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**Strategic Communication and Its Absence in Armenia's Tech Sector
Development**

Bachelor's thesis

Yerevan 2025

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Introduction

If businesses, right on the first day of their creation, prioritize social media presence, targeted campaigns, and a strategy to represent their brand identity to gain partners and a customer base, why shouldn't countries adopt such strategic communication approaches to position themselves internationally? In the given context, strategic communication, nation branding, and public relations, and professionals who can do the work become important for countries' global standing, especially in small countries with no gold and oil, like Armenia.

Having worked in the Armenian technology sector for over two years as a marketing communications specialist, I revealed a number of success stories that went underreported, showing the systematic gap in strategic communications and country-level storytelling. Had I not worked in the industry, I would have stayed clueless about such stories, too. This created a paradox of duality, from one perspective a sense of pride, because despite being surrounded by war and enemies, Armenia is thriving with intelligence, and on the other hand, disappointment, because of the lack of recognition not only internationally, but even locally. Influenced by these personal observations, I decided to write my capstone, raising awareness of the problem and analyzing deeply the possible reasons behind Armenia's technology ecosystem's stories going unnoticed.

Thesis statement

This capstone argues that the lack of strategic communications, national storytelling, public relations, and tech journalism in Armenia's technology sector greatly limits the country's local and international visibility. Hence, the tech industry struggles to attract more global partnerships, investment, and funding opportunities, and recognition, which ultimately slows down the long-term growth as a regional tech hub. Through qualitative survey, expert interviews, and media monitoring, this study will explore why these non-technical positions are unrecognized and underutilized and what benefits their involvement could bring to the sector.

Research question

This research is an attempt to address the following main question: How does media shape the perception and development of a country's tech identity as a regional tech hub? The researcher will aim to explore how media specialists, tech journalists, or public relations and

communications specialists' roles are acknowledged in the Armenian technology industry and how they can bring benefits to the country's specific sector. Another research question is exploring whether such non-technical people are necessary for the development of the country's tech ecosystem, and if yes, what benefits they bring to the country's development.

Hypotheses

Based on my research focus, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Armenian tech companies do not hire non-technical specialists because they lack awareness of their strategic value.

Hypothesis 2: While some companies recognize the need for such roles, they either face budget limitations or struggle to find qualified professionals in the local market with knowledge of the tech industry.

Literature Review

This section presents the existing research, directly or partially connected to the research topics, and hypotheses contributing to other findings.

In the article "All We Need is a Silicon Valley: Tech Place as a Strategic Branding Tool," Itzhak Mashiah (2024) examines how countries strategically use the notion of a "Silicon Valley" to build their global image and drive economic growth. Mashiah claims that beyond being a geographic place, Silicon Valley has grown into a symbolic brand defining innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological excellence.

Employing the branding theories (Messely et al., 2015; Clouse et al., 2020), Mashiah emphasizes that repeating the "Silicon Valley" brand has become an intentional marketing strategy. Nation branding, according to Aronczyk (2008), "allows national governments to better manage and control the image they project to the world as a communications strategy and a practical initiative" (Aronczyk 2008, p. 42). According to the data Mashiah (2024) gathered through content analysis, countries intentionally employ the "high-tech" concept to control their image. These countries want to present themselves as sophisticated and innovative. The paper also links nation branding and tech diplomacy and soft power, suggesting that building a local "Silicon Valley" can have diplomatic and reputational purposes. The author introduces the concept of tech-driven storytelling that uses strategically written narratives, visuals, and collaborations to elevate the tech region's global image.

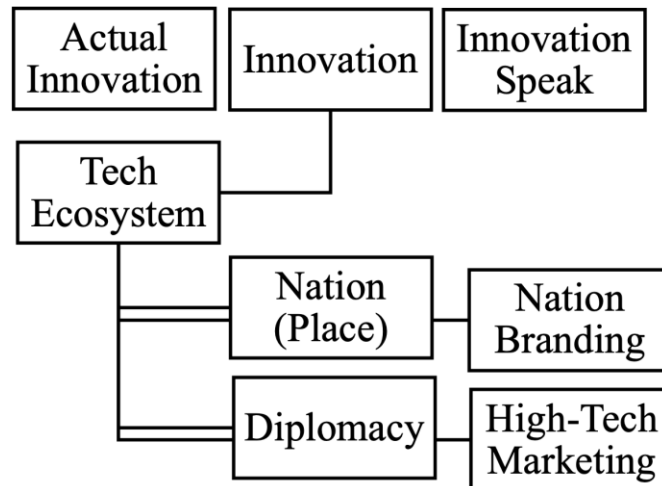


Fig. 2 Conceptual framework of innovation speak by nations

Source: Adapted from Mashiah, 2024

The author concludes that establishing a branded tech hub, including implementing high-tech marketing and innovation-centered storytelling, remains a decisive tool for regional growth,

