
The Task of the Leader in Today's Media Industry

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ABSTRACT

In the first and second decades of the 21st century, the media industry underwent an intense digital transformation. This transformation made their products and services go digital. The media began to take advantage of technologies such as mobile networks, cloud storage, and high internet speeds. What made the media constantly innovate. Therefore, in these crucial moments, it is necessary for them to be leaders who influence, keep awake and motivate human talent, so that new opportunities are taken advantage of through innovation. This paper analyzes the current state of the media industry and notes some variables that the leader must consider, for example, the value chain and new technologies. In addition to the external forces that Alborran considers globalization, regulation, the economy and social aspects. In this research, the importance of leadership is established and the tasks of the leaders of the media industry are indicated, for example, to generate a quality environment that favors innovation and creativity, since the natural and organizational barriers to innovation must be broken.

Keywords: Leadership, Media industries, Media management

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the media industry has experienced enormous changes, thanks to the digital transformation. Competitive differences such as exclusivity and product quality vanished (Londoño-Proaña, 2021), which meant that innovation became essential for communication companies to be competitive. Therefore, people are needed to develop these innovations. This human talent requires leaders who manage change through a vision for the future and face the barriers of innovation. Therefore, leadership is more relevant than in other times, since people are needed to guide the human talent of the companies in the media industry, which are the key to success. Leadership allows to manage change and enhance creativity and ethics (Hollifield et al. 2016).

The most effective leadership style is transformational leadership, which is a process of influencing followers, through inspiration and motivation, that makes them abandon their self-centered goals and follow the objectives of the organization and may even go beyond them (Yahaya y Ebrahim, 2016). Transformational leadership improves job satisfaction, prevents symptoms of poor mental health, provides a sense of well-being and enables supporters to give more effort (Londoño-Proaña, 2021). Consequently, the media must have leaders who motivate professionals in the communication area to

lead them to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by the digital transformation. This research analyzes the task of leader from a theoretical perspective and the current situation of the media industry. Finally, some keys to the new tasks of media leaders are provided.

THE LEADER'S TASK

The transformational leader communicates his vision for the future, favors ethics, morality, innovation and creativity. You must know how to support changes in the organization, in order to take advantage of opportunities and compete effectively. Kotter (1999) outlines eight steps of organizational transformation that are applicable to the media industry:

1. **Create a sense of urgency:** It refers to examining the market and competition. Analyze the crisis, potential crises and new opportunities (Kotter, 1999). For example, the leader of a newspaper must examine the new platforms and new digital news media that, day by day, emerge on the Internet, to know the competition and evaluate the opportunities.
2. **Assembling a powerful leading group:** It refers to building a strong and powerful team that can lead the change (Kotter, 1999). Teamwork is encouraged. For example, the leader of a television channel should put together a team of editors, journalists, audiovisual communicators, photographers, producers, post-producers, etc., who have the experience and motivation to develop new ideas and work on new proposals.
3. **Establish a vision:** It refers to formulating a vision that helps to achieve change (Kotter, 1999). Strategies are made based on this. To illustrate, the leader of a radio station must think about and apply strategies to develop new radio strategies, which will bring the change that will allow them to remain competitive.
4. **Share the vision** It refers to the way in which the vision is delivered, which should be in new ways (Kotter, 1999). Mintzberg and Westley say that the transformational leader must have strong communication and that the language of the transformational leader is symbolic and with metaphors (Küng, 2016). For example, the leader of a television channel must communicate in a symbolic and metaphorical way his vision to achieve change through new proposals that will allow him to compete effectively.
5. **Empowering others to act according to the vision:** Refers to the need to empower others to eliminate potential barriers to change, to encourage risk-taking and non-traditional ideas and actions (Kotter, 1999). For example, the leader of a newspaper must develop constant training programs, in the different areas in which value is generated, in order to maintain the competitive advantage, such as new narratives for the generation of attractive content for the audience and new technologies, which are a determining value.
6. **To raise and cause intermediate developments:** It refers to making visible improvements and sometimes rewarding employees when those improvements are achieved (Kotter, 1999). For example, the leader of a radio

station who makes new proposals visible to the owners of the media and suggests that they should be rewarded.

