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## **Syncretism of forms and media used by the electric power industry in its communication strategies**

### **Synkretyzm form i nośników wykorzystywanych przez sektor elektroenergetyczny w strategiach komunikacyjnych**

**Summary:** The electric power sector has been changing its attitude towards communication with the world. Social communication becomes a strategic element in managing many processes and projects. Naturally enough, the pursued communication strategies draw the attention of mass media. In order to sustain the attention, interesting and modern ways of transmitting information are needed.

The authors have undertaken an analysis aimed at presenting innovative communication solutions. They attempt at finding out which of the solutions are particularly efficient, what kinds of forms meet with the greatest interest of the audience and which messages become best embedded in human memory. Finally, they try to establish the contents which might serve as a kind of the sector's "labels" shaping the image of its companies.

The activity of major power companies of Poland in that respect has been assessed.

**Keywords:** electric power sector, social communication, communication strategies, syncretism of forms and media, communication of the electric power industry

**Streszczenie:** Sektor firm elektroenergetycznych zmienia swe podejście do komunikacji z otoczeniem zewnętrznym. Komunikacja społeczna staje się strategicznym elementem w zarządzaniu wieloma procesami i projektami. Realizowane strategie komunikacyjne budzą zainteresowanie mediów. Aby podtrzymać ich uwagę, potrzebne są interesujące formy i nowoczesne nośniki.

Autorki podejmują się analizy, która ma na celu prezentację innowacyjnych rozwiązań komunikacyjnych. Próbuje odpowiedzieć na pytania dotyczące efektywności w środowisku odbiorców; jakie formy spotykają się z największym zainteresowaniem, które przekazy najdłużej zapadają w pamięci, które stają się swoistymi wizerunkowymi „etykietami”. Ocenie zostaną poddane działania największych firm z branży energii elektrycznej w Polsce.

**Słowa kluczowe:** sektor elektroenergetyczny, strategie komunikacyjne, synkretyzm form i nośników, komunikacja społeczna, komunikowanie sektora elektroenergetycznego

## Introduction

The volatile business environment of power companies has forced them to implement a number of innovative solutions in the area of social communication.

Social communication has become a strategic element in management of various processes and projects. Dialogue with the public, permanent and updated information is the *sine qua non* condition for efficient modern communication strategies in the power sector. With effective outreach and attractive form of the messages conveyed the consumer's interaction becomes more likely. A dialogue with the external environment is a most important thing for any corporation. Well-established relationships provide a congenial climate for mutual understanding, as well as contemplated and conducted investment projects. A positive image, sustained development and corporate social responsibility are attained as a result.

## Transformation of Poland's power sector

In modern economy the power sector counts among the key ones. It exerts profound impact on business ratios of companies and is major factor conditioning the changes of the business trends. The energy security is an issue of national importance, in which all social groups take interest, from the ruling élites, politicians, academic world to businesspeople to the consumers using the electric power in their households on a daily basis. Given the universal application of its products, the power sector remains the centre of attention of the broadly termed public opinion.

There has been a heated debate in Poland concerning the shape of the country's current and prospective energy policy, since it is obvious that contemporary activities are bound to have strong impact of the life of future generations. Viewed as a crucial moment in the history of Poland's power sector can be the year 1997, when the new Energy Act<sup>1</sup> was adopted, having paved the way for breaking the state monopoly to be replaced by a liberal market operating under the rules of competition.

Further milestones were three Community directives<sup>2</sup> providing the basis for statutory regulations concerning the energy market of Poland and its mechanisms. One of the solutions consisted in the establishment of the Energy Regulatory Office (Polish abbr. URE), with its responsibilities in the field of "monitoring of the regulated (fuel and power) sectors, support to the important aspects of their development (including, *inter alia*, promotion of renewable sources of energy, protection of consumers, promotion of competition)"<sup>3</sup>. Yet another essential aspect is the "new structure of power companies; fin observance of the rule of autonomy, separation was made between the functions of electrical power supply and

<sup>1</sup> The Energy Act of 10 April, 1997 ("Journal of Laws" 1997, No. 54, item 348 as amended).

<sup>2</sup> Directive 96/92/EC, Directive 2003/54/EC, Directive 2009/72/EC.