nation branding, and international diplomacy if it represents the real technological success stories and strategic messaging. In addition, the research showed that countries all over the world already actively use these tactics promoting their domestic technological innovations, innovators, products, developments, and companies as a central component of their long-term public diplomacy efforts (Mashiah, 2024, p. 453).

In exploring how communications and media can shape the country's success in a certain direction, the example of Shenzhen is quite convincing when Chinese scholars and experts began to realize the importance of sharing their success stories with the world and their people. In terms of news reporting, even if a government allows journalists the freedom to report on everything happening within a country. Although Chinese journalists attempt to share important facts with their audiences through news reports, what audiences hear and view is ultimately affected by long-term national developmental directions (Xu et al., 2023, p.194). In this specific case of using media as a tool for branding a city, the Chinese context of choosing a city branding strategy through media was managed at the national level, indicating that it was planned, organized, and implemented by the government. Hence, if a country wants to develop a city, the media can be an important force in this process. Molotch (1976). Focusing on the building and deployment of international companies, the People's Daily shaped the image of the global economy in the East as 'high-tech' from 1992 until the end of 2004. Members of the People's Daily, which was the central mouthpiece of the CCP, positively promoted the distorted view of Shenzhen as a center of high-tech and even its signature brand, ignoring the fact that its technological basis was just beginning (Xu et al., 2023, p. 203). If ignoring the fact that the government used media for propaganda, pushing their agenda of having a winning country, this kind of coverages promoted mainstream opinions within the CCP and improved Shenzhen's

conditions. To draw parallels between this case and my capstone project, highlighting the fact that despite having full freedom to share everything connected with the high-tech industry and startup ecosystem, Armenia lacks tech journalists. However, there is no data available to prove this, yet a number of representatives from the Armenian technology industry and communications specialists working in the field, even Armenian media outlets' tech editors themselves, stated that the Armenian media landscape does not have tech enough journalists, rather, it has enthusiastic journalists who cover topics related to the technology industry, which gives another point to continue to explore the reasons, underlining the statistical and academic gaps on this topic.

This is not to say that Armenia has no nation branding, but its reputation during Soviet times is comparable. During that period, Armenia was recognized as the Silicon Valley of the Soviet Union (EVN Report, 2021), having more scientists per capita than any other Soviet republic. Back then, high-tech innovation was considerably connected with Mergelyan Institute, where from 1958 to 1965, the Razdan family of general-purpose computers was developed, and defense and civic automatic control systems were also manufactured. The point is that Armenia recognized and valued its technical specialists long before AI started generating national wealth for countries, and it is unfair to lose past reputation because of not having enough non-technical people who would communicate all the local success to the world. If, during the Soviet times, Armenia was the leading tech company, now it may not immediately come to mind for many. The positive side is that starting from scratch is not a necessary element. The long-term chances of the country can be impacted if the government supports and encourages the growth of the industry and incorporates it as a compulsory element into a well-managed national brand strategy. (Anholt, 2006, p. 11). Continuing the topic, another of my sources is about the

connection between brands and countries, presenting the advantages that famous brands bring to the country. A national brand strategy determines the most realistic, most competitive, and most compelling strategic vision for the country and ensures that this vision is supported, reinforced, and enriched by every act of communication between the country and the rest of the world (Anholt, 2006, p. 11). By saying communication, the author (Anholt, 2006) means any type of communication activities that brands do about the country's exports, about how it positions itself for trade, tourism, foreign investment, and talent hiring, how it conducts domestic and foreign policy actions and how these actions are communicated, representing with the world. Most importantly, in the book, it is mentioned that the big part of the nation's brand is how it is represented in international media, what organizations and bodies it is a part of, whose nations it associates with, how it competes with other economies in entertainment and sports, what it returns and what it offers the world.

