

When the voices are multiple

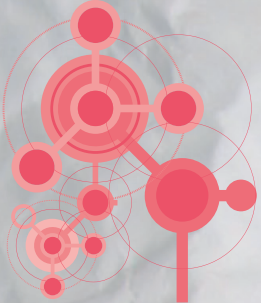
Quando as vozes são múltiplas

Cuando las voces son múltiples



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What makes the areas of knowledge or professionals integrate? When do the voices of a segment begin to influence changes in other sectors? The idea of integrated communication gains space and dimension with the presence of researchers and professionals acting together, in dialogue, in various parts of the planet and seeking synergy between thoughts and actions. The polysemy of some areas enhances the need for conversations with sectors of society, academia, and companies, without which there would be no development, there would be no evolution.

In this issue, Organicom addressed two themes of great presence in the contemporary discussions of communication: public relations and marketing. And how both, in some way, are more and more influenced, generating what has been called integrated communication for some time.

To get a broad and global look, we talked with one of the world's leading experts on the subject, Prof. Juan Carlos Molleda, who has been researching and discussing the subject for a long time, in addition to having a profound experience in public relations, journalism, and marketing. Prof. Molleda today works at the University of Oregon, having extensive experience in research and teaching in the United States, but with a vision profile far beyond the borders.

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ORGANICOM – *How do you see convergence between marketing and public relations? Has the concept of integrated communication evolved? How does the world see and practice communication in times when the feeling of immediacy grows?*

Molleda – Integration is happening with various degrees in different types of business contexts. Large multinational corporations still have separate marketing and public relations/public affairs units. However, they are coordinating their commercial and institutional voices more and better. Public relations agencies are adopting more advertising (creativity) and marketing (data analytics) in their services. Advertising, marketing, and consulting firms are incorporating more public relations strategies and tactics in their portfolio of services. Small- and medium-size businesses are more and more integrated because they are less complex and don't have the resources and specialization needs of large organizations.

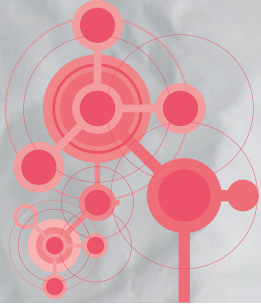
ORGANICOM – *People today are reporting massively – not always correctly – on digital social networks. Is this positive or negative for communication within organizations?*

Molleda – It is negative because it captures a deficient, limited, and perhaps distorted picture of the market and consumers/audiences.

ORGANICOM – *The world has growing waves of intolerance. What is the role of the communicator in this scenario?*

Molleda – Communication is a neutral proposition and its practices can be placed in a continuum from manipulative to objective. Yet, honest and authentic communication can help people to come together by avoiding extremes and the possibility to alienate or exclude groups. Strategic and ethical communication is powerful and impactful. The responsibility of media and organizations to use this power is at the center of the intolerance phenomenon/trend.

ORGANICOM – *Some advertising messages on social networks no longer intend to talk about the brand, product or service, but rather to become a content channel for the interests of the individual. Do you agree with that thought? And how does this get into the communications market?*



Molleda – Yes, I do agree with this approach because the decision-making power and influence have been democratized. That is, individuals and their tribes can influence public conversations quickly and efficiently in cyberspace and in physical spaces. Brands with purpose and responsibility understand the new dynamic. Consumers or audiences should be the focus of strategic communication and brands should be open to co-creation and active participation from those who are the target of communication strategies and tactics.

ORGANICOM – *After all, is content communication and marketing strategy in the online environment the best way nowadays?*

Molleda – Online environments cannot be ignored by anyone today; however, personal and group communications are still important and desirable by many people. A clever combination of the two would be the correct formula, since some online situations or issues may be more prominent than face to face and vice versa.

ORGANICOM – *How can communication and marketing contribute to a more just and egalitarian society?*

Molleda – Communication conveys meanings and reflects or prompts actions. In other words, words should be consistent with actions, and in today's world any issue that becomes trendy should be on top of the agenda for communicators and organizations. Having said that, social justice and inclusion (egalitarianism) are topics of debate and interest across the world. Therefore, communicators should advise their organizations to act and communicate in ways that meanings of justice and egalitarianism are upheld and celebrated; otherwise, they will take the change to further lose trust and reputation among internal and external public/stakeholders.

ORGANICOM – *Mass media communication has already reached the standards of behavior, consumption, health and values of some societies. How can we see the role of large media groups these days?*

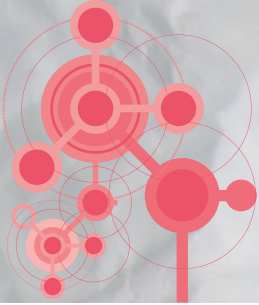
Molleda – Media groups are losing their monopoly of news, entertaining, and content creation and distribution. A variety of institutional and personal actors are now part of the media landscape. In many instances, people trust more their peers and members of their tribes than the established media operations. Media groups, therefore, must reflect the values of society and produce quality contents in a timely manner that responds to society expectations. Quality and purpose (identity) dominate the media landscape today.

