



Planning for Strategic Communication
– tools for management and marketing
used at
Stockholm University Library



Gunilla Lilie Bauer

Head of the Department of Information and Public Relations

gunilla.lilie.bauer@sub.su.se

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Summary

The presentation stresses the importance of strategic communication as a tool for the library management and marketing (as well as for all other leaders) and aims to introduce two simple, professional and effective tools for communication, used at Stockholm University Library: the Ten Questions for Communication Planning and the Communication Chart.

The two communication tools are used by the library staff in different management and marketing situations, such as when a new library service is to be promoted but also when the library management plans actions and communication activities towards the faculties and university departments, the university management and other financiers.

Introduction

As an introduction: some photos of Stockholm University and the University Library together with some keywords. Photos are not included in this full version, please have a look at <http://www.su.se/pub/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=521&a=2199> and look at <http://blogs.su.se/kbrem> if you want to have a look at the vice-chancellor's, blog.

Stockholm University

- The university of the capital of Sweden: Stockholm
- One of the largest universities in Sweden
- About 37.000 students
- Four faculties: Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Natural Sciences
- 4 200 employees
- Keywords: Decentralisation, Internationalisation, Plurality
- Example of an information tool for the management: the vice chancellor's [blog](#)

The university campus is situated in Frescati, in the north of Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. It dates from Stockholm College which began in 1878. In 1960 Stockholm College became a state university.

I would also like to give you a short presentation of the library:

Stockholm university library

- One of Sweden's largest university libraries
- 2,7 million printed books and magazines
- Gives access to e-journals, e-books and databases
- 140 employees
- 5000 – 6000 visitors/day
- Primary target groups: students and staff at the university
- Also a research library open to the public

The university library is called "the heart of the campus" at the university website and since between 5000 and 6000 visitors daily use the library we do believe it is an adequate term.

The library is not only the library buildings – the website, www.sub.su.se, is as important and treated as the main information and communication channel.

Two tools for strategic communication planning

Let's go to the main point of my presentation – the tools for strategic communication planning!

What does the term *strategic communication planning* really mean? Is it just another buzz word – or? I would like to share our definition and point of view with you

- All communication activities which contributes to reach the goals for the library/organization
 - Creates and maintains relations with target groups and strategic alliances
 - Contributes to create confidence and to give the library a clear identity
 - An active and planned process which forces you to "thinking before acting"
 - Demands professional communication skills, proactivity and contextualization
- A tool for the management since "Leadership is spelled communication"

This slide shows the basic outlook of strategic communication according to the view of the library management. Important to know though: all staff has an important communicating task, but the library management and the department of Information and Public Relations which I'm the head of certainly have the main responsibility. The department has a task as a

policy-making, coordinating, supporting and educating unit for the library's communication and marketing activities but is of course not performing all communication activities. One of my tasks as Information Officer at the library is to be a support to (and member of) the library management as well as to the other staff.

“Leadership is spelled communication” – in Sweden there is a book with this title¹ I take it for an important truth. If you cannot communicate you cannot lead. To many leaders this is quite clear, but certainly not to everyone. If an organization is not working well and has a bad climate I believe bad communication in most cases is the main reason why.

The two tools I am going to present I have learned to use by Sven Windahl, former professor in information and communication at the University of Lund in Sweden and the founder of the company Nordisk Kommunikation in Copenhagen².

I got to know him when I worked as the head of the department of Information and Library Services at the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, about ten years ago, when I learned the importance of communication planning, using the first tool which I call “The Ten Questions for Communication Planning” – it has been an important tool for me and I have been working to implement it at Stockholm University Library since 2004.

In the autumn 2005 all heads of the departments of the library gathered for a seminar with Sven Windahl concerning strategic communication. His knowledge has also been used as a support to the librarians who are in charge of the communication between the library and the different departments at the university.

The Ten Questions for Communication Planning,

Let's start with the first tool: The Ten Questions for Communication Planning, which forces you to thinking before acting.

1. What are you going to communicate?
2. Why is there a need for communication?
3. Who are your target groups?
4. What do you want the target groups to know, learn, feel, try or do?
 - Formulate the communication goals for each target group.
5. Which communication channels will get the best result?
 - Use your knowledge of the communication habits of each target group.
6. When are the different activities going to take place?
7. Who is responsible?
8. How are you going to formulate the message?
9. Are there any predictable obstacles in the planned communication process?
10. How can you evaluate the communication process?

These simple but important questions are used as a start and help to plan the communication activities in different situations. Sometimes the situation is promotion of new library services, sometimes the management is planning how to get a constructive dialogue with the faculty deans and sometimes it concerns contacts with a financier of a project. The Ten Question List is useful in all such situations!

¹ Ledarskap stavas kommunikation / Segerfeldt Claes-Henry. Malmö, 2002. ISBN 9147065257

² www.nordisk-kommunikation.com

Comments to the 10 questions

1-2 Define what it is all about. Is there really an information need and why? Always useful to explain to yourself and to others.

