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The S.T.R.E.E.T. Toolbox

The S.T.R.E.E.T. Toolbox

EPN CONSULTING, ENGIM, TRANSPADANA, ALPINE PEARLS, AND OBČINA BLED

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Contents

How to read this e-book xi

Introduction 1

I – The S.T.R.E.E.T. Project and the Erasmus Plus funding scheme 1

II – The Project Legacy: Toolbox 14

Part I. The Toolbox

1. THE MOBILITY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK CONTEXT 21

1.1 – Definition of Mobility Management 21

1.2 – Comparison of National contexts in the S.T.R.E.E.T. countries 23

2. THE MOBILITY MANAGER: REQUIREMENTS AND EXPERTISE TO ACCESS THE PROFESSION 38

2.1 – Introduction and Objectives 38

2.2 – Who needs a Mobility Manager? 39

2.3 – The Mobility Manager's Role 41

2.4 – The Mobility Manager's Resources 42

2.5 – Training and Education courses to develop Mobility Manager's skills 44

2.6 – Focus: Mobility Management and Tourism in the Alps 46

2.7 – Focus: Practical examples of Mobility Management 50

2.8 – Focus: Integrated Transport Ticketing 54

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE MOBILITY PLANS AND SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAYS TOURISTIC PRODUCTS (Operational Guide) 60

3.1 – Mobility problems in contemporary cities 60

3.2 – Mobility Planning: Traditional / historical approach – more roads more cars 61

3.3 – Sustainable Mobility: Accessibility and economic advantages v environmental burdens 66

3.4 – Smart and Integrated Mobility Planning: Spatial planning concepts 72

3.5 – Benefits of a Sustainable City 79

3.6 – Examples of Sustainable Holidays Touristic Products 79

4. CASE STUDIES: VIRTUOUS EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE CONTEXTS 91

4.1 – The London Study Visit (18-22 Sept 2017) 91

4.2 – The Werfenweng Study Visit (16-20 Oct 2017) 104

4.3 – The Bled Study Visit (06-10 Nov 2017) 123

4.4 – The Turin Study Visit (19-23 Mar 2018) 143

4.5 – The Study Visits follow-up 153

5. DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE: A HORIZONTAL SKILL 155

5.1 – Communication abilities, marketing skills, social networks 155

5.2 – Teamwork and problem solving 166

5.3 – Entrepreneurship 175

6. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION AND EVALUATION 192

6.1 – What has been done so far in the European Union? 192

6.2 – At National level: national occupational classifications 193

6.3 – The European Qualification Framework 194

6.4 – State of the Art in Europe and in the S.T.R.E.E.T. Countries (2017) 196

6.5 – Non-formal Learning 198

6.6 – The European Inventory 200

6.7 – Training Opportunities and Resources 200

6.8 – Other Resources 202

6.9 – Professional Profile in the S.T.R.E.E.T. Project 206

6.10 – Experiment in Italy with learners in the S.T.R.E.E.T. Project 214

7. JOBS PLACEMENTS AND JOBS OPPORTUNITIES 219

7.1 – London and the UK 220

7.2 – Bled and Slovenia 227

7.3 – Werfenweng and Austria & Germany 230

7.4 – Turin and Italy 234

8. CONCLUSIONS 239

Part II. Alternative Keypaths

Best practices in S.T.R.E.E.T. countries 249

Mobility Management 250

S.T.R.E.E.T. Cities 251

A) London and the UK 251

B) Werfenweng and Austria 251

C) Bled and Slovenia 251

D) Turin and Italy 251

Annex 1 - DISSEMINATION ACTIONS 253

A1.1 – The Project Website 254

A1.2 – The Project Newsletters 256

A1.3 – The Project Facebook page 258

A1.4 – The Project Multiplier Events 260

Annex 2 - THE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE 277

Annex 3 - Thanks 298

5. DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE: A HORIZONTAL SKILL

5.1 – Communication abilities, marketing skills, social networks

Nowadays knowing how to communicate is one of the most important skills. It is necessary to be able to speak appropriately with a great variety of people, but also to listen to our interlocutors effectively. In fact, communication allows us to interact with other people and transfer information. Without it we would not otherwise be able to share knowledge or experience. Communication can take place through various forms: "**verbal**" (using the voice); "**written**" (through books, newspapers, e-mails, websites, social media, ...); "**visual**" (using logos, maps, graphs, infographic, ...); "**para-verbal**" (through body language, gesture, tone and volume of voice) (De Vito, 2017).

