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# Creativity in Public Relations: The Case from Croatia – How to Make the History of the Insurance Company “Cool”

*Bozo Skoko and Dejan Gluvacevic*

## Abstract

The chapter deals with the role of creativity in public relations. Creativity is usually associated with marketing and design, while public relations is associated with information and communication management, respectively, as the information and educational component, but often as persuasion. However, in modern conditions in which there is a kind of inflation of content transmitted by public relations experts to the media and the public, it is very difficult to fight for media attention and public attention. Therefore, the public relations professional is forced to bring creativity to the way of communicating, presenting key messages, and achieving communication goals. For that reason, creativity is becoming an essential strategic and tactical tool for public relations professionals to shift the task to a higher level. The authors present a case study of the leading Croatian insurance company—Croatia osiguranje, which had the challenging task of using the anniversary to communicate its own identity and values, strengthen its image, and attract new clients. The project “Croatia je Hrvatska” has received a number of national and international awards and can serve as an excellent example of synergy between communication management and creativity in achieving communication and business goals.

**Keywords:** creativity, creative campaigns, public relations, Croatia, communication

## 1. Introduction

Public relations and creativity have been linked since the beginning of the profession as evidenced by the creative campaigns of Edward Bernays—a pioneer of public relations. His professional career was marked by some of the campaigns that are still considered the most creative campaigns in public relations, so we can mention the campaign “Torches of Freedom,” “Hearty Breakfast,” “Ivory Soap,” etc. [1].

Today, in the globalized twenty-first century, when the world is exposed to a variety of messages and events, it is becoming challenging how to successfully attract the attention of the target public. Now, more than ever, public relations depends on the development of technology and human consciousness, and

creativity is imposed here as a very desirable element in communication with the public. Moreover, today, we are especially focused on creativity to get the attention of the public and the media. Nay, the public, but also clients, require public relations professionals to be creative.

Marketing and public relations agencies are facing this challenge on a daily basis, wanting to overcome the challenges of successfully capturing the attention of the target public and media, and increasingly relying on creativity as the so-called attention catcher. Therefore, the public relations professional is forced to bring creativity to the way of communicating, presenting key messages, and achieving communication goals. For that reason, creativity is becoming an essential strategic and tactical tool for public relations professionals to shift the task to a higher level.

Creativity is one of the most commonly used words today, but what is creativity? Sometimes creativity is easier to recognize than to define, but it is certainly something we can call “thinking outside the box.” Andy Green, a leading expert on communications and creativity, states if we want to understand meaning of word “creativity,” we need to observe creativity as an individual talent, as a process, as a product, and as a recognition by others [2]. Among numerous definitions and different approaches to defining creativity, Green gives his own definition for public relations practitioners, and it is as follows:

*Creativity is the ability each of us has to create something new by bringing together two or more different element sin a new context, in order to provide added value to task.*

*A creative act consists of not only originating but also evaluating the added value it contributes. It is not novelty for its own sake, but it must produce some form of value that can be recognized by a third party [2].*

In order for creativity to be successfully applied in public relations activities, it is necessary to know the context under which it develops. Moreover, something that is creative and interesting for one target audience does not mean that it will be creative for another audience. Therefore, creativity in public relations requires that it be reexamined each time. Also, creativity is not inventing something completely new, but innovatively presenting something existing in a different and hitherto unseen way. So we can say that creativity in public relations uses existing content that it just “repackaged” and presented in a different form, which ultimately results in achieving communication goals such as attracting the attention of the public and the media. This is constantly confirmed by numerous public relations campaigns, from Bernays’ campaigns as such as “Torches of Freedom” and “Hearty Breakfast” to the recent ones as such as “Ice Bucket Challenge,” “Black Lives Matter,” “Share a Coke,” etc. It only confirms that creativity was and still is one of the desirable skills that a public relations practitioner should have.

## **2. The creative process in public relations**

According to Levinson (2002) if “in art creativity is meant to cultivate, to enchant, to touche the soul,” creativity in public relations is supposed to earn trust, to add value, to change the attitude, behavior, and beliefs of the company’s publics. In order to achieve all above on creative way, public relations practitioners need to use some of activities as such as brainstorming, ideas’ evaluation, idea-stimulating techniques, surveys, etc. [3]. All these activities require time and elaboration, so we can also consider it as a creative process. Therefore, some of research studies on the connection between mindfulness and creativity confirmed that mindfulness may be related to creativity, originality, and flexible thinking [4].

