

REFRAMING – POWER VECTOR IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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Adesea, comunicarea este considerată un simplu schimb de mesaje verbale. În realitate, comunicarea este un proces complex și dinamic, desfășurat pe planuri și canale multiple. Atunci când decodificăm mesajul cuiva, o facem prin filtrele personale active în acel moment, răspunsul la mesaj fiind determinat de răspunsul intern pe care decodificarea lui l-a prilejuit în intercorelație cu filtrele folosite. Reîncadrarea este esențială în a învăța cum să comunicăm cu noi și cu ceilalți. La nivel personal, reprezintă modul în care atașăm un sens evenimentelor. La nivel de afaceri este unul dintre cele mai eficiente instrumente de comunicare disponibile.

One important part of the conception concerning the subjective life or experience can be thought by the analogy with a map building. We firstly refer to the world by the senses that we have, these representing the main way by which we know the world. Besides the senses, there are also sets of subjective beliefs: the previous experience, ideas, suppositions, and memories, educational and family influences. These represent the filters that mediate our relationship with the world that is our image about reality. It results that the image about reality is not in a relation of identity with the reality itself. We have at our disposal two great categories of filters:

- Some of them belonging to the physiological stocking limits or to the functional capacities of the sense organs.
- Others belonging to the individual existential universe, that is the family and educational inheritance, and to the individual's principles and values.

The consequence arising from here is that by changing the filters with which we refer to reality, we can change the world that we know. There is only one reality, but what is different is given by the ways in which we consider it.

Quite often, communication was thought as a simple change of verbal messages. In reality, communication is a complex and dynamic process, developed on multiple levels and channels. When decoding somebody's message, we do it by the personal filters active at that moment, and the answer to the message is determined by the internal answer that its decoding brought about in intercorrelation with the used filters. In fact, we do not respond to our partner's message but to our internal image about it, that is what we understood from the received message. The same also happens with our communication partner.

There is not necessarily a relation of identity between the sender's communication intention and the way in which the receiver decodes his message. This is due to the intervention of personal filters. Any message can be practically double filtered: once by the sender and secondly by the receiver. The receiver does not refer to the message sent by the partner, but to his own image about it Figure 1.

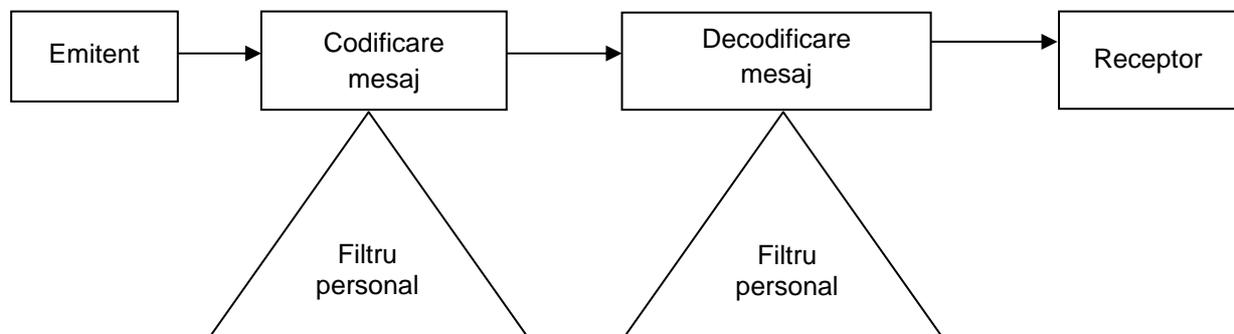


Fig.1. Interhuman communication.

In a professional business relationship, it is necessary then to take into account this reality, to optimize the expressive capacities, so that the sent message coincides with the communication intention and equally to take into account the partner's personal filters.

Communication is more than the words that we utter. The nonverbal language contributes to a much greater extent to communication than the practical content of a presentation. The words are the content of the message, while the gestures, the mimic, the posture, and the timbre of the voice make up the context in which the message exists. Altogether they make up the essence of communication.

