

Table of Contents

ISBN: 978-0-9860419-1-4

**Creating Global Competitive Economies:
*2020 Vision Planning & Implementation***

**Proceedings of
The 22nd International Business Information Management
Association Conference**

November 13-14, 2013
Rome, Italy

Editor

Khalid S. Soliman

International Business Information Management Association
(IBIMA)
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Rethinking Organisational Communication in Political Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Communicating to staff and members of political party is no small task. This challenge is further complicated in political parties that have wide geographic spread, whereby the national headquarter is responsible for sending some messages to state or local offices in geographically dispersed locations. The broad objective of this study, therefore, is to interrogate the contemporary role of organisational communication in electoral politics. Specifically, however, the study seeks to establish the relationship between message development and political party efficiency. In pursuit of this objective, the survey method of research was employed to collect data from 278 staff and supporters of ten political parties in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The data were analysed with some descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, tables, percentages etc. Also, some hypotheses were formulated and tested with regression and Pearson's product moment correlation. The findings revealed among other things that, effective communication among a political party's hierarchies is a desideratum for success at the polls. Besides, organisational communication was found to influence and motivate the behavioural performance of party staff and supporters. It is therefore, recommended that political parties should strengthen their internal communication channels in order to achieve electoral success.

KEY WORD: Political Party, Communication, Marketing, Organisation

INTRODUCTION

Internal party communication takes its root from business communication, and early mass communication studies published in the 1930s through the 1950s. Until then, organisational communication as a discipline consisted of a few scholars within speech departments who had a particular interest in speaking and writing in business settings. As competitive pressure increases, the need for political parties to be productive arises which largely depends on the efforts of the employees and supporters as well as the right coordination by party leaders and promoters. Internal party communication is said to be one of the main functions of party managers. This is so because in any organisation, workers knowingly or unknowingly get involved in different conversation on how jobs can be jointly executed by a group of employees, how to establish a good understanding among themselves towards aligning with organisation's goals (Sigband, 1989).

Internal party communication is said to be the art of being able to structure and transmit a message in a way that can easily be understood and / or accepted. It is also seen as an attempt by the sender to use symbols (words) to create shared meaning (mutual understanding) that will result in an effect on both the sender and the receiver. Communication can be a simple verbal or non-verbal exchange of messages between friends or it can be a formal event that requires much preparation. Because it involves exchange, it can require speaking and listening and sometimes requires all sorts of language processes: speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing (Worlu, 2010). Internal party communication is necessary to enhance work and political marketing practice.