**The Universal Value-Oriented Approach for PR Measurement, Evaluation & Management**

**Whitepaper**

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**Introduction**

This white paper is about a new approach for PR measurement which includes an advanced theory and related technology. The new approach works similarly for commercial, social and political PR [2,3,9]. Commercial PR is closer to marketing, sales and advertising. Political PR is closer to propaganda and social control [1]. Social PR is more about PR itself, and it mostly refers to E. Benays understanding PR as a process of social integration and adjusting private and public interests.

This approach uses values for PR measurement as the most universal concept that steers all human life. We refer to very broad understanding of values. Values is what individual interesting, important or desired at the moment of communication or decision making. In values we may include A. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the ten divine rules of conduct in Christianity. In fact, everything we need has some value to us.

In psychographics [4], values and lifestyles (as clusters of values) are used for segmenting society and marketing. In psychodynamics [5], shared values are used as a basis for similarities in behavior. Psychometrics [6] develop a general comparative measurement principle for measuring values and attitudes toward the values.

The proposed approach extends the limits of PR measurement by integrating, in one unified decision-making, individual human evaluations and large amounts of data collected in monitoring web, media, and social networks. The fundamental methodological basis for this integration is the use of two different interpretations of probability. One is a subjective interpretation of probability as a certainty [17], and the other is a traditional frequency interpretation (as relative frequency of mass events).The references below show areas of knowledge used for developing this approach.

**Values, Preferences and Comparative Measurement Principle**

Following the methodology of psychometrics [6], this approach realizes in the full a comparative measurement principle providing a measurement of verbal and non-verbal information. In addition to a number of subjective ordinal scales described by L. Thurstone in [6], we introduce a qualitative preference relation [more preferable than]. Depending on the content of PR communication this preference relation could be interpreted in many different ways, such as: [more trustworthy than], [more interesting than], [more probable than], and even [more tasty than], [more odorous than], etc. It allows to include some features of scent and multisensory marketing in conjunction with content marketing into PR programs.

Introducing values paired with value preferences allows us to study dynamic processes in a changing system of values. Values can remain constant during a lifetime, but value preferences can change within minutes.

Within this proposed approach we are able to implement an understanding of some important PR concepts in terms of values. In the literature on PR, these concepts are suggested for measuring the overall value of PR. They are relationship, reputation, engagement and trust.

In accordance with this understanding, relationship is about shared values, and reputation is about accepting and transferring (on future activities) values. Engagement and trust then appear to be just some significant degrees of acceptance of values. Engagement is manifested with additional activity clearly pointing to that acceptance by audience, and trust points on deep acceptance of and reliance on those values and their carrier.

In addition we can consider a concept of VROI (Value-ROI) which is an evaluative result of accepting values. It comes from the idea that every PR communication has two components, informative and evaluative. The approach provides a mapping procedure for transforming nonmonetary values into monetary values, if relevant for the given PR campaign.

Let us consider measuring trust as an illustration of the comparative measurement principle and its effectiveness. For this measurement there is no need for using any complicated scorecards to calculate a summary of psychological phenomena of trust. One would simply compare the preferences to two statements [I do trust] and [I don't trust] towards a topic, person or organization). If one statement [I do trust] is more preferable than the other, then one would trust that topic, and vice versa if it is less preferable.

This evaluation may be inaccurate or imprecise if it is only made once. That is why we make this comparison many times during PR campaign, after getting additional information on that topic. And finally we get an accurate enough evaluation. The point is that we don't need to know the absolute numbers of trust, but only preferences between alternative statements.

There are some additional bonuses of measuring trust in this manner. We can also answer additional questions such as: "How much do we trust (topic)?" and "Out of a list of people, who do we trust

more (or less)?". Having the ability to answer these questions will allow us to build complex decision-making procedures about trust. In the same manner we can measure interest, importance, anger, doubt, and many other feelings.

**Five Main Concepts of the Value-Oriented Approach**

The proposed approach describes a measurement model and management solutions with the following concepts.

***Tree of Categories***

It presents categories of communicated content (values, topics, keywords) assembled in a hierarchical contextual way. The tree outlines a subject matter area at the highest level and main terms of communication language at the bottom and may include hundreds or thousands of categories. A Tree of Categories presents a less formal version of Maslow's hierarchy and hierarchy of ideas used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming [8].

***Profile of Preference***

This is a main measurement tool that sets preferences on the given categories of value. It realizes a comparative measurement principle based on various ordinal scales of preferences or qualitative preference relation [more preferable than]. Quantification of qualitative preferences implements a number of methods in psychometrics [6], utility theory [17] and theory of fuzzy sets[19] allows to build advanced decision-making procedures within PR campaigns. The numeric values of preferences could be determined based on subjective judgments or statistical data of monitoring content and activities.

