)	Per Head (\$)	As % of GNP
West Germany	17.974,00	9.985,80	164,20	1,10
Belgium	39.068,00	1.047,40	106,20	0,90
Danemark	2.528,00	371,70	143,30	1,00
Spain	540.000,00	4.373,20	112,50	1,90
France	40.338,00	6.723,00	120,90	0,90
U.K	6.160,00	10.266,00	180,60	1,70
Greece	56.052,00	321,40	32,10	0,70
Holland	6.386,00	3.193,00	218,50	1,80
Ireland	133,00	190,60	52,80	0,90
Italy	5.694.130,00	4.380,10	76,40	0,70
Portugal	22.206,00	156,60	15,30	0,50

Source: Starch Inra Hooper

**Figure 2**

- c) There is not only a growth in investments, but also the number of brands making advertising nearly duplicate between 1977 and 1988.

### NUMBER OF BRANDS MAKING ADVERTISING

1977	1988
15.007	30.302

Source: J.W.T.: "Investment on Advertising in Spain", Madrid, 1989.

Figure 3

- d) The public sector becomes during this period the first spanish advertiser, with annual growths of 190% .

### INVESTMENT ON ADVERTISING IN SPAIN (1988)

Companies with public participation	15.251 millions pesetas.
Ministries	10.447 millions pesetas
Others	8.705 millions pesetas
<b>TOTAL PUBLIC INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>34.403 millions pesetas</b>

Source: JWT: "Investment on Advertising in Spain", Madrid, 1989.

Figure 4

#### *Conclusions: Stage II*

It could be said that the one-way, consumer-oriented communication through an only channel, advertising, is the best defining feature of the spanish communication from the sixties to the late eighties. Instead of a communication armonized mixture, we should better speak about an advertising "violin solo".

The expressiveness of this assesment shouldn't hide the birth of opposite trends, in the same advertising glamorous years, that would draw today's communication portrait.

### **Stage III: The INTEGRATED CORPORATIVE COMMUNICATION, 1986-1994.**

If political opening starts in 1975, with the transition towards a constitutional democracy, it is not until 1986, with the starting of the integration process of Spain in the EC, when the Spanish Economy's real opening takes place.

"However, the economy's opening challenge becomes, actually, a challenge to the spanish firms" as Prf García Echevarría (4) points out. The operators with their strategies, are the ones that have to offer competitive answers to the new environment.

The system's political, social and economic opening breaks with the former communicative scheme and presents new demands to the firms, we are refering to:

- a) The birth of new relevant publics.

Consumer is not the only requiring companies' attention. We assist to an increasing relevance of organized social groups. Green groups, neighbourhood and consumers' associations etc, take a leading role in determining, for example, the opening or close of a factory, the instalment of a water-purifier or the design of a new road. Within this context opinion-leaders and journalists, as social mediators, require a special attention, not dispensed until now. The same could be said about stakeholders: shareholders, suppliers etc., traditionally forgotten, not to say punished.

b) The need of new systems.

It is obvious that advertising, although resulting highly reliable in a company-consumer relationship, it does not result so important in the relation with the new relevant publics, arising the need of introducing new communication systems, and finding the most convenient communicative mix in each case. (5)

In 1959, Harvard's Prof Neil H. Borden divulged a concept that revolutionized the marketing world. He called it "Marketing Mix", following an analogy of the term used in recording studios "sound mix". (6) The concept, although having been applied successfully in marketing's strategic process; however was forgotten in the communication area. Communication Mix shows the need of selecting and combining all the communicative means and systems in a correct balance in order to achieve positive results in a given social or market situation.

The new concept, shyly introduced in Spain in the second half of the 80's by a few communication consultances and applied later by some leader firms, extends in this country the sinergetic and integrating focus that should characterize the existing moment.

c) Corporation's increasing presence

The traditional consumer-product relationship is, therefore, replaced with a new relation with the corporation backing those products or services and which acts as guarantee of them. Besides, both in research area (ESOMAR Congress, Montreux, September 1987) as in commercial practice (BENETTON as international paradigm and LOEWE as

the spanish one), appears clearly the influence of corporative brand's image in the selling of their products.

Communication is frequently understood as something that the sender, the company in this case, makes to the receivers, pressing them to buy her products. This compulsive interpretation of communication, apart from its theoretic inconsistency, lacks of sense in an open system characterized precisely for his balance trend, through feedback systems.

The successful corporations in an open system are those that best listen to their publics. Spanish investment in social and market research was approximately of 7,000 millions pesetas in 1987, a mere 1,3% of the advertising investment. This fact confirms that Spanish companies are more worried about sending messages than in listening. Unfortunately, the actual economic recession has aborted a recent significative trend change, giving one of the lowest dimension to the spanish research market.