How do creative ideas come about? It is often a long and arduous process full of trials and errors, and history teaches us that many great and creative ideas arose

precisely from “error” or from the crystallization of an idea that took time to be born. More precisely, the idea must go through a creative process.

The creative process can be divided into several different stages and some cases will require research into the very beginning and development of the idea through each of these stages, while in other it will develop simultaneously through all stages. Alex Osoborn, an author of creative technique named brainstorming, creative process divide on the following steps: orientation, preparation, analysis, ideation, incubation, synthesis, and evaluation [5]. Furthermore, Green brings a similar but somewhat simpler classification of the creative process using the mnemonic list of the five “I” which includes:

- information;
- incubation;
- illumination;
- integration; and
- illustration [2].

## 2.1 Information

The first stage of creative process includes two important elements as one in posing the right questions to be answered, and the second is gathering the relevant information to assist with the tasks [2]. The first part of the task in the creative process is to supply the conscious part of the mind with information and then exclude rational processes. The subconscious must be very well informed in order to the ideas were purposeful. Most creative ideas are of poor quality, and they notice that in even those who consider themselves creative. Such ideas are often not even used. Gathering information is one of the key stages to success or failure creative activities. Or as Green vividly describes it in comparison to Lego bricks—the more dice you have, the more opportunities there are to create new and different things [2]. For creativity in public relations, the first phase that involves analysis is very important because the better the analysis is, the easier it will be to find the missing puzzle pieces that will eventually lead to a creative solution. Asking the right questions at the right time is one of the key skills of a creative public relations practitioner, and only then he will be able to make a valid analysis that will lead to optimal solutions.

## 2.2 Incubation

The second phase of the process often exploits the subconscious in an effort to find a solution to a problem. Numerous great thinkers and literature of the functioning of the human mind and subconscious confirms that relaxation and so-called daydreaming are good for developing the subconscious in order to reach the desired solution. Sometimes public relations practitioners need to go miles away from solving the problem and go to relax, so ideas can arise and develop indefinitely. We can say that this phase requires “maturing” the idea and its solution in a way that diverts the focus from solving it and leaves it to the subconscious to do its part of the job. Thus, the incubation process will help the emergence of more creative ideas.

## **2.3 Illumination**

The third phase refers to flash of inspiration which is showing up from nowhere and arises as a consequence of the rapid action of the process that preceded it—information and incubation. Illumination as such consists of perception at two previously unrelated elements and creating a connection between them in order to solve task. There are habits and techniques that help to take advantage of the illumination and one of the best and most common is to write down all information and ideas.

## **2.4 Integration**

Ideas are created while the creator or in our case public relations practitioner is working or during the so-called integration phase of the creative process. The brain does not follow passively the original idea, yet it is constantly adding new element to the idea and builds on the idea by changing it fundamentally. Although this changes the original idea, the fact is that there is an upward and improving creative process that develops even more creative solutions.

## **2.5 Illustration**

The final phase of the creative process involves many key elements that must be considered and defined in order for a public relations professional to manage this phase as effectively as possible. Key elements that need to be identified and considered include legitimizing the source of idea, timing, translating the idea, keeping within brand values, and presenting within the context of a relationship [2]. In public relations, it is very important to find a way to present the source of the idea to the public, because the way it is presented will affect how successfully the idea will be accepted. Also, the right moment is also very important because with a well-chosen way of presenting the idea, timeliness is a key element in the illustration phase. If the idea is presented to a client or public in the phase when it is too embryonic and not fully developed, there may be a danger of its rejecting before it comes to the final form [2]. This is a phase where public relations practitioner need to present and sell an idea. Moreover, a presentation and “selling process” will be effective only if there is an understanding on the client’s perspective and his way of thinking before making any formal conclusions about the idea as well as being well prepared to understand the motivation and how the audience will accept new information [2].

Conceptualizing creativity as a process, no matter which authors we refer to, leads to the fact that creativity is a process rather than an intuitive act of genius or as a specific outcome, and it is useful because it identifies the attributes, behaviors, and skills required for creative performance as well as it is a learned skill that can be amplified or reduced by training, education, and environment [6].

Finally, by understanding the creative process and its distinct phases, a public relations practitioner can identify weaknesses in his efforts to produce a creative solution as well as to understand how to sell and idea can be more important than the quality of the idea itself [2].