7. **Consolidate improvements and produce even more changes:** Refers to relying on the credibility of the vision to change to increase change (Kotter, 1999). También se debe contratar, ascender y formar empleados que favorezcan el cambio. For example, the leader of a newspaper who, based on the success of the team that led the new proposals, encourages other sections to follow his example.
8. **Institutionalize new approaches:** It refers to establishing a mechanism to build institutionalized leadership (Kotter, 1999). Relationships are established between corporate success and new behaviors. For example, leader of a television channel that creates leadership opportunities, through new projects, linking success and new behaviors.

The media industry is extremely changeable and full of emotions; the transformational leader must be smart, adaptable, strategic, find and inspire talented professionals to navigate towards innovation (Hollifield et al. 2016).

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

In the first and second decade of the 21st century, the media industry underwent a major transformation (Albarran, 2011; Picard, 2014). This transformation implied digitizing the media, its products and services, taking advantage of the speed of fiber optics, managing documents through cloud computing and storing them in the cloud (Zapata, 2017). This included the use of technology such as smart TVs, computers, game consoles and mobile devices, all connected to the Internet. This digitalization of content and the multiple access to it (Neira, 2016) allowed new opportunities for the media; on the one hand, it provided greater convenience to users, because they could watch their content as many times as they wanted and, in the place, they wanted; on the other hand, the media increased their distribution volume and their audiences. In addition, the irruption of social networks has changed the context to a scenario of interactions, fast connections, and influence on content (Neira, 2016). That is, technological advances changed ways of production and distribution, consumption paradigms, and audiences (Küng, 2016).

On the other hand, the traditional linear value chain changed to a non-linear value chain, especially distribution, which fragmented into several sub-sectors (Hess y Matt, 2013; Küng, 2016). In this context, each component can be developed (produced) by an intermediary. Intermediaries play an important role in this process (Hess y Matt, 2013; Küng, 2016) and are outsourced, being a mechanism employed by several organizations to generate savings, business efficiency and overcome any risks and inconveniences (Chalaby, 2018).

Albarran (2011) believes that the media industry is affected by four external forces:

1. **Globalization:** This power is created when communication companies sell services outside their territories (Albarran, 2011). Streaming video platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and others sell their services

outside their borders and increase their subscribers. One success story is Netflix, a company that expands internationally year after year. In 2012, Netflix subscribers were 33.3 million, and increased in 2020 to 6.02 times its size (Statista, 2020). In 2020, Netflix agglutinated 200.5 million subscribers (Statista, 2020), offering its products in more than 190 countries, and several languages such as Spanish, English and several others.

The phenomenon of globalization also occurs, when companies in the media industry buy companies in other countries (Albarran, 2011). In 2017, Walt Disney Co. bought for 52.4 billion dollars the assets of 21st Century Fox, with this it expanded its business strategy, since it owned the ABC, ESPN, major Hollywood studios, now controls FX, NatGeo and is reinforced with the Indian channels Star and 39% of the television operator Sky (Diario El Espectador, 2018). Another form of globalization is when companies are placed in several countries (Albarran, 2011). For example, The New York Times has offices in New York, Paris and Hong Kong.

2. Regulations: Kent (2018) says that there are different types of regulations issued by governments: (1) countries that have regulations that favor freedom of speech and the inclusion of all actors in society; for example, in Ecuador, newspapers must include intercultural information in their editions.; (2) countries that have regulations that try to keep political control of the media to defend their own power; for example, in China press regulations are quite strict and often fall into the violation of free speech; (3) other countries that believe that the media are regulated by market forces; for example, the United States and its public opinion, which constitutes a true industry of criticism; and (4) other countries where the government interferes little in regulations and private institutions have more weight; for example, in the United Kingdom, the Independent Press Standards Organization acts as a regulatory body.