#### **Stage IV: NEW STRATEGIES**

It looked inevitable a communicative adjustment to the new demands, arising it timidly around 1986. Three trends mark it:

- a) Advertising's relative weight decline in the communication mix:

A watchful analyst would have detected that already in 1985, within an advertising apotheosis, a double-speed growth was taking place, and the so-called "below the line" media were taking off at a much higher rate than conventional advertising.

Effectively, while in 1985 76.3% of the total investment was directed to conventional advertising, and the leaving 23.7% was aimed to "below the line" media, in 1991 situation goes the other way round and "below the line" media, misinterpreting their denomination, overcome the conventional ones covering a 50.7% of total investments. The trend is confirmed in 1992 with a 54% and in 1993 with a 55.5%, this year advertising suffers for the first time a negative growth of - 11.6%. (Source: JWT and "Federación Nacional de Empresas de Publicidad" Reports). (7)

This double-speed growth is appreciated in Prof. Mazo's research about FNEP data.

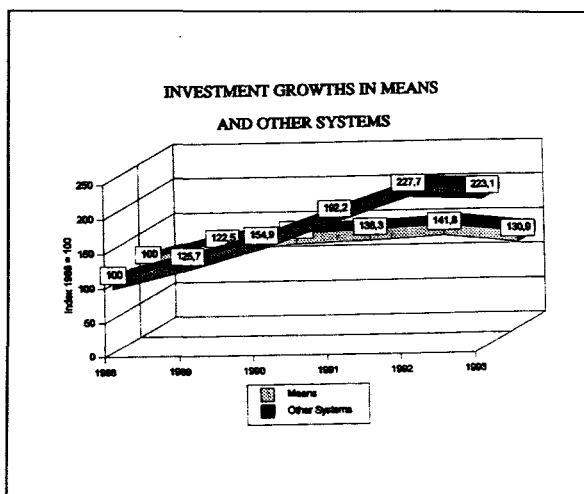


Figure 5

- b) The irresistible ascent of the integrated communication.

"This sinergetic approach, that allows a positive inter-relation between mass media, micro media and the face to face dialogue, is called to achieve success, cause it offers the best use of financial and technical resources" foresaw "Public Communication Institute" in the late eighties. (8) Reality has confirmed progressively this assesment and nowadays Spain faces a clear trend to integrate:

- product/producer discourse.
- internal/external communication
- different systems and means communicating about the firm, from the design of emblematic buildings, to their interior design, logos, uniforms, showcases, fairs and congresses, publishings, patronage, press conferences etc, etc.

- c) The surge of MM in Communication Mix.

It had to be with the arrival of celebrations such as the Expo'92 and the Olympic Games when MM first appeared stunningly in the strategies of spanish public senders, as an attention call of the spanish modernization.

### *Conclusions: Stage III*

The system opening makes necessary new strategies based in dialogue and integration. MM make an impressive appearance as part of an image strategy of spanish modernization in Seville's Expo and Barcelona's Olympic Games. It is a non-finished process that needs a thorough analysis.

### III. THE MM IN THE RECENT SPANISH EXPERIENCE

MM's impulse in Spain comes from different spheres:

- \* **University:** Research about Multi-Media is led from the CAVP I department of Information Sciences Faculty of "Universidad Complutense" in Madrid, directed by Prof. E. Bustamante, where an outstanding professors' group generate an important bibliography. Another important academic centre about this issue is placed in the "Universidad Internacional Menendez Pelayo".
- \* **FUNDESCO:** Foundation for the Development of Social Function and Communications (FUNDESCO), headed by Obdulio Martín Bernal and through its bulletin, "TELOS" magazine, annual reports and research prizes has become into an unavoidable reference for the MM study in Spain.
- \* **Public Administration:** Having received pressures from the EU, oriented to an effective demonopolisation and deregularisation that would allow more competitive standards in Telecommunications, it has found in Multi Media a strategic resource to show the spanish modernization to the rest of the world, and it put it into practice through the great shows of Expo 92 and Barcelona Olympic Games.
- \* **Companies:** That start introducing Multi Media in their Communication Mix more as attention-capturing and self image value-added elements than as a basis of the profitability of their huge operative possibilities.



We shouldn't forget the active role of telecommunications companies that take position before the sector's deregularisation.

