

# WEB 2.0 in ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION- SOURCE OF IRRITATION or DRIVER OF INNOVATION?

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## ABSTRACT

The common understanding of strategy still emphasizes organizations' long-term orientation, where they try to reach an advantage for themselves through long-term monitoring and consciously initiating necessary steps accordingly. As concerns strategic corporate communication, the rise of social media calls for a revision of this idea. As this paper seeks to explore, the strategy terminology has to be rephrased due to the evolution of new media towards more interactivity, reciprocity, participation and sociality as well as new applications through technological advancement. Social media change the organizational realm and ask for organizational strategy's adaptation to a thus changing environment. Disturbances of communication have become normality. Instead of interpreting them as nuisance, these disturbances might entail enormous strategic innovative potential that needs to be let unfold.

## Keywords

Social Media, strategy, organizational communication, business communication, political communication, communicative innovation

## INTRODUCTION

Based on Clausewitz's comprehensive theory on warfare, strategy (in ancient Greek στρατηγία [stratēgeía], the art of military leading, commanding) – in contrast to tactics (art of arranging a battle formation) – can be defined as the long-term planned aspiration of a goal.

"From this arises the totally different activities, that of the *formation* and *conduct* of these single combats in themselves, and the *combination* of them with one another, with a view to the ultimate object of the war. The first is called *tactics*, the other *strategy*. [...] According to our classification therefore, tactics is the *theory of the use of*

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*military forces in combat. Strategy is the theory of the use of combats for the object of the war.*" (Clausewitz Bk. II, Chap. 1)

In Mintzberg's enhanced terminology, the term 'strategy' is placed on a continuum between pure planning and executing preassigned tasks on the one hand and emergent phenomena on the other, which demand rethinking during the process itself.

"Thus, we would expect to find tendencies in the directions of deliberate and emergent strategies rather than perfect forms of either. In effect, these two form the poles of a continuum along which we would expect real-world strategies to fall. Such strategies would combine various states of the dimensions we have discussed above: leadership intentions would be more or less precise, concrete and explicit, and more or less shared, as would intentions existing elsewhere in the organization; central control over organizational actions would be more or less firm and more or less pervasive; and the environment would be more or less benign, more or less controllable and more or less predictable" (Mintzberg/Waters 1985: 258f).

The common understanding of strategy, however, still emphasizes organizations' long-term orientation, where they try to reach an advantage for themselves through long-term monitoring and consciously initiating necessary steps accordingly. Johnson and Scholes, for example, define strategy in their influential textbook *Exploring Corporate Strategy* as

"[...] the direction and scope of an organisation over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organisation through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfil stakeholder expectations" (Johnson/Scholes 2002:10).

As concerns strategic corporate communication, the rise of social media calls for a revision of this idea. As our paper seeks to explore, the strategy terminology has to be rephrased due to the evolution of new media towards more interactivity, reciprocity, participation and sociality as well as new applications through technological advancement. Social media change the organizational realm and ask for organizational strategy's adaptation to a thus changing environment. This is true for organizations in politics and business in equal measure; yet, the kind of change can be quite different. However, it applies to all organizational types that the ability to plan communication has been reduced. Disturbances of communication have become normality. Instead of interpreting them as nuisance, these disturbances might entail enormous strategic innovative potential that needs to be let unfold.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA: Framework Conditions for Organizational Communication**

In 1989, information scientist Tim Berners-Lee created the World Wide Web's foundations in the European nuclear research center CERN when trying to simplify the data exchange among CERN's different institutions. Originally intended to smoothen communication among scientists, the Web 1.0 conquered the world at a pace unheard of (Berners-Lee 1999; Headrick 2009: 143). However, this first internet has evolved. In

the course of time, the separation predominant in the first phase between information suppliers and information consumers has disappeared. User-generated content and social networks have altered the internet's character. The way the internet is used has changed. The Web 2.0 was born (O'Reilly 2005).

The possibly shortest and most concise definition of the Web 2.0 derives from Eric Schmidt, Google Inc.'s CEO: "Don't fight the internet." (O'Reilly 2006) Tim O'Reilly interprets this definition accordingly:

"Think deeply about the way the internet works, and build systems and applications that use it more richly, freed from the constraints of PC-era thinking, and you're well on your way. Ironically, Tim Berners-Lee's original Web 1.0 is one of the most 'Web 2.0' systems out there — it completely harnesses the power of user contribution, collective intelligence, and network effects. It was Web 1.5, the dotcom bubble, in which people tried to make the web into something else that fought the internet, and lost." (O'Reilly 2006)

For organizational communication, this change has enormous effects. For one thing, it means that the internet cannot be ignored. Mainly, it means not to communicate against the internet, but to get engaged in the communicative forms of the 'community' and to adapt one's own communication strategy accordingly.