ORGANICOM – *With a presence of ordinary people as the young influencers of the internet, is the look at the world more balanced, the horizontalization of forces, the movement of the most unreachable stages in the vast majority? Or is effective power still concentrated?*

Molleda – Influencers are impacting the conversation in a variety of economic sectors. And organizations understand the power of influencing and are partnering with influencers. Influencers that remain true to themselves will elevate their voices and values despite of corporate or organizational influence/power. Again, media and organizations with a purpose and clear identity will also impact and influence conversations and debates in the marketplace and in the public sphere.

ORGANICOM – *Have we finally arrived at the time when relations and public boundaries can be functioning in a fully integrated way, resignifying their origins and generating new forms of communication?*

Molleda – With emergent communication technologies and online environments, the private and the public often intercept. This fact is important to both individuals and organizations. Today, it is difficult to hide the private from the public.



ORGANICOM – *What differentiates the marketing and communication practiced and conceived in rich countries from what is done in the less favored countries?*

Molleda – It is mainly an issue of economics in terms of the types and quantity of human resources and technologies that can be retained or adopted for projects, as well as the media buying power to saturate a market with messages and public engagement strategies. Both the rich and less rich worlds have talented and creative professionals, but they operate in different contexts and with a varied amount of resources and funds to accomplish similar outcomes.

ORGANICOM – *Did the consumer (of products, services and ideas) evolve and become more critical, requiring brands to be more ethical and transparent?*

Molleda – Totally, consumers have more information to make decisions and more opportunities to express their views and organize around the actions or inactions, as well as offerings, of brands.

ORGANICOM – *How should 21st century brands build their speeches?*

Molleda – Building clear, distinctive, and strong voices that are consistent with their decisions, actions, and the quality of product and services they offer.

ORGANICOM – *How does the acceleration of information, how does internal communication work in organizations today?*

Molleda – Similar to external communication, technology allows for more direct communication and greater involvement with internal audiences. Also, internal audiences, like external audiences are, in general, better informed and more activist.

ORGANICOM – *How can marketing and institutional communication concepts be applied to the exercise of public communication?*

Molleda – The strategies and tactics of marketing and institutional communication can be used by all types of organizations and for all types of purposes. Marketing and communication are neutral propositions and impact all the sectors of a society.

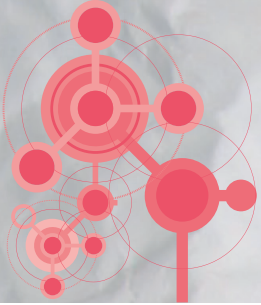
ORGANICOM – *Over the last few decades, several authors have been thinking of classifications for audiences. Does this still make sense? How can we think of public and their importance in an era in which participation seems to be a sine qua non?*

Molleda – Yes, this still makes sense and, in fact, we have more real-time information to be more specific and to articulate evolving types of audiences. Media use and involvement are creating new types of audiences. The nomenclatures we have in the body of knowledge can always be refined and expanded, similar to the theories that inform those nomenclatures and/or constructs.

ORGANICOM – *The demand for measuring results has grown. How do you see the evolution of this area? Are we able today to evaluate and measure results in public relations? And in marketing?*

Molleda – We have more technical tools and data to plan, execute, monitor, and evaluate public relations and marketing programs.

ORGANICOM – *What do you think about the future of academic training areas for marketing and communications professionals? Will the university still be the main training site?*



Molleda – University programs in public relations and marketing need to be as dynamic as the professions we serve are. Academic programs need to balance the teaching of conceptualization and with skills training, workshops, labs, and hands-on experiences on- and off-campus for all students. Bringing more guest speakers to curricular and co-curricular activities is more critical today, as well as developing industry-university partnerships with technology companies and other sectors of the creative and media economy.

ORGANICOM – *What about the institutional communications market, how do you think the future will be? Will large investments still remain in the hands of large corporations or will there be investment dilution, creating more specialized players?*

Molleda – Currently, the diversification and specialization of marketing and communication practices are happening both in large and small/boutique services providers. Also, large organizations are creating their own units to plan, produce, and distribute quality and traditional and emergent contents in a timely manner. Large marketing and public relations agencies are continually reinventing themselves or extending their service offerings with the use of freelancers or out/in-sourcing.

ORGANICOM – *Regarding postgraduate training, do you believe that it can account for the training of professionals from any area to work with public relations and marketing?*

Molleda – Yes, professionals who want to transition into public relations and marketing can be the target for professional master's programs. The challenge is to level those with some knowledge and experience in the industry and those who need to catch up. The advantage of having master's students with and without experience and knowledge in marketing and/or public relations in that the world is also moving to teams that are transdisciplinary and diverse.