5.1.1 – What is communication?

What is communication then? Wikipedia (2018) defines communication as:

"*What allows us to interact with other people; without it, we would be unable to share knowledge or experiences with anything outside of ourselves. Common forms of communication include speaking, writing, gestures, touch and broadcasting*".

We can summarise it in these key points:

- It is the normal process of contact between two or more people
- It is bidirectional (dialogue), not unidirectional (monologue)
- It can be an intentional process or not
- It can implicate conventional signs or not
- It can take on linguistic forms or not
- It involves *non-verbal* (gestures, look, ...) and *para-verbal* language (tone of voice, rhythm, pauses, ...).

A study conducted by prof. A. Mehrabian ("*Non-verbal communication*", 1981) has shown that what is perceived in a vocal message can be divided as shown in Fig 5.1

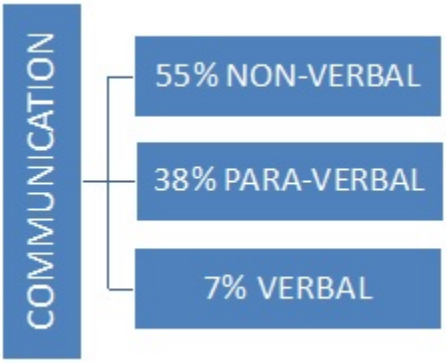

Fig. 5.1 – Mehrabian's scheme about non-verbal communication (Source: authors' reworking)

So, when we communicate with one or more interlocutors, what is our gesture? Do we respect physical spaces? Do we use an appropriate tone of voice according to the various situations? Are we assertive or too accommodating? There are numerous aspects to consider. Therefore, **communicating is not a simple act**. On the contrary, it becomes even more

complex from the moment when there are two key elements not to be overlooked: listening and feedback.

The communication process is in fact a very complex process (Foulger, 2004): it involves, as we have seen, various aspects that can influence and condition the message we would like to convey.

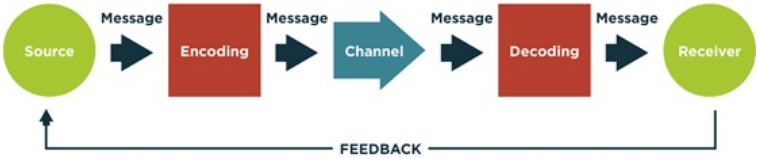

Fig. 5.2 – The process of communication (Source: authors' elaboration)

Communication is **sharing**, **interaction** and **feedback**. Therefore, it is not just a one-way passage of news and information, or even a simple disclosure. If we wanted to simplify the process, we could say that communication is a process not linear but circular (Fig. 5.2):

- **Message**: content of the communication
- **Source of the message**: issuer
- **Message encoding**: it is the activity of the issuer to transform ideas, concepts and mental images into a message that can be communicated through a shared code
- **Transmission channel**: can be understood both as the technical means external to the subject with which the message arrives (telephone, fax, mail etc.) and as the sensory medium involved in communication (hearing and sight, etc.)
- **Decoding**: it is the reverse path taken by the receiver that transforms the message from code into ideas, concepts and mental images

- **Feedback**: it is the interchange that takes place between the receiver and the broadcaster when the return information allows the issuer to perceive if the message has been received, understood etc.

Finally, we could add:

- **Noise**: communication disorders arising from the context.

5.1.2 – Effective communication

"Effective communication" is the communication that produces intended or desired result. It is a two-way process: *sending the right message* and *send it to the right person*. It is important to know the psychology of the people you are interacting with for communication to be effective.

