Topics in
GENDER,
GOOD GOVERNANCE,
and
ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT
IN NIGERIA

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Chapter 6

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 the same 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 movement 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, Elections

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 (World, 2010). Internal party communication is necessary to enhance work and political marketing practice.

Communication occurs at different levels in a political party which is one major weapon that if used properly can increase members' performance. Without organisational communication, members and staff of a political party will not be able to perform effectively. Most party members involve in communication to improve their performance at jobs attached to them. Most political parties in modern democracies cannot maintain the cohesion required for electoral success because of poor internal communication. The major aim of this study is to establish the connection between message development and party efficiency. The relevant research question arising from this objective is: what are the connections between message development and party efficiency? The null hypothesis that will be tested in this study is that there is no significant relationship between message development and party efficiency. The solution to this hypothesis will enhance communication at different levels of the party for better understanding of party staff and members' jobs which will lead to effective or improved electoral performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Organisational communication is a vast, fast growing and multifaceted discipline, combining aspects of psychology, sociology, communication studies and management theory. Baker (2002), notes that the traditional literature focused on 'how variations in organisational communication were affected by the variations in the size, structure, and types of organisation and how different types of organisational cultures gave rise to different types of organisational communication'. Naturally, much of the more recent literature focuses on the impact of computer-mediated communication on organisational practices, structures and cultures. Research into internal communication in academic library contexts is surprisingly limited with the majority of studies, journal articles and monographs dating back to the 1980s.

Essentially, communication in politics is unique, and politics is about power and the struggle for power. From another dimension, politics is about policy. Extending this view, Bruce Miller (2004), states that 'policy' is a matter of either the desire for change or the desire to protect something against change. However, Nzimiro (1992) argues that politics in modern society is expressed through political parties which are created to achieve the goals of society. Thus, political parties are organised around specific ideas often called 'ideologies'. Political parties have now become the platform for rearing leaders who contest for power through the electoral system. This is where marketing comes in. In order to be in power, the politician has to be marketed.

Political marketing is the use of marketing mix, opinion research, and environmental analysis to promote political parties (Wring, 1999). But Lock and Harris (1996) posit that political marketing is nothing but the positioning process of parties and candidates; or the communication process between the voters and political entities. In the same vein, Harris and Ward (2000), argue that political marketing is the use of persuasive techniques in campaigns to promote both politicians and their policies. However, the assumption that effective internal communication is essential to the effective functioning of any political party is supported by a voluminous body of theoretical and empirical literature. Hall (2002) proposes that effective communication should consist of 'accurate information with the appropriate emotional undertones to all members who need the communication content. It is broadly recognised that effective communication also results in a number of positive outcomes for party managers. These include increased productivity and greater commitment to party goals (Clampitt and Downs, 1999; Pincus, 1986). On the other hand, communication practices that succeed in maintaining an informed and empowered party membership offer many benefits to party members and supporters such as improved morals and better relationships.(Brooks, Callicoat and Siegerdt, 1979).

A typical communication process within a political party can flow from positions of higher authority to those of lower authority, and may include information about party policies, ideologies,

practices, strategies, goals, and performance feedback. This is technically called 'focused communication'. Adrian (2004), notes that a discrepancy exists between party management's perception of members' need and the need itself. Conversely, upward communication refers to information flows from party membership to party managers and leadership. This may include suggestions for party success, electorate concerns, and information about operational issues. Hall (2002) argues that, 'people are unlikely to pass information up if it will be harmful to themselves or their peers which may result in as Downs and Adrian (2004) suggest, a filtering out of "upward communication out of a need for self preservation related to their mobility aspirations and their desire to gain their manager's trust". However, it is widely acknowledged that upward feedback, vertical (upward) communication and open door policies deserve significant organisational benefits, such as enhanced participation, better decision making, and an enhancement of organisational learning (Tourish and Hargie, 2004). It is important to note that vertical communication can either take a downward course or an upward course (Worlu, 2010).