In the Web 2.0, the task to research information, to process and to diffuse it can be fulfilled by any amateur. The amateur can create his or her own website or blog. He or she can produce and publish videos and audio files, can discuss within online communities or communicate in social networks. This communication offer can be ignored by the internet's other users, yet can also spread at an unbelievable pace. In the Web 2.0, there are no 'gatekeepers' who filter the information stream on behalf of the user and differentiate between important and unimportant issues, or things meant to go public versus secret occurrences.

Unhampered, anybody can set up content, opinion and information in the internet. Whether these contents are true, untrue, subjective, objective, or authentic is irrelevant. What degree of diffusion these contents eventually experience is decided within the internet itself by the dialogue amongst the users. In the Web 2.0, everybody communicates with everybody else. The Web 2.0 is a complex, dynamic meshwork of any kind of communicators. A multitude of communicative offers by private, amateurish, or professional communicators competes for attention. Within this network, there prevails a continual coming and going by opinion leaders or nodal points through whose interface function a multitude of users can be reached or who, in return, can bundle the users' individual opinion. Eventually, the Web 2.0 is a dialogic medium of communication with, in principle, bidirectional communication between communicator and user (Grupe 2011: 369ff.). Thereby, the users' power is enormously enhanced (Sta-noevska-Slabeva 2008: 16).

This 'peaceful' media revolution of the Web 2.0 constitutes new challenges for organizational communication. At the moment, the Web 2.0 resembles a huge sandbox where one experiments, learns and rampages without restraints (Puttenat 2007: 124).

New perspectives and opportunities for organizational communication are thus generated; however, just as any other chance, it cannot be taken without risk.

In summary, there are primarily three characteristics of the currently new media that distinguish them from the classical media of the pre-Web 2.0 era:

Firstly, new media only reflect an organization's internal and external structure by way of their technological features. This means that an already existing exchange is represented or supported by technical structures, respectively. Thus, the Web 2.0 is a 'translation' of language into technology, no more and no less. Through the new media, the different realms of organizational communication are forced to increasingly think in terms of symmetric communication. The exchange between organizations and their stakeholders is per force put on a symmetric basis: 'Pull' elements more and more replace 'push' elements. The user must and can decide proactively to participate in communication, for instance by retrieving the organization's website or by commenting an organizational blog's entries.

Secondly: The boundaries between mass and individual communication disappear. Mass communication becomes more individualized; individual communication becomes more flexible. Whereas a linear unidirectional information and communication flow interested in information distribution was predominant in the internet's starting time, the Web 2.0 is characterized as an interactive and, first and foremost, personalized medium forcing organizational communication to think anew. Also the trend towards neuro media can be attached to the new media, which place emotion above rationality and create associations and repetitions more easily than traditional media. Additionally, information sources and content are independent of time and place, thus to be determined autonomously. A technological change of paradigm – i. e. from process towards personal software – eventually leads to a change of paradigm in organizational communication.

Thirdly, the Web 2.0's multi-media features bring about a cross-media integration of all existing media content and enhance the reusability of content. At the same time, integrated communication – erstwhile the sublime goal of communication managers - becomes a natural core element of the new media world (Grupe 2011: 375ff.) as well as its biggest challenge since information is exchanged in real time among the media channels (mainly audio-visual and electronic, to a lesser extent print media) as well as among target or stakeholder groups. A target group-exclusive steering of the media is hardly possible.

By way of these three conditions created by the Web 2.0 – symmetry in communicative exchanges; personalization of mass information; implicitness of integrated communication –, discourses or issue worlds are created which pass by classical information flows. These issue worlds still constitute a kind of 'public' that presents itself as a hardly detectable signal within the internet's hidden publicness. It is difficult to grasp for strategy finding, yet can become an enormous source of influence for organizational communication within almost no time (Liebl 2000). For the organization under concern, such an incident can prove to be a communicative

godsend; however, it can turn out to be a catastrophe as well. Communication in the Web 2.0 is difficult to control and even less projectable.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

Despite all imponderability the Web 2.0 creates for corporate communication, the advantages for corporations are clearly visible – at least in theory:

For one, the Web 2.0 allows for a target group-centered supply of information (push function) without having to resort to a loop way or gatekeeper such as a journalist or traditional media. In practical respect, the greatest challenge is most certainly to interlink content cross-media in a way that the desired awareness is eventually reached (Grupe 2011: 378f). Due to the new media, the boundaries between marketing and PR vanish even more since the Web 2.0 demands even more quarreling for achieving either content awareness.