## **3. Obstacles to creativity in the industry of public relations**

No matter how well creative solutions may be set up, they often face challenges and obstacles to be realized. Moreover, sometimes some top-notch creative



solutions have never even been realized just for the reason that they stuck on one of the obstacles in the way of its realization. Obstacles are like hard-to-penetrate walls which impede the performance of creativity skills. According to Wong and Pang (2003), “creative skills may be affected and reduced by various attributes which include the person’s individual personality, environment, situation, motivation, cognitive development” [7]. For this reason, it is important to understand and anticipate all possible obstacles in order to eventually realize the creative idea.

### **3.1 The nature of the problem**

Each problem can be classified in the line between well-defined and poorly structured, and by identifying the nature of the problem, public relations practitioners can assess the task they need to solve and determine in order to their efforts convert into an added value [2]. This obstacle could be major obstacle to creative thinking in case that public relations practitioners have lack of knowledge, experience, or understanding, which in the end results without good solution that could be applied. Public relations professionals may be tempted to seek solutions to problems before they realistically saw the problem and focus on creating solutions without pinpointing the root cause or essence of the problem [2]. It can be solved if the problem is identified as a key creative task in the information stage of the creative process [2].

### **3.2 Poor green light<sup>1</sup>/red light<sup>2</sup> thinking in creative process**

Individuals may underperform or fail to creative by having poor so-called Green Light or Red Light skills. To overcome them, they need to be detected and removed in a timely manner. So, potential problems related with poor Green Light thinking skills included overcoming the fear of looking foolish, an intolerance of ambiguity, a preference for judging ideas rather than generating them, a belief that we are not creative, use of poor creative problem-solving methods, impossibility to reduce stress, laziness, habits syndrome, a functional fixation (how certain element sin the problem are perceived), and the “early bird” syndrome by doing something without considering alternatives [2]. On the other side, poor Red Light thinking skills which could be perceived as obstacles are confirmation bias, lack of motivation, following the rules excessively, a focus on the downside rather than the quality of an idea, an overreliance on logic, lack of consultation, excessive reliance on external resources, overemphasis on either competition or cooperation, emphasis on doing rather than thinking, being critical and negative, and the insecurities of the expert [2].

### **3.3 Poor management of the creative process**

It is related to failing to understand the creative process and its five stages which result with lack of understood which one of the phases of the creative process is responsible for blocking the successful development of the idea—and if so, which one [2]. Some potential examples of poor management of the creative process obstacles are failure to define the problem in an ill-structured situation, not enough time allowed for incubation, failure to recognize and record illuminations, poor technical, professional and presentation skills, etc. [2].

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<sup>1</sup> Green Light thinking refers to presenting all possible solutions without setting boundaries. Known as brainstorming.

<sup>2</sup> Red Light thinking refers to evaluation of each individual solution using clearly set criteria.

### **3.4 Cultural/socialization problems**

These obstacles relate more to our social background and practical needs of education. In that sense, we are more willing to think critically than creatively as we try to harmonize with the environment, which in a way “suffocates” our creative abilities. Likewise, the practical needs of education can contribute to eliminating our talent for fantasy, with its inherent abilities for creativity [2].

### **3.5 Schedule pressures**

Lack of time could be dangerous and disastrous for the development of a creative idea. The rush and need to come up with a quick solution can be counterproductive in campaigns. It is better to let go of an undeveloped idea and dedicate oneself to a safer but less creative way of solving a task than to start something that is not clearly elaborated in the beginning and thus endanger the image of one's own agency, but also of the client.

### **3.6 Highly competitive environment**

One of the obstacles to creativity in public relations may be a fact that a private company is operating in a highly competitive environment. A private company's communication activities may be understood as a commercial campaign and would have limited public relations reach and general appeal. Because it often falls into the trap of being perceived as classic corporate projects that are not attractive to the general public and that do not interact with the general public. On the other hand, this obstacle can also be understood as an incentive because it forces some private companies to think outside the box and develop their creativity in order to cope so successfully with a competitive environment.

Therefore, these are just some of the most common obstacles that arise when developing creative solutions in the public relations industry. Their timely and valid removal increases the chances that the public relations practitioner will be able to develop a creative idea in a good and appropriate way.

## **4. The case from Croatia: how to make the history of the insurance company “cool”**

The central part of this chapter is to present a creative campaign in public relations. It is a campaign that deals with the history of an insurance company from Croatia, and which was presented in an interesting way that ultimately invited citizens to get involved and participate in it. For this reason, the case was divided into several thematic units in order to get a clear picture of the insurance company and how the development of the campaign<sup>3</sup> and ultimately the results.

