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**THE TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY OF  
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF  
UKRAINE****N. KRAKHMALYOVA<sup>1</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design**Keywords:**

European education cooperation, educational services market, higher education institutions of Ukraine, communication tools, consumers of educational services, international education exhibitions, university logo, public relations.

**ABSTRACT**

The article studies the nature of communication, which is a systemic phenomenon and possesses the element base. There has been analyzed their impact on the successful functioning of universities, studied university trend of communication activities in Ukraine. There has been defined the assignments of university communication activities, considered a rational set of higher education institution communications as a single functional direction where all the tools of communication are coordinated. That will most effectively bring the information to the target audience.

**Statement of the problem and its relevance.** Globalization processes in the world in various fields of human activities carried out by means of comprehensiveness of global communication systems, whose driving force is the information process, contribute to the dynamic development of the educational services market in most countries. Ukraine is not the exception in this process. In modern society higher education fulfills a complex economic function, namely influences the economy and the dynamics of its development through human potential. At the same time changes in economic conditions cause the need for new models of higher education development. Ukrainian economy moves to innovative investment level of development that requires the modernization of higher education, which content remains the urgent problem today. One of the ways to solve this problem is to apply the modern management technique, including the communications of higher education institutions.

From the economic point of view communications at the education market are considered as a necessary tool for effective management of universities. For improving activity and increasing competitiveness at the education market, universities effectively use various forms of communication that provide simultaneous distribution and obtaining a wide range of economic, technical and commercial information.

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**Analysis of scientific papers on solving problems.** Definition, importance and necessity of using the communication tools by organizations of different areas and higher education institutions are featured in the works of many foreign and national scientists, such as E. G. Becker, I.M. Gryshchenko, Em Griffin, I.M. Sinyayeva , T.N. Paramonova, E.M. Sheremetyeva, I.M. Krasiuk, O.I. Matthias, D. E. Schultz, W. Rudelius, S.I. Tannyenbaum, R.F. Lauterborn, F. Kottler, Karen F.A. Fox, L.E. Orban-Lembryk, A.A. Chichanovskyy, Jan W. Victor and others. However, the essence and influence of communications on the effective activity of a company are not studied sufficiently. To a less extent there has been studied the use and development of communication tools by higher education institutions taking into consideration the peculiarities of domestic and foreign consumers of educational services and other privies towards their target information, in order to gather knowledge about a higher education institution and its educational services, to achieve understanding and receiving return reaction in the form of actions which are featured in the content of transmitted information.

**The objective of the article** is to determine the role of communications in the context of successful functioning of higher education institutions at the Ukrainian educational services market and rationally choose the communication tools to provide clarity, consistency and influence maximization of communication programs on target audiences by means of undeniable integration of all individual appeals.

**The main results of research.** In contemporary complicated global and information environment, higher education institutions exist and develop in conditions of constant changes, too dynamic environment, tough competition. Therefore, the system of higher education Ukraine definitely needs further reform as required by the needs of the modern development of socially-oriented economy and to the integration of Ukraine into the European educational cooperation as the European vector of development in all spheres, particularly in higher education, is defined in the state.

These trends contribute to the necessary disclosure of the existing potential in education, its intellectualization. Taking into consideration the problem of increasing competition, universities are made to compete for potential consumers of educational services – entrants more actively, often involving non-traditional methods and approaches that have not been previously characterized by the education industry and belonged exclusively to the business area, namely tools of communication. Today at the Ukrainian education market supply prevails demand. By means of active and open communication one can influence even the innovative human behavior.

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The determinant of competencies specific to each activity is communication as a process of creating and interpreting information linked to relationship causing a certain reaction [2]. Thus, the communicative process is the basis of communication, the organization of which depends on understanding the system, process structure and the nature of communication, which is a systemic phenomenon and has the element base [14]. Nowadays the experts of almost all areas have communication problems. In addition, the problems of studying the communication processes belong to the global problems of civilization [13]. Today communication activity of universities is aimed at:

- ✓ formation, development and presentation of contemporary material and technical base of the university;
- ✓ organization of material basis for training reserve officers, carried out by the institution;
- ✓ creation and presentation of university intellectual property;
- ✓ design, development and improvement of university corporate style, meetings of graduates of different generations, creating its own corporate clothing and uniform style (for security guards, mantles for professors and students, etc.);
- ✓ improvement of material and moral encouragement of students, faculty and staff (bonuses, scholarships, prizes, diplomas, etc.);
- ✓ organization of leisure of students, sport, development of cultural preferences development, rehabilitation, etc. [7].

However, under conditions of competition at the educational services market traditional methods of communication activity (career guidance) used by higher education institutions during decades and which mainly were assigned to attract future students, become not effective enough because they are designed for other social and economic conditions. Under these conditions, there is a need for universities to cohere and coordinate all efforts in promoting their services, namely the use of elements of communication that allow to integrate individual messages to ensure consistent and purposeful impact on different groups of communication recipients. Communication tools such as developed electronic communications infrastructure play a crucial role in providing effective management at the level of higher education institutions and higher education system as a whole. A special role belongs to informatization of education, information and communication processes, because communicative literacy, culture and competence are obligatory conditions for success of an individual in modern professional life [9].