<sup>3</sup> Biuletyn URE [URE Bulletin] 2/2014, *Sprawozdanie z działalności Prezesa URE w 2013 r.* [A Report on the Activities of URE President], p. 6, [www.ure.gov.pl](http://www.ure.gov.pl) [accessed on 29.07.2014].

distribution. Supply Companies and Distribution System Operators (DSO) were created”<sup>4</sup>, and individual consumers were granted the right to select the power provider.

In the market of Poland there operate five energy groups supplying the electrical power. These include: ENEA S.A., Energa S.A., PGE S.A., RWE Polska, Tauron S.A. The groups attempt at finding their competitive advantages in many areas, communication with the external environment being one of them.

### **Diversity of communication concepts**

The external communication in power industry is burdened with a number of clichés concerning both specific features of the companies themselves and the way in which the businesses operate. The external stakeholders need reliable information and education. The complex processes, from a change of the operator to the modernisation of the line or construction of nuclear power plant may all be a source of considerable anxiety. Local communities, caring for the safety of human lives and health must not be deprived of knowledge about the functioning of the power companies and their infrastructure. The said means that the communication-related activities should be defined and inscribed in the company strategies as fundamental elements of the new tactics. Communication via values becomes essential. These are often specified in the mission or vision as the sets of values whereby the role played by the organisation for its environment is communicated. Table 1 presents the missions and visions of Poland’s Energy Groups. An analysis of the strategic elements shows that the main values of the companies include: care for the customer, trust, improvement of the customers’ life quality, building a better future. Positive relationships with the external environment also contribute to better and more efficient company operation and have immediate effect on how the staff and executives function in the business. The message has to be reliable and attractive. Its functions are much farther-reaching than they were in the past and it is supposed to evoke interaction, as it is only through dialogue that a precise diagnosis of the needs and expectations of the audience can be made.

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<sup>4</sup> M. Łosiewicz, *Grupa Energa – identyfikacja wizerunkowa w dobrym stylu*, [in:] *Współczesne teorie komunikacji 2* [The Energa Group – Image Identification in Grand Style [in:] *Modern Theories of Communication 2*], A. Łaba (ed.), Wrocław 2009, p. 162.

Table 1. Missions and visions of Poland's Power Groups

| Group name   | Mission, vision  |
|--------------|--|
| Enea Group   | <p>Mission</p> <p>Group goodwill growth through the building of trust and credibility with the Customer</p> <p>Vision</p> <p>To be a fully integrated power group building up its competitive advantage by flexible reacting to market needs and efficient resource management</p>   |
| Energa Group | <p>Mission</p> <p><i>Improvement of quality of life and work of our customers</i></p> <p>Vision</p> <p><i>Creation of an efficient and strong Group, flexibly adapting itself to market conditions as: a low-risk company with good performance indicators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>an infallible, first choice power supplier</i></li> <li>• <i>an environment-friendly and efficient power generating business</i></li> </ul>   |
| PGE Group    | <p>Mission</p> <p><i>To energetically create value and build a safer future</i></p> <p>Vision</p> <p><i>To be a leader in dynamic development, thanks to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>modern and diversified production portfolio</i></li> <li>• <i>revealed customer-friendly attitude</i></li> <li>• <i>efficiency, innovations and financial strengths</i></li> <li>• <i>skilful use of the Group's potential and its business opportunities at home and abroad</i></li> </ul> |
| RWE Group    | <p>Mission/Vision</p> <p><i>To be involved in permanent development of the European energetic system, striving to achieve possibly best economic results as a trust-deserving partner.</i></p> <p><i>Focusing on investments in production of energy from renewable resources and maintenance of modern network infrastructure while providing modern power-related products and services.</i></p>   |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Tauron Group | <p>Mission</p> <p><i>Provide power to our customers following the industry's best practices securing growth of the firm's value</i></p> <p>Vision</p> <p><i>To be one of the region's lead power companies</i></p> |
|--------------|--|

Source: own elaboration based on: [http://www.ir.enea.pl/pl/informacja\\_o\\_grupie\\_kapitalowej\\_enea/strategia\\_rozwoju/](http://www.ir.enea.pl/pl/informacja_o_grupie_kapitalowej_enea/strategia_rozwoju/) [accessed on: 03.08.14] [http://grupa.energia.pl/Mission\\_i\\_Vision.xml](http://grupa.energia.pl/Mission_i_Vision.xml) [accessed on: 3.08.14] [http://raportrocznyppge.pl/page\\_5\\_pl.php](http://raportrocznyppge.pl/page_5_pl.php) [accessed on: 3.08.14] <https://www.rwe.pl/web/cms/pl/1921146/start/wszystko-o-rwe/strategia/> [accessed on: 3.08.14] <http://www.tauron-pe.pl/tauron/o-tauronie/strategia-korporacyjna/Strony/strategia-korporacyjna.aspx> [accessed on: 03.08.14].