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<sup>3</sup> Client: Croatia osiguranje/Co-Organizer: Zagreb Tourist Board/Advertising agency/Creative Agency: Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/PR Agency/Creative Agency: Millenium promocija/Spatial Design Agency/Creative Agency: Brigada/Corporate Communications Director: Predrag Grubic, Adris grupa/Director of Corporate Communications Sector: Maja Weber, Croatia osiguranje/Head of Marketing Communications: Zrinka Jugec, Croatia osiguranje/Deputy Director of Corporate Communications Sector: Paola Poljak, Croatia osiguranje/Corporate Communications: Kristina Miljavac, Adris/Creative Director: Davor Bruketa, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Author of the Exhibition Concept: Bozo Skoko, PhD, Millenium promocija/Creative Director: Damjan Geber, Brigada/Client Service Director: Masa Ivanov,

The method used in presenting this chapter is a case study, in which primary and secondary data are collected. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the project actors. On other side, secondary data were collected from already published materials and reconstructed in order to make an analysis of this case study. The secondary data are related to the numerical values of the number of visits to exhibitions, the number of media announcements, their financial value, statistical data that compare the set goals and achieved results, etc.

#### 4.1 Background of Croatia osiguranje

As many as 20 companies operate on the Croatia insurance market, and Croatia osiguranje (CO) is the largest and oldest Croatian insurance company that has been operating since 1884 with the constant goal of protecting Croatian citizens. Together with CO Health Insurance at the end of 2016, it had a 29% market share. In second place was Allianz Zagreb with 12.7%, followed by Euroherc osiguranje with 9.6%, Wiener osiguranje Vienna Insurance Group with 6.8%, Uniqa osiguranje d.d. with 6.6% market share [8].

Due to the specifics of industry and market regulation, there was no significant differentiation according to supply and pricing policy, and competitors' communication was mainly reduced to basic offers of products and services and their benefits, while image campaigns are rare in the market.

Croatia osiguranje's communication efforts were to work on differentiation in relation to the competition and to emphasize its Croatian identity, as well as social responsibility.

Research has shown that Croatia osiguranje has a certain advantage by which it can be differentiated, and that is precisely the long-term sustainability and tradition, which is a particularly important factor in choosing insurance [9].

In 2014, Croatia osiguranje marked 130 years of existence. On this occasion, it planned to launch a communication project, which would mark a significant anniversary in an attractive way, and through which the history, values, and identity of the company would be presented to the public.

An aggravating circumstance was the fact that it is a private company operating in a highly competitive environment, so any communication about its anniversary and market reach would be understood as a commercial campaign and would have limited public relations reach and general appeal.

Moreover, exhibitions organized by companies are often not attractive to the general public and therefore the communication challenge was to avoid the

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Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Account Executive: Zrinka Pozar, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Product Designer: Dominik Cergna, Brigada/Event Manager: Martina Pandzic Skoko, Millenium promocija/Senior PR Consultant: Ivan Pakozdi, Millenium promocija/Junior PR Consultant: Tamara Begic, Millenium promocija/PR Assistant: Ruzica Herceg, Millenium promocija/Media Director: Maja Zrncic, Millenium promocija/Media Planer/Buyer: Ana Simic, Millenium promocija/Online Media Buying: Filip Kunder, mDigital—Millenium promocija/Online Media Buying: Maja Samardzic Gaspar, mDigital—Millenium promocija/Architect: Marina Brletic, Brigada/Account Director: Marija Lukic, Brigada/ Creative Director: Dragan Lakicevic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Art Director: Andrea Knapic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Senior Designer: Nikola Vukalovic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Production Manager: Vesna Durasin, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Digital Media Strategist: Iva Bolta, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Digital Director: Ivan Kovacevic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/PPC Specialist: Dubravka Srkulj, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/PPC Specialist: Valentino Dujic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Community Manager: Bernarda Amidzic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Head of Digital Production: Vedran Firkelj, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray/Account Director: Svjetlana Vukic, Bruketa&Zinic&Gray.



perception of a classic corporate event and realize an exhibition and campaign that involves the general public through direct interaction with the brand.

Therefore, the communication team focused on the historical development of the company—the political and social specifics of the emergence, development and growth from a local cooperative to the largest insurance company in the region. In the process of research, they came across interesting historical sources about the founding of this society and realized that through the development of the company Croatian history was broken and that it continuously shared the fate of the state, or turbulent history of Central and Southeastern Europe. In fact, the corporate importance of the company outweighed its historical, cultural, and traditional significance for Croatian society.

