



**krifa**  
Kristelig Fagbevægelse



EO / WOW / SS BOFOS / KRIFA / EZA SEMINAR



“How should Trade Unions  
build up a positive image  
in a declining market”

Hotel “Relax”  
Kovacica  
Serbia  
27 – 30 August 2013



## How should Trade Unions build up a positive image in a declining market



The seminar on the topic “How should Trade Unions build up a positive image in a declining market” organized by the Autonomous Trade Union of Employees in Banks, Insurance Companies and other Financial Organizations of Serbia in cooperation with the Christian Trade Union of Denmark – Krifa, the World Organization of Workers (WOW), and the European Center for Workers Questions – EZA, supported by the European Commission, was held August 27-30, 2013 at Kovacica, Serbia.



Rolf Weber, International relations Secretary of the Christian Trade Union of Denmark-Krifa pointed out the difference between image and identity:

“Identity is related with what you are known for while the image is what you would like to be known for. There is always discrepancy of image and identity”.

Mara Erdelj, BOFOS president added that the idea to organize this seminar comes from the fact Rolf Weber mentioned: Union image is not the same as its identity.

“Good image can be a product of good relations with the public. In Serbia, media are not interested in unions but the unions are in part responsible for not being enough present in media since they do not have appropriate approach to them. Modern levels of relations and communication with media are almost unknown to unions.

That is why this seminar is valuable offering us the possibility to learn how to work on union image” said BOFOS president.

## Reminder: Participants' expectations from the seminar

Krsto Pejovic, Montenegro



I expect that the news about trade unions finally get to be good ones as the outcome of this seminar.

Milos Colic, Serbia



I expect to hear theoretical and practical information about branding of the union.

Drago Domazet, Croatia



I expect our colleagues' from the Netherlands and Malta presentations will lead us to some conclusions that can be implemented with all of us.

Mojca Sfliggj, Slovenia



I would like to hear new ideas and something about Internet presentations of the unions.



Josef Vella, Malta

Since we are going to deal with important aspects of union work I hope that we will not only return home after the seminar but that we shall establish a kind of a working body that will deal with PR issues.



Miroslav Zecevic, Republic of Srpska

I expect that we shall leave here enriched with new knowledge.



Minka Rasidbegovic, Federation of B&H

Expectations are always higher than reality but since I like learning I am sure that we shall all learn something new because we are not aware of how much we do not know.



Everet de Groot, Head of communication and marketing department of the Dutch CNV Dienstenbond union has spoken on how to create identity, image and reputation. Making a parallel between his cycling hobby and image CNV representative said nothing could be done on image overnight.



**“**You have to ride straight and long distances. You cannot change your image quickly. First, you should know what image you want and to be truly dedicated to its creation because it can be lost very easily” underlined de Groot. He added that everybody in the organization had to be engaged in image building that is, to know how to behave in line with the image creation campaign. Speaking about the Dutch CNV Dienstenbond union he said it was considered reliable and competent one.

“It is good for us to be considered competent because when a journalist wishes to learn something instead of calling some other union like FNV he calls us” said Evert de Groot and explained that it was very important for the union to maintain personal contact with members as well as to bring a grain of optimism, good mood and humour in its work.

*“By using humour we become closer to young generation” said the representative of CNV and added that at the time of their logo creation they chose violet colour since it was very modern.*





Jonas Mortensen Norgaard, Head of Communication Department of Krifa union, introducing Krifa's new strategy of positive image building named “Pleasure at work” underlined the importance of the new Center for employment and career. Krifa wishes to be known for the center where you go when you feel well and also when you are not well. “We want people to use Krifa for some other things like career advancement and to get there an inspiration and impulse. Knowing that respect is one of the best motives / driving force for the people, Krifa considers every member as an individual to be paid due attention”, explained Norgaard and added that in Krifa talking with every member on Skype is very important while seminars-webinars are in more frequent use.



Rolf Weber said that unions frequently reminded of hospitals where people came when they felt bad.

“We do not want to be hospital but fitness centre where people also come when they feel well. Pleasure at work is our main mission that includes:

1. Passion that is, commitment to the creation of pleasure at work;
2. Readiness to praise the one who demonstrates potentials;
3. Courage to act and if possible to act in a new way.



Srdjan Dimitrijevic, a journalist of the Serbian National TV (RTS) defined public relations as a series of activities being undertaken to create a positive image of some organization and stressed that relations with media were the most important aspect of public relations. Speaking about the key elements of communication with media planning, Dimitrijevic pointed out the need to put an event in a broader context at the time of making a problem public. He mentioned as a good example a statement of a mobbed individual who addressed the public emphasizing that not only he has been mobbed but his colleagues as well and the consequence of such mobbing could be work stoppage of the collective and afterwards everybody would have problems...