Furthermore, the users' reactions towards an organization's communicative offers in the social media can be used for the organization's own market research (feedback function). Comments and reactions can be evaluated quantitatively or qualitatively. It is better to collect even negative responses on the corporation's own website in order to be able to react quickly. Additionally, users can also be directly integrated into some of the organization's internal processes or projects. Examples of this so-called crowdsourcing (Howe 2006) are numerous. Starbucks, for instance, has created the 'My Starbucks Idea' platform where users can introduce new ideas for the company. These ideas are in turn assessed by other users; thus, the Starbucks management can implement the most promising suggestions (Kaplan/Haen-lein 2010: 66).

Moreover, stakeholder attachment is increased. By way of online communication, the dialogue with different user groups can be led independently of time and place in order to tie them closer to the organization. Online communication even reaches dialogue groups that cannot be addressed through classical media, for example the much cited 'digital natives'. Also, online communication allows for tremendously increasing communication processes' pace; thus, communication offers get hold of their target groups without delay (Grupe 2011: 377). Through dialogic communication, which seems to be open and authentic and is able to at least create the outward impression that the communication partner is taken seriously, customers can become fans (pull function). If not, the contrary is also within reach: For instance, when Boeing opened its first corporate blog, it did not provide for comments on the part of the users. Consequently, the Boeing blog was perceived as fake and corporate advertising in disguise (Kaplan/Haen-lein 2010: 66). When it became known that Anheuser-Busch's PR had secretly changed the Wikipedia entry about its SeaWorld parks, a virtually irreparable impression of the corporation's untruthfulness prevailed (Kaplan/Haenlein 2010: 67).

To summarize in benefit categories, it pays off for corporations to communicate within the Web 2.0 since, firstly, they can attain reputation benefits and brand

awareness for specific stakeholders by way of target group-oriented content (Scott 2008). Secondly, dialogic communication in the Web 2.0 creates reciprocity (Cialdini 1999: 17ff); the users feel indebted to the corporation and pay back. They are tied to the company and are also inclined to do positive PR for the corporation. Thirdly, new customers can thereby be won even without direct customer approach on the part of the company, namely by benevolent intermediaries – opinion leaders as defined by Katz and Lazarsfeld (Katz/Lazarsfeld 1955). Fourthly, added value for the company is created by way of dialogic communication whenever the consumer also produces content, i.e. whenever the consumer turns into 'prosumer' (Tapscott/Williams 2008).

Taking social media into account, corporations thus let third parties, i.e. intermediaries, proactively design corporate communications – including all chances and risks implied for communication planning. Therefore, an active issue management is indispensable whenever corporations communicate in the Web 2.0. Generally speaking, issue management means to recognize topic areas that are relevant for the corporation and arise within any public and to react accordingly. Thereby, discrepancies between the corporation's actions and the stakeholders' expectations, emerged from a dialogue-oriented process or – even better – still in the process of emerging, are to be disposed of (Chase 1984).

Numerous examples for the importance of issue management can be quoted. On a website for people interested in cycling, it was reported that expensive bike locks by Kryptonite could be opened with a simple ball pen. This news quickly spread through the web; Kryptonite, in return, published a response that the locks were safe. However, the storm did not abate. When the New York Times and Associated Press also reported on it, Kryptonite was forced to react adequately and offered to replace all 100,000 bike locks sold free of charge, only ten days after the news' primary publication (Kirkpatrick 2005).

All the more astounding is a survey from 2008 that finds out that the majority of German medium-sized companies had not even started to explore the topic Web 2.0. Only 9% of the companies polled had already implemented Web 2.0 projects. Another 5% were planning such projects. Almost a third of IT decision makers had not previously ever heard the term 'Web 2.0' or 'social computing'(IBM 2008). This might have changed in the years since, although not to a substantial extent until 2010. According to another survey from 2010, only about 22% of all German companies were using Web 2.0 applications (ZEW 2010).