Horizontal or lateral communication refers to the sharing of information among peers and is usually the most frequent form of communication between colleagues. Downs and Adrian (2004) assert that horizontal communication is usually informal in nature, is task oriented or takes place for social reasons, often stimulating organisational commitment. Stevens (1983) argues that " the most effective means of solving problems within a party is that which provides for a high degree of lateral communication among and between first line officials and their members, as they deal jointly with many problems of coordinating electioneering campaigns".

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Knowing the target audience and the desired response, the communicator can proceed to formulate an appropriate message. The communicator has to solve three problems according to Koller (2002). These are what to say (message content); how to say it logically (message structure), and how to say it symbolically

(message format).

In message content, the communicator has to figure out what to say to the target audience that will produce the desired response. This has been variously called the appeal, theme, idea, or unique selling proposition (Kotler, 2002; Achumba, 2006; Worlu, 2009). It amounts to formulating some kind of benefit, motivation, identification or reason why the audience should think or do something.

Traditionally, there are three appeals intended to be generated by the message content. These are rational, emotional, and moral appeals. Rational appeals are appeals directed to the rational self-interest of the audience. They attempt to show that the political product will yield the expected functional benefits. Examples would be messages demonstrating that a medical doctor running for an election would give priority to health issues if elected. Emotional appeals are appeals designed to stir up some negative or positive emotion that will motivate interest in the political product. Communicators have worked with such negative emotional appeals as fear, guilt, and shame, especially in connection with getting people to start doing things they should (e.g. exercising their franchise and other civic responsibility) or stop doing things they should not (e.g. political thuggery and other vices). The use of fear appeals has been studied more than any other negative emotional appeal, not only in marketing communications but also in politics (Worlu, 2010; Kolter 2003). Negative emotional appeal tends to be effective when it increases because of the urge to reduce the tensions involved.

What about the effective of positive emotional appeals, such as love, humour, pride and joy? Some political marketers have successfully used messages communicating hope (e. g. some political campaign ads) associated with voting for a candidate (Samuel, 2004; Harrop, 1990; Worlu, 2009). Moral appeals are appeals to the receiver's sense of what is right and proper to do. They are often used in messages exhorting people to support high consensus social causes such as a cleaner environment, better race relations, and equal rights for women, and aiding the disadvantaged. An example is the march of Davis appeal: "God made you whole, give to help those He didn't".

In message structure, the persuasive effect of a communication is affected, not only by its content but also by the manner in which it is structured. Research carried out many years ago by Hovland and his associates at Yale shed much light on the major issues in message structure. These are conclusions drawing, one-versus two sided arguments, and order of presentation. Conclusion drawing raises the question of whether the communicator should draw the definite conclusion for the audience or leave it to them. One or two sided arguments raise the question of whether the communicator should only praise the product or also mention or anticipate some of its shortcomings. Intuitively, it will appear that the best effect is gained by a one-sided presentation: this is the predominant approach in political contest, and sales presentations. Yet the consumer is not so clear-cut. It depends on such things as the initial position of the audience, the audiences' level of education, and the audiences' exposure to subsequent communication.

Two-sided messages tend to move effective with audiences who are likely to be exposed to counter propaganda. By mentioning a minor shortcoming in the product, a salesperson takes the edge off this mention when it comes from a competitor (Worlu, 2008; Wring, 1990 & Jahanson, 2005). Order of presentation raises the question of whether a communicator should present his or her strongest arguments first or last. In the case of a one-sided message, presenting the strongest argument first has the advantage of establishing attention and interest. This may be especially important in newspapers and other media where the audience does not attend to all of the messages. However, it means an anti-climatic presentation. If the audience is captive as in sales presentation, conference or political campaign, then a climatic presentation may be more effective.