3. Next task is to define how important the target groups are in relation to your vision, mission and goals. To do this I strongly recommend you to use the Communication Chart, which I will show you soon. It allows you not only to define the importance of each group, it also forces you to define if the communication with a special target group so far has been efficient or not. And don't forget to include the internal target groups, i.e. how and when you will involve the library staff. Very often marketing activities give no result due to the course that the staff concerned has not been properly involved and sometimes even not informed about a new service or a new change. This is not allowed to happen – but as we all know it sometimes does.

4. Do make a difference between these different kinds of communication goals! Do you want the target group only to be aware of something or do you want them to know all the details? Or do you want them to do something, maybe change a common behaviour or an attitude? Do they have to learn something new? The answers to these questions help you to formulate adequate goals. Remember not to be too eager and ambitious; information is a weak tool if you really want to change a user pattern. To succeed you have to have a trustful, close and personal relation so be economic and realistic.

5. Choose the channel you know your target group prefers! And use a channel suitable to the message. It sounds simple, but your knowledge about the target group behaviour and their preferences is crucial. You cannot use e-mail as a communication channel if your target group does not! So try to be sure of the habits of your target groups and plan carefully which channels you are going to use: e-mail, web, blog, a leaflet, telephone, personal meeting etc

6-7. In which order are the communication activities going to take place? Are they connected and dependent of each other? And who will be responsible for doing what at the library? If you don't involve the concerned staff in due time the plan maybe just remains as a plan. Or you will have to do everything yourself.

8. Everybody knows how important the formulation of a message is so work it out carefully e.g. by using words you know are familiar to the target group and not using internal library terms, not understandable to anyone else. And think of the attitude – should it be friendly, engaging or maybe surprising?

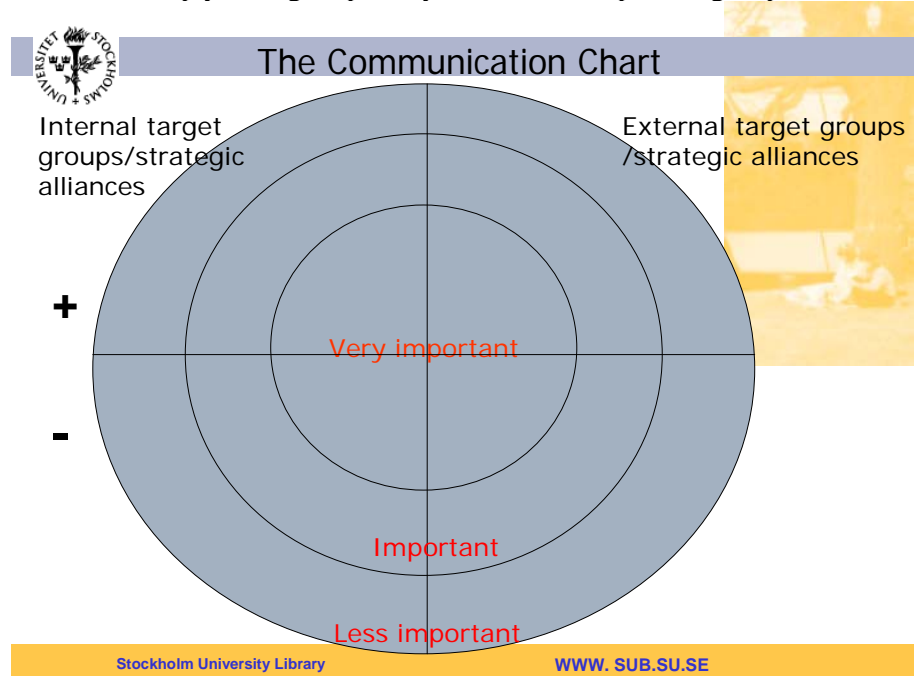
9. Often there are obstacles for the communication which can be predictable. Think carefully if you have enough resources, interest, skills or knowledge and you might avoid some mistakes!

10. How are you going to measure your communication activities? How can you be sure you really have reached your communication goals? Plan how you can make a proper follow-up. Ask yourself if it is possible to measure?

The Communication Chart

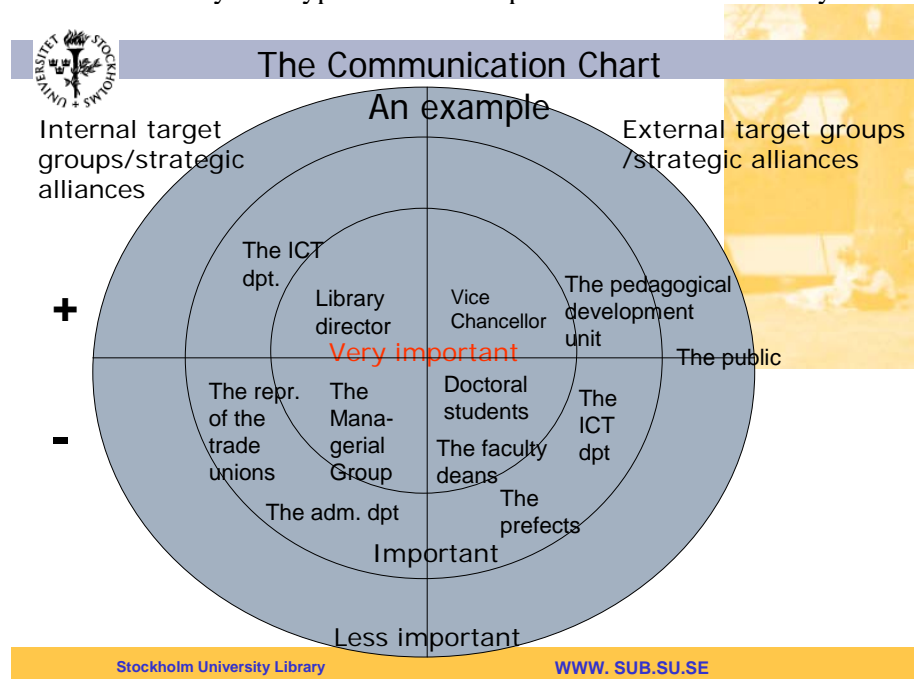
Now – coming back to the importance of being aware of and really knowing who your target groups are and how they work. The Communication Chart is a tool for defining them and to make clear whether your ongoing communication with the target groups is working well or