The companies are well aware of the circumstances, and in order to stand out against others (so as to gain competitive advantage), they use a full range of the means being in their disposal. Not always does it prove sufficient, though, and in order to develop some sort of *differentia specifica* of their communication strategy the firms in question resort to syncretism of the forms and media applied. For the purpose of this paper, under the notion of syncretism the authors shall mean the combining of various, oftentimes divergent or even contradicting forms<sup>5</sup>, paths or philosophies of communication. The varied elements drawn from separate models are bound together to form a coherent unity. The mixture of various styles, types, genres is expected to result in effective two-way communication, offering numerous opportunities for an innovative application of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)<sup>6</sup>, responding on the one hand to the needs of effective communication with the external environment and to the expectations concerning the implementation of the strategic goals of the Energy Groups on the other. As one of the co-creators of the concept, Don Schultz, puts it, the IMC is a „process of permanent development and implementation of programmes covering various forms of persuasive communication targeting consumers. It (...) takes into consideration all types of contact with the customers which the organisation and the brand has at its disposal (...) and makes use of all possible ways of communication that may suit the clients. (...) IMC takes, as the point of departure, the customer's perspective and then specifies the forms and methods through which the communication programmes would be developed (...)”<sup>7</sup>. As regards the tools, the syncretism concerns, *inter alia*, the application of public relations, advertising, promotion, sponsoring, traditional and social media.

In case of each of the analysed firms, its communication strategy is based on the adopted assumptions and feedback information received from the market. As the report

<sup>5</sup> W. Kopaliński, *Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych* [The Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases], Warszawa 1989, p. 493.

<sup>6</sup> In Polish translation, the name of the concept is *Zintegrowana Komunikacja Marketingowa (ZKM)*.

<sup>7</sup> A. Świątecki, *Zintegrowane Komunikowanie Marketingowe* [Integrated Marketing Communication], Warszawa 2001, p. 24.

on the „Communication of the electrical power sector via the Internet media<sup>89</sup>” shows, the leader among the Energy Groups is PGE, the largest of the companies. As many as 1,188 records concerning it were published on the Web during the first quarter of 2013. Tauron came second (with 533 records), Energa (378) and Enea (301) occupying further positions. There is a real abyss between RWE and the leader (PGE), as only 27 articles were published about the former. The Energy Groups are mentioned either favourably or in a neutral manner, the negative information accounting for less than 1% of the total amount. A detailed statement regarding publications on the Web and their overtone is presented below, in table 2.

Table 2. The amount of information about Energy Groups on the Web and their overtone in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2013

| Energy Group | Positive information | Neutral information | Negative information | Total information in the 1st quarter of 2013 |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| Enea         | 110                  | 168                 | 23                   | 301  |
| Energa       | 167                  | 188                 | 23                   | 378  |
| PGE          | 580                  | 535                 | 73                   | 1188   |
| RWE          | 27                   | -                   | -                    | 27   |
| Tauron       | 280                  | 233                 | 40                   | 533  |

Source: Own elaboration based on INSOURCE report *Komunikacja sektora energii elektrycznej w mediach internetowych* [Communication of the Electrical Power Sector Using the Internet Media], p. 3.

During the examined period the bulk of the information was published in social media and on professional websites. Examining the feedback and assessment thereof is – along with the close identification of the target group – one of the elements used by the firms to develop an effective communication concept.

### Practical use of innovative communication solutions

The observation of the strategic communication of the Energy Groups shows that they gladly resort to the application of unique solutions allowing them to capture the leadership premium. The latter is attainable where new ideas are exploited, not applied by the immediate competitors. The power sector also takes over methods and tools that have proven successful in other business areas, adapting them to their specific needs. It is well-worth noting, for instance, that the Energy Groups use the same sort of media – usually a website of their own, social media (mostly Facebook, less frequently Pinterest or Instagram), YouTube channel, and apply the tools typical of the areas of public relations, advertising, promotion or sponsoring. What is peculiar about them, though, is the fact

<sup>89</sup> Covered by the report are the results of the 1 quarter of 2013.

that each time the communication takes a new shape, different style, draws from various genres or makes some special use of those.