They wanted to present this untold history in a way adapted to the modern age and the interest of the citizens. They tried to design a project that would show the social role of the corporation, its size, historical significance, and role in the development of the Croatian economy. The result was a multimedia exhibition dedicated to the common history of Croatia and Croatia osiguranje called *Croatia is Hrvatska*,<sup>4</sup> which was realized in the fall of 2017.

In order to make the exhibition unique and interactive, in addition to the official history of the corporation and the state, they wanted to “tell” another history—a parallel history of visitors and their families, giving them the opportunity to send their own photos to become an integral part of the exhibition. So they reminded us that in this way we do not allow others to write history for us, but “we write our own history.”

The Grič tunnel, a former World War II (WWII) shelter under the Zagreb Old Town, was chosen as the exhibition space. The space provided the possibility of setting up a kind of time machine (walks through history), and special emphasis was placed on the selection of exhibits, which were borrowed from about twenty museums and other partner institutions and the design of the exhibition.

So, in order to communicate this market advantage of Croatia osiguranje (rootedness in the local community, long history and social responsibility and strength and tradition), the communication team decided to make an exhibition about 133 years of history that shows the presence and sustainability through social change—world and local wars, and changes in state and social arrangements.

## **4.2 Idea and creativity**

Historical exhibitions are usually related to famous people and events, and in the history of Croatia osiguranje, the biggest role was played by unknown, “ordinary” people. Namely, Croatia osiguranje is the only insurance company in Croatia that have proven that, regardless of what happened, it stands firmly with its insured. For 133 years, it has been going through all the difficulties together with them—world and local wars, changes in state and social systems, a long series of national and personal challenges.

The exhibition is realized by an insurance company whose primary purpose is the protection of citizens. Therefore, the location of the exhibition was an air shelter from the Second World War, that is, the Grič tunnel below the upper town, in

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<sup>4</sup> The title of the exhibition is a play on words, since Croatia and Hrvatska are synonyms (Croatia is the Latinized name of the country, which is used in English, while Croats call their country Hrvatska). The insurance company is therefore named after the Latinized (English) name of the country, so the very title of the exhibition suggests that Croatia and Hrvatska are synonymous, but at the same time speaks of the connection between the state and the insurance company.

which an interactive overview of Croatian history and the history of Croatia osiguranje from 1884 to the present was divided into 13 decades.

Through the media and social networks, citizens are invited to complement their “official” history with their own histories. They were allowed to have stories and photos from their family history, which they posted on social media with the hashtag #PovijestPisemoSami,<sup>5</sup> become part of a physical exhibition in the tunnel in real time. As the photos were constantly arriving, the setting itself changed and the exhibition grew until the last day.

The exhibition was marked by various multimedia, digital, and interactive contents—screens, projections, music adapted to each decade, and the space of the tunnel is completely dedicated to visual and sensory installations. Some of them are installations inspired by the work of the great inventor originally from Croatia Nikola Tesla as an adaptation of his coil that produces music, creating a human chain that closes the circuit and turns on the lights, showing the tunnel during World War II where the first Croatian feature film was shown – Lisinski. A unique experience of passing through the rain in the tunnel itself, which symbolizes the “purgatory” of wartime and entering a new era, dances from the 1950s and 1960s, as well as certain places for photography with legends of the Croatian music scene and popular animated character Baltazar.

That is why this is not an ordinary presentation of important events and historical figures, but an interactive timeline that citizens filled through social networks with their family histories. Croatia was primarily interested in the citizens and their destinies. This exhibition served as proof that no matter what happened, the largest and oldest Croatian insurance company always stands by its citizens.

### 4.3 Strategy

At first glance, all insurance companies in Croatia do look the same. But Croatia osiguranje is the only one that went successfully through 133 years of turbulent Croatian history. By doing so, Croatia osiguranje proved to be the only insurance company that you can count on both in good and, more importantly, bad times. And what good is insurance when everything is going smoothly?

To showcase that Croatia osiguranje can survive everything and still come through for its citizens, communication team not only created an exhibition showing 133 years of national and Croatia osiguranje history intertwined but also left gaps in-between and invited “ordinary” people to fill them with their personal stories. Family pictures were displayed side by side with “great” events from Croatia’s turbulent past. The exhibition took place in a WWII shelter and was designed as a linear walk through time that combined three main parts – historic events, family stories which added emotional context to them, and Croatia osiguranje’s role in both of them. Pictures of their own ancestries gave visitors the opportunity to experience the importance of having insurance by your side when times get tough. It also included interactive Tesla’s experiments, a dark rainy hall depicting WWII and the “Future Wall” where visitors could display in real time their wishes for the years to come.