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Today the assortment of educational services at the Ukrainian market is very diversified. But under the conditions of market economy it can vary considerably, because higher education institutions have to take into account the requirements of the environment. In addition, basic education services are often complemented by related services, which owners or producers are universities receiving additional income. Significant role in activity of Ukrainian and foreign higher educational institutions belongs integrated communication activities. For this reason it is important for universities to use communications that must not only inform applicants and interested parties about its objectives, activities and suggestions, but also motivate them for choosing this university.

Within a higher education institution, communication should be considered as a multilevel process of information exchange for communication among its employees, departments, students, applicants, all interested people etc. It should be noted that exchanging information, the sender and receiver are equal participants in the communication process and pass several stages, where the main task is to make the message and use the channel for its transmission in such a way that both sides understand the original idea [6]. These stages include: the origin of idea; coding and choosing a channel; transmission; decoding; feedback. Consequently, communication of higher education institutions is the process of information transmission through the usage of communication principles, functions and forms to provide awareness and interaction of education market subjects. Communication - is more than information exchange, it is a process, activity in order to acquire new knowledge, points of view, changes of social values. Besides, communication presupposes a single communication space (as information brings together partners in single information area), and its members are active subjects of mutual informing [10]. In general, communication is a way of human existence as a whole, because it implements life reality of any person. In a broad sense of meaning, communication is considered as a process of interaction and communication means that allow to create, send and receive various information and is characterized by repeated nature of messages and complex, integrated impact on the target audience [13].

The process of organization of communication with the market is too complicated and uses a complex of different functions and different internal structure. Together they constitute a set of promotion-mix, which means a system of promoting goods [11]. The integrated system of communications of higher education institutions include: advertising, vocational work, exhibitions, public relations (PR), personal communications, the Internet, corporate identity, sponsorship, unplanned communication etc.

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Such communications have many forms, the contents of which should be planned to meet the needs of the target audience and achieve the goals of higher education. Thus, university should use only one logo in the mass media and other communications to increase recognition of the institution and to identify every communication with it. This allows to create and coordinate a clear, coherent and convincing picture of an educational institution and its services. Thus, communication tools serve as the main management tools of higher education institutions through which they can reach and maintain a high competitive position at the education market of Ukraine.

According to the results of studying the foreign experience, higher education as a sphere of social activity possesses incessant dynamism, flexibility and adaptability of the market, advanced research, innovations, business creativity, openness to all kinds of social transformations, etc. [5]. For our country the effective modernization of the national education system is the key to socio-economic and scientific-technical achievements and the main prerequisite for integration of Ukraine into the European education space. Some scientists consider that using communication tools by means of information space it is even possible to rule another country, creating a huge range of situations according to its own program if information flows are directed with given creativity [12]

For each organization it is strongly topical to create their own communication aimed at achieving mission taking to consideration the design of communication strategy model. While choosing the set of such communication tools it is necessary to consider basic components, criteria and sequence of development stages of communication activity. As the character of each organization is reflected in the transmission of information and communication with the environment. And an organization itself exists by means of transmitting information and communication. That means communication is the main tool of strategy and practical implementation of organization market objectives. The process of organization communication with target audiences uses a range of tools of various functions and its different structure.

Determinative assignment of the communication activity of higher education institutions is the choice of optimal set of communication elements that will the most effectively bring the information to the target audience [3]. If the choice is correct, the various elements of communication will mutually reinforce the impact on consumers. In particular, the sequence of applying the communication elements plays the important role in the process, as using one of them often opens opportunities to others.

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As an example, advertisements on providing educational services and activity of higher education institution may encourage applicants or interested people to address the university for more details via e-mail or call or even visit him. With the rapid development of information technologies, the Internet becomes more and more important communication channel of higher education institutions with future applicants, their parents, relatives and other interested parties that presupposes significant changes in their communication activity. Users of personal computers around the world spend more time in social networks, paying less attention to other means of communication. Modern universities realizing the importance of this communication channel present themselves in the network, creating web-sites that contain information about educational services, departments, specialties, qualification levels (at the Bachelor, Master, postgraduate, doctoral levels), tuition fee, employment opportunities for students. Equally important message is information about dormitories, sports stadium, swimming pool, culture center of the university, fashion festivals and its other events. In addition, it covers various events in the University life, meetings with famous people in our society, with both national and foreign representatives in different areas.