In the Brand New Justice book (Anholt, 2006, p.33), an interesting trick done by the government was presented. The Korean government, understanding brands' positive impact on the economy, decided to create a specific Brand Academy. They selected 300 well-known products that are technologically and aesthetically competitive on a global scale, and through that academy, they annually prepared around 500 specialists as part of the government's ambition to strengthen the country's "brand infrastructure."

Important insights into how high-tech companies create and convey their corporate identity can be gained from Plowman and Chiu's study (2007) on corporate identity and reputation in Silicon Valley. They examined corporate identity campaigns to show how branding, reputation, and image-building are strategically integrated as tools for influencing public opinion. Their study focuses on the reasons, methodology, and success elements of

corporate branding initiatives, especially in the context of high-tech companies. According to the report, corporate identity reflects how an organization views itself and wants stakeholders to perceive it. This source also offers research on the long-term advantages of such initiatives, presenting how consistent reputation-building initiatives can maintain a business's function in the high-tech industry. The progress of stakeholder confidence and trust is one significant benefit. Businesses may align their public image with corporate reality and establish credibility by communicating their principles and goals. Additionally, their distinctive qualities and creating an apparent presence in corporate branding initiatives assist businesses in standing out in competitive markets, adding to the overall country's economy. Another element mentioned was the strategic emphasis on humanizing corporate communications in the campaigns. Storytelling here was a noteworthy part. By focusing on user advantages and shared values instead of just technical stories, businesses could engage audiences more on a deeper level and guarantee that their innovations have an impact apart from their functional capabilities. Additionally, they argued that the internal part influences how the company is perceived. To maintain alignment between corporate culture and intended image, there should be a participative corporate culture in which employees are encouraged to partake in initiatives to increase credibility (Dozier et al., 1995). Employee engagement, they claimed, has a major impact on an organization's external image, with staff members being seen as reliable information sources (Caillouet & Allen, 1996). Likewise, the research highlights the essence of incorporating marketing and public relations into an integrated marketing communications strategy, which guarantees messaging coherence and links communications to corporate goals (Caywood, 1994; Gonring, 1994). It is assumed that if the company is a big corporation and brings a good amount of income annually, then it is doing well in terms of having an established public image, marketing, and sales. However, this research

showed that even for companies operating in the most successful and wealthy ecosystems in Silicon Valley, they still need to take action for their public image and not rely only on their geographic privileges. Lastly, even though the analysis is still focused on distributors and employees, the possible impact of communications specialists like tech journalists and public relations specialists, who act as intermediaries between corporations and external audiences is not examined. To close these gaps, my capstone will study how media experts affect corporate identity campaigns' success or failure, especially in high-tech sectors. This study will build on Plowman and Chiu's (2007) results by examining their function in mediating narratives, influencing opinions, and managing crises, delivering a more comprehensive awareness of the relationship between external communication dynamics and corporate branding efforts.

According to another study done by Deephouse (2000), a company's performance can be greatly impacted by its media reputation, which is defined as how a company is portrayed in the media overall. Empirical data emphasizes the significance of media perception in competitive marketplaces, where good media coverage can improve business performance by improving public image, stakeholder trust, and, ultimately, profitability, even though this influence may appear tiny in absolute terms. The hypothesis of the research was that the coefficient of media favorableness is positively related to Return on Asset (ROA). With a sample of 526, the research showed that media reputation raised ROA's pseudo R² by 0.02. The latter discovered that adding a company's environmental rating to a model that forecasted ROA raised the explained variance by 0.01, which is a 4% rise. This paper's incorporation of media reputation raised the pseudo R² by over 5%. Given the encouraging findings, the factors that influence media reputation are crucial topics for future research and are very much connected to my capstone's focus. However, the gap in this research was the fact that the research was done in 2000, and 25

years would have significantly changed the situation. Another difference was that research was conducted in the USA, yet my capstone seeks to address the situation in Armenia, especially in the technology sector.

Communication, journalism, and PR terms are often misunderstood, with fixed expressions frequently interchanged. The research (Avetisyan, N/D) shows a widespread misconception within Armenia's public and private sectors regarding the role and responsibilities of public relations specialists. This misunderstanding is evident among the heads of organizations—public, commercial, or governmental—and among many individuals who occupy PR-related positions. For instance, some press secretaries from various ministries openly stated that they do not engage in PR activities, perceiving the field negatively. This further confirms the consequences of the failure to strategically put into action the potential of PR specialists within the country. These misunderstandings may be the outcome of Armenia's post-Soviet shift because, during that period, the traditional media responsibilities were reinterpreted, but in contrast to international norms, the discipline of strategic communication did not achieve institutional or scholarly importance. Unlike the United Kingdom, the study of public relations has emerged largely within schools of management and business, which influenced the emphasis and focus of scholarly work conducted by UK academics in this field. (Moss et al. 1999, p. 19).

