

# Development of Effective PR-Interaction in Public Institutions

Deeva I.V.

 Department of Journalism, Rostov State Economics University  
Rostov-on-Don, Russia

Kikhtan V.V.

 Department of Journalism, Rostov State Economics University  
Rostov-on-Don, Russia

Klemenova E.N.

 Department of Journalism, Rostov State Economic University  
Rostov-on-Don, Russia

**Abstract** – Activities of the press service are multidimensional, it has a set of tools, technologies and platforms for successful work. The entry of Russia into the information society and the new stage in the development of press services put new demands on them. In addition to communicative, image-building, utilitarian and marketing tasks, press services of public institutions perform ideological and popularizing functions which requires specific technologies and PR practices. The heavy workload of daily tasks and primacy of the traditional approach create obstacles in implementing innovative PR-technologies. The development of PR-tools and the implementation of innovative ones, building effective interaction with public groups is the subject of a multi-faceted study.

**Keywords** – state PR, EMERCOM of Russia, expert survey method, benchmarking, content analysis, Internet site.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Modern society is overloaded with bulky flows of information. The need to structure these flows, integrate them into the goals of the organization, use tools to form a single set of communication flows involving multiple activities to improve the relationship between the enterprise and its public groups is one of the main goals of press services. The complexity and inefficiency of activities of public institutions without the use of PR-tools and technologies have been proven; it is necessary to identify the most effective tools for interacting with the target audience. The object of the study was activities of the press service of the Southern Regional Center of the Russian Emergencies Ministry.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The official websites of Rostov Region institutions were objects of research: SRC of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia; the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR; The prosecutor's office of RR; the Ministry of Economic Development of RR; Administration of Rostov-on-Don. After comparing the tools and technologies used by the press services of public institutions of Rostov region, the article concluded that official websites of public institutions differ from each other; they are decisive PR tools. It determined the purpose of the expert survey: a comparative analysis of technical and substantive characteristics of the

websites. To conduct marketing research using expert assessments, questionnaires were developed. Information on the evaluation of sites was studied in order to select evaluation criteria. Experts were selected. The expert group consisted of 7 people. Assessment of the competence of experts was carried out by the method of self-assessment. The calculation was performed by evaluating the results of calculating the competency coefficient  $K$  on the basis of the expert's judgment on the degree of awareness of the problem being solved. The coefficient is calculated by formula:

$$K_j = \frac{1}{2}(K_{uj} + K_{aj}), \quad (1)$$

where  $K_{uj}$  – problem awareness coefficient;  $K_{aj}$  – argumentation coefficient [24, 16]. To calculate the expert awareness coefficient, tables were filled with self-assessment points from 1 to 10 (1 – complete ignorance; 10 – expert knowledge) in the following areas of knowledge: website design, Internet technologies, Public Relations, innovative PR technologies, PR in government.

The expert awareness coefficient was calculated by formula:

$$K_n = \frac{\sum_{s=1}^m B_{sj} \alpha}{\sum \alpha} \quad (s=1, 2 \dots m), \quad (2)$$

where  $K_{jn}$  – coefficient of awareness of the  $j$ -th expert in the  $n$ -th question of the questionnaire;  $B_{sj}$  – the number determined by the expert in the questionnaire characterizing the level of awareness of the  $j$ -th expert with number  $s$ ;  $\alpha$  – degree of preference for specialization  $s$  for the  $n$ -th criterion,  $m$  – number of areas of knowledge.

Then, the scores were adjusted in the range of values from 0 to 1 provided that the maximum competence of each expert is 150 ( $K_{max\ u\ j} = 10 * n$ ). The coefficient of argumentation was calculated by adding scores according to the reference table. The general competency factors for each expert and the general competency coefficient were calculated by summing them. The personal and professional characteristics of experts were evaluated by the self-assessment method: creativity,

attitude to expertise, neo-conformism, analyticity and depth of thinking, constructive thinking and self-criticism.