For communication to be effective it is necessary to know the circumstances of the counter entity. Effective communication includes all the aspects of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic language to appeal the listener. To make effective the communication, just follow the **7C rule** (Cutlip and Center, 1952), summarised in the following scheme (Fig. 5.3).

Fig. 5.3 – The 7C of effective communication (Source: authors' elaboration)

The first "C" means "**Completeness**". The information conveyed in the message should be complete for the communication to be effective. The sender must take into consideration the receiver's mindset and convey the message accordingly. Complete communication enhances the reputation of the sender and always gives additional information wherever required, it leaves no question in the minds of the receiver. This helps in better decision making as it serves all the desired and crucial information, persuading the audience.

The second "C" means "**Conciseness**". Conciseness means communicating what you want to convey with the smallest number of words. It is necessary for effective communication. Concise message is more appealing and comprehensive to the audience: messages are non-repetitive in nature.

The third "C" means "**Consideration".** Effective communication must take audience into consideration by

knowing the viewpoints, background, mind-set, educational level, etc. Consideration implies *stepping into the others' shoes*, ensuring that the self-respect of the audience is maintained and their emotions are not harmed. Consider the needs and requirements of the audience to achieve an effective communication!

The fourth "C" means "**Clarity**". Clarity implies emphasising on a specific goal or objective at a time, rather than trying to move away from track. This skill helps to understand the message easily. Complete clarity of thoughts and ideas enhances the meaning of message, coming with the use of exact, appropriate and concrete words.

The fifth "C" means "**Concreteness**". Concrete communication implies being specific and clear rather being fuzzy and general. It shows good level of confidence and helps to strengthen the reputation of the organisation. Concrete information cannot be misinterpreted.

The sixth "C" means "**Courtesy**". Courtesy means being polite, kind, judicious, enthusiastic and convincing. It reflects the nature and character of the message sender and it is the same as *give respect and expect the same*. Courtesy is not at all bias in nature.

The last "C" means "**Correctness**". Correctness in the communication implies that the correct information is conveyed through message and it boosts up the confidence level of the sender. Correct information has greater impact on the audience, free from grammatical errors and use of appropriate and correct language. It requires the precision and accurateness of facts and figures used in the message.

Today, communication does not focus more exclusively on

the individual and on what s/he says, but on the context in which it is inserted. The human being is considered within a system of relationships, communities, social groups, which generate behaviour and reactions.

5.1.3 – Marketing

Defining what Marketing is in a few words is quite difficult as there are many definitions. One of the most effective is a word game (McCharty, 1960):

"*Marketing is putting the right product/service in the right place at the right price at the right time for the right people by the right way*".

Marketing is the communication between a company and the consumers' audience that aims to increase the value of the company or its merchandise or to raise the profile of the company and its products in the public mind.

The purpose of marketing is to *induce behavioural change in the receptive audience*. Doing marketing means listening, interacting, transmitting value and communicating with consumers/users (i.e. those who buy and use products or services), studying their needs and preferences to be able to satisfy them in the best way, inducing a change in their behaviour. It is the consumers/users, therefore, with their needs and desires to be pivotal around which the marketing revolves (Fig. 5.4).

Fig. 5.4 – The 8 steps to improve marketing skills (Source: authors' elaboration)

Now let's move on to the concept of **Digital Marketing**, starting from the definition – which is not as obvious as it would seem – of digital marketing.

According to Wikipedia: "*Digital Marketing is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium*".

In a nutshell: **Digital Marketing is that particular set of marketing techniques that use new media to promote a product or service, a brand or an organisation**.

Talking about the importance of digital marketing in recent years is almost superfluous. Indeed, having a commercially effective online presence is absolutely essential today and it is for any business. It is even true for professionals; thus the concept of *personal branding* was defined.

5.1.4 – Social Media

Social media represent a change in the way people learn, read and share information and contents. In social media there is

a fusion of sociology and technology that transforms the monologue (one to many) into a dialogue (many to many) and the people from users into publishers of contents. The digital marketing through social media (Social Media Marketing) has the goal of stimulating/generating conversations with users, putting closer sender and receiver of a topic/message.

