

**Nuclear Energy Has To Communicate**

**Ec. Corina BARARU**

*Nuclearelectrica, 65 Polona St., Bucharest, Romania;  
corinabararu@gmail.com*

**ABSTRACT**

The silence has been kept too long. Nuclear energy has to implement some strong communication strategies in order to firstly attract the most valuable employees, and secondly to develop on the long term. The paper presents arguments and means for the nuclear energy companies to communicate on the inside and the outside of their organizations.

Firstly, the internal communication of a nuclear power plant organization is as important as completing its object of activity, it is a basic element for a strong image of the company and of the industry on the outside. If (executive) employees acknowledge the importance of the company and industry they work for, surely this message will be supported by external parties as well. Employees do not simply work in an office like theirs, but for a nuclear plant and they should become the first exponents of the industry, with respect to the theory that every employee is a marketer of their business. In order to accomplish this, a strong organization has to be built and healthy work environment has to be put into place.

The most time and cost efficient methods, in order to attain high group adherence of the employees are groupware applications, developed on an intranet platform, inside the company. Another means of motivation of the present and future employees are interactive exchange programs between companies from different countries. An issue that stands in the way of opening the way to communicate with the public is the degree of technicality implied by the energy industry, in particular the nuclear sector.

Secondly, the external communication of such a company may solve – on the long term – the current personnel crisis in the Nuclear Energy sector, if targeted toward this direction. An external communication strategy would raise the level of public acceptance regarding the nuclear energy. One of the means of putting it into practice would have to be: internships for students, in order to allow young people to test being a member of such an organization.

On the other side, people should acknowledge the sources of the electricity that they use in their day to day lives and this should also be one of the objectives of the communication strategy.

The paper will present not only the theoretical aspects of the implementation of such communication strategies – internal and external – but it will also try to make real propositions for a real case – Nuclearelectrica.

In Romania, nuclear energy hasn't been promoted as much, neither to the public, nor to the organization, and, as the market is being liberalized, there have to be taken immediate measures in both aspects.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nuclear power is the least emitting CO<sub>2</sub> energy production type. Although some may say that it emits CO<sub>2</sub> also while extracting uranium or building a plant – the same would be emitted by building another type of power plant and on the long run, nuclear is friendlier to the environment. Nuclear waste becomes less and less radioactive during their storage, it is even estimated that in 500 years fission products will be less radioactive than uranium ore they originally derived from.

Nuclear energy and renewable ones have one important feature in common. They give us access to virtually limitless resources of energy with negligible opportunity cost - we are not depleting resources useful for other purposes.

Recent analyses fail to come up with any 50-year scenario based on sustainable development principles which does not depend significantly on nuclear fission to provide large-scale, highly intensive energy, along with renewables to meet small-scale low-intensity needs. The alternative is either to squander fossil carbon resources or deny the aspirations of hundreds of millions of people in our grandchildren's generation.

In conclusion nuclear energy needs intensive communication with special attention towards the education system that is forming now the future citizens – who need to know in what environment they live in and what needs to be done in order to protect it. It is important even for the countries that don't have a nuclear plant on their territory to acknowledge the importance of nuclear in the energy sector worldwide – because we will reach a point in the interdependency of countries where nuclear energy will be delivered to them and they need to be aware of it.

### 1.1. The organisation of a company

The premises for obtaining an efficient organization of a company is represented by it's organization, so that there will be insured the best use of the environment conditions in which it acts. For this reason, the economic theory as well as practice gives a special importance to the issue of company organization.

From a historical point of view, the organization concept has evolved from simple to complex following in fact the evolution of the companies and of management. Consequently, similar to each stage in the history of the company there is a certain organizational form correspondent. The incorporation of marketing in the economic theory and practice could not stay without eco as regarding to the conception of company organization. This was proved through the apparition and evolution of some organizational forms capable of insuring the adopting and the functioning of the marketing concept, affirming in this way a theory of the organization of the marketing activity which was reflected in practice in a series of specific formulas to the various types of companies.

In the present period, marked by the effective passage to the market economy, in the Romanian economy the preoccupations of all the companies toward the marketing concept have increased. As expected, the management of the companies has acknowledged the necessity of the reorganization of the activities in accordance with the new environment conditions in which they were put to act.