However, implementing storytelling for communicating the strengths of the country's tech ecosystem to the world, creating relationships with international tech journalists to ensure consistent and up-to-date coverage, collaborating with well-known and targeted figures as ambassadors for the tech industry abroad, and most importantly, cooperating with analysts and researchers to collect, format, and present data for informed decision-making, attracting data-driven investors, all of this together could contribute to a more reliable, stable, and famous tech

ecosystem, which in its contribute 5% of the country's total GDP (Armstat.am, 2023). Even though PR's potential has been acknowledged, not much research has been done on how PR specialists could strategically support Armenia's status as a regional tech hub, an area where their knowledge could help with important branding and communication issues, benefiting the country's economy. This is how my capstone will address and fill in the gaps.

In other words, the specific industry of the country needs branding. Ying Fan (2006), the author of "*Branding the Nation: what is Being Branded,*" the paper suggests that the nation branding concept is aimed at creating a strong, simple, and united idea, which is derived from emotion and can be expressed both in speech and visual and can be understood by people in different contexts. Nation branding integrates the wider self of the nation besides the political, cultural, and commercial projection to make it complete. Fan (2006, 7p) states that while product branding centers around tangible products or services, nation branding is built on a far more complex and nuanced level. Thus, nation branding should market the nation's image, which is a far more multifaceted process than marketing a product. In product branding, proprietary branding typically involves one company or product team, while nation branding is multi-stakeholder, state, the private sector, and society. In the campaign of product branding, the targeted consumers are segmented, but for nation branding, in the given context of the High-Tech industry, the customers are international investors, businessmen, startups, founders, international journalists, and the international community.

Anholt (2003, p. 7-8) stated that poor countries in the Third World use nation branding to develop their economies, but they first have to find or make something to sell: a competitive product or service. To achieve this, Anhold suggested countries concentrate on investment, technology, and know-how, and, only after that, nation branding. The steady annual growth of

20%, many international office presences, and being one of the few countries to have AI as a part of all levels of the education system with FAST Foundation's "AI Generation" program all confirmed that the first steps are already completed, and now it is the time for non-technical people to act and build upon technical specialists' success. However, Armenia is still not moving at the pace it needs to.

Research Methodology

This capstone adopted a mixed methods approach, incorporating qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey to research deeper reasons for not having enough involvement of non-technical professionals in the Armenian technology sector, gather perspectives from important community members, and examine the impact on the country's recognition as a regional tech hub.

The survey aims to collect data and insights from key decision-makers in the field to understand the potential barriers or reasons. Before I start analyzing the survey I have completed with my chosen target group, it is important to highlight the reasons behind my decision and justify why it is the right choice. Given the niche topic, I decided to explore, I strongly believe that the decision-makers in the tech companies should participate in the survey. In this case, I can guarantee that my survey results reflect the reality. By decision-makers, I mean the positions that

identify the company's needs, oversee the hiring processes, choose the final candidate for the company, and those responsible for filling a position and hiring the right candidates. These positions are first and foremost chief executive officers (CEO), founders and co-founders, and middle management, such as project or program managers, department heads, team leaders, human resources managers, and recruiters. In addition, my survey specifically targets the Armenian tech industry because the country lacks any kind of data, existing research, or information on that topic, which is a big gap that I aim to fill in.

Now that I have identified my target group, from whom I aim to collect data, the next important step is to define the survey goals. The main goal is to collect primary data, more specifically 1) Identify whether the tech companies in Armenia consider and recognize the communications job as an important aspect of the tech industry or not, 2) Analyze the demand for these non-technical specialists in tech and 3) Understand the barriers and reasons to hire, for example, the budget limitations, lack of awareness, difficulty of finding the right talents. The results will help me validate my hypotheses that tech companies in Armenia either do not fully recognize the value of communications professionals or face budget or talent limitations that prevent collaboration and hiring.