The strategy was centered round digital media. They were used to raise awareness about the exhibition itself, incentivize people to go and see the tunnel and engage users to take an active part in the exhibition’s layout by posting their own photographs from the past on their own social media profiles with the hashtag #PovijestPisemoSami and a short caption.

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<sup>5</sup> English translation: #WeWriteOurOwnHistory.

#### **4.4 A target audience**

Considering the range of products that Croatia osiguranje offers, the target audiences are residents of all ages and income as current customers, potential customers, or those who have an impact on the purchase of insurance on potential customers. The target group was therefore divided into primary and secondary.

The primary target group consisted of young and middle-aged people (35–49), employed, highly educated, those living in families with average and above-average household incomes. The secondary target group consisted of people aged 25–55 who have at least one insurance, employees, and retirees with an average household income.

The project was also intended for foreign tourists visiting Zagreb in order to let them know Croatian history in an attractive way and to perceive the greatest Croatian insurance.

#### **4.5 Communication channels and communication goals**

Along with strong public relations, all media from TV, print, OOH posters, and digital channels were used in communication, and the ATL campaign developed in two head phases:

- Part 1—invitation to the exhibition
- Part 2—emphasis on activation and the concept of #WeWriteOurOwnHistory

Digital media formed the backbone of the strategy because communication team raised awareness about the exhibition, motivated people to visit the tunnel and invited users to participate in the exhibition by posting their historical photos on their own social media profile with the hashtag #PovijestPisemoSami and a short description.

The campaign lasted 7 weeks, with a budget of approx. 17,300 € which was divided into Facebook (15%), Instagram (8%), Google (11%), and Twitter (6%), and direct lease of media space on top portals (60%). Through the digital campaign, content was placed in order to intrigue and motivate users to participate in the exhibition setup and become brand ambassadors. The target group was all internet users, and the way of targeting was adjusted to the results in real time.

For the launch of the campaign, a generic creative was created in the form of raising awareness of the event itself. Over the next 7 weeks, in order to optimize the campaign and achieve the best possible result, and based on the insights from the campaign results, new creative solutions were prepared each week for different digital channels, tailored to its individual laws. Historical photographs of users filled the exhibition on a daily basis, and became a content generator for further online and offline communication.

Unlike the usual structure of image campaigns that usually have television as the central communication channel, here all channels lead to a physical experience with an otherwise intangible brand.

As, it was mentioned earlier in the text, digital media formed the backbone of the strategy because through them communication team raised awareness about the exhibition itself, motivated people to visit the tunnel and invited users to participate in the exhibition setup.

The task was to showcase 133 years of the activity of Croatia osiguranje in a creative and appealing way. The tunnel below Zagreb was turned into a multi-media project that is an exhibition spanning 13 decades characterized by interesting

events, people, and items from a specific historical period. Its specificity was allowing citizens to actively engage in compositing its layout over digital channels changing it on a daily basis and embedding bits and pieces from their own past. The project was foreseen as a historical account accommodating each and every one of us.

Or to present communication goals more specifically and precisely, then these would be the following goals:

- During the 45 days of the exhibition, position Croatia osiguranje as a socially responsible company that has been in the service of the development of the Croatian economy since its establishment and which represents a significant part of Croatian heritage and national identity.
- During the 45 days of the exhibition, attract a minimum of 30,000 visitors and “educate” them about Croatian history and the role of the Croatia osiguranje in this historical development.
  - The client did not measure the brand value immediately after the campaign, but the number of visitors (30,000) was set as a measurable goal. Attendance at exhibitions in Zagreb in previous years was taken as a benchmark:
    - a. *Exhibition Joan Miró*—35,000 visitors in 129 days in the period from 2.10.2014.-8.2.2015. (Source: Art Pavilion in Zagreb<sup>6</sup>)
    - b. *Exhibition Auguste Rodin*—38,000 visitors in 138 days in the period from 5.5.2015.-20.9.2015. (Source: Art Pavilion in Zagreb<sup>7</sup>)
    - c. *Exhibition Alberto Giacometti*—37,000 visitors in 109 days in the period from 21.9.2016.-8.1.2017. (Source: Art Pavilion in Zagreb<sup>8</sup>)
    - d. *Pablo Picasso exhibition*—130,000 visitors in 106 days in the period March 23, 2013—July 7, 2013 (Source: Klovićevi dvori Gallery<sup>9</sup>).
- Position the exhibition as a cultural project that is not of a corporate nature and ensure that in at least 70% of media publications the exhibition is characterized as a multimedia-interactive project of an educational nature.
- Using various communication channels to reach as large a part of the population in Croatia as possible (51% on TV, 25% in print, and 1.5 million impressions on digital citylights).
- Inform citizens about the possibility of participating in the exhibition and ensure that they participate in a period of 45 days with a minimum of 2000 of their own photographs in the creation of the exhibition.