The practice of modern companies has proved that it is impossible to have an efficient management without the assurance of a proper organization of the activity. Basically, this means to structure the companies activities and allocate resources in the proper way in order to obtain the best economic performance for the company. At first sight, this seems an easy job to do, but in fact it supposes the most appropriate allocation of resources in the structure of the organization so that each resource fulfills it's tasks best for the attaining of the companies' objectives. This means assigning the proper resource for the proper task.

The distribution of the decisional competences and of the responsibilities of each employee is made through the creation of the company's structure and that is where the importance of the configuration of the organizational structure stands at.

In the center of the structure we will find the professional employees, the organization having as objective the determination and orientation of their activities. Indeed, the organizational structure represents the frame on which are articulated the internal and external relationships of the company. It has a fundamental role in the management activity, which can be summarized as following: the organizational structure ensures the necessary framework for managing authority and communication relations within the company. It also affects directly the relationships with the personnel, its demands and the degree of motivation and it represents the major element through which it is insured the co-ordination of the proceeded activities. This co-ordination influences and determines the flow of goods or services and personal relationships as well as the informational flows within the company. Through its role, the organizational structure insures the putting into practice of the companies' strategy. The features of the external environment influence a great deal the organizational formula adopted. Within these features, the most important are the dynamics of the environment, its complexity, its hostility or uncertainty – all found in the degree of centralization of the organizational structure. This way, companies acting in a dynamic and hostile environment will have a de-centralized structure while companies activating in a complex and competitive environment will use a more centralized organization structure. In a similar manner, the structure of the organization is influenced by the type of relationships with the customers, the social responsibilities, the technological degree or the life cycle of the products.

## 1.2. Internal communication

Internal marketing is the one important tool to implement, meaning that it supports communication and helps an organization overcome any resistance to change. This area of marketing also inform all personnel involved in new initiatives and strategies. An internal marketing policy is easily built, particularly if traditional marketing principles are known. The main difference between the "external" marketing and it, is that here 'customers' are company's employees and colleagues.

As a definition, internal marketing is a process of gaining the support of the company's employees, to encourage to promote corporate objectives. This process may be going on at several levels, from increasing awareness of a particular product or marketing campaigns, to explaining the entire business strategies.

Currently, there are a number of phenomena that lead to the need to implement internal marketing such as that many companies are continuously in one form or another transformation: mergers, alliances, reductions or increases in staffing.

A number of companies renamerespectively rebrand themselves - a process that requires notification to all the stakeholders, including employees. I would mentionthat the ideal communication process should beginwith employees, according to the saying *beauty comes from inside*.

Many companies encourage staff to focus on relations (very good) with customers and this process needs total commitment, deepening their knowledge through training on brands.

Another important of implementing internal marketing policies would be the increasing number of employees with fixed-term contract, to the detriment of indefinite duration. Staff employed in projects must understand the brand vision during their work and also that permanent change is highlighted by the increasing trend to outsourcing. The level of loyalty between the employer and the employee decreased, meaning that the time the employee dedicates to an organization or a brand became negotiable. The key to returning to sharing/linking the values and objectives of a company may be to create an 'internal' brand through this type of marketing.

New ways of working require organizations and staff teach the new skills constantly, often are won by association - which is why, building a company open to studying(learning company) becomes an issue worthy of consideration. The domestic brand may be the umbrella for the beginning of such an effort.

Among the key concepts of internal marketing, I would list the following:

- Domestic marketing should serve as a continuous internal process advanced
- Alignment behavior of employees regardin the organization's mission
- Learning the company's values by its employees
- Motivation, accountability and defining the exact attitude of employees
- Inside-out management strategy.

The personnel represents the fuel of the corporate brand. Employees meet, welcome and serve customers (both "marketing" and "corporate") in a variety of ways: face to face, online, by phone and so forth, so that the public relations / customers depend entirely on their attitude and their loyalty. To motivate staff it is necessary to communicate both horizontal and vertical, through all organizational levels. This communication process should include the company's mission and values but many organizations fail to make communication accessible at all levels.

If the staff is not aware of the organisation's corporate values, it is clear that it will not be able to communicate to customers / public they are coming into contact with. We have a number of examples of inconsistency between internal and external faces of a brand in everyday life. Thus, a grumpy employee that is welcoming a family at a fast food restaurant, contradicts the image of the family image that the restaurant has.

