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ALICJA WASZKIEWICZ-RAVIV (2021). VISUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE POWER OF IMAGES IN THE COMMUNICATION OF AN ORGANIZATION, WARSAW: WYDAWNICTWA UNIwersYTETU WARSZAWSKIEGO, 230 PP., ISBN: 978-83-235-4812-6, DOI: 10.31338/UW.9788323548201

Today, the great majority of organizations, whether private, public or non-profit, use public relations (PR) tools to manage the organization's communication and image. Given the rapidly developing visual communication, which is closely linked to the expansion of social media and image culture, the subject of visual PR is a powerful tool in building an organization's brand awareness and communication with the public. Written by Dr Alicia Waszkiewicz-Raviv, the book entitled *Visual PR. The power of images in an organization's communications* is a valuable and actual work addressing the still narrow and relatively new research area of visual PR, especially in the world of social media.

The monograph is an interdisciplinary collection of research, descriptions and insights on the determinants and functions of images in the communications of modern organizations. The purpose of the book is to seek out and show the influences of selected fields of visual communication on public relations. Throughout the book, the reader can learn about the key communication tools that create the experience of visual messages, such as images, photographs and infographics on social media, promotional audiovisual messages, or animation in online spaces. The book introduces the reader to a theoretical understanding of visual PR and demonstrates in a practical way how it works in influencing audiences.

As the author points out, two paradigms dominate PR communication today. The first, the functional, dialogical paradigm, is based on a model of communication, usually two-way symmetrical between the organization and stakeholders. The second paradigm, on the other hand, is the socio-cultural current, which opposes the influence of economics and management in favor of social analysis in public relations research. It is this second paradigm that the author focuses on, noting that the socio-cultural approach helps to make sense of PR at the macro-social, organizational and individual levels. Thus, important issues for understanding visual PR are trust and legitimacy practices within the visual sphere, how power is exercised through and over images, and the understanding and self-reflection of the communication practices of the social group

that PR professionals themselves comprise. The monograph clearly states that „the times of ubiquitous creation of images and images enable communication specialists to manage perception in innovative ways and increase the effectiveness of techniques for establishing relations with the public.” Considering the dynamic development of information and communication technologies, and consequently new forms of communication and message creation, especially visual, this statement is most justified. The author even refers to the economic aspect of visual communication, stating that we live in the era of the economy of images. The exchange of goods and services, striving to satisfy needs, is mainly based on images, resulting in the fact that „images are created, images are traded, and images are communicated about and through them.” The visual experience created by organizations is created through the use of specific messages with informational and persuasive functions aimed at the sense of sight, which in turn is related to the aesthetic dimension of the organization’s functioning, where visual PR techniques are used.

The book is divided into five parts. The first section is devoted to the theoretical embedding of visual PR in media sciences and social communication, with a particular emphasis on the communication of organizations, which is closely related to the research area proposed by the author. The next section presents a range of possibilities for the use of images and the functions they can perform in the process of implementing public relations for organizations. Key in terms of the practical aspect of the work are the remaining chapters. In the third part, the focus is on information in visual PR. Among other aspects, the chapter discusses data visualization, infographics and information, and presents the criteria for the visual convention of infographics along with their functions. The fourth chapter is devoted to the persuasive power of PR, in which the characteristics of images that make up the persuasiveness of visual messages are presented, and a template for evaluating the persuasive aspect of messages is discussed, to identify and determine the mechanisms of influence of signs used in visual institutional messages. Also noteworthy is an attempt at genre typologization of dynamic persuasive visual messages (in the context of PR) disseminated in the online world.

In turn, the final, fifth section deals with aestheticization in public relations messages. In this chapter, in addition to characterizing aesthetic reflection, the author presents the limitations of the theory of institutional aesthetics and introduces selected aesthetics of modern times with PR models. A key point in this chapter is the author’s analysis of visual tools used in PR in a case study of the Disney corporation.

This book combines theory with PR practice, which is undoubtedly an advantage of Waszkiewicz-Raviv’s book. A thorough analysis of the literature on the matter, along with numerous case studies combined with methods of observation

and in-depth interviews, indicate the author's high level of commitment and desire to explore the area of visual PR as deeply as possible. Public relations are characterized by long-term and carefully planned strategies, so it is necessary to consider the changing socio-cultural and technological environment in the process, which is also noted by the author of the book. A strength of the monograph is the presentation of specific activities and tools for practicing visual PR in the new media ecosystem. The various features and functions (information, persuasion, aesthetics) of PR have been set in contemporary realities, with an emphasis on the role of social media, making the book a very good resource not only for theorists but also for PR practitioners who are aware of how big a role visuality plays in an organization's communication in times of rapidly developing new forms and channels of communication.

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