Communication management in the era of the Web 2.0 has become permanent issue management. Not only is this valid in order to reproach dangers as in the Kryptonite example, but also to exploit chances as in the example of the Coke Mentos Geysers: In 2006, two performance artists uploaded a video to YouTube where they put several Mentos drops in a 2 liter bottle of 'Diet Coke'. The drops reacted strongly with the liquids inside, and out of the bottle there arose a huge coke fountain. The video became top on YouTube, and the idea spread virally. While Coca Cola is rather skeptical as concerns this kind of public relations and even considers the brand identity to be endangered, the producer of Mentos drops – Perfetti Van Melle – is delighted. There,

the marketing value of these geysers was estimated to add up to 10 million dollars globally (Der Spiegel 2006; Puttenat 2007: 133f.).

Without doubt, communication in the Web 2.0 burdens the management of corporate communications with high expectations. Despite all risks, however, communication in the Web 2.0 creates enormous chances as well. This is not only true for corporate communications, but especially also for communication within the political realm.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

Any politician who wants to win election campaigns needs to control the game with the media, 'classical' as well as 'new'. In August 1960, Vice President Richard Nixon had hurt his knee, stayed two weeks in hospital, and clearly lost weight. At the occasion of the first public debate of presidential candidates in the then 'new' medium television, Nixon appeared in a badly-tailored shirt, pale, sick and with clearly discernible 'five o'clock shadow'. On the contrary, his challenger Senator Robert Kennedy had been on a campaign tour throughout California and, thus, steered through the debate relaxed, self-assured and sun-tanned. An audience of 70 million people watched this first TV duel. Up to that point, the voting result was supposedly undecided; Nixon's public appearance in the medium TV is said to have been the cause for Kennedy winning the following elections (White 2009).

However, the TV duel's relevance has been assessed differently. Even if the causes for Nixon's failure probably cannot be attributed to this single TV debate (Greenberg 2010), this event at least changed one thing, namely the perception of 'new' media as important, if not pivotal factors of influence in political communication. Thus, it is all the more surprising that in US-American election campaigns, the internet and social media initially only played an secondary role. This changed only with Howard Dean's campaign during the primaries of the presidential election in 2004. At the time, Howard Dean was governor of Vermont and practically unknown in the rest of the country. Although he eventually dropped out of the primaries, he had successfully resorted to the internet's opportunities in order to enhance his degree of popularity.

Thus, Howard Dean used a multitude of blogs and what was then a not so popular website, meetup.com, to interlink his supporters. The goal of the website meetup.com created in 2002 was to bring people with common interests closer together and to facilitate the organization of personal encounters between these people – both local and face-to-face. At times, Dean had more than 140,000 supporters on meetup.com; moreover, his supporters spent so much money that he was able to raise an all-time donation record – 15 million dollars during the second quarter of 2003 – as compared to other candidates of the Democratic Party (Wolf 2004).

However, Howard Dean pulled back early from the primaries and left the field to John Kerry. Yet Howard Dean's campaign had been pathbreaking for political

communication in the Web 2.0. On Wired, Gary Wolf mainly emphasizes the participatory effects of Dean's internet strategy and the attractiveness involved:

"One key to his online popularity is the harmony between his message and the self-image of the Internet community. 'A lot of the people on the Net have given up on traditional politics precisely because it was about television and the ballot box, and they had no way to shout back,' he says. 'What we've given people is a way to shout back, and we listen—they don't even have to shout anymore.' [...] The intersection of political analysis and Internet theory is a busy crossroad of cliché, where familiar rhetorical vehicles—decentralized authority, emergent leadership, empowered grass roots—create a ceaseless buzz. But the Dean organization has embraced this language of Web politics passionately." (Wolf 2004)

Dean's campaign was the beginning of a media revolution in political communication. By the time of Barack Obama's election campaign in 2008 at the latest, politics seems to have propelled itself in a pioneering role, even though it had been somewhat lagging behind business's Web 2.0 capabilities up to this point. Obama, with the help of new media – YouTube, push mailing campaigns, Twitter, blogging –, ceded the main part of campaign impulses to the Web 2.0 – and was successful despite the unpredictability of the results.