### 1.3. External communication

In school, everyone learns about resources – of any kind – as being scarce, but in practice all members of the society are used to the simple idea of how much one uses, one pays – not thinking any further about the scarcity of what is used. Unfortunately, at least regarding the energy, the flow of facts is not as simple because it comes down to every movement's consequences.

Energy is not a simple market, where if one type of energy is no longer approved or bought, it is taken out of the store. It is good that humanity has discovered so many ways of producing energy so far, but we have to get used to arranging them on shelf continuously, so that all energy is accepted and bought – at some point.

For knowing all the means of helping protect the environment, for helping each other develop ways of improving the energy consume and for changing the mentalities persistent in this field, time and resources should be dedicated to communicating to people.

Up to this point people are used to simply receiving energy from various sources, without questioning where it is coming from. If people would become conscious of the sources of the energy they use and count on so much, they would respect more the energy production effort. This education could be made only by continuous, perpetual and perseverent communication process with every members of the society.

Communication is needed on all plans today, but the energy area not only lacks it the most but also needs it the most. Being so intangible, energy is thought to be too technical to think about, too unapproachable and kept only for the knowledge of those very well instructed. Having this as a general rule for the public, governments and corporations should take the time and resources to invest in informing people and receiving feedback from them.

The public needs to be reassured of every step made in the energy business, both locally and globally so that it may give its' point of view and have the power to act for or against any policy or discovery made. By informing people about energy, they will be able to support good measures at all time.

A global information campaign should be supported and spread by great organizations around the world and implemented in the school systems – in order to efficiently target the public able to change mentalities.

Through a continuous change of information, all principles of the World Energy Council are respected. If availability and accessibility are supported and promoted through communication policies, then the acceptability may come very easy from the public – when knowing all implications. If through acceptability we may measure possibilities of new energy types being put into practice, then we should also take into consideration a new possible measure of the developing energy industry: adaptability (of the population to whole new ideas about production and distribution of energy).

## **2. PAST: LACK OF COMMUNICATION**

### 2.1. About Nuclearelectrica National Company

Nuclearelectrica was set up in July 1998, with the Romanian state holding 90,28% of the shares and the Property Fund with 9,72% shares. Nuclearelectrica's main mission is the production of

electrical and thermal power using nuclear fission and also the manufacturing of nuclear fuel, under terms of maximum security, proficiency and respect towards the environment and the population.

The headquarters of Nuclearelectrica, located in Bucharest coordinates the activity of its two subsidiaries:

- Cernavoda NPP Division, responsible for the operation of Units 1 and 2 of Cernavoda NPP.
- Nuclear Fuel Plant in Pitesti which is the qualified producer of CANDU 6 type nuclear fuel bundles.

The main areas of activity of SNN S.A. focus on the production of electricity, heat and nuclear fuel. Also, SNN S.A. coordinate the work of investment and development, and training activities and improve the human resources field. Currently, SNN SA has two branches, CNE Cernavoda - operating units 1 and 2 of the Nuclear Power Plant in Cernavoda and conservation of Units 3-5. The second branch of Nuclearelectrica is the Nuclear fuel factory near Pitesti.

SNN SA's mission is to generate electricity and thermal power using nuclear technology, to develop nuclear power and to manufacture nuclear fuel, ensuring high safety, economic efficiency and taking care of people and environment.

The Vision of Nuclearelectrica stands in the recognition of the company as a factor of economic stability, highly contributing to the development of tomorrow's world

The Values of the company are:

- **Safety** - Nuclear safety is a permanent concern of our activities
- **Care for the environment** - Respect for the environment and care for the future generations
- **Efficiency** - Remarkable achievements supporting our national economy
- **Trust** - We are a trustworthy company, an honorable and honest partner open to dialog, actively involved in the local community's life
- **Sustainable development** - Reliable energy source capable to meet the present and future power needs
- **Transparency** - We believe in a dialog with the public on a permanent and open basis both directly and through the mass media

## 2.2. The former communication approach in the nuclear energy sector

The energy industry part using nuclear process still drags after itself the disaster image in Chernobyl, even though in Romania the Nuclear Power Plant in Cernavoda was built after the most secure existing process: CANDU (Canadian Deuterium Uranium). In this context, fairness, transparency, promptness, trust and respect are the main features of the policy SNN SA relations with the public.