In the area of message format, the communicator chooses the most effective symbols to implement the message content and structure strategy. If the message is to be carried in a print advertisement, the communicator has to develop the format elements of headline, copy, illustration, and colour. A good message strategy can be ruined by a poor message format (Kotler, 2002). If the message is to be carried over radio, the communicator has to choose words,

voice qualities (speech rate, rhythm, pitch, articulation) and vocalisations (pauses, sighs, yawns). The sound of an announcer promoting used automobile has to be different from the sound of an announcer advertising a soft, comfortable bed mattress. If the message is to be carried over television or in person, then all of these elements, plus the body language (non-verbal clues) have to be planned. Thus, politicians have to pay as much attention to their facial expressions, gestures, dress postures and hair style as to what they are saying.

INFORMATION THEORY: COMMUNICATION AS A MECHANISTIC SYSTEM

White and Chapman (1996) introduced into this communication system both human (the person's horizon of experience, thoughts/feelings, the acts of encoding/decoding) and interpersonal feedback elements. Since that time, an array of human filters that are influenced by the person's horizon of experience (such as motive, effect, attention, knowledge, attitudes, values, and beliefs) have been specified. Although the social context affects these human filters, the larger social context is not directly addressed in these approaches. The contextual approach to communication focuses not just on content (e.g. the accurate exchange of information or adequacy of conveying the intended meaning) but on the larger context of communication. It focuses on non-verbal cues as well as verbal content. It also looks at the relationship context between the sender and receiver within a larger social or organisational or cultural context. It sees words as symbols interpretation in context. Mead (1984) and Blummer (1992) stressed communication as symbolic interaction that created meaning and one's sense of both self and society.

Discourse analysis is an extension and elaboration of the contextual perspective. Rather than looking at particular interpersonal exchange or sequences of exchanges. Discourse analysis looks at an overall body of communication (including formal and informal, oral and written communication of all kinds). The goal of the analysis is to relate discourse patterns to patterns of social relations. It seeks to explicate how the creation and

maintenance of social relations materialise in talk (Manning, 1991; Pearce, 1994, 1995; and Cronen, 1991, 1995). Through discourse about itself, the organisation enacts (shapes, defines and marks the boundaries of) itself. Discourse gives rise to objectively known collective representations that have inter-subjective validity. In this sense, discourse is both interpersonal and collective, both inter-subjective and contextual.

POLITICAL MARKETING THEORY

Political marketing represents a marriage between political science and marketing. It draws from the techniques of political science and marketing in the implementation of party agenda. This cross-disciplinary match derives more from marketing which offers several orientations to explain business behaviour. These are product, sales and marketing-orientations. As will be shown later, these three orientations can be applied to party behaviour.

Marketing also uses a process to depict activities, such as marketing intelligence which businesses engage in. These are presented as 'marketing mix' or '4ps': product, pricing, promotion, and place. This can be formed into chronological process consisting of various stages a party will go through within one electoral cycle. To do so, the 4Ps need to be significantly altered to create more appropriate activities. In other words, the 4Ps need considerable stretching to make much sense in politics (Scammel, 1999). Certain stages overlap with political studies. The use of polls by parties, for example, exemplified by the stage of market intelligence, has become a notable area of study for political science. The marketing process does not leave it in isolation, however, but connects it to the communication and design of behaviour. From marketing therefore, we receive three new orientations, and a marketing process which if adapted to suit politics, produce a theoretical framework to develop our understanding of political behaviour.

ADAPTING THE MARKETING ORIENTATIONS TO POLITICS

Political parties can use political marketing to increase their chances of achieving their goal of winning general elections. They alter

aspects of their behaviour, including policy, membership, leadership and organisational structure, to suit the nature and demands of their market. They can do this by being product, sales or market oriented.

A product-oriented party argues for what it stands for and believes in it. It assumes that voters will realise that its ideals are the right ones and therefore vote for it. This type of party refuses to change its ideals or product even if it fails to gain electoral or membership support.

A sale-oriented party focuses on selling its argument to voters. It retains its pre-determine product design, but recognises that desired supporters may not automatically want it. Using market intelligence to understand voters' response to its behaviour, the party employs the latest advertising and communication techniques to persuade voters that it is right. A sales-oriented party does not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers.