Three examples illustrate the spanish case:

a) Seville's EXPO 92:

In Prf. Fernández Beaumont words Seville's Universal Exposition represented "the made-real dream of communications' global village ..." (9)

The contribution of telecommunications and electronic and computing technologies, as well as, audiovisual prestations concreted in the following grounds: Integrated services digital network, broadband for communications, fibre optics highways, high-definition television, videotelephony, future's cinema, MM systems, information interactive consultance, etc, etc.

As laboratory and exhibition place of the last advances in Multi Media and Telecommunications, it is thought that EXPO invested 500, 000 millions pesetas in this concept, being the reason for searching private firms' financial aid. IBM, Bull, Rank Xerox, among others contributed with their last foundings.

Concretely EXPO has meant:

- \* The first spanish digital network of integrated services (Telefónica and Alcatel).
- \* Miles of optic fibre wire: The underground of Cartuja's Island sheltered seven digital wires of fibre optics of hundreds kilometres of length.

- \* **Intelligent telephony:** The exhibition of telephonic communications in EXPO came from the research with the GSM system or Paneuropean Digital Moving Telephony; the automatic moving telephony in 900 megahertz; radiosearching, radiotrucking and 700 intelligent public phones capable to dialogue with the users in seven languages.
- \* **High Definition Television.**
- \* **New ways of films projection:** Imax-Omnimax system that allows images 10 times greater than the usual ones. Fujitsu used solid Imax TM in 3-D in a show distinguished as virtual reality. The Spanish Pabillion used Movimax through a 24m- diameter semisferic screen and moving seats for the spectators.

Everything was there. (10)

b) **Barcelona's Olympic Games, 1992.**

The first target was to identify the intervention grounds in computing and telecommunication needs, this guiding programme was called BIT'92.

Starting from this planning and through a partnership with private companies, telecommunication and computing contribution concentered in the following fields: telecommunication networks to transmit different types of signals (images, data, audio); computing management for mass-media and the olympic family: computer management oriented to Game's organization; control and security of facilities and people and, finally , measure and control of athletic competitions' results.

For the information's circulation within the system, a tailored-designed, private telecommunication network was built. This network was capable of dealing with 10,500 telephones, 1,300 faxes (600 for COOB and 700 for journalists); 4,000 walkie-talkies; 2,400 radiosearchers; 2,000 telephone-boxes; 400 special telephones for journalists. All this completed with a 150km optics fibre network, together with 250km of coaxial wire, capable of conducting a high number of simultaneous signals to 11.000 terminals placed within the olympic facilities. (11)

All this, linked with external communication parallel systems, made Barcelona's Olympic Games into " The most important communication process, at least quantitatively, of TV's history" as Prf. Morgas Spa points out. (12)

c) Madrid's Strategic Planning

PROMADRID, the promoting entity of Madrid's Strategic Planning considered the convenience of spreading to the capital's citizens, through a public exposition, the advances of the Planning, in his second stage at that moment, that only was able to identify the "critical factors", without achieving to offer alternative solutions yet.

The hired company for the purpose, The Institute for Public Communication (ICP), conscious about the difficulty of wakening the interest of Madrilians with something so abstract and non-exciting as the "critical factors", chose a Multi Media exposition, that could offer the maximum ammount of information to the citizens in an attractive way as well as resulting attractive to the potential sponsors of the exposition.

This way, the march 15th 1991, a giant "computer" was erected in one of the most jammed crossroads in Madrid, the "Colón Plaza", this computer, if real an not an exposition décor, would have deserved to be inserted in the Guinness records book.

On a base of 20 x 20x 3.5 metres, an IBM-shape 9 x 8 x 12 metres big carcass was erected. The electronic screen "Tecnoscopia Odeco" 3.6 x 7.4 metres big launched out constant information during 12 hours everyday through a 225,280 diods system.

Inside the exposition the Multi Media system covered:

Video projections, thematic information panels, pamphlets, Exposition newspaper and a popular research made by ICP/Research through the statistics package "Research Machine", developing a video questionnaire on computer terminal, through CATI system, that allowed the immediate tabulation of results.

The research's results, as well as the most significant opinions of visitants were launched out through the giant screnn using IBM's MSL software.

This Multi Media design allowed to beat, with 67,000 visitants in a month, the assistance record to a local exposition in Madrid. What was completed with a research of 5,355 questionnaires, and the fact that a high percentage of Madrid's citizenship had noticed the existence of the planning through the attention call caused by the giant computer's image while driving their cars or through the news appeared in mass media.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The communication strategies of Spanish public senders and, consequently, their Communication Mix, have evolved accordingly with the system's opening. Once overcome the stage of modernity show, the development of the Multi Media in Spain is very likely to access to a discovery and deep use of their real operative possibilities, what will require a new corporate culture in the communication sphere.

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