Social Media are important for digital marketing, changing the relationship between the producer/supplier of goods and services and the consumer/user. This is because now more and more people use the Internet for every type of need and especially the Social Network, a growing trend especially thanks to the use of mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) in different moments of everyday life.

Why use social media? Because:

1. Information is **multi-channel**: an advanced communication must employ different channels, giving each one a peculiar role within a homogeneous and coherent plan
2. it is an **integrated** strategy: it means that the presence in a social platform will have to be coordinated with that in the others (in times, type of service offered, etc.) linking them with offline marketing activities (events, advertising, ...)
3. it allows to **listen to** people's needs and **relate** with them: the Social Media Manager is a communication officer who knows how to write well and how to relate with users at different levels
4. it allows to build a **custom-tailored** information: understanding your starting situation, defining long-term objectives, understanding a definition of targets, positioning, contents, etc.
5. it allows to **measure** results: constantly monitoring the progress of the campaign based on quantitative and qualitative parameters.

Which Social Media is best suited to our needs? As in television and paper advertising, even in web marketing, it is fundamental to know how to choose the right channels. You need to know your audience and what's on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. As you know, every social platform is different in many ways: first of all, what we want to communicate and for which recipients' category. Let's try to explain in a funny way the differences between the 6 most used social platforms, through the example of a user who wants to communicate to the world *his way of eating*:

Fig. 5.5 – Different way of conveying messages on different social media platforms

If he were on **Twitter** he would write a sentence like "*I need to eat*": in fact, Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service created in 2006 that provides, through the platform of the same name, a personal page updatable via text messages with a maximum length of 280 characters (previously it was up to 140 chrs).

If he were on **Facebook** he would write "*I have just eaten*", making his friends aware of his action just taken: Facebook, the

most popular among social networking services, was created in 2004 with the aim of relating the students and former university students, sharing common interests with "posts", organized according to the workplace, school, university, etc..

If it were on **FourSquare** instead he would write "*This is where I eat*": Foursquare is a social network founded in 2008 and based on geolocation available via the web and mobile applications, where users can perform a "check-in" (registration of the own GPS position).

If he were on **Quora** he would then write: "*Why am I eating*?": Quora is a social network founded in 2009 where users can post questions and answers on any subject. The platform groups the questions and answers by topic and allows users to vote or add comments.

If it were on **YouTube** it would instead write "*Look at me when I am eating!*": YouTube is a web platform, founded in 2005, which allows the sharing and viewing on the network of video (video sharing). Users can also vote and comment on videos.

Finally, if he were on **LinkedIn** he would write "*I'm good at eating*": LinkedIn is a social service launched in 2003 mainly used for the development of professional contacts and relationships. On LinkedIn, the user can upload their curriculum vitae and describe their experiences and skills.

To be successful in social media it does not mean having a large number of "likes" or "followers" but transforming interaction into *measurable results*. It means having the ability to maximise the exchange with its users, listening to them and observing the market from a privileged position. Once you have learned to move in this "social space" and master its tools,

you will be ready to invest time, money and hopes in a high-profile social media marketing activity, which will allow you to take measurable actions in line with your pre-set goals.

5.2 – Teamwork and problem solving

5.2.1 – Teamwork

Let's start from the literal meaning of "Teamwork" which is, in fact, the crucial point. It is a group of people working in synergy to reach together one or more common objectives. Working together is the best way to build something, to realise a project, to present a proposal to a consumer/user. But it is not always easy to get along and in harmony with the different facets of the individual characters.

The word TEAM can be considered as an acronym "Together Everyone Achieve More". In TEAM the individuals do not retain their individuality but unite themselves and their skills in favour of the "goals" to be achieved; it is a group of individuals working together to solve a problem, meet an objective, or tackle an issue.

Working in a team generates several advantages:

- The whole is more than the sum of parts: the advantage is that of working with a group of people with different experiences and skills who work together to achieve one or more common objectives
- Individuals contribute with different talents, knowledge, experience, contacts, etc.: opening up to the possibility of learning from each other; but also enhancing the skills of each individual, which improves learning from other colleagues
- Working as a team imply better results can be achieved: