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“On Air” Co-Existence and Separation: How Can Branded Content in Radio Co-Exist with Information?

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Paper Abstract

Abstract

Introduction

Studies assessing the separation between information and branded content projects in radio stations are scarce. Top management’s organisational espoused values influence organisational dynamics. Still, research addressing the values that top management embraces and their effects on the perceptions and decision-making of internal and external stakeholders is limited.

Using a qualitative processual approach, this research is supported by stakeholder interviews, archival data on cases and events identified in the interviews, and a narrative-building process that examines harmonising the roles of information and entertainment missions.

Goals and Methods

This study examines how top management values inform organisational decision-making when the radio group adopts an information-and-entertainment mission. Using a qualitative, processual approach and a narrative construction strategy, 62 in-depth interviews were conducted with members of a national radio group's management and with various internal and external stakeholders. In addition, archival data on cases and events identified in the interviews, in 28 cases, support the narrative-building process. Resorting to thematic analysis and narrative analysis all the collected data generate 5 narratives, stemming from the top management interviews and incorporating other stakeholder interviews, archival data and editorial policy. This approach advances qualitative research innovation. It supports that the top management's espoused values are consistent with the editorial policy of the radio group and guide the separation between marketing and editorial decisions.

Results

Results show that balancing the editorial policy and the branded content projects needed to attract revenue is achieved by separating editorial and branded content teams and positioning the radio brand along the two axes of information and entertainment.

Conclusions

This study contributes to mapping the internal and external circulation of top management's espoused values, their visibility in internal and external stakeholders' perceptions about the organisation's information and branded content values, and their influence on organisational governance.

Keywords

Narratives

Processual Approach

Information

Branded Content

Radio