

STRESZCZENIE W JĘZYKU ANGIELSKIM

VISUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS.

THE POWER OF IMAGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

In order to compile the characteristics of institutional communication in the era of the triumph of visual media culture, a complex of scientific fields was selected. In this book, I propose to broaden the way of public relations analysis, and precisely to change the optics of this observation.

The aim of the book is to search for and demonstrate the impacts of the chosen fields of visual communication on public relations. I will look at PR, the theory and practice of organizational communication through the lens of visual activities. The following questions will be discussed: What, considering visual messages inspired by PR activities, attracts attention in the media sphere? What allows to evaluate, and according to what categories, the informative variables, persuasive variables and the aesthetics of the visual organizational communication? In this book I will demonstrate that one may think about public relations in a creative way and be open to the application of various scientific paradigms. The times of ubiquitous images enable communication professionals to innovate perception management and to increase the effectiveness of public relations.

The monograph is divided into five main parts, with an accompanying introduction and ending. Part I is the methodological part, in which I place the subject of work on the basis of media studies, but also social communication, and more precisely communication of the organization. Then I point out the affordances of images in PR (Part II). Next, the book is divided according to the functions that images may fulfill in the public relations. Therefore, Part III concerns informative function in visual PR, Part IV is dedicated to persuasion, and Part V introduces aestheticization of public relations messages. Based on theoretical knowledge, I use case studies to illustrate the thesis presented in each part. The study also includes my own research of the PR professionals in Poland. The research includes in-depth qualitative studies of advanced PR activities in the visual aspect: the museum of the organization (The Polish Vodka Museum in Warsaw), which I researched using the method of observation and interviews, and the analysis of corporate aesthetics (Disney Corp.). Various research methods are included. In a visual studies maze of approaches and paradigms, I make the methodological effort to identify those that link visual communication with public relations field.

Part I attempts to locate visual public relations in the network of selected scientific fields and disciplines; the process is non-linearly illustrated according to the rhizome model. I juxtapose five approaches with images used in organizational studies, along with the application of each of them to PR (archeological approach, practical, strategic, dialogical, documenting). In theoretical approaches to the iconosphere in organizational communication research, I emphasize their performative aspect. I indicate the areas of visual theories application in PR. The chapter also provides the overview of the visual communication definition, the description of visual experiences and visual events within the framework of visual media culture. By placing the subject in the socio-cultural paradigm of PR theory, this part of the book ends with the proposal of visual public relations definition.

Part II presents the affordances of the visual messages in the organizational field. I try to answer the question: what can a picture in the organization actually do? Through three selected theoretical paths: psychology of perception, cognitive science and social semiotics, I present a multi-faceted reflection on the potential of images in PR. I develop the following themes: how to situate visual reflection in an institution (cognitive science) and how meanings are generated through institutional images (social semiotics). In this chapter, I also describe, from the point of view of the psychology of perception, how organizational images are apprehended. The theories are accompanied by examples of the PR campaign analysis. The second part ends with the complex case study of visual communication in an organizational museum. I apply empirically the affordance's analysis into visual public relations tools.

Part III is devoted to the informative function of images in organizational communication. In particular, I discuss: data visualization, infographics and information (animated infographics). I present the criteria for the infographics' visual convention with their functions, as well as recommendations for infographics used for PR purposes. I place visual informational messages in the broader context of data journalism and visual journalism, pointing to the area of media relations as the most strongly constituted PR technique, based on these visual phenomena.

Part IV is devoted to the persuasive aspects of visual PR. Images inform, disseminate data, propagate knowledge, but images also persuade, influence the attitudes of the audience, change the emotional attitude of the public, generate behaviors etc. I consider the issue of visual persuasion in the context of public relations theory and present the priority features of images that constitute the persuasiveness of visual messages. In order to identify and reveal the mechanisms of the influence of signs used in visual institutional messages, a practical template for assessing the persuasive aspect of messages is discussed. The chapter presents the developing phenomenon of corporate photography. The list of types of heroes of these representations is provided and the functions of e-portraits are listed. The part ends with an in-depth analysis of the promotional film, with the division into promotional film content and possible usage in PR practice. Numerous categories of corporate videos that can inspire communication professionals are discussed. I attempt, still in the context of public relations, to typologize the genre of dynamic persuasive visual messages disseminated on the Internet.

Part V of the book concerns the aestheticization of the organization's messages. The last chapter begins with the characterization of aesthetic reflection. I present the limitations of the theory of institutional aesthetics. The chapter discusses the gradation of organizational aesthetics (from objectivism to subjectivism) along with example variables from PR activities. In a separate part, I juxtapose selected modern aesthetics (the aesthetics of everyday life, entertainment, information and entertainment) with the models of public relations. Part V ends with the author's analysis of the visual tools used in Disney's PR activities as ways of disseminating certain aesthetic variables among the audience. It is, therefore, an illustration, an example from practice, of the theoretical approaches discussed earlier.

The book focuses on public relations and its visual artifacts. Images are created, images are traded, images are communicated. Contemporary organizations constitute relations with stakeholders through images. "Visual Public Relations" book is an attempt to understand how the image of organization is created, within the framework of PR theory, by visual messages disseminated by organizations.