With different Profiles of Preferences we describe organization's objectives, audience's interests, evaluative component of communicated content, etc.

***Stream of Messages***

It presents a universal form of organizing communication and control [1] as a sequence of messages, relatively small portions of verbal or non-verbal content (sent, received or listened). A Stream of Messages could be corrected depending on specifics for human perception of information like forgetting curve, rule 7+/-2, etc.

***Funnel of Cognitive/Emotional States***

A funnel presents a sequence of communication stages or psychological states[4, 6, 7] associated with them. This funnel generalizes various communication, marketing and sales funnels. From psychology we know that every cognitive or emotional state has its counterpart. This fact allows us to build PR campaigns promoting positive and negative attitudes and opinions in a similar way.

***Scenario of Actions***

It presents an ordered sequence of actions (or events). It transfers the concept of psychological unit of interpersonal communication [20] "action-reaction-transaction" on the triad of public communication "outputs-outtakes-outcomes". Ultimately the sequence order is determined by the sequence of dynamically changing Profiles of Preferences.

**Four Basic Groups of Tasks in PR**

The new approach provides measurement solutions to these four basic tasks of PR, that outline the essence of this professional area, and makes related technology universal.

***Creating and Organizing content***

We could organize content in accordance with not only the organization's objectives and audience's interests but also with relative importance of objectives and interests.

We create content as a result of adjusting organization objectives and audience interests that are both presented as categories of values. Preferences determine the attention paid to each category during communication. The more preferable the category, the more we focus on this category. For every audience (group of stakeholders), content is created depending on the audience's Profile of Preferences.

***Communication management***

This is the biggest part of every PR campaigns. A full communication cycle includes messaging, monitoring, measuring and management. The new technology allows us to combine all these components into one decision-making process. Stream of Messages provides effective messaging in accordance with a given Profile of Preferences. Scenario of Actions allows us to plan and realize diverse sequences of messages. Monitoring is provided through specially designed value-oriented surveys and collection of content digests. Measuring is provided on the basis of values promoted (described by outputs), values accepted (described by outtakes) and values shared (described by outcomes). Finally, this effective measurement gives leverage for effective management.

***Developing relationships***

We set Profiles of Preferences to present every group of stakeholders and determine the degree (experienced as a psychological state) of relationship we want to have with each group. There is no relationship in general. We may have trust-relationship, love-relationship, engagement, friendship, etc. Comparative measurement [6] allows us to avoid many difficulties of quantifying our comprehension of all these complex psychological phenomena in absolute numbers. To develop relationships, we create content and conduct communication processes in accordance with the solutions mentioned above.

***Building sustainable groups of interests***

Promoting the Profile of Preferences launches self-organizing processes within society. Providing positive feedback by looping the content (as a Stream of Messages) generated by an audience onthe audience itself can form a self-sustaining agenda in the given group. E. Bernays called this "organizing the chaos of public opinion" [2], S. Mann mentioned the chaos of "widely variant goals and values" [21]. Both these cases in fact can be referred to nature-like processes studied by I. Prigongine [18], but instead of a gradient of temperature or gravity, we promote a gradient of values to organize society. The effectiveness of this method of social organization is also confirmed by the fact that in most cases editorial policy is more effective in media than censorship.

**General Measurement Procedure of PR Campaign**

A general measurement procedure is based on five abovementioned concepts of the measurement model. To measure PR campaign as a whole we determine through various surveys, a preference profile of public interests and set organization's preference profile of PR objectives pursuing the goal of changing public profile to some target profile. This target profile supposed to make a given target public behavior as the most probable. You can determine current (or final) public values and preferences based on specially designed surveys and use this measurement for tracking the progress of PR campaign.

As mentioned before, every PR communication consists of informative and evaluative components and they are closely connected. A concept of the Profile of Preferences takes into consideration both of these components. It takes content of communication from the Tree of Categories that outlines this content and collect ratings of categories by value preferences. During PR campaigns we create and communicate content to deliver the evaluative part of communication as well as to make the public (or its fraction) accept the promoted values and preferences.

Within the communication process we transmit informative part in outputs and outtakes as an organization's and audience's Streams of Messages and calculate respective preference profiles. For every action or event reflected in the Scenario of Actions, we include a describing message into the measurement model.

Informative and evaluative parts of outcomes are presented by the resulting preference profile calculated based on profiles of outputs and outtakes. Finally, communication stages (or states) set by the Funnel of Cognitive/Emotional States are measured state-by-state, similar to measuring trust (see above).