To effectively gather the necessary data, I designed a structured survey methodology with Google Forms. My research approach was to employ a quantitative approach aimed at measuring the previously mentioned target groups' also called decision-makers, perceptions about hiring communications specialists, challenges, reasons behind their decisions, and other hiring practices related to communication professionals in the Armenian Tech industry.

The designed questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended, such as multiple-choice, numerical rating scales, and open-ended questions, to gather measurable results and a mix of qualitative

insights. It was conducted during February 2025 with sufficient time for data collection. The survey was shared and distributed online, mainly with direct reach out on LinkedIn and my professional network, with emails and Telegram. To maximize the response rates, I have specifically chosen people working in positions within the target group and also sharing in industry-specific channels. Another important fact that I considered when reaching out to people is that respondents work at well-known tech companies in Armenia, including both local businesses and international companies with offices in the country. I also considered company size to ensure my research gets data from businesses of all scales, covering all layers of the industry.

The hardest part of the survey methodology was determining the sample size. As previously mentioned, there is no existing data on key aspects of my survey, such as the number of decision-makers in the industry or the number of IT companies, which is why the decision on sample size was difficult. However, that further ensures that my research is important. To address this, I included a question in the survey itself to gather information on the number of decision-makers in the company. For now, the survey received 32 responses, with none coming from the same company, which means that the gathered insights are from 32 different companies within the sample.

In addition to the survey, this research also uses expert interviews to gather in-depth qualitative insights to complement the quantitative data with first-hand viewpoints from dedicated leaders in the industry, about issues surrounding non-technical specialists, their experiences, and deeper insights.

The participants, three experts, were selected based on their experience and involvement in the Armenian tech ecosystem. Interviewees included a CEO of the Science and Technology

Angel Network, an AUA professor, a startup mentor, and a platform founder that promotes tech news about Armenia with over 18 years of experience in the technology and creativity sector.

The other is the executive director and PeopleOps specialist of the QLess tech startup. The third expert interview was Gayane Ayzvazyan, the executive director of The Armenia Project NGO, who has more than 10 years of experience in public relations sector in various industries.

In total, three expert interviews were conducted during March and April 2025. The interviews were held online via Google Meet, which were audio recorded with their permission and then transcribed for deeper analysis. Each lasted 30-60 minutes, leading to open and wider discussion. I used a set of prior-prepared open-ended questions to guide the conversation, as well as follow-up questions that emerged based on their answers.

This method helped the research achieve a better understanding of the survey findings, provided a profound analysis of possible cultural and educational reasons that can become a disturbing circumstance for such a situation, and also gathered their experience of working with non-technical specialists in the field, which is analyzed with thematic analysis and quote selection.

Findings and Thematic Analysis

This section presents the key insights gathered from survey responses, expert interviews, and web monitoring, showing the current state of the presented issue, challenges, opinions, perceptions, and future possibilities related to strategic communication, tech journalism, branding, and other non-technical professionals in Armenia's tech ecosystem. By analyzing the recurring themes across the data, the outcomes indicate a pattern of a lack of strategic oversight and under-recognition, limiting the country's global positioning. To ensure that the findings

reflect the reality, throughout the survey, I ensured the respondents work in a diverse range of companies from small to large-scale, such as Saima, Miro, Doctor Yan, Milies, Webb Fontaine, Text'nPayMe, ServiceTitan, Krisp, EasyDMARC, Doccy, Rebound Technologies, Teqno, DevsData, AWS User Group Armenia, Prismix, Neetrino IT Company, Solicy, Dexatel, and Ardook social enterprise.

To make it easier to follow the research, the information gathered from the survey and interviews was grouped under several themes in the framework of hypotheses.