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<sup>6</sup> These data are not made public but were obtained upon request from the source.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*



- Increase online engagement of users on social networks of Croatia osiguranje by 100%. The goal was set with regard to the planned activities on digital channels and the expected engagement of citizens. In the period of 10 months before the exhibition, user engagement was 3% (Source: Facebook Insights<sup>10</sup>).
- Value of public relations effect—200,000 €. Considering the investment in media advertising (80,000 €), the return through media impressions is expected to be 2.5–3 times higher.
- The agency's task was to increase brand awareness, generate buzz and incentivize social media engagement.

#### **4.6 Implementation of public relations of the project**

Implementation of public relations of the project involved the following steps:

In the preparatory communication campaign (August 26–September 10, 2017), the goal was to interest the public in Croatian history and the history of the Croatia osiguranje through a series of thematic stories. It was mainly communicated through print media and portals.

In the second phase (September 10–October 1, 2017), historical themes were replaced by stories about the individual attractions of the exhibition. In this phase, a press conference was organized in the most attractive part of the tunnel, to which 24 media responded, and an insight into some of the attractions of the exhibition additionally contributed to strengthening the interests of citizens.

Additional interest was stimulated by the grand opening of the exhibition for 200 VIP guests and more than 20 local and national media. At this stage, communication on social networks began.

During the exhibition, interesting facts about the exhibition were continuously presented, and influencers were introduced into communication who, through their family memories, additionally invited citizens to visit through social networks. An important communication element was live television coverage from the scene.

In the last phase (October 1–November 1, 2017), the emphasis was placed on the concept of #PovijestPisemoSami, which involved the involvement of citizens by posting their own historical photos on social networks with the appropriate hashtag and short description. Each week, a series of received photographs would be selected to be printed and fitted into the exhibition. Post-festum communication activities referred to the communication of the results achieved by the exhibition and the international awards it received.

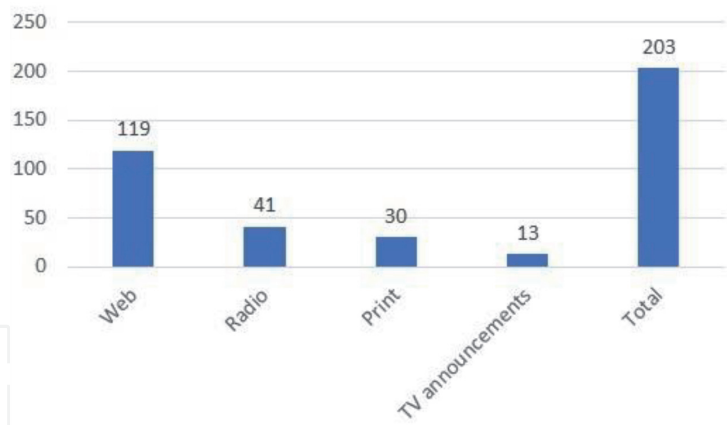
#### **4.7 Evaluation**

The exhibition “Croatia is Hrvatska—We write our own history“ was the most visited exhibition in Croatia in 2017. This is a good indication that the exhibition was not perceived as a classic corporate event but really aroused great interest.

The number of exhibition visits exceeded the target by 243%, and thus all expectations. People came to the exhibition and spent an average of 30 minutes interacting with the brand. Namely, during 45 days, the exhibition was visited by 103,000 people (the previous goal was 30,000). Furthermore, the value of public relations performance was approx. 705,845 € value of unpaid media [10], which exceeded the target by 252%. Some of the headlines that have garnered so many

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*



**Figure 1.**  
*Media announcements during the 2 months.*

media impressions can be described with following words: “it as a unique cultural project,” “an interactive exhibition of turbulent history,” “an exhibition we created ourselves,” and “an exhibition with excellent results.”

Thanks to the work of public relations, a huge media interest has been achieved. During the 2 months, 203 media announcements were made (119 web, 41 radio, 30 print, and 13 TV announcements) and in more than 70% of announcements the corporate character of the exhibition was not emphasized, but its cultural contribution was emphasized (**Figure 1**).