"Howard Dean's 2004 campaign was groundbreaking in its use of the Internet to raise small amounts of money from hundreds of thousands of people. But by using interactive Web 2.0 tools, Mr. Obama's campaign changed the way politicians organize supporters, advertise to voters, defend against attacks and communicate with constituents." (Cain Miller 2008)

Barack Obama and his campaign team combined a self-reinforcing virtual network marketing with mobilizing the real world in an unprecedented expert way, where – according to the Tupperware principle – one trusts his or her neighbor and not the producer (Cialdini 1999: 167ff), where everybody was supposed to convince everybody else of the new political product – namely Obama. Both instruction and motivation were accrued through the Web 2.0, and the strategy bore fruit as Sarah Lai Stirland, shortly before election day, correctly forecast on the blog Wired:

"The Obama campaign has been building, tweaking and tinkering with its technology and organizational infrastructure since it kicked off in February 2007, and today has the most sophisticated organizing apparatus of any presidential campaign in history. Previous political campaigns have tapped the internet in innovative ways. [...] But Obama is the first to successfully integrate technology with a revamped model of political organization that stresses volunteer participation and feedback on a massive scale, erecting a vast, intricate machine set to fuel an unprecedented get-out-the-vote drive in the final days before Tuesday's election." (Stirland 2008)

Barack Obama's campaign success shows quite plainly what powerful instrument the Web 2.0 is to mobilize whole networks of supporters, who in turn advertise for an even greater number of supporters independently. At the latest with Obama, political communication "is no longer about 30-second television commercials. It is about engaging the voters in a process fundamental to democracy." (Anderson 2009)



The advantages for politics potentially resulting from communication via Web 2.0 are clear. First and foremost, there is the mobilization of supporters and voters. As it was possible to analyze social media in corporate communications, different categories of use can also be described for politics:

Firstly, the empowerment created by citizen-driven campaigns can, with the help of social media, bind the online actors to the parties' political offers. In Germany, the issue of member retention is currently one of the most important since people have become more skeptical as concerns politics and demand more right to a say in political processes (Gülden-zopf/Hennewig 2010: 46). Especially with large catch-all parties, issues often times create conflicts between communication for members and communication for potential voters. Also here, the web might create additional platforms to unfold communicative bonds without documenting inner conflicts about political opinions in a way harmful to the parties' image (Römmele 2011).

A second category of use can be paraphrased by the term 'social recommendation'. Politicians and parties can win additional voters without addressing them directly, as in when they bet on opinion leaders' power to convince within the Web 2.0's social networks (Stirland 2008; Cain Miller 2008).

Thirdly, the Web 2.0 offers the opportunity for the citizen to participate in the political landscape. Especially parties that suffer from dwindling membership—whereas social-political organizations are experiencing heretofore unknown support—could trigger more participation through the Web 2.0, create motivation via practical guides for action, and re-design political manifestos as grassroot movement (Gülden-zopf/Hennewig 2010).

Thus, new ideas can be adopted to the parties' own political line and communicated as their own. In practice however, politics will still consider planning as the ultimate objective and the idea that one could indeed recognize the necessary steps for communicative success beforehand and, thus, initiate them in time. Yet the Web 2.0 only consists of in hard-to-control individuals, each with their own agenda. Communicative disturbances can also emanate from the group of supporters; sentiments can revert quickly.

Here, the question must be asked to what extent politics has learned to cope with disruptive moments—also in contrast to the business world—, and whether this is reflected in strategic concepts of communication accordingly. It must be taken into account that the logics of both action systems—politics and business—have quite converged as far as communication is concerned. However, the difference, namely that business wants to sell material goods and services while politics sells the word itself, i.e. ideology, cannot be disregarded. Profit maximization versus vote maximization as command variables, thus, will presumably have an influence on how so-called sources of irritation will be dealt with as concerns strategic planning.

Generally speaking, instances of disturbance in political communication are dreaded to a larger extent than in corporate communication. Evidence for this can be found in Barack Obama's presidential election campaign where he extensively tried to

control the chaos within his own supporters' network (Stirland 2008). Here, the goal was to interlink activists who acted more or less as lone fighters and to put the added value of collaborative work across to them. Additionally, many activists were extensively educated in special weekend training sessions, so-called Camp Obamas.

