

Third International Conference

“Strategic Communications in Business and Politics”

Saint Petersburg State University brought over 300 professionals, academics and students from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia and Turkey together for the “Strategic Communications in Business and Politics” Third International Conference. The issues tackled within two days of the discussions comprised up-to-date advertising studies, state media relations, e-government, crisis-management in business communications, new trends in PR technologies and changing demands in the job market.

The conference also featured the GR-Club “North-West” and the Methodological Council in “PR and Advertising” sessions, the focus of the latter being the transfer from the educational standard toward the professional one. The roadmap was approved, which “makes it possible to believe that there will be young professionals coming into the industry qualified to meet employers’ demands”, - **Julia Gryaznova**, Russian PR Association executive director stated.

Dmitry Prokofiev, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Leningrad region, is sure that effective communications allowing for the lower spendings will be the main demand on the business part towards PR-professionals.

Alexander Tsyarkin, Vertical Capital investment company vice-president, following Prokofiev in the plenary, presented a list on the main tasks for PR-people today. These are: (1) going deeper into the details of the business one is working for, (2) having plans B and C, adjusting quickly and consciously to the changing environment, (3) enhancing one’s’ copywriting skills and (4) training top-managers and employees in communication.

As **Nika Zebra** later mentioned, top managers are now more willing to talk in public personally, explain crisis situations and even express their emotions. There is the other side of the coin, though: a top manager active on Facebook, for example, is a new task for PR manager, something to keep an eye on round the clock.

Yury Strofilov, SpbNews creative director made the point of timeliness as well: “Content is growing, population does not keep up with its’ speed. There is just not enough people for all the content produced. Consequently, people get superficial and are mostly interested in what is happening right now”, - Strofilov said, setting up a streaming on Periscope for his presentation. “Time is crucial. Audi, being a huge company as it is, takes only 12 minutes to react in social networks. Sheremetev airport team monitor tweets and solve problems of their clients even faster, I checked once in a flight registration queue. Importantly, you can lie no more. Everything is checked in seconds”, - the speaker reasoned.

The main advice given by the other “Stratcom” speakers was: listen to your audiences and make your communication strategy an immanent part of the organizational one.

“There was a new context for our meeting this year, - professor **Dmitry Gavra**, the head of the conference team told, - Not only did we elaborate on the crisis consequences for the industry but also went into the details of international strategic communications”.

Thus, **Elif Aydemir**, general manager of Quatro Strategies & Consulting (Turkey), having started her speech with the words of condolences towards Russian citizens, emphasized strongly the need for dialog between Russia and Turkey at this moment. "The two countries had reached harmony as to the Crimea issue, having become not only economic partners (8 times growth in the last 15 years), but strategic partners, - she mentioned, - "Having overcome one crisis, we just have to deal with this new one and continue listening to each other".

"Every decision taken or action made by the major forces in the global information society has quite a chance to be perceived strategically", - professor **Gavra** concluded, summing up the core of the conference discussions.

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