A market-oriented party designs its behaviour to provide voter satisfaction. It uses market intelligence to identify voter demands, then designs its products to suit them. It does not attempt to change what people think, but to deliver what they need and want. A market-oriented party will not simply offer voters what they want, or simply follow opinion polls, because it needs to ensure that it can deliver the product on offer. If it fails to deliver, voters will become dissatisfied and the party will risk losing electoral support in the long term. It also needs to ensure that it will be accepted within the party and so needs to adjust its product carefully to take account of this. A market-oriented party therefore designs a product that will actually satisfy voters' demands: that meets their needs and wants, is supported and implemented by the internal organisation, and is deliverable in government.

To achieve these orientations, political parties engage in various activities, going through a market process. This is presented in figure 1. Further detail on each activity in the process is to be found in case 1.

This representation of the market process differs significantly from marketing itself and also from previous studies of political marketing which do not always change marketing as extensively. One example is the pricing notion within the traditional marketing 4Ps. Wring includes this in studying campaigns, building on
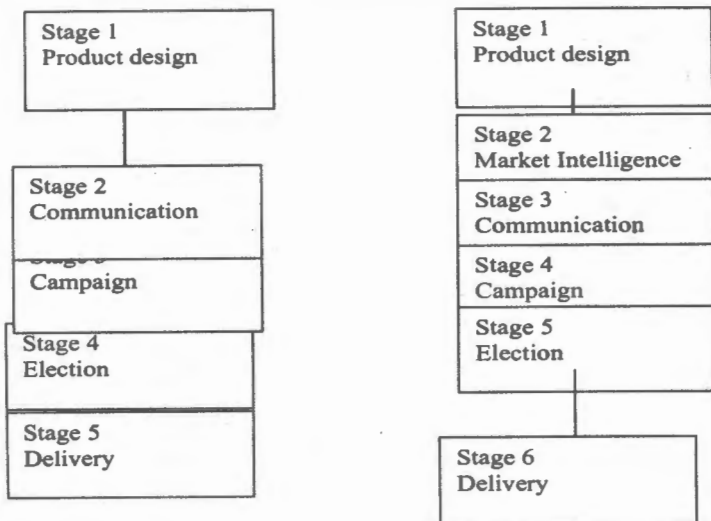
Niffernegger. But although it has some utility for campaigns (the cost of advertising for example) it has less for party behaviour as a whole. This has therefore been altered considerably to 'product adjustment'. Place is also discarded because although it is appropriate for the study of campaigns organisation, it makes less sense for party behaviour as a whole.

Certain aspects of marketing language are nevertheless retained. Party behaviour is called 'product' to encourage parties (and scholars) to think about party behaviour as a 'product to be given to voters'. This is also true with product adjustment for a market-oriented party. Stages 2 and 3 could be combined, but there is utility in keeping them separate and in order to- find out voters demands first, before thinking about internal party concerns. Swap them around and you reduce the tendency of a party to look more fully at the electorate rather than internal members. Nonetheless members, at least in the British context, could be considered, alongside the other components of stage 3. Other aspects of the process are designed to integrate similar and /or equally valuable understanding from both marketing and political science, such as the implementation stage. The standard marketing process does not include this as an actual stage, but within marketing literature there is much discussion of how important it is that those working within a business organisation accept the idea of the desired orientation it is to succeed. This is of particular relevance, if not somewhat problematic, for a political organisation such as a party. Marketing literature also offers useful guidelines for introducing a market-orientation.