The firm communication activity, the concern for the way in which the firm establishes the relationships with the clients and the suppliers, the attitude in relation to the image contributes substantially to the business success. The successful enterprises always look for improving the firm image, especially with their clients and suppliers. Communication means developing serious, positive and future relationships with business partners. Most firms use to emphasize the value of their relationship with the clients, laying stress on providing quality services. But this relationship cannot use its whole potential without also taking into account the other important factors. Thus if the employees are low paid or badly treated, they can determine the increase in number of the unsatisfied clients in spite of the other marketing efforts of the firms. As a result, the internal communication inside the firm must not be neglected either. The successful firms build strong relationships by means of the policy of increasing confidence and communication among them and their representatives. As they develop, confidence is a safe way of consolidating this relationship.

Reframing is essential in learning how to communicate with us and with the others. On the personal level, it is the way in which we attach a sense to the events. On the level of business, it is one of the most efficient available communication tools. The person that establishes the framework is also the one that has a greater influence. Much success recorded in business is the consequence of some expert reframings – by changing people's perceptions so that their new representations in relation to certain things should transpose them in a state that would make them feel something new or to make them act in a different manner. A company can be sold on the basis of its assets, can be sold on the basis of its value expected over 5-10 years, or it can be sold on the basis of the interest in other business development.

Reframing in its most simple form, represents the change of a negative proposition into a positive one, by changing the reference framework used in perceiving experiences. There are two main types of reframing, or ways of modifying our perception in connection to something: the context reframing and the content reframing. Both of them change the interior representations.

The context reframing implies the change of one experience that seems unpleasant or undesirable into a big advantage in another context. In business the context reframing is something invaluable. The big innovations are made by those who know how to reframe activities and issues in potential resources from other contexts.

The content reframing involves taking exactly the same situation and changing its meaning. It is the famous syntagm said by a general during a massive attack of the enemy: „we do not withdraw; we just head to another direction”.

Reframings are done in a great extent for us and not by us. Somebody else changes the frameworks for us, determining a reaction to a stimulus. Advertising is a good example in this sense. In reality, there is not anything extremely strong in connection with a certain brand of whiskey or something extremely sexy with reference to a brand of deodorant. Someone who grew up in an African tribe he surely would not consider the deodorant as being sexy. But the marketers have reframed the deodorant and we consider it as such.

One of the greatest reframing that has ever been made was done by Pepsi Cola Company. The product of the competing company Coca Cola was the most required drink ever. The tradition and the market presence could not be equalized. Pepsi could not do anything to defeat it in its own field. They could not state that their brand is of a greater tradition for the simple reason that nobody would ever believe them. Thus, those from Pepsi Company turned it upside down: they reframed the perceptions people have already had. They launched „Pepsi generation” turning a weak point into a strong one. Those from Pepsi stated: „sure, the others led in the past. But now would you like the yesterday product or that of today?” The advertisements reframed the traditional dominance of Coke drink into weakness, as an indication that it was a product that belonged to the past and not to the future”. And thus, the traditional status of Pepsi Company (the second

place) was reframed to the advantage of the company. By changing the framework and by defining the terms, Pepsi made one of the greatest marketing hits in history. The strategy of Pepsi Company is schematically rendered in Figure 2.



Fig.2. Reframing Pepsi Cola products.

It is obvious that the strategy of the American company was on the perspective reframing by replacing the image of a big company that would like to take profit with that of a company with which it is desirable to become partner, that helps and stimulates the national economy. By using this strategy, Pepsi company aimed at penetrating directly the second market in the world in the leader position. **Pepsi has added two more elements to the marketing mix: the policy and the public opinion.**

And the examples can go on: Olivetti, Polaroid, IBM, s.o. different firms, from different sectors that do exactly the same thing.

But reframing is not only the privilege of the big companies. They distinguish themselves more easily because of the advertising they have. Reframing can be implemented as easily by the small companies, or it can also be implemented at the personalized level of the interhuman communication. Reframing is one of the most powerful tools that helps at changing the way of thinking with reference to an experience.

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