Keeping in mind that what the audience needs is not just reliable information but also a certain amount of education, the power companies turn to various learning strategies. One of those followed is the instrumental learning strategy, with the behaviour viewed simultaneously an instrument for the attainment of an earlier set goal and a reward (an ever more frequent repetition of the behaviour being expected as a result)<sup>9</sup>. The mode of communication, as followed by the Energa Group, is a good illustration of such activities. The Group uses the instrumental conditioning to build up good and lasting relationships with the external environment. The method is diversified depending on the type of the audience, hence the messages directed to the already attracted customers (concerning, for instance, the payment of electricity bills with PAYBACK points) differ completely from the (more varied) messages expected to attract a wider group of audience (including new customers); the latter are mostly used to help build the company image. A good example of that is the large-scale education activities aimed to create a positive image of the firm and the strategy pursued by it.

Communication by education, as carried out by the Energa Group, takes up many varied forms appearing under a common name of the “Energy Planet”. And thus the name can be referred to a website destined to school children and their teachers, a contest for elementary school pupils and staff, and an amusement park where school students can gain knowledge about power generation, the ways of using it and technical possibilities of the energy storage. The message is transmitted using a combination of various channels (you can learn about the “Energy Planet” via a website, Facebook and the Youtube channel). It is in a similar way that various tools and genres are combined, expected not only to evoke the repeated and multi-faceted relationships with the customers, but also to build up a community initiated by the power company and continuing to stay together thanks to it. Attractive messages adapted to the needs and expectations are exploited to that end.

The website has been designed to evoke interaction both with the teachers (who can load attractive teaching materials for their classes, co-create the website or join a discussion on the forum) and children who can use an Internet encyclopaedia („Energopedia”<sup>10</sup>), take part in an interactive mission, play games, do jig-saws or got involved in picture colouring. An important feature of the website is that it facilitates interaction between school children and teachers, which is possible via a “Virtual Classroom”. Considering that, the Energy Group, as the promoter of the undertaking in question, is bound with the teachers by a common objective – teaching electricity to the children in an attractive way. It is also vital that both the form of the education and its contents (including the

<sup>9</sup> A. Falkowski, T. Tyszka, *Psychologia zachowań konsumenckich* [The Psychology of Consumer Behaviour], Gdańsk 2006, p. 33-38. The strategies of classical and instrumental conditioning, as referred to advertising and promotional activities have been, on many occasions, described in literature. See, *inter alia*, D. Doliński, *Psychologiczne mechanizmy reklamy* [The Psychological Mechanisms of Advertising], Gdańsk 2003, p. 92-96.

<sup>10</sup> The Energopedia contains knowledge from the field of environmental protection, electrical engineering, science and ecology.

pro-ecological attitudes promoted there) prove effective in diverting the attention from the awkward issues of electrical power distribution and sales or the negative impact the electric current may exert.

A varied range of rewards adds to the attractiveness of the forms of education. The teachers visiting the website and conducting their classes using methodical manuals developed by the Energa Group can, having taken part in a contest, win a number of awards, such as arrangement of the arrival of the “Energa Planet”<sup>11</sup> to their place or the obtaining of educational certificates. Similarly, educational toys and books can be obtained by school children. Thanks to the actions the energy group not only extends the time of its relationships with the audience but it also builds up a network of interpersonal contacts (the energy group – teachers – school children; the energy group – teachers – school children – parents; the energy group – teachers – parents) and creates its image as a donor and a business entity taking interest in building up a safe future of its stakeholders. It is also essential that the image is built up mainly thanks to the efforts of third parties (teachers, parents, children), who – through the activities undertaken – express their acceptance and attachment to the firm, presenting its philosophy in a positive light.