Product Oriented Party   Sales Oriented
                    Market Oriented Party

Stage 1 Product design		Stage 1 Product design
		Stage 2 Market Intelligence
Stage 2 Communication		Stage 3 Communication
Campaign		Stage 4 Campaign
Stage 4 Election		Stage 5 Election
Stage 5 Delivery		Stage 6 Delivery

Sources: Lees –Marshment (2001) Political Studies Vol. 49, 692-713

Figure 1.0: *The Marketing Process for Product, Sales and Market-Oriented Parties*

RESEARCH METHOD

The results reported here are based on a study of Nigerian political parties actively engaged in organisational communication. Ten of these parties were purposively selected to serve as a representative sample of fifty two (52) parties on the record of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2011). Nine participating chairmen of parties were selected from each of the ten parties from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. In other words, 540 respondents were targeted. This selection process was designed to reflect uniquely sequenced input, identification and evaluation of organisational communication.

DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES

To measure the relationships between message development and political party efficiency in Nigeria, a seven-item measure adapted from previous studies (Klein and Roth, 1990; Clark and Pugh, 2001, Worlu, 2010) was used to capture the perception of respondents on

contemporary role of organisational communication in electoral politics. The measures used to investigate the relationship between message development and political party efficiency in Nigeria were chosen on the basis of the literature surveyed.

INSTRUMENTATION
In view of the above, 540 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the 10 participating parties confirmed by INEC to have functional offices in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. They were to confirm from their experience the role which organisational communication plays in electoral politics. They were also to determine the relationships between message development and political party efficiency; and if such relationship is capable of significantly improving the level of electoral success.

A total of 317 copies of questionnaire were returned. Out of this number, 278 were complete and usable, resulting in a response rate of 51.5%. This result constitutes a fairly high response rate, considering that the average top management survey response rates are in the range of 15% and 20% (Menon, Bharadway and Howell, 1996), and that collecting data for such a country-wide study with a large population is difficult due to the numerous obstacles encountered (Douglas and Craig, 1983).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY MEASURES
The possibility of threat to validity in this study was reduced by presenting a description of the organisational communication model. The proposed model illustrated external and internal validity and assumptions guiding overall research reliability and potential for generalization. Trochim (2001) refers to this as 'wanting the measure to reflect the construct, the whole construct, and nothing but the construct'.

This study assumed that there is an explanatory relationship between organisational communication and electoral efficiency of political parties. By this assumption, the conclusion of this study can in specific instance of high proximal similarity be used for extending theory based analytic implementation of political marketing communication programmes.

RESULTS

The returned copies of questionnaire constitute a high response rate and provide confidence that the non-response is not an issue (Weiss and Heide, 1993). Responses can be aggregated as follows:

TABLE 1: POSITIVE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	YES	278	100
2	NO	-	-
	TOTAL	278	100%

Source: survey data, 2011

Table 1 above shows that all the respondents were of the opinion that organisational communication plays a positive role in electoral politics. Respondents were further asked to specify how organisational communication contributes to electoral efficiency. In response, the following results emerged:

TABLE 2: CONTRIBUTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION TO ELECTORAL SUCCESS

		YES		NO		TOTAL	
S/N	RESPONSES	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%
1	Increases electoral performance	268	96.7	10	3.3	278	100
2	Improves party members' productivity	266	96.0	12	4.0	278	100
3	Reveals the interest& skills of party members	276	99.3	2	0.7	278	100
4	Helps to achieve coordinated result	264	95.4	14	4.6	278	100
5	Reveals feelings & emotions of party members	246	89.4	32	10.6	278	100
6	Enhances shared vision among party hierarchies and members	256	92.7	22	7.3	278	100

SOURCE: SURVEY DATA, 2011

From table 2 above, over 90% of the respondents agreed that organisational communication enhances electoral performance, improves party members' productivity, reveals the interest and skills of party members, helps to achieve coordinated results as well as enhancing shared vision among party hierarchies and membership. However, 89.4% maintained that it reveals feeling and emotions of party members. The next concern was to interrogate the relationship between message development and party efficiency. Table 3 below shows the result.