Theme 1: Lack of awareness of the value of non-technical roles

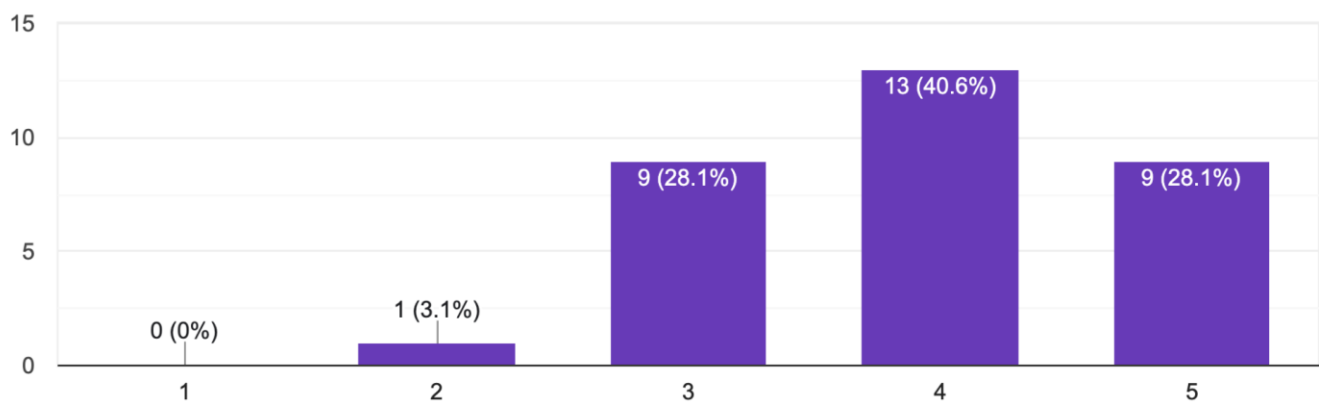
For the survey, my focus was on examining decision-makers' perceptions and thoughts on the importance of communications professionals in tech, and I also paid attention to having responses from both sides, the companies that currently employ and those that do not have any kind of communications or public relations positions in their company. Out of 32 responses, 16 companies did not have such positions right now. As one respondent noted, "We don't have a PR specialist because: - we focus on sales, not reputation – our investment has likely been in sales rather than PR. - My company is still focused on product development and customer acquisition, with PR becoming a priority later. - some PR functions may be handled by me, my marketer, or SMM specialist, but not in a dedicated role". 14 of the respondents employ such specialists, and only two of them were planning to hire soon. This means that only half of the surveyed companies have related roles, highlighting the big gap in the industry.

To explore why tech companies in Armenia still don't employ PR or media specialists, the survey included an open-ended question: "If your company does not employ media/PR specialists, what are the main reasons?" Among the 17 responses, the most common reason (9 respondents) was that they did not see a need for such roles in their organization.

Controversially, the question “To what extent do you believe media and communication professionals contribute to the success of a tech company? Scale of 1–5, where 1 = not important at all, 5 = extremely important)” received high ratings. All respondents rated three and above, with only one person rating 2 and none choosing 1, as not important at all.

To what extent do you believe media and communication professionals contribute to the success of a tech company? Scale of 1–5, where 1 = not important at all, 5 = extremely important)

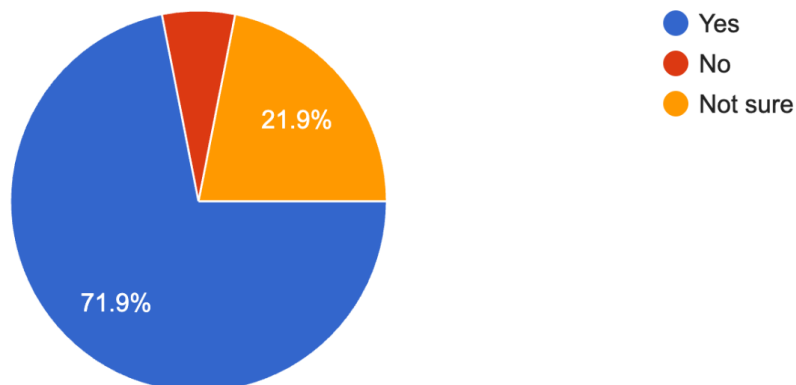
32 responses



Another controversial idea that the results brought up was that although the majority do not see the need for communications professionals, they do agree that the Armenian technology sector would benefit from such professionals.

Do you think the Armenian tech ecosystem would benefit from media/PR specialists?

32 responses



To understand even deeper people's perceptions and expectations of communications professionals within the tech sector, I included an open-ended question: "Do you think the lack of media/PR professionals in tech affects Armenia's international visibility as a tech hub? Why or why not?" For this question, almost 90% of respondents agreed that there is a lack of media/PR professionals, and it definitely affects Armenia's visibility.

When asked about the fields in which media, public relations, and communications specialists contribute to their company, the most common answer was in marketing and brand-building (81%), public and media relations (76,2%), and content creation and storytelling (71,4%). Communications received 46,7% of the answers. However, internal communications (28,6%), employer branding and recruitment marketing (28,6%), and crisis management (23,8%) were less commonly chosen in the survey.