The RWE Group has attempted to adopt a way of communication similar to that launched by the Energa Group. The communication is not, however, as shrewdly well-thought and skilfully planned as the above mentioned developments are. A sort of an equivalent to the “Energy Planet” is the “RWE Safe Energy” programme addressed to teachers, school children and their parents. The campaign was a sort of an educational game, aimed at making the audience aware of the risks related to the use of electrical appliances. The “RWE Safe Energy” got recommendations from the School Superintendent Offices of Mazowieckie and Podlaskie Voivodships (Provinces), the teachers there being supplied with science class scenarios, work sheets, boards and booklets that could serve as guides to the world of electricity. The [www.bezpiecznaenergia.pl](http://www.bezpiecznaenergia.pl) website has included games and pictures for the children to colour in<sup>12</sup>. Currently the website plays the role of an information page and a school teachers’ forum. There is, however, no clear context for the activities undertaken and the published articles are not related to the firm’s mission. With the communication lacking in clarity and coherence, no firm grounds for the building and maintenance of good relationships with the audience have been established. The tools and ways of communication used still need a well developed strategy that would allow for a more efficient communication in the long run.

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<sup>11</sup> The initiative in question is an educational campaign launched to cover various cities of Poland (Szczytno, Koszalin, Grudziądz, Ostrów Wielkopolski, Płock, Sopot). The Amusement Park includes a number of zones: a 3-D cinema one where a film about the adventures of “energy manikins” can be watched, a zone of experiments in which research of their own can be conducted by children willing to verify the laws of physics, in which attempt they are supervised by scientists. Yet another zone of the “Energy Planet” Park is place where a bicycle relay is held for the children to generate the electric current and where the secrets of an electric car can be examined. It should be added that some of the activities mentioned here are accompanied by contests allowing the participants to win rewards. A Relay Race has involved 10 locations visited by the Amusement Park, with the local inhabitants participating.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. <http://www.rwe.pl/web/cms/pl/1044542/start/dla-mediow/aktualnosci/fundacja-rwe-w-polsce-uczy-najmlodszych-jak-bezpiecznie-korzystac-z-energii-elektrycznej/> [accessed on 3.09.2014].

As opposed to the case described above, relationships with the children and adult audiences have been consistently built up by the Polska Grupa Energetyczna (Polish Energy Group - PGE) using the "Energy of Words" contest in stylistics (original writing). The coherent combination of the activities undertaken in that respect can be seen in online services and at [www.energiaslow.pl](http://www.energiaslow.pl) website. The community with whom special ties have been established is the Facebook users, to whom it was proposed to invent educational fairy tales on electricity generation and the meaning of the renewable power resources. The community were asked to name the key words for the subjects in question, so as to prepare a kind of a material for the writing of three tales (about water, wind and biomass as the renewable sources of energy). Over 15 938 words were listed by the users having thus become the co-authors of the fairy tales ( their first and last names being mentioned in the text where also the numbers of those having indicated the same words were stated) and winners in the contest. A writer (Sylvia Chutnik) and two musicians (Paulina Przybysz, a singer, and MC Silko, a rapper) were asked to write the tales<sup>13</sup>. Thanks to the thus planned communication not only did PGE initiate interaction with the audience, but it also created a sort of a community, participating with full conviction in the implementation of the mission of the energy group – the building of a safer future through education. By the same the energy group also bolstered up the participants' self-esteem, rewarding their efforts and dedication. In addition, it triggered their will to undertake common actions with which they could identify themselves, as their co-authors. The latter effect seems to be even more telling.

The communication format adopted in the last case, assumed – just as it was with other power companies (e.g. the activities of the Energa Group described above) – that various forms of communication would be used, including a literary genre of special meaning in education (being, however, more a hybrid genre than a didactic or strictly magic fairy tale). In addition, by giving one assignment to the audience (and thus starting interaction) the execution of other ones was provoked. The mentioning of a word entailed the reading of the tale and, consequently, resulted in the distribution of the latter (by reading it to children at their bed-time or sending it to friends via Facebook or e-mail). The undertaking of all the actions was encouraged on the website where links to social media (Facebook, Youtube) were also placed along with a contact form attached, to allow sending the contents to three more users. And thus the "Energy of the Words" with the various forms employed by it became an important channel of social communication for the firm, which – in that very way – effectively builds up the feeling of attachment among its customers, gaining extremely positive opinions thanks to the initiated activities.