not. It will help you to give priority to the most important groups.



The term "strategic alliances" I use for persons, departments etc who you are dependent on in a way or another. For a university library it is obvious that the vice-chancellor is one of them and so are the faculty deans, the prefects and projects financiers. There are also strategic alliances within the library to be aware of, e.g. other heads of departments, the trade unions' representatives but also key persons in the staff with big influence on others, the "informal leaders".

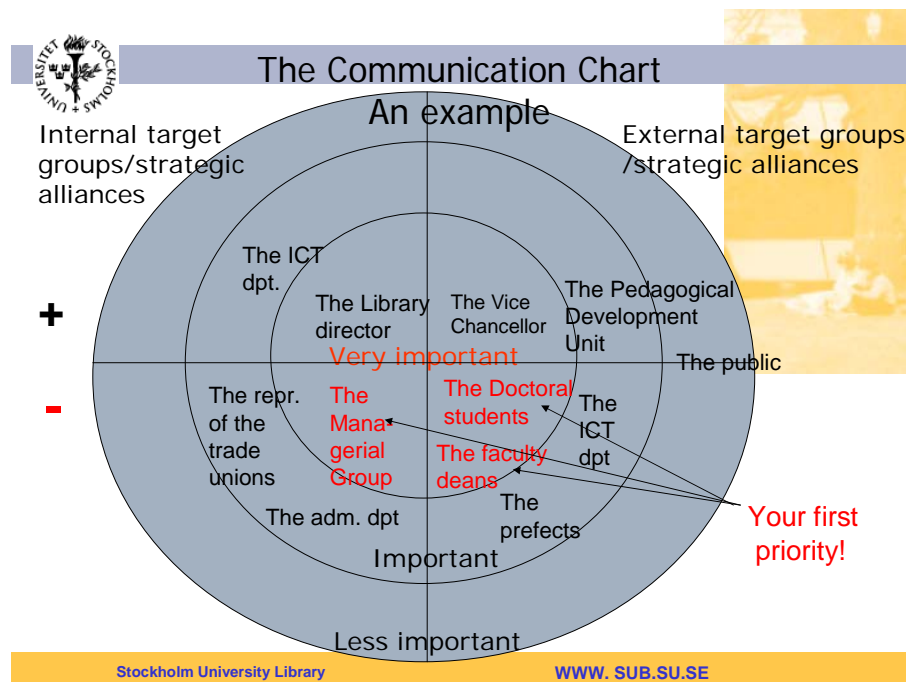
I will now show you a hypothetical example for an academic library:



The minus sign at the left side of the circle means the present communication is not very well functioning.

The plus sign of the circle means the communication is working well.

When you have put the names of the internal (within the library) and external target groups in the right place – according to your knowledge and experience and due to degree of importance and communication success, plus or minus – you will get a hint of which group or groups who ought to be your Priority Number One for further communication activities.



The faculty deans and the doctoral students are very important groups and you have made the statement with them that the communication is not well functioning. This gives you a strong signal of where to begin!

Conclusions

I will soon let the floor to the next speaker, but first I'd like to summarize my point of view concerning important components for a successful strategic communication:

A leadership spelled communication with strong support from an information unit who coordinates, educates and supports other skilled, motivated, engaged and professionally communicating staff, planning the strategic communication and marketing, using appropriate communication tools.

And finally, since I try to live as I learn, some communication goals for this presentation:

- At least 50% of you have tried at least one of the tools before the end of this year
- Some of you have inspired one or two more people to use them
- Please, m@il your experiences or questions by using the M&M section's new mailing list: **IFLA-MM**, subscribe at: <http://infoserv.inist.fr/wsympa.fcgi/info/ifla-mm>

Thank you for listening!

Gunilla Lilie Bauer, Head of the Department of Information and Public Relations at Stockholm University Library. From September 1st 2006, Library Director of the Library of the Swedish Parliament. Member of the IFLA Management & Marketing Standing Committee 2003-2007 and also a member of the Committee's Information Team and administrator of the IFLA-MM and the IFLA-MMSC mailing-lists.