In order to enhance the acceptance of nuclear power on the domestic and international actions to counter the negative impact on the development of national energy policy, relations with the public include the following objectives:

- Achieving the correct information and educate the population and authorities on nuclear energy specific issues
- Maintaining a positive image for SNN SA both internally and externally
- Ensuring/maintenance of relationships with the media
- Ensuring / maintaining cooperation with industrial and professional associations active in the nuclear field
- Establishing a proper internal communication within the organization.

To achieve the listed objectives, the SNN SA policy of public information and publicity provides educational programmes for young people, maintains relationships with the media, maintains relations with local and central factors for decision, carries out advertising campaign for its organised activities to ensure a competent information of the public.

An important observation here is that during the last couple of years, the company went through a process of rebranding in a limited sense of the word. The logo of the company changed - being developed by a specialized firm and in this regard the image of the company is now, more unitary.

Before this process, the logos of the branches were not similar to the logo of the headquarters. Also starting 2005, Nuclearelectrica has a new website with an online presence and with this new site information is kept updated of company linked events.

Nuclearelectrica is in a phase of great changes, the most important is putting into service of the second unit at Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant.

The image changing process through changing the logo has brought itself with a series of changes in the communication plan.

Unfortunately, however, all the changes are not made known far enough outside and almost nothing on an internal level. The organization is not feeling due to communicate, nor is encouraged to do so by its very vertical organizational structure.

The process of communication needs serious improvements between the executive headquarters and branches of the company, this phenomenon being due to the same vertical structures of internal communication. Communication takes time for such structures, and this is why the three points of the company can not enough communicate.

As a vicious circle, lack of communication within the organisation, when problems occur, take longer to recover all the information flow that should exist on an issue. A key issue in the process of internal communication is the lack of procedures simple, clear, succinct and easily tracked, and applied to facilitate the flow of information within the premises and between them. For this reason, bureaucracy makes it possible that many times the information is lost on the road or takes too long to reach its destination.

Making staff more responsible can bring a faster flow of information. Also, the avoidance of internal competition and lack of real change are signs of acceptance of the same problems.

In preparing the offices' staff of the organisation there exist large discrepancies, such as the training should be done to bring the same level of knowledge on certain issues. Any training programme should be continued, perfected, verified and shared within the organization in order to self-enrich.

Employees must be made responsible but also - especially - supported and informed - in order to promote themselves ahead the image of the company . The effects are on the long-run-term, perhaps a visible effect - especially for a company that does not provide high income - is that people can attract well-trained professionals who seek a good working environment, an environment that supports people, promoting new ideas .

Even if there is no commercial communication - although this should prevent the true future liberalization of energy markets - corporate communication must begin from within the company. "Family" is the one who knows best its' dirty laundry, but also one that can find the most original and powerful strength. For this reason it is better that just and feedback is good for the image of corporate society to be first tested internally - if not promoted internally.

Lack of internal marketing, lead to the lack of knowledge of the mission and values by employees which leads, obviously at not following these successfully or their failure. Communicating in a friendly manner can result primarily from a continued improvement of the communication policy and developing a set of values of the actual organization, a set of values that can motivate staff to întradevăr.

Perhaps the most readily offered reward is for personal pride to work for such an organization - and it may exceed the material. If the image outside the company is a good, strong and well known, the staff is also recognized for the work, but this image has no basis if you do not start to build from the inside.

### **3. PRESENT AND FUTURE: INCREASING COMMUNICATION**

#### **3.1. Internal communication improvement: the intranet**

The increasing volume of information and resources of companies or other organizations has been to increase the necessity and importance of electronic applications internal organization.

In the information explosion age, it became a certainty that a well-structured intranet system and users might bring considerable leverage a company's modern business. Since the intranet

applications have generally been developed at the request of specific companies, it is normal that they differ greatly (as structure and functions), depending on the needs of the organisation which make use of them.

An intranet solution can be uni-directional (for example, an application allowing the sharing of documents between the company's employees) or developed in several directions (an application covering more inter-connected modules).

The latter could include a module dedicated to human resources management company, another one dedicated to financial management, management of a library of documents. For example, the work of company's employees might be monitored through a mode of intranet applications (targeted to count both time spent in business and work). The work of employees can be seen, too, in relation to projects carried out - adding an intranet component of project management. These electronic instruments can help measure the effectiveness of management of a company: a manager can always have control over projects under way, can see the degree of involvement of employees in various projects related to their tasks. Also, having access to the database of human resources, may allocate November competent where needed (or can easily refer to the need of engaging people in November when the volume of work necessary to prove very large).