The expert assessment procedure was carried out by filling out the questionnaire. Initially, experts were asked to evaluate the technical characteristics of the sites, the content of the sites, and the benefits of the PR technologies by direct assessment. The analysis of sites and advantages of PR technologies was carried out by ranking scores from 1 to 5 (1 – the criterion is developed better than on other sites; 5 – the criterion is developed worse). The results were correlated with the reference table to determine the degree of argumentation of the opinions of each expert:

$$K_{a1} = 0,3 + 0,45 + 0,2 + 0,05 = 1$$

$$K_{a2} = 0,2 + 0,45 + 0,2 + 0,05 = 0,9 \text{ и т.д.}$$

A comprehensive expert competence indicator was further defined:

$$K_{gen} = 0,86+0,81+0,89+0,84+0,89+0,86 + 0,87 = 6,02$$

$$K_{gen\ min} = 2/3 * K_{max} = 2/3*7 = 4,67$$

Thus, the general competence of the group exceeds the minimum permissible by 1.35; therefore, the group is competent. As a result, the degree of agreement of the opinions on all criteria is higher than 0.5 (all  $W_j > 0.5$ ); therefore, expertise is convincing. To calculate the coefficient of agreement, the components of the formula were calculated (Table 1).

The study revealed the following generalized ranking of the importance of the criteria "Assessment of technical characteristics of sites": information security <Ergonomics <Website design <Download speed <Structure and navigation functions <Functionality.

The generalized ranking of the importance of the research criteria "Site Content Assessment" is as follows: segments of Internet interaction <Content exclusivity <Completeness of information.

The general ranking of the importance of the research criteria "PR technologies" is as follows: the use of advertising

for PR <Variety of PR tools <Use of moral and ethical content for PR <Availability of utilitarian information <Interactivity <Frequency of news and all PR manifestations.

TABLE I. VALUES OF  $\chi^2$  FOR EACH RESEARCH OBJECT

Research object	T <sub>j</sub>	W	$\chi^2$
1	2	3	4
Ergonomics	69	0.581	16.26
Website design	57	0.558	15.62
Structure and navigation functions	126	0.589	16,48
Functionality	174	0.597	16.72
Information Security	288	0.532	14.89
Download speed	309	0.665	18.62
Interaction segment: business environment	66	0.538	15.06
Interaction segment: citizens	96	0.560	15.69
Interaction segment: government	177	0.742	20.76
Information completeness	168	0.658	18.43
Content Exclusivity	198	0.555	15,55
Diversity PR- tools	69	0.520	14.57
Frequency of news and PR-manifestations	207	0.555	15,53
Interactivity	66	0.538	15.06
Availability of utilitarian information	225	0.504	14.11
Availability of advertising for PR purposes	300	0.730	20,44
Use of moral and ethical content for PR purposes	192	0.569	15.94

It is necessary to analyze the work of other organizations. Using benchmarking technologies, it is necessary to identify the best PR practices which can be used by public institutions. The revealed experience in maintaining the site by government agencies is presented in Table 2.

Despite the fact that the site of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia ranks first in the overall ranking, the following characteristics should be improved in the group of technical characteristics of the site: "Ergonomics" is better on the websites of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR and the Prosecutor's Office of RR; "Website Design" is better developed on the websites of the Ministry of Economic Development of RR and the Prosecutor's Office of RR; "Structure and navigation functions" – on the website of the Ministry of Economic Development of RR. The SRC of EMERCOM of Russia should pay attention to such characteristics as "Functionality" and "Download Speed".

TABLE II. FINAL RANKING OF SITES

1	Research objects	Overall criterion ranking	Ranking of the sites
	2	3	4
Ergonomics	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	2.45	3
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	1.59	2
	Prosecutor's office of RR	1.44	1
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	2.89	4
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	4.33	5