The syncretism of communication forms can be also seen in the activities of the Tauron Group, which – similarly to the Groups of Energa and OGE – creates various facets of communication and applies numerous tools to build up individual relationships with its customers. Referring to the selected interests and passions of its targeted customers and their aesthetic tastes the firm attempts at creating a good foundation for the relations by

<sup>13</sup> Cf. <http://www.gkpgc.pl/biuro-prasowe/komunikaty-prasowe/korporacyjne/bajki-ktore-maja-moc/> [accessed on 3.09.2014].

implying that it shares the audience's liking and makes efforts to satisfy them on an individual basis. Besides customary links to the social media (where current news or press articles concerning the firm's operation can be read), the [www.tauron-pe.pl](http://www.tauron-pe.pl) website presents offers of interactive shops and attractive discounts. The platform of the relationships between the energy group and its customers is the purchasing of fashionable garments or equipment (see the "Freshen up Your Wardrobe Before Winter" or the "EcoGadgets" campaigns), sports products (available at the website's basketball player's shop, volleyball player's shop, runner's shop and tourist's shop) or participation in cultural events (as tickets to the STU Theatre or for the Cracow's festivals of Misteria Paschalia, OFF PLUS CAMERA International Festival of Independent Cinema, Opera Rara cycle, the Wrocław Opera performances and concerts of the National Symphonic Orchestra of the Polish Radio in Katowice can be obtained there). What is peculiar about the thus invented messages is the fact that they do not actually meet the goals and expectations desired by the audience, but rather initiate contacts and develop a trust supposed to result in favourable assessment of the firm's operation. The practice, as described above, does actually resemble the "small steps" method, well-known as a selling technique, effective in gaining the dedication of the external environment.

Another solution in the sphere of social communication, applied by the Tauron Group, is the stands named "Modern Contact Zones", placed at shopping malls. Visitors to the zones can participate in various contests, solve riddles, build a battery out of fruit or create a simple electric circuit and watch a "hair-ruffling" Van de Graaf generator's operation. They can also learn innovative methods of protecting their homes against all kinds of risks and make use of the services of a consultant who, having examined their electricity bills, will suggest solutions meeting their individual needs<sup>14</sup>. Promotion and advertising tools are successfully used under that scheme and social communication activities concurrent with the firm's mission are launched, thus building up a community with the customers and encouraging them to take further actions.

It is rather telling that each of the energy groups, using the experience of their predecessors, attempts at making itself distinguished from the latter through the creation of a unique area of communication and use of different promotional, advertising or selling tools. This is clearly seen in the activities of the Enea Group which tries to establish and maintain contact with the customers via the nc+ TV platform. The new clients of the energy group are offered attractive discounts on access to the TV, which can, however, be gained only upon talking to a consultant capable of developing an offer adapted to the way in which television is used by the client ( film, sports, educational or scientific packages of channels can be selected). Essential in that respect is that the customer may not draw the information simply from the website, but has to get in touch with the consultant. It is thus the customer, declaring his/her interest in the offer, that initiates another interaction, by doing which he/she puts himself in a subordinate position against the provider (the Enea Group represented by the consultant). Of importance is also the fact that not only does

<sup>14</sup> M.G., *Elektryzujące konkursy* [The Electrifying Contests], "Polska Energia" 2013, vol. 11, p. 10. Source: <http://www.tauron-pe.pl/Lists/PolskaEnergia/61-magazyn-polska-energia-11-2013.pdf> [accessed on 5.09.2014].

the provider receive a clear signal regarding the customer's needs and expectations, but that it is the provider itself that builds up a positive communication portrait based on the relationship. In case of the Enea Group the factor is one of indisputable meaning, as it is related to the firm's mission which includes *building up the Customer's trust and gaining a growth in the Group's goodwill by the same*.

## Summary

The peculiar features of social communication, as launched by the power sector, make one reflect on the use of various form, genres and styles making a coherent whole together with other promotional, advertising or selling activities. The selection of syncretism itself, and a change in the functions of certain methods or genres followed under the concept certainly helps attract the interest of various groups of external stakeholders, including – in particular – individual customers and media; the two groups undoubtedly appreciate the application of the innovative formats and projects, attractive both in their subject and methods. The attractiveness of the form is also of importance for the memorising of the message. In addition, it evokes further interactions, as the social media (and other fields where the means of communication are applied) reveal. It is in the media that the best projects, winning special recognition of the audience, gain the status of genuine “labels” shaping the firms' image. Considering the said, hardly is it surprising to note that the position of the leader is occupied by Polska Grupa Energetyczna – PGE (Polish Energy Group), followed by TAURON and Energa Groups.

Another interesting aspect of the analysis is the blurred differences between those sending the message and those receiving it. It turns out that the audience, once passive, becomes ever more an active participant of the interaction, their activity ever more frequently serving to shape a positive image of the energy group.

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