3. Economy: The most critical issue in the media industry is the management of capital and investment (Picard, 2014). Many companies in the media industry are unable to find a way to sustain themselves. In former times, advertising revenue was the main income of media industries. Now, due to the fragmentation of the audience, advertisers are distributing their advertising campaigns among several media, for example, Google and Facebook capture 58.4% of online advertising in the United States (eMarketer, 2021). This decrease in advertising has caused some media to reduce staff and consider their subsistence.

Several media companies are trying to find other ways to finance themselves: (a) selling online advertising; (b) subscriptions; (c) donations; (d) pay-per-view; (e) data delivery in exchange for free content; (f) social payment (sharing on Twitter or Facebook) in exchange for free content; (g) pay if you like the content; (h) dynamic payment; (i) paywall [6]. Despite the multiplicity of options, many communication companies still fail to sustain themselves (Picard, 2014).

4. Technology: It refers to technological progress and innovations (Albarran, 2011). Every day new platforms emerge on the Internet that can be accessed from anywhere with the only limitation of having a connection. For example, audiovisual content that is no longer exclusive to television can now

be seen on several OTT (over-the-top) platforms that in the United States already reach 95 platforms, including: Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, Roku and Boxee and Apple TV (Simon, 2016), and recently, Disney plus. In 2016, a market volume of \$35.8 billion was estimated (The Daily Television, 2016). Almost all newspapers such as The New York Times or The Guardian have their own platforms, where they place content, adjusted to the tastes of their audience.

This technological development in the media industry produced an abundance of content (big amounts of news, information and entertainment) that caused the audience to become fragmented and polarized (Napoli, 2012; Picard, 2014).

5. Social aspects: The public (consumers or users or audience) has more power in the media industry than in other times (Albarran, 2011; Picard, 2014). The media have given more control and choice to audiences in their content (Napoli, 2012). We can see this in two aspects: the payment that the consumer makes for services (Picard, 2014), and in the content created by consumers.

The way of audience measurement is a problem for the media industry because the audience is changeable, and it is not possible to have an accurate measurement. So, the media do not have accurate and reliable measurement (Napoli, 2012). There are attempts to measure audiences, one of them was presented by the American network NBC Universal. This network launched CFligh which is an audience measurement on television, cable television and platforms on all screens (computers, television, and mobile device) (Poggi, 2020).

Nowadays, one measure of audience is engagement, which is associated with audience behavior (Broersma, 2019). Another alternative is Big Data analysis, which achieves a balanced sample, market-wide coverage, individual and family demographic levels, and data availability all the time (Nelson y Webster, 2016).

THE NEW TASK OF THE LEADER IN TODAY'S MEDIA INDUSTRY

Based on the theoretical basis and the previous analysis, it is determined that the leaders of the media industry have new tasks: (1) Generate a quality environment that favors innovation and creativity; since the natural and organizational barriers to innovation must be broken down; (2) give confidence, provide support, encouragement, motivate subordinates through respect and consideration, and communicate a positive vision of the future, with a lot of hope for supporters to work and give their best efforts; (3) create a powerful coalition that supports change; (4) encourage teamwork, as it is essential in the media industry; (5) lead by example to inspire subordinates; (6) place a sense of urgency in the organization to develop tools that use the organization's Big Data, given that an optimal measurement tool that delivers reliable audience data in different media, platforms and social networks is necessary to interest advertisers; (7) be attentive and analyze each component of the value chain and its competitive advantage, so that it helps to

financially empower the media. In this sense, you should favor innovative and creative solutions.

CONCLUSION

As we have discussed, there is a changing landscape in the media industry, so the leader must be attentive to this series of changes to take advantage of the opportunities and make his company competitive. The task of the leaders becomes important because it anticipates the changes, raises awareness within the organization about the urgency of tuning into the changes, builds a group of collaborators to start thinking about new ideas, proposes strategies to achieve it, communicates its vision, trains the group of collaborators in the new technologies and, as they are successful, forms other groups to follow the example and finally, institutionalizes the new technology and new ideas in the organization.

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