**TABLE II CONTINUATION**

Website design	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		3,58	3	
	GU Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia and the RO		3,58	3	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		1,40	1	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		2,49	2	
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		4,67	4	
Structure and navigation functions	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		2,41	2	
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		4,27	4	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		2,97	3	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		2,04	1	
	Administratsiya Rostov-on-Don		5,57	5	
Functionality	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		6,21	5	
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		4,93	3	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		4,07	2	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		1,93	1	
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		5,36	4	
Information Security	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		1,29	1	
	GU MVD of Russia for RO		2,70	3	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		1,41	2	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		2,96	4	
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		2,96	4	
Download speed	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		4,46	5	
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		2,23	2	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		4,29	4	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		3,60	3	
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		1,71	1	
Internet Connectivity Segments	Business environment	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		1,63	3
		Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		2,23	4
		Prosecutor's office of RR		2,49	5
		Ministry of Economic Development of RR		0,86	1
		Administration of Rostov-on-Don		1,29	2
	Citizens	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		1,03	1
		Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		1,03	1
		Prosecutor's office of RR		2,57	4
		Ministry of Economic Development of RR		1,63	2
	Government	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		2,06	3
		SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		1,54	3
		Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		1,03	2
		Prosecutor's office of RR		0,60	1
Information completeness	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		4,71	2	
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		9,86	3	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		12,00	4	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		4,29	1	
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		9,86	3	
Content Exclusivity	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia		2,83	1	
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR		6,60	3	
	Prosecutor's office of RR		9,11	5	
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR		5,97	2	
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don		6,91	4	

TABLE II ENDING

A variety of PR tools	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	1.90	1
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	4.21	5
	Prosecutor's office of RR	3.94	4
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	2.17	2
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	3.39	3
Frequency of news and all PR-manifestations	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	5.10	1
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	8.70	3
	Prosecutor's office of RR	9.60	4
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	5.10	1
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	5.70	2
Interactivity	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	2.15	1
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	3.31	2
	Prosecutor's office of RR	5.30	5
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	3.48	3
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	4.97	4
Availability of utilitarian information	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	2.99	2
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	3.46	3
	Prosecutor's office of RR	2.04	1
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	2.04	1
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	4.56	4
Availability of advertising for PR purposes	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	2.37	2
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	1.08	1
	Prosecutor's office of RR	2.96	5
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	2.76	4
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	2.66	3
Use of moral and ethical content for PR purposes	SRC of the EMERCOM of Russia	1.29	1
	Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR	4.00	4
	Prosecutor's office of RR	3.29	2
	Ministry of Economic Development of RR	3.29	2
	Administration of Rostov-on-Don	3.57	3

The main information is aimed at the population (G2C); it is necessary to add information for the business environment (G2B) and the government (G2G). By this criterion, the sites of the Ministry of Economic Development and the Administration of Rostov-on-Don are better developed. The experience of interaction with the government is more effective on the website of the State Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR, the Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Economic Development.

In the group "Assessment of the benefits of PR-technologies", such characteristics as "Availability of utilitarian information" and "Availability of advertising for PR purposes" should be improved. The first characteristic is better developed on the website of the Ministry of Economic Development. The second one – on the site of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia: banners and contextual advertising on the internal pages of the site.

### III. FINDINGS

Upon completion of the first stage, it was possible to identify the benefits for public relations such as the institution's website, and determine the characteristics of this Internet site that are most valuable for effective interaction with audiences. Thirdly, it was possible to use a substantial set of tools and technologies within this platform.

At the second stage, one of the areas of PR activities was chosen as a practical field for identifying and evaluating the tools used by the press service of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia: development of patriotism in citizens, glorification of heroism and courage.

The study was being conducted in 2014–2018. During this period, the PR service of the SRC of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia held events with children and youth covered by the media, used media tools (publicity, "agenda", advertising, press releases, media statements, photographic tapes, interviews, reports, multimedia and entertaining articles, etc.).

We studied materials aimed at an external audience.

The site publishes materials on the annual competition of regional departments of the All-Russian student rescue teams. The wide geography of the participants, interesting competitions were covered by the sites of the Ministry of Emergencies and local and student media [29, 12,30, 31, 2]. Additional reported were devoted to winners [24, 25]. (12 publications: 34 % of the notes, and 17 % of the interviews). Since 2014, the All-Russian first-aid and psychological support competition "The Human Factor" has been held; in April 2019, the III stage started. The number of publications about the event ranges from 17 to 22 annually. The publication activity of the press service is aimed at the popularization of the regional Worldskills Championship of professional excellence in the Rescue work competency. The number of publications varies from 16 to 20 per year; there were 38 % of notes and 23 % of reports.