When asked "What challenges have you faced when integrating media/PR professionals into your company?" the most common answer selected was "Difficulty finding media/PR professionals who understand the tech industry"(39,1%). The second most common answer was "Unclear role or responsibilities within the company" (30,4%). 26,1% of respondents selected

“Limited budget for hiring these roles” and 17,4% chose “Difficulty aligning communication strategies with business goals”. 21,7% of the respondents stated that they did not face any challenges, and 4,3% said that, as they have not worked directly with such professionals, they can not answer the question.

One of the open-ended questions in the survey asked: “Do you think the lack of media/PR professionals in tech affects Armenia’s international visibility as a tech hub? Why or why not?”. The received answers were varied giving valuable insights to the research, such as “A very strong yes. I believe that a country's sector's success should be connected to communications; if they are working very well but not saying in the right way what they are doing, how will others know? The same goes for our technology sector, if we don't have at least five coverage monthly about tech in Armenia in different international media outlets, how will the major companies know about us? How will the investors know about the startups we have to fund, how will Apple decide to open an R&D center in Armenia, and many, many other questions? So yes, I think the lack of good tech journalists and comms people is a missing part of a big puzzle,” “Without proper PR/communications we cannot make ourselves known and compete in the international market,” “Yes, because I think it's known as a tech hub among the tech industry or people close to it, yet the media/PR professionals are the ones with the help of whom it can be known to those who aren't related to the industry,” “Investors don't take our tech resource seriously because our global positioning, image and communication strategy are rarely aligned with what they actually want to hear to deem a country's tech field as sustainable and trustworthy,” “Yes, the absence of media and PR professionals affects Armenia’s global recognition as a tech hub. Without proper promotion, many local innovations and startups go unnoticed internationally, reducing opportunities for investment, partnerships, and talent

attraction. Strong communication and outreach are essential for building a global reputation,” “I don't think this is only PR's role, it should be Founders, Sales, Marketing role as well,” “absolutely! Armenia's tech market is kinda staying in the bubble. Seems like only the stuff considered as "BIG-BIG" is getting a little noticeable, and a lot of innovation just live there struggling to attract investors, partnerships and customers,” “Maybe, but I don't think that's the main issue,” “It is difficult to say what is the reason and what is the consequence, but one thing is clear that Armenia lacks well thought PR/positioning/country marketing activity. Another massive challenge is that the Armenian tech ecosystem is massively relying on the Arm Diaspora and the participation of international players is limited,” “Yes, the lack of media/PR professionals limits Armenia's visibility as a tech hub. Despite strong talent and innovation, Armenian startups struggle to gain international press, secure coverage in major tech media, or establish thought leadership. Without strategic storytelling and global PR efforts, Armenia risks being overlooked, even with its growing ecosystem,” “I think we should concentrate on creating real startups, then doing PR and for now it seems we are doing the opposite. In terms of startups that reached Series A and more, they need more PR and media coverage. Overall, I think we do PR for startups that are not ready for that and ignore those that create the real value,” “International startups and enterprises often rely on PR-driven ecosystems to assess market opportunities, and Armenia lacks sufficient coverage in this area.”

Another open-ended question was about the most immediate consequences if Communications/PR contributors were removed from a tech company, according to the respondents. Among answers were reduced brand visibility, weaker crisis management, ineffective external and internal communication, weak branding, media silence – no press releases, partnerships, or public engagement, one mentioned that public, investors, clients will

stop being aware of them, another respondent said “Nothing, because I don't think tech companies even have comms,” others stated “I am not sure, but the quality of the products won't change of course. Maybe the information about the companies won't reach its target,” “Not much,” “if there is no sufficient PR/communication, companies will have difficulty both in recruiting talent and sales,” “Removing PR professionals would weaken the company's public image, credibility, and ability to manage narratives effectively,” “Fewer media opportunities, leading to lower investor and customer engagement”