A total of 118 different media reported on the exhibition, in 190 publications it appeared as the main subject, while in 99% the publications were positive. The exhibition ensured the favor of the cultural public and numerous positive reviews and comments from the leading media, which characterized the exhibition as one of the most attractive and production-challenging exhibitions ever held in Zagreb.

Talking about online engagement, the target was exceeded by 266%, that is, in the campaign period the engagement of users on social networks was 11%. Such a result was achieved given the reach of 791,833 unique users reached by the message through all online contact points, and direct engagement of citizens was achieved with used #PovijestPisemoSami by sending 5370 personal historical photos and sharing impressions of the exhibition. Numerous citizens also showed great interest in positive reactions on social networks, where they achieved over 616,314 interactions. Namely, brand awareness amounted to about 500,000 users, which achieved 300% higher results (**Table 1**).

The exhibition exceeded all set goals and won the “Event of the Year 2017” award, awarded by the regional professional magazine Media Marketing. Also, the

	Set communication goals	Achieved communication goals
Number of visitors	30,000	103,000
Number of media announcements	100	203
Percentage of positive media announcements	75%	99%
Value of public relations effect (EUR)	200,000 €	705,845 €
Direct engagement of citizens by sending personal historical photos	2000	5370
Online engagement	200,000	791,833

**Table 1.**  
*Set and achieved communication goals.*

exhibition has won numerous other awards in the field of communications as such as Effie, Red Dot, MIXX Europe, Strategy Slam, MIXX Hrvatska, SoMo Borac, BalCannes Top 25, IIDA Global Excellence Award. The exhibition achieved additional recognition by winning awards in the field of design and architecture as such as IIDA (International Interior Design Association)—Fair and Exhibition, German Design Award—Excellent Communications Design: Fair and Exhibition, Red Dot—Exhibition Design, etc.

## **5. Conclusion**

Public relations as a complex domain demands multiple skills from public relations practitioners and those skills include creativity because it often plays an important part in public relations campaigns [3]. Creativity in public relations campaigns can be viewed as a well-told story. The well-told story is the result not only of a detailed strategy and listening to the needs of the audience but also of providing a unique experience that arouses the interest and desire for more.

However, in order for a story to be well told or creative, it requires it to go through a complex process during which it often encounters various obstacles. The case of Croatia osiguranje shows us how the main threat to the development of this campaign was detected in time so that the potential threat actually became an opportunity to develop an even more creative idea.

Public relations practitioners at the time detected the company's highly competitive environment and a danger of the campaign for being perceived too commercially and without the desired public reach. Thinking outside the box by public relations experts who worked on the 133rd anniversary promotion campaign assured in the end a unique exhibition that brought Croatian history closer to citizens and tourists in an interesting way, and the positioning of the company in that history. The exhibition allowed visitors to participate in creating exhibits with personal stories. The corporate project is perceived as both cultural and educational. A large team of creatives, historians, and museum experts worked on the exhibition for several years and it contained numerous attractive museum exhibits, multimedia displays of artifacts, legendary musical numbers, and numerous interactive points. The main attraction was the "rain hall," the central hall of the tunnel in which artificial rain was falling all the time, on the drops of which the holograms of famous Zagreb historical figures were outlined. And visitors had to borrow an umbrella with the insurance company logo at the entrance to it.

The production-demanding project has successfully combined culture and science, economy, tourism, and modern technologies and has shown that it is possible to interest and activate the public through a creative presentation of historical content. The exhibition was the result of a synergy of different communication experts and approaches and excellent cooperation of agencies.

In conclusion, more than 103,000 people came to see the exhibition in person and 5370 displayed their stories. With a media budget of 80,000 €, it earned 5,293,842 free media impressions and notified 616,314 reactions on social media. The message was clear, that is, there is only one insurance in Croatia on which people can always count on. And that made all the difference. Croatia osiguranje ended up being the leading insurance company in Croatia in all market segments. This creative campaign shows us the fundamental purpose of public relations, and it is about building relationships between public and organization. Finally, the exhibition was the result of a synergy of different communication experts and approaches and excellent cooperation of agencies.

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### **Author details**

Bozo Skoko and Dejan Gluvacevic\*  
Department of Strategic Communication of the Faculty of Political Science,  
University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

\*Address all correspondence to: [dejan.gluvacevic@hotmail.com](mailto:dejan.gluvacevic@hotmail.com)

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