The activities of the All-Russian field camp "Young Rescuer" were covered as well. The participants are schoolchildren who have shown the best results in the qualifying competitions. The event is covered in electronic media as an announcement which creates interest of the younger generation in the profession of a lifeguard. There were 15 publications on the topic, among which 41 % of press releases [34, 35, 9, 14, 20, 26].

The tenth Seliger Youth Forum was covered by the media as well. The EMERCOM of Russia organized 9 educational points, the School of Survival was the most popular. The event was covered by the urban and federal media, using a variety of methods and genres [11, 15, 10, 8].

Since 2015, the press service of the Ministry of Emergencies has been covering activities of the Territory of Meanings of the All-Russian Youth Educational Summer Forum. There were 16–21 publications: notes – 41 %, press releases – 32 %, and reports – 22 %.

The youth rally "Tavrida" in Sevastopol was one more focus of patriotic education. EMERCOM of Russia employees organized 10 training sections. More than a thousand people were able to feel like rescuers and understand complexity and responsibility of their service [19, 16, 3, 18]. There were eight publications (notes – 32 % and photo collections – 53 %).

The effectiveness of the PR project on the development and establishment of the Badge of Honor "For Active Work on Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation" and the commemorative medal "Patriot of Russia" for EMERCOM employees of Russia [19] was evaluated as well: this encourages citizens to perform patriotic actions and draws public attention to the problem of patriotic education. Thirdly, it increases the prestige of the organization and a person who received the award [32, 33, 27, 13].

The study revealed that the site popularizes the work of EMERCOM of Russia on patriotic education of citizens, aimed at the internal audience. In 2014–2018, EMERCOM of Russia held the following special events which were covered by the press service: restoration and development of museums, rooms of military and labor glory; training and retraining of professional personnel for work on patriotic education in the departments of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia, popularization of life experience and spiritual potential of veterans and their involvement in teaching employees of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia; development of public associations of youth ("Memory Watch" dedicated to the feat of the Soviet people in the fight against fascism, a rally in memory of the fire assault in Maykop, the youth military-patriotic game "Zarnitsa", etc.).

The next sub-step was the assessment of events organized by the EMERCOM. Every year, competitions are held for the best research work on the problems of patriotic education among cadets and students. The department has youth public associations (the Youth Union). Since 2015, after signing the cooperation agreement between the EMERCOM of Russia and the Golden Vityaz International Film Festival [27], the cadets have participated in film festivals, forums, and exhibitions aimed at strengthening morale. For the same purposes, the press center of the SRC has implemented the project "Young Patriots of Russia" in Rostov-on-Don schools. Materials about the event were covered by the regional media and the official website of the Ministry of Emergencies, using publicity and forming the effect of the "agenda" [4, 5, 7, 28, 22]. The press center is hosting the annual International Festival of twin cities "Earth is our common home", All-Russian rallies of young tourists in hero cities, etc.

The following conclusion can be made: activities of the press service were most effectively manifested through the organization and popularization of various events: meetings, forums, museums, presentations, etc.; PR tools are successfully used (publicity, the effect of the "agenda", "problem management") on the website and in the various media; publication of materials and discussion of topics contribute to the patriotic movement of the Ministry of Emergencies.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Taking into account comments of the experts and results of the analysis, the following recommendations were developed:

1. Development of the convenient website design using various mobile devices.
2. Implementation of a high-tech software following the example of the website of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for RR to improve the website functionality.
3. Location of the button for switching to the version for the visually impaired on the top of the site.
4. Posting news on weekends for ordinary citizens.

For the implementation of innovative PR-technologies and PR-tools in the press center of the SRC EMERCOM of Russia, it is recommended to post:

1. training videos, online services for access to information databases of open data;
2. interactive (step-by-step) forms for filling out applications (appeals);
3. samples of documents;
4. interaction with social networks;
5. training webinars, online encyclopedias;
6. foreign-language sections with information aimed at foreigners;
7. the "Statistics" section;
8. intermediate and final data on the activities of the SRC in the format of infographics and direct links to them;
9. reviews of appeals addressed to the head of the SRC and brief reports on the results of the review;
10. the banner with a call number 112;
11. feedback forms "question and answer", forums, chats, online hotlines;
12. information about updates;
13. RSS;
14. subscription (mailing) for news (announcements).

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