A solution represents a modern building an intranet applications own plate the needs of the company. Organizations with a modern understanding of the advantages which made the implementation of such a system dedicated to the development of opting for a solution that is fully consistent with its own internal organization needs. This solution is preferred for understandable reasons: the possibility of creating a software perfectly adapted to the needs of the company, easy to understand and use and possibly improved during its use. Further, hiring a team specializing in software to achieve such an intranet application presents certain benefits: lower cost of development (as opposed to the purchase of intranet applications already enshrined on the world market), can improve the intranet as needs require a company (unlike products that are already enshrined in a final version and - many of them - can not be amended in accordance with the requirements later).

According to the principle of *time is money*, intranet makes the organization gain time and save money by facilitating the exchange of information in real time between headquarters and the executive branches.

Intranet is as accessible as possible for users, as the most used interface is the website. Thus, the intranet has a friendly user interface, firstly encouraging them to come back, and in consequence making them increasingly interact with the system and between them.

### 3.2. External communication improvements

Until not so many years ago, companies producing nuclear energy were not making so public their activity, besides the general status of their work of course.

#### 3.2.1. *National communication policy*

Nuclearelectrica has a communication policy but at a regional level, covering only the south east area of Romania, mostly Cernavoda and Constanta.

#### 3.2.2. *Environment friendly complementary activities*

Many of the nuclear power producing companies have developed environment friendly facilities for energy production or activities for consumption efficiency. The media will always remind the public about Chernobyl and in order to change the public opinion about nuclear energy we should start by having a common discussion (sustaining) point, as green energy.

Some members of the Young Generation Network – ENS – employed at Nuclearelectrica have put into place a paper recycling program in the executive offices in Bucharest and are on their way to promote it.

The program is called Paper Tree and is managed by a non-profit organisation. Paper tree is meant to save all the money earned from paper selling and expending it on trees buying for planting by volunteers.

### *3.2.3. Open to public attitude*

National Company Nuclearelectrica is on its way to re-designing its' information and visitation Centres in Cernavoda and Constanta. It has been launched a negotiation notice in order to find a services provider for such a project.

### *3.2.4 Online communication*

Search engine marketing: why on tapping the word "nuclear" in a search engine all the findings are of a negative influence? There are not findings of the productivity of the nuclear energy or about nuclear medicine. That also happens because the silence has been kept too long. The communication departments (at least in Romania) have taken care only of extreme situations and media crisis. The communication policy needs to take into consideration the preventing of communication crisis.

Search engine marketing should be taken into consideration, and for a better result by more companies in more countries, because not only one Nuclear Power Plant should present it's good parts but an internet user should be able to choose among more positive articles than negative.

Youtube has more and more videos with pros and cons for nuclear energy and of course the number of cons is greater than the number of pros. Pros for nuclear are bearily starting online and are mainly due to people/organizations in this industry. Consumers haven't reached a point where to express their pro opinion on nuclear power. But it is a starting point.

Youtube is also a starting point for the analysis of the current image of the nuclear energy, as to put into practice a communication strategy for this industry. One may observe here the general impressions on this topic, as well as what the general public thinks on this subject. Contrary to the destruction image generated by the so-called "old fashioned environmentalists" in the videos there are introduced some funny elements in order to balance the image of this industry.

Another online tool to tackle the problem of nuclear communication are nowadays the Blogs. They are most commonly read by the general public as – at least in Romania – there have already been created 'branded' bloggers, read by everyone, better than newspapers. There have already appeared logs about nuclear energy or referring to certain articles published online, but only on an industry level. The information didn't reach the 'regular consumer' yet – although it is very likely to reach at least some part of it through a Buzz marketing campaign. Some of the nuclear referring videos on Youtube have the 'potential' to create interest in this matter to the general public and may be used to attract positive oppinions.

My conclusion would be that the online tools presented make the concept of nuclear power more approachable, less official, less technical, therefore more simple for people to understand the concept.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**



## **REFERENCES**

- [1] BALAURE, Virgil (coord.) – “Marketing (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)”, Uranus Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002
- [2] KOTLER, Philip – “Marketing insights from A to Z” , John Wiley & Sons Publishing house, 2003
- [3][www.iqads.ro](http://www.iqads.ro)
- [4][www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)
- [5][www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- [6][www.energycentral.com](http://www.energycentral.com)