

» Chile: From wedge issues to the story

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It is no longer a secret to anyone that, according to the last polls, both the President and the Government have obtained the lowest approval ratings ever. For this reason, it is hard to believe that the communication strategy used until now has had any positive outcomes.

At the beginning, the strategy had a confrontational style and focused on entrepreneurship, as seen in the famous video on the tax reform. There was then a radical change in the strategy, becoming an ode to silence trying to avoid new battles.

Over the time, this new strategy, which was supposed to calm audiences, only managed to worsen the situation, spread rumors and create problems that were previously either non-existent or still yet to be identified. The silence strategy boosted several notes and theories and forced the government to face the media over and over again in order to deny rumors and criticize those news they said to be unfounded, which only helped to add more fuel to the fire.

As if that was not enough, several problems coming from a lack of coordination and communication mistakes have occurred along the path. Although they could be considered irrelevant, they have played an important role in increasing the feeling of lack of coordination and guidelines regarding the government's communication.

This scenario in which there is not a guiding story, has lead to wedge issues such as the backhoe, the end to the profit, reality without resignation and the recent destabilization campaign (amongst others). When we talk about wedge issues we are referring to expressions that become news in journalism. However, such concepts and expressions are not enough to write a story and therefore create an image of institutionalism.

The feeling of an institutional crisis that the Government lived (and is now living) was worsen by the development of the first communication strategy (which was confrontational) and the lack of clear guidelines. It also creates a monstrous search of easy solutions based on wedge issues which clearly do not represent the reality of the situation.

All the above mentioned ingredients are enough to create an institutional story. For that to happen, we currently need to believe in the importance of communication, the way we approach it and the management of its assets; and in this scenario, silence and lack of transparency are not acceptable. We need to understand that, the clearer and more comprehensive the information is, the lower the risk of misinterpretations and confusion. We need a new scenario where wedge issues cannot be the communication nor the story.

It is necessary that we understand that nowadays we face a paradigm where aesthetics are no longer important and where there is a new way for transparency and ethics. A new environment where citizens have a more important role on the decision making process of those policies that affect them.

The Government needs to understand that there is now a new opportunity to change and rethink the way it approaches communication. This is a more empathic government which is able to understand this connected sector, unsatisfied and empowered (citizens). For this reason, the way the government approaches citizens needs to be different so it meets their expectations and demands.

Understanding this whole situation is not currently a challenge, but a duty and an obligation.





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