"The sessions vary in size from groups of 40 to more than 300, held variously at the campaign's Chicago headquarters, in rented office spaces, union halls, churches or on college campuses. In addition to leadership and motivation training, the camp features storytelling sessions, where the volunteers are broken up into small teams organized by congressional district. Each member of these groups is asked to tell personal stories in two minutes, in the same format Obama used in his 2004 speech at the Democratic National Convention." (Stirland 2008)

Barack Obama's campaign was successful because he got involved with the imponderability intrinsic to communicate in the Web 2.0. However, his campaign influenced his own supporters' networks in a very controlling way. Generally, also in this example this imponderability of an open communication through the Web 2.0 seems to have been considered a source of irritation rather than an opportunity. In Germany, the situation with political communication is quite similar. For many politicians there, the Web 2.0 is a threat factor to the system, since the opportunities for participation asked for in the Web 2.0 can be used by talented yet unknown outsiders to their own advantage. Accordingly, they avoid dialogic forms of communication in their online activities (Elter 2010). Also in Germany, politics does not consciously take the Web 2.0's risk in order to use the inherent chances (Römmele/Einwiler 2010). In fact, the Web 2.0 is rather seen as a factor of disturbance. Corporations are clearly ahead of the game.

### **NEW CHALLENGES: Control as a Problem of Activating Resources**

In a nutshell, the era of the Web 2.0 means that corporations as well as political parties increasingly have to deal with digital natives, i.e. people who prepare their decisions and, additionally, influence the decision-making behavior of other (potential) customers, voters, and other stakeholders. In return, this means that corporations and parties block out competitive advantages when communication with their stakeholders is not successively endowed with feedback features. In short: The fear of negative feedback cancels out the chances actually offered by the Web 2.0.

Expressed in the words of economic social theory, commercial as well as political actors such as corporations or politicians / parties initiate a principal-agent relationship by communicatively acting in the Web 2.0 (Stiglitz 1987). Without explicitly assigning such a task, organizations – through their Web 2.0 communication – hope that internet users take on their communicative offer and carry it on and develop it further as autonomous agents in the interest of the organization. The organizations, thus, convey part of their rights to control organizational communication on social media's users without explicitly demanding something in return. According to James Coleman's social theory, a conjunct form of authority between the actors is initiated by such a unilateral transfer of control rights; this means that the internet users practically exert authority over organizational communication. The organization thereby transfers its

control rights voluntarily and without compensation to the internet users, assuming a congruence of interests between its own interests and theirs (Coleman 1990: 65ff).

Such contract relations, based on a unilateral transfer of control between a principal and an agent, are always founded in trust (Coleman 1990: 91ff). Thus, there is a fundamental risk of non-fulfillment of the contract. Organizations are afraid of this basic principal-agent problem where the principal cannot control the agent's actions due to information asymmetries. In the case of Web 2.0 communication, for instance, the organization communicating neither has any knowledge regarding the users' true interests nor an overview of all their actions (hidden intention, hidden action, hidden information). One option for organizations to solve this principal-agent problem consists in hierarchical structures (Miller 2005: 349), i.e. abstaining from communication in the Web 2.0, for example, or conducting online communication without feedback features. However, such abstinence dispossesses the organization of the very chances that Web 2.0 communication has to offer.

James S. Coleman offers an interesting approach to solving this dilemma of how effective 'norms' of collective action can be realized in the interest of all parties – for example in relationships of authority such as outlined above. Here, he begins with stating a structural similarity between the free rider problem and the phenomenon of overeagerness. The free rider problem (Heap et. al. 1992: 347f.) explains that rational actors contribute to realizing common interests (public goods) only if they can either be excluded from consuming these goods or they can be forced to contribute by a hierarchical organization. Coleman illustrates that in several situations where one would expect typical free rider behavior, the exact opposite occurs, namely overeagerness. As an example, Coleman draws back on team sports where one team's victory inures to the benefit of all, independently of the team members' individual performance. Instead of acting like free riders as one would expect, the team members often work harder than individual athletes during training sessions as well as in a competition (Coleman 1990: 274).

According to Coleman, the incentive structures for free rider behavior as well as for overeagerness are quite similar. However, the social structure in each situation is different. Free rider behavior occurs when actors cannot mutually influence each other's behavior; overeagerness, on the contrary, occurs when actors can influence each other through mutual social ties as in a sports team. Thus, social linkages allow for controlling actions for the benefit of all actors. According to Coleman, mainly the closeness of a social system can be made responsible for its actors' overeagerness:

"More generally, closure of this network gives increased potential for amplifying returns to the actor. Thus a system in which others have connections to the actor may exhibit a strong potential that induces higher levels of activity, but a system that in addition has high closure has an extra potential, due to the benefits that each of those who experience externalities of the actor's action receive from another. There is an amplification that occurs even before the rewards get back to the actor himself." (Coleman 1994: 278)

This example possibly illustrates how organizations might reduce their skepticism as concerns communication via Web 2.0. They might in a way try to strongly interlink the communicative actors amongst each other through according options for dialogue in order to thus create some sort of team.