**Integrated Solutions**

***Social Media as Real-Time Feedback***

Measurability of an organization's outputs and audience's outtakes with respective preference profiles allows one to make social media an integral part of PR communication and the use of social media as an immediate source of real-time feedback. It also makes audience a countable actor in creating content. The conditions of combining profiles and including them into one decision-making procedure are stated in [19]. The fact that today's PR communications are mostly bidirectional makes this integration very important.

***Measurement of White and Black PR***

Symmetry in working with positive and negative preferences, psychological states and their counterparts allows us to build very flexible PR strategies. We can measure PR campaigns promoting positive and negative public opinions. We could also measure a PR campaign’s changing value preferences from negative to positive or vice versa. For example, we could set funnel states from negative to positive, similar to

J. Trevino's degrees of acceptance of any idea in the concept of J. Overton's window, up to the state when an idea (or set of values) becomes a discipline norm or a law.

It was also proven within this approach that every crisis or conflict ultimately leads to changing the sign of the preferences for some categories from positive to negative. During a crisis we may encounter situations when good becomes bad and right becomes wrong.

For example, Black Public Relations or negative PR, which is a process of destroying someone's reputation and corporate identity, also changes public value preferences from positive to negative.

***Multidimensional Taxonomy of Metrics***

By making observable all measurement and decision-making aspects of PR, the proposed technology provides a basis for developing multidimensional taxonomy of all currently used metrics [10,11, 14,15].

For example, the new technology provides an answer for how to measure outtakes, at the stage of [Interest], in the reputation building PR campaign.

Answering this question gives us an easy way for integrating metrics, collected in AMEC's frameworks IRF and VMF (\*), into one taxonomy structure. For this purpose we can make an IEF matrix as a tabbed matrix with each tab designed as a separate copy of an initial flat matrix and marked by a sequential communication stage taken out of VMF. Every metric set in IRF and VMF will be entered in the relevant cell of this three-dimensional matrix. This more diversified taxonomy eases the selection of suitable metrics.

Taxonomy can be made even more granular with adding other (than in VMF) communication stages, various layers of intermediary effects (from both sides of communication channel) and different types of PR campaigns. In the new technology there is no restrictions to the numbers of these characteristics.

To manage this multidimensional taxonomy we can set a number of relational database tables with "many-to-many" relationship. Due to overlapping and mixing, many metrics can be plugged into more than one cell of this taxonomy. By answering to the initial type of question asked, this multidimensional taxonomy allows one to overcome confusion in the search of relevant metrics.

(\*) AMEC –International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication

IEF – Integrated Evaluation Framework

VMF – Valid Metrics Framework

**Some Examples of Future Applications**

This advanced technology helps create a wide range of communication programs from self-marketing to large-scale strategic communication. Let us consider just two examples for possible implementations of this technology.

1. Companies like Google, Amazon, and Palantir provide a very effective behavioral profiling of various users which allow them to create personalized marketing. During the one-to-one conversation they collect data about current needs, requests and interests of their customers.

What about the changing of these profiles and related habits and stereotypes in accordance with some changed organizational objectives? The technology provides techniques to change them by changing a system of values and preferences. We can go very deeply into the customer's value identity, starting from their physiological to high level self-actualization and spiritual needs, in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

2. Arnold Mitchell [4] made his studies after the US crisis in the 1970s, trying to understand and reconsider American core values from the viewpoint of populace and marketing segmentation. Currently, Americans are experiencing another big crisis. Do Americans need to reconsider their values again?

The new technology significantly expands the ideas developed in psychographics [4] and later on

in psychodynamics [5]. Psychographics studies of A. Mitchell is about segmenting the audience by lifestyles as a combinations of values sitting deeply in the national (American) public culture. Psychodynamics studies of J. Tyler is about the similarity of market behavior and getting along based on a person's relationship to the core values of American culture, such as shared values.

By introducing value preferences the new technology helps to study very dynamic processes of change in the public systems of values and take into account that every crisis leads to changing some value preferences from positive to negative and vice versa. The technology helps to develop long-lasting communication programs that gradually, explicitly or implicitly, promote a new system of values and preferences. By promoting value preferences of discipline norms and misbehaviors (offences) by severity of punishment, we could also provide a deep social and cultural impact [4,13].

Currently, the development of this technology is in the stage of software prototype that provides some basic package of services. Our company is looking for partners to develop a commercial product and to create a new business model for a future full-service PR agency by implementing this new approach for PR measurement, evaluation and management.

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