TABLE 3: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT AND PARTY EFFICIENCY

		YES		NO		TOTAL	
S/N	ITEM	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%
1	Message provides direction to members	266	96	12	4.0	278	100
2	Message helps to share party goals	268	96.7	10	3.8	278	100
3	Members output is improved with message	264	95.4	14	4.6	278	100
4	Correct message boost member's preferences	270	97.4	8	2.6	278	100

Table 3 above shows that over 90% of the respondents confirmed the relationship between message development and party efficiency by indicating that message provides direction to party members, helps to share party goals, improves members' output, boosts members' electioneering performance, elicits voters' mandate, etc

However, the above revelations are not sufficient to conclude that organisational communication plays positive role in electoral success. Thus, the study raised and tested the following hypotheses:

1. H0: organisational communication does not contribute to electoral success.
2. H0: there is no significant relationship between message development and political party efficiency.

5	Good message improves elicits voter's mandate	276	99.3	2	0.7	278	100
6	Message improves official's and supporter's output	270	97.4	8	2.6	278	100
7	Party officering is generally enhanced with good message	256	92.7	22	7.3	278	100

Table 4: Result of Tested Hypothesis 1 with Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient

	Organizational communication	Electoral Success
Organizational Communication Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 278	0.952 0.002 278
Electoral succession Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	0.952 0.002 278	1 278

Table 5: Anova Result for Hypothesis 11

Hypothesis 2	Calculated F	Tabulated F	P-value	Decision
Ho	3.621	2.725	0.017	Reject

The level of significant is at 0.05.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Hypotheses 1: Organisational communication does not contribute to electoral success.

Based on the result in the above table 4; correlation co-efficient between the variables is 0.952, P-value of r is 0.002. Since r is positive and p-value < 0.05 significance level. Hence, we REJECT the stated hypothesis 1 and it can be inferred that the converse is true, i.e. there is a significant relationship between organisational communication and electoral success. This implies that organisational communication contributes to electoral success.

Hypotheses 2 (H0): there is no significant relationship between message development and political party efficiency.

Based on the result of the above table, calculated f-value is greater than tabulated f-value (F 0.05, 3.76) at 0.05 significance level, i.e. 3.6217 2.725. Therefore, REJECT the stated hypotheses 2 and conclude that there is a significant relationship between message development and political party efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Organisational communication plays an important role in the overall success of a political party at the polls because political entities that communicate to their hierarchies and membership will end up creating a cohesive and formidable front that culminates into success at the polls. This study has also revealed that there is a significant relationship between message development and political party efficiency.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have become necessary.

First, it is important that political parties engage their members and supporters in communications in order to enhance their efficiency and smooth flow of operations.

Second, political parties should ensure that there is constant, coherent and consistent flow of information from top hierarchies to other levels as a way of communicating their ideologies to the electorate. This will also influence and motivate the behavioural

performance of members.

Third, it is important that there exist a proper channel of communication to enable officials and party members receive timely information regarding party goals and task directions which they require to improve output. Communication channels also provide an opportunity to discuss progress of work and appraise the support of the electorate.

Fourth, party officials should ensure that messages and ideas communicated to members and supporters are correctly worded to give the recipients a clear understanding of the contents, and consequently boost their performance.

Fifth, in order to appropriate the benefits of communication, parties must engage in organisation, innovative use of new technologies, skilful volunteer and resource management and accurate reading of the political terrain.

Sixth, political parties should know that communication for them means providing content, political images and cues as well as aiding the interpretation and 'sense-making' of a complex political world.

Furthermore, political parties' communication function does not only involve a simplification of a political message, but also includes the 'new management' function. This aspect of communication is targeted at secondary exchange parties, i.e. intermediaries of which the media are of foremost importance. Wring (2002) calls this 'free' communication activities which are concerned with managing publicity that that is not directly controlled by the political organisation (Worlu, 2010).

In order words, information interpretation and agenda-setting aspects are crucial requirements of managing 'the news'. News management includes utilising distribution channels with inherently high credibility levels. However, the communication itself cannot be 'managed' in the sense of controlling it but can only be influenced. The exchange partners of the news-management functions are mostly journalists and other opinion leaders (Worlu, 2005).

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