Dimitrijevic stressed the value of showing emotions and mentioning concrete examples at the time of addressing media. "All present media houses function as the BBC because they begin a story with an example, then follows addressing those in charge (who are expected to be able to solve the problem) and at the end epilog of the story comes that is, the expected outcome of events. Journalists want to hear an information with emotion, because emotion is something that people remember. It is necessary to place a mixture of acting, drama and facts", said Dimitrijevic.

He also mentioned timing and selection of journalists as important parts of media plan. He said that the best time for the union to organize events is Monday or Tuesday between 9 and 10 a.m. or between 1 and 3 p.m. The best month for union activities is August since other events are scarce, said the RTS journalist and added that it was important to know well some well known journalists, their plans, since the invitations could be sent to them directly instead to editorial office. "When an invitation is sent to editorial office it comes to the editor - a GATE KEEPER - who controls information to be published. It is necessary to mention something interesting, intriguing in the invitation, whilst a statement should be supported by a photograph or video clip", explained Dimitrijevic.

*"You should not wear checkered clothes, a tie lighter than a shirt, or a striking jewelry because it distracts the audience's attention", advised Dimitrijevic.*

Speaking about appearance in media Srdjan Dimitrijevic gave several advises one of them being to be always ready for tricky questions.

"Give yourself time to find the way out, buy some time with several memorized sentences and do not show that you are struck with a tricky question. If you focus with difficulties do not look your interlocutor in the eyes but in the lips or chin. Do not look in camera as well because it is distracting".

## Experiences of the ZSSS in public relations

*“If there is no information there is no organization, if there is no organization there are no members and without members there is no union. There must be a direct communication with members since they are the best PRs - it is most useful to offer living stories to media.”*



Goran Lukic, Executive Secretary of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (ZSSS) passing on his union experiences in public relations mentioned that the basis of a good campaign was that every member of a team had his responsibility. Lukic mentioned as a great success his union's struggle against „little work“. During that campaign they collected signatures at referendum. Before the campaign at the very beginning 80% of people were in favour of “little work” and only 20% against. “We used experience of experts from Germany who passed on to us experiences from “little work”

implementation in that country” said Lukic. According to his explanation “little work” represents certain quantity of working hours on which lower contributions are calculated. He said “little work” and low wage were the same and stressed that “little work” in a long run killed jobs. “On the basis of what we have heard from German colleagues we were able to offer objective arguments because in campaign besides the attitude, one had to have knowledge” also underlined Lukic and added that at the end of the referendum 80% of the people were against „little work“.

In the seminar segment dedicated to unions' experiences in internal and external communication as well as public relations Ms. Mara Erdelj mentioned some of BOFOS's activities that attracted media attention such as all activities related to the project „Health and safety at work network“. She added that BOFOS has strengthened its visibility with several street events. She also emphasized the importance of internal information.



Božo Mikus, president of SING union from Croatia said that this union cooperated very well with media and two days training on public relations they had helped them a lot. „We also have our magazine that is issued every even month and the union school named „Union A to Z“, concluded Mikus.

Jesmond Bonello, UHM union president from Malta informed briefly the participants about this second biggest union's in Malta work stressing that last year even 43 collective agreements were concluded. He also mentioned that it was important to be innovative in relations with media. “It is essential for every member to know what the union promotes and what strategy it has. Strategy named Jobs Plus that is, a short and impressionable name for active labour market strategy is something that UHM is known for”, Bonello continued, emphasizing that the whole public has embraced Jobs Plus as very good strategy for new jobs creation beginning from social partners, prime minister to opposition.





At the seminar, the Branding Platform promoting positive values on which BOFOS wants to build its image was adopted. After presentations of speakers and successful workshops all participants were presented with certificates.

## BRANDING PLATFORM

### SS BOFOS:

- ▶ Is an accountable and competent adviser and advocate of labour-issues;
- ▶ Is an equal partner in the social dialogue;
- ▶ Advocates for freedom of choice and trade union organization;
- ▶ Respects each individual's individuality and needs

### SS BOFOS guarantees:

- ▶ Open relations based on mutual respect and trust;
- ▶ Exchange of information and training of its members;
- ▶ Possibilities and platforms for personal development;
- ▶ Improvement of existing levels of service and introduction of new services to members

### SS BOFOS advocates:

- ▶ Freedom of choice and trade union organization;
- ▶ Better working-conditions, health-protection and safety at work;
- ▶ Elimination of all forms of discrimination at the work place;
- ▶ Creation of a good work-atmosphere where employees feel respected and will be motivated, satisfied and committed to work

