What’s measurable gets done – Communication controlling as a prerequisite for a successful reputation management

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Communication controlling represents a holistic view of communication management for companies, and for controlling corporate communication. Adopting managerial methods from controlling, a model for modern communication controlling is defined that is intended as a standard and a benchmark in both areas: controlling and communication. Reputation also plays a role in this holistic model of communication management. Methods for managing reputation often use a different language and different images, but are compatible with the management model of communication controlling in terms of the questions they address and their approach. Essentially, the model answers two questions:

1. How can one prove communication’s contribution to a company’s value creation?

2. How can communication and reputation be managed so that they make an optimal contribution to a company’s value creation?

The basic model of communication controlling

At present, there is little connection between reputation management and communication controlling. But a glance at the general definitions in both disciplines shows this does not have to be so.

Reputation management?

Reputation management is here defined as the management of the expectations of all stakeholder groups and of their cognitive and emotional attitudes towards the company. That includes the identification of the reputation drivers and the assessment of its value creation.
**Communication controlling?**

Communication controlling means not only checking budgets and costs, but **management** as a whole. It establishes professional management for corporate communications with methods to measure its value creation.

The common goal is, then, proving the value created by soft factors.

What is meant exactly by management or controlling in the context of communication controlling?

![Diagram](image)

**Fig. 1.** Communication controlling includes the whole management cycle.

The management cycle is the foundation for an holistic model of controlling and thus for the management of corporate communications. Often, however, there are gaps in the cycle and thus deficiencies in management. In practice, corporate communication focuses too much on measures. There is often too little emphasis on strategies and goals at all levels – the measurement of success and evaluation take place haphazardly and are linked only to specific measures (most recently, see Nix/Schnöring/Siegert 2009). The motto here would appear to be “Do everything that’s possible” or “The measure was successful, but why did we actually do it?”

Quite fundamentally, one must realise that nothing can be measured except the achievement of a goal. Key performance indicators (KPIs) only make sense when they are linked to a specific goal. In a sense, goals always formulate a question, to which the KPI provides an answer. To keep with the language of success measurement: for each KPI, a key performance question (KPQ) is needed. Among communicators, the methods of strategy development and goal planning are not endemic. They can benefit here from adopting management methods from controlling. To this end, various forms of goal scorecards have already been used in communication