The important communication tool for most higher education institutions in Ukraine is developing the effective programs of public relations (PR) and the purposeful application of their methods in the area of education and awareness of their significance. Universities are constantly working with many circles of society, for needs of which students are taught. In these circles the public opinion about the university and the quality of its services is formed. In general, for any company, public relations is a management function of establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relations between it and the public. In addition, the success or failure of the organization depends on its opinions [4]. Rationally organized PR work allows to establish effective cooperation with the community and build and strengthen a positive public opinion about a higher education establishment, the quality of its educational services. Developing the program of complex PR activities contributes to the prestige of the university in its environment and the creation of its positive image. The positive image of any organization, namely a higher education institution, increases its competitiveness at the market, attracts customers and partners, increases sales of goods or services and, consequently, profits of organizations and higher education institutions in particular.

As for universities, if the image is important to attract applicants for budgetary places, it is twice more important for paid tuition. Graduates play a special role in forming the university image [1].

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Work on building relationships with graduates can be started with monitoring their career, creating alumni clubs as a way of forming the horizontal network of mutual assistance, involving graduates into university life. Relationships with graduates fulfill two important functions:

- ✓ creating informal community of people whose life is connected with university, and the stronger advantage of each participant is, the stronger is the overall brand of the university;
- ✓ assistance to the university as a community center - only graduates who have retained relations with education institution, it will provide financial, information, lobbying and other support.

It is important that graduates represent different spheres of human activity, take the appropriate position that is they are not directly university representatives. That is unattainable for one graduate may be possible for another one. However, graduates are able to achieve much more together, because opportunities to realize powerful synergy effect is created.

One of the key means of promoting educational services and communication tools of higher education institutions is advertising, which consists of non-personal forms of communication made through paid media. Effective advertising campaign of universities provides:

- ✓ goal setting; forming the budget that totally depends on its financial capacity;
- ✓ developing effective advertising messages;
- ✓ selecting appropriate media channel;
- ✓ evaluating the effectiveness of advertising for offers, adjustments and changes of advertising in future.

However, at the beginning of developing the program of university advertising campaign it is necessary to determine target audience, the necessary coverage and frequency of advertising messages, to describe the needed reverse reaction, because the effectiveness of impact of advertising messages is defined by the presence of feedback. For efficient activity at the education market universities effectively use exhibitions as a communication tool, which provide simultaneous distribution and obtaining a wide range of economic, technical and commercial information [8]. After all, exhibitions facilitate the information exchange, enable the comparison of similar educational services, offered not only by national education institutions, but also the foreign ones, conditions of its sale, quality and price, provide direct communication with the target audience, create preconditions for contacts of professionals in education sphere etc. In addition, the international exhibition is an effective mechanism for implementing plans of Ukrainian integration into European educational space, forming the system of European education, training universities and staff to expand the scope and intensity of contacts with European countries and world culture.

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Besides, the international exhibition of educational services orients national education system to solve the priority assignments of sustainable development of our country. It is highly important for Ukrainian higher education institutions to attract foreign students, take part in international exhibitions abroad. The above-mentioned events give the opportunity to the participants and visitors to get acquainted with international experience of the educational process, modern scientific and methodical developments, innovation and information tuition technologies, author projects, new samples of teaching means.

While forming the complex of communication elements, universities should take into consideration the important point of communication activity - identify and meet the information needs of faculty, staff, current students and other members of the internal environment, as they are, in turn, the channels of transmitting information to target audiences [7].

Therefore, in order to achieve the aims universities effectively use different communication tools and combinations that provide simultaneous distribution and obtaining a wide range of various relevant information. And for effective communication activities universities should take into consideration current trends, namely:

- ✓ conscious communication activity of a higher education institution in a competitive environment that has its purposes and nature of the conviction, aimed at achieving tactical and strategic objectives of the institution;
- ✓ singling out not only purposes, but also forms, tools used simultaneously and sequentially in the communication process, but are intermutual;
- ✓ foreseeing ways of feedback and its availability, in which the information recipient response is simultaneously a signal for future university actions;
- ✓ multilevel nature of communication, implementation of which involves several successive stages (levels).
- ✓ opportunity of calculating the economic effect of communication activity that is the hallmark related to the economic nature of communication;
- ✓ reducing the communication budget by means of careful approach to selecting and coordinating the communications tools.

For this reason, it is expedient for higher education institutions of Ukraine to use only those combinations of communication tools that are mostly suitable for effective achieving its strategic goals. At the same time choice and intensity of using complex communication tools are important not only for the university, but also for other participants of the communication process.



**Conclusions.** At the present stage of the education market development in Ukraine and abroad successful functioning of higher education institutions requires total focus on specific customer of education services with long-term relationships, but not only on the individual market segments of consumers. Sustainable competitive university position at the market of higher education is provided by complex communications as a single functional direction where all the communication tools are coordinated, which base is in using a single university logo.

It should be noted that effective communication activity plays a crucial role in the successful management of higher education institutions and influences the importance of its competitive position at the national education market as well as in other countries.

Applying an integrated approach to communications enables higher education institutions to reduce the budget of communication activities, since such communications carefully coordinate the use of complex communication tools, avoiding duplication that is extremely important for public universities of Ukraine, where the funds have been always limited.

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