



A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF THE SLOVENIAN PES AND MAKING THE PUBLIC AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS MORE AWARE OF PES SERVICES.

Communicating the added-value of PES as part of the PES Communication Strategy

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SLOVENIA

Communicating the added-value of PES has been developed in the context of providing better services and meeting changing expectations about how the PES communicates with clients and stakeholders. The practice is founded on the differentiation of target groups and the adaption of communication methods and techniques to these groups, depending on their specific characteristics and needs, and taking into consideration lifestyle, digital literacy and knowledge of foreign languages, etc. The practice involves both internal and external communication activities, including staff notifications and workshops, social media, e-services, a public call centre, news media, engagement with employers and job fairs.

Name of the PES

Slovenian PES (Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) (*Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje – ZRSZ*))

When was the practice implemented?

Since 2015

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

The driver was the PES Strategy 2020, which aims to make PES a key facilitator of institutional coordination in the labour market, user-orientated, and to develop e-services.

The PES strategy 2020 includes a Communications Strategy (adopted in December 2015). It serves both as a guideline and support for planning and implementing communication methods and other activities. The Communication Strategy states that the general operation of the Slovenian PES, as well as the successful implementation of key PES strategic development guidelines, depends on them being known to the public at large.

The broader context is one of increasing unemployment and in particular the need to integrate the long-term unemployed and older people. Also, employers expect more tailored communication and use of IT as a means to communicate with the PES.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The Employment Service of Slovenia (PES) was responsible for implementing the Communications Strategy. While the Slovenian PES is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, it is an independent institution, it has developed its own centrally planned communication strategy and it involves internal staff in communication activities on a daily basis. The PES works with key stakeholders via the Council of the Slovenian PES, which brings together trade unions, employers, and government.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

Communications are designed to reach the following groups:

- ▶ Internal staff across the Slovenian PES (including advisers for employers, employment counsellors, management, etc.)
- ▶ Unemployed people and jobseekers
- ▶ Employers
- ▶ ALMP service providers
- ▶ Public and government bodies
- ▶ Social partners and civil society
- ▶ Media
- ▶ General public

What were the practice's main objectives?

The practice promotes better strategic communication, which is about planned and organised communication aimed at maintaining the corporate image of the PES as an institution and supporting management relationships with key stakeholders.

The key objectives of the Communication Strategy are as follows:

- ▶ Inform the general public about new service features;
- ▶ Improve service accessibility for the target groups and increase the user pool;
- ▶ Improve the recognisability of the work and role played by the Slovenian PES among the general public;
- ▶ Improve the PES' image among the general public.

What activities were carried out?

The practice is founded on the differentiation of target groups and the adaptation of communication methods and techniques to these groups, depending on their specific characteristics and needs, and taking into consideration lifestyle, digital literacy and knowledge of foreign languages, etc.

With regards to the media, the approach of the practice is based on meeting the stylistic requirements of different media formats, using events to grow media interest, providing accurate and timely information, and being accessible to media enquiries.

Since the reputation of the PES is shaped by its employees, the practice also places significant emphasis on in-house communication (i.e. ensuring effective information flow and creating two-way communication). Key internal communication activities include regularly notifying employees through the Intranet; creating more engaging news for employees; organising regular in-house meetings; and organising workshops and employee training.

For external audiences, the practice entails the following channels, tools and techniques:

- ▶ Website (including e-services as part of a blended approach to service delivery, e-portals for employers and employees, and options for web chatting).
- ▶ Call centre for the public.
- ▶ Social media channels (Facebook/LinkedIn) targeted to young people.
- ▶ Promotional and informational materials (e.g. videos, eNews).
- ▶ News media (communicating with journalists; organising news conferences and other media events; facilitating news stories in the media; regular labour market update announcements).
- ▶ External corporate advertising on PES vehicles (e.g. logo, website, call centre, mobile site, etc.) and in other places (e.g. on buses, in front of cinemas, etc.).
- ▶ Engagement with employers (visiting employers and holding special events and roundtables).
- ▶ Holding job fairs for jobseekers and stakeholder conferences.
- ▶ Notifications (website, eNews, social media, newsletters) to users and key stakeholders (jobseekers, government, ministries, employers, trade unions) about events, labour market data, and policy updates etc.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

External public relations experts advised on media channels and target audiences. The PES public relations department was also responsible for this.

Employer associations were engaged for the purpose of encouraging companies to attend jobs fairs.

What were the source(s) of funding?

There was no specific budget, and it was funded through the PES budget for general activities.

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

Key achievements are as follows:

- ▶ There have been 958 media reports, most of them by the Slovenian Press Agency alongside other main media outlets in Slovenia, with the majority of contributions related to the broader topic of the PES (851) and 117 contributions about the field of active employment policy.
- ▶ The Slovenian PES were also active on social networks, e.g. in June 2017, 72 entries were posted on Facebook. The most successful aspect of outreach was having content promoted by users on Facebook (42 864 instances). Also, over 9 000 people saw content linked to companies, and 7 186 people saw the post entitled 'Preparation of a CV in the form of a website'. The majority of page visits were at the beginning of June and visitors were mostly women aged 25 to 34.
- ▶ In July 2017, the PES posted on Facebook 53 times. The most popular post was the publication of a job vacancy in a police department (seen 8 940 times). Also, more than 6 000 persons saw other job vacancies. More people accessed the PES website via mobile devices rather than through a computer.
- ▶ In August 2017, there were 67 Facebook posts, of which the most popular was for a job vacancy in Ireland (it reached 20 098 persons), followed by an announcement of the 'Opportunity for me' programme (13 833 people). Over 10 000 people saw a post announcing the programme 'Employ me' and the publication of a vacancy at the PES.
- ▶ The PES Facebook page has 15 675 'likes' and 15 668 followers. The vast majority of visitors to the page are aged 25-34 and most of them are women (77%). Posts are most often viewed around 9am and between 8pm and 9pm.

What outcomes have been identified?

Outcomes include the following:

- ▶ Improvement in the PES' image as measured by analysis of press coverage. For example, more positive announcements in relation to PES and less negative responses.
- ▶ Improved satisfaction ratings for PES from stakeholders, based on an annual survey.
- ▶ Anecdotal evidence that jobseekers are more satisfied with PES services and that awareness of services is improving.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

Lessons learnt and success factors include the following:

- ▶ It is important to have a clear vision and a strategy about how to achieve it.
- ▶ Communications rely upon media channels being differentiated and tailored towards different target audiences, for example using social media video for young people.
- ▶ Messages should be clear, simple and concise, and also use graphics.
- ▶ Communications should be national and also take place at local level. The active engagement of local offices is important.
- ▶ External public relations expertise can play a role but it is also important to develop PR skills internally within the PES.



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