To express this differently, corporations and parties are confused that due to the new symmetry of social media communication the power to exert control rights concerning their public appearance in the Web 2.0 is also reassigned, namely from corporations and parties onto the stakeholders themselves. Eventually, this reduction of control on the part of the corporations and parties – if they concur with establishing authentic social relationships, a social structure in the sense of Coleman – should lead to more truthfulness and communication. Truthfulness also creates trust, and this is exactly what helps to decrease the Web 2.0's threat potential. For instance, the relevance of weblogs is increased at the exact moment when conventional media discuss issues only insufficiently and when they do, the consumers of information deprive them of trust.

To abstain from communication in the Web 2.0 or to design it in a merely unidirectional way, respectively, are inadequate strategies with which to counter the social web's challenges. Since whether corporations or parties do indeed want to take part in the Web 2.0 cannot be decided by themselves any longer, they simply do it through their stakeholders who communicate about the organization on the web. This leads to an increase in information demand as concerns the different stakeholder groups and, thus, to asking for more feedback monitoring.

For a classical understanding of strategy, a decentralized, hidden, yet 'public' agenda setting as in the Web 2.0 must be supervised, as it is a disturbing factor for communication planning. This leads to an increased complexity for communication, yet no longer in implementing strategy as a result of issue management, but in issue management itself. This monitoring is directed towards actors in the net who are relevant for the public concerned in order to not let them win control rights on organizational communication by default.

However, this classical understanding of strategy is not suitable for the era of the Web 2.0. It would be much more profitable to no longer consider the Web 2.0 and the resulting emergence not as sources of irritation of a strategic formula of reaction just as in chemistry, reminding one of game of dice – yet without any probabilities – but as drivers of innovation that enrich any preset pattern in the sense of Mintzberg's (1978; 1985) non-chained 'emergent strategy'.

Whenever intra-organizational or actors who are only loosely bound to the organization have a large leeway for decision making, they can also follow their own strategies that are not connected to the organization's overall strategy. The organization's management can try to hamstring these personal strategies, which may be why actors of course try to obscure their strategies. According to Mintzberg, it might still be useful for the organization to learn from these individual strategies and to adopt the overall strategy accordingly:

"The leadership can, however, play the game too, waiting to see what happens, knowing it too can learn from clandestine behaviour. If the strategy should prove successful, it can always be accepted and broadened-internalized in the system as a (henceforth) deliberate strategy." (Mintzberg/Waters 1985: 266)

The important antipodes of understanding strategies are, on the one hand, strategy as planning, i.e. a consciously intended course of action analogous to a chemical reaction and emergent strategies, i.e. in the absence of, or even against the organization's intentions on the other. As a compromise between these poles, there is an interpretation of strategy, mainly affected by Mintzberg. In this sense, strategy is a "pattern in a stream of decisions" (Mintzberg 1978: 934), which implicates resulting behavior and whose goal it is to create consistency – be it planned or unplanned. It comes down to understanding strategy as inherent to the process of managing instead of strategy as a static factor.

In this regard, strategic communication would also be a form of management which recognizes disturbing factors' strategic potential as it results from communication in the Web 2.0 and which uses these disturbances to permanently adjust and adapt the communication strategy to an ever changing environment. This does not mean to deviate from the strategic plan, but rather to adapt it. Thus, it means continuous planning as it is inherent to Mintzberg's notion of strategy.

To understand strategic communication in such a way and to implement it accordingly in the Web 2.0 implicates that any time differential between strategy finding, getting the stakeholders' buy-in, strategy implementation as well as evaluation and readjustment disappears. Instead of wasting potential owing to understanding disturbances as moments of crisis, organizations and their management might also let things evolve and take chances that arise. Only in such a way can innovation come into existence, namely via resourceful entrepreneurs who – instead of optimizing well-known matters – try to exploit profitable chances for themselves and, thus, create new knowledge (Kirzner 1973). Related to strategic communication, this means that – by way of adaptive communication management – new content that could not be thought of ahead of time can be accorded importance.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WITH STRATEGY?– Rethinking and Redefining Strategy Terminology**

Especially when communicating via independent intermediaries and during discursive forms of discussion through so-called social media, it is doubtful whether the message to be communicated even reaches the recipient as intended by the sender. Messages tend to develop a life of their own. This is particularly valid in the case of social media communication: Communication also needs to cope with the unpredictable and the unforeseeable. Yet many of the people responsible for organizational communication are deterred by this challenge.