The last open-ended question was “What is the biggest obstacle preventing these professionals from being recognized as key contributors in tech?” and it got wide range of answers, providing direct links to the research hypotheses. Some valuable examples: “Because they are NOT key contributors. Key contributors are the ones who create the product, the ones who bring the product to the market and the investors that finance it,” “Their work and contributions sometimes cannot be measured I guess,” “Post society culture,” “Maybe the decision makers do not know their value,” “Maybe because their work is not always talked about, it's more of a shadow work, that's why,” “Engineering-centric mindset,” “Market maturity,” “Mindset - for some reason ppl don't take PR seriously,” “Lack of Direct Revenue Attribution, Engineering-Centric Cultures,” “Probably the issue is that in Armenia the whole marketing ecosystem is built on SMM and quick results, rather than building a long-term reputation,” “Lack of education in that subject,” “It is difficult to evaluate the impact of PR/Marketing activity and it pays off in long term,” “The biggest obstacle is the engineering-centric culture in tech, where technical innovation is prioritized over PR and communications. Since PR's impact is harder to quantify, it's often undervalued, despite its crucial role in building visibility, trust, and reputation,” “Engineering mindset, over overestimating only tech aspect, not

realizing that if the product is not known, the tech geeks will not be needed,” “Lack of awareness among tech leaders about how strategic communication drives partnerships, funding, and credibility.”

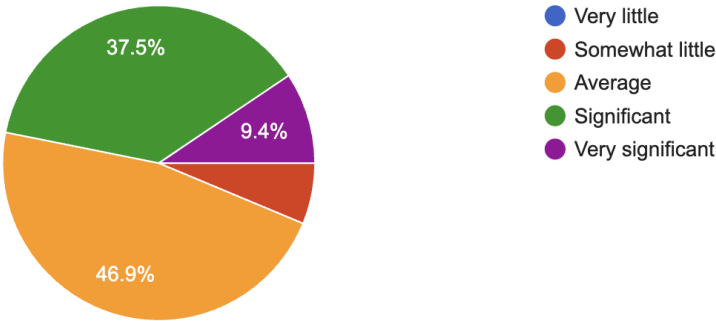
The final question asked the participants to select how much they believe Media/PR specialists contribute to achievements, when considering successful Armenian tech companies.

The following screenshot represents the results of the question:

When considering successful Armenian tech companies, how much do you believe Media/PR specialists contribute to their success?

[Copy chart](#)

32 responses



Having examined the survey results and building upon them, we now turn to insights gathered from expert interviews.

The first interview was conducted to explore the role more from a perspective of startups, investments, and also focusing on how media and communications professionals contribute, whether it is important from the executives’ perspective, and examining the possible reasons for non-involvement.

CEO of STAN generally accepted that most stakeholders in Armenia have little to no idea what strategic communications, branding, or PR professionals actually do, let alone tech

journalists. He shared his impressions after attending a startup ecosystem conference in Estonia, focused on the Balkans. “One keynote speaker gave practical advice to founders on working with journalists, such as never asking a journalist to send you the draft of an article for edits before publishing, because it’s unprofessional. That kind of media literacy is completely lacking in our culture. Many founders here simply don’t know how to collaborate with communications professionals.” However, we also mentioned that sometimes it is justified in the Armenian ecosystem because journalists sometimes make basic errors, like confusing an incubator with an accelerator or misreporting investment news. So, according to him, this is a two-sided issue: founders don’t fully grasp the value of these roles, but the industry also does not have many experienced tech journalists who can demonstrate that value clearly. “It is about understanding what communication is, why it matters, and how it impacts your brand and growth. That foundational understanding is often still missing here.”

Another essential topic was whether investors pay attention to media and communications-related work when making a decision about investment. He mentioned that they do not decide to invest because a startup has a communications strategy, but things like a media kit, press releases, a proper website, consistent messaging, social media presence, and tracking media coverage all show professionalism. He continues further by saying that it definitely makes the startup more attractive to investors. “If the founder is professional and strategic enough to include a communications strategy alongside all the fundamental actions, it significantly increases the chances of a positive investment decision. While it’s a critical component for any startup, it’s ultimately up to the founder to realize its importance and implement it. It might not be a standard item on most founders’ checklists, but having it in place makes everything run more effectively,” said Mr. Osipyan.

To discuss the reasons for not partnering with such non-technical professionals, he noted that there are deeper issues at play. One of them is that founders often don't encounter strong communications professionals who can help shape their understanding of why communications matter. For example, if someone comes from a technical or scientific background, they're usually focused on doing the work itself, without realizing that it also needs to be communicated, promoted, and turned into storytelling. "That kind of benchmark simply doesn't exist in their mindset." There might also be a lack of international experience. He mentioned that founders who participate in global accelerator