Eventually, considering new media as disturbance or even a factor of fear often times leads to the wish for claiming hierarchical campaigns or even control campaigns.

However, in the world of the Web 2.0, goal and result of campaigns are not so easy to render congruent since interferences on the part of the stakeholders are increasingly disturbing. Predictability has gone if it ever existed at all. In the Web 2.0, theory equals praxis. The only valid strategic consideration is that participation is better than avoidance.

In any challenge as social media's emergence creates them there lie chances as well. To restrict oneself to classical (offline) media is just as insufficient an answer as communicating solely within social networks. Organizational communication needs to face up to new media's evolution towards more interactivity, reciprocity, participation, and sociality as well as new options for application due to technological change, respectively.

In so far, social media alter the realm of organizations and demand from organizations that they adapt their strategies to a transformed environment. It applies that the ability to plan communication has decreased. Supposed sources of disturbance turn into normal situations. Yet a troublemaker often times disturbs only one's complacency. In fact, some disturbance might entail enormous strategic potential that needs to be let unfold.

The surprising cannot be anticipated – in this tautology lies the core of understanding communication with the help of new media. It is about flexibility inherent to an organization in order to react to unexpected events and to plunge into the flow of events, i.e. participation itself as strategy.

Such a situationist approach owed to the new media only apparently finds itself in a position contradictory to the paradigm of strategic action. Neither is communication in the Web 2.0 equal to 'action without plan' nor is it strategy stubbornly following a preset plan. Strategy means to use circumstances optimally, to derive advantages from the Web 2.0, and to let the organization be carried by them.

Then, instances of irritation are no longer disturbances, but more a part of normality. In this respect, the statement of strategy researcher Michael E. Porter gains new meaning: "The essence of strategy is choosing what NOT to do." (Porter 1996: 70) Letting things occur, not doing anything, jumping on the bandwagon in the right moment, and using the momentum. Letting stakeholders enfold action with issues that had not been part of the picture, ceding control. However, heretofore reassessing one's own role and, thus, strategy understanding is necessary. Especially politics would have to trust in its stakeholders operating in a supporting way (!) without controlling them in order to let them partly take over the organization's communicative performance as its representatives.

Openness for coping with different situations that pose various demands – especially as concerns interaction within and without an organization with a third party – needs to be learned. Strategy is about mapping out mistakes and discussing those with the individuals concerned in order to eventually learn how to cope with indeterminableness and complexity.

Only then, by the way, can innovation evolve. (Market) process theory as part of theoretical economics has been instrumental in carving this. A resourceful entrepreneur

observes his or her environment, recombines already existing knowledge and thus creates new knowledge. He or she finds profitable opportunities and uses them to his or her own advantage. He or she creates profits not by optimizing the known, but by generating something new:

"The pure entrepreneur [...] proceeds by his alertness to discover and exploit situations in which he is able to sell for high prices that which he can buy for low prices [...]. It is not yielded by exchanging something the entrepreneur values less for something he values more highly. It comes from discovering sellers and buyers of something for which the latter will pay more than the former demand. The discovery of a profit opportunity means the discovery of something obtainable for nothing at all. No investment is required; the free ten-dollar bill is discovered to already be within one's grasp." (Kirzner 1973: 48)

Relating to organizational communication in the Web 2.0, this situationist outlook on strategy means invigorating entrepreneurial elements: getting involved with new ventures, being open for the new, and creating something new. In other words, strategically planning the unpredictable. It is about letting innovations in the course of any communicative process be discovered. Such innovations where new communicative content unfolds importance are the solution to problems that NOBODY was able to foresee.

Thus, strategic communication management would mean enabling an organization and its individual members / actors to envision social media's potential and to use it to the organization's and their own benefit – no more and no less. The great danger therein lies in falling back on the idea of planning by calculating emergent communicative potential. However, the idea of targeted innovation by tactically analyzing communication opportunities makes the idea itself absurd – no matter how alluring, comfortable and more easy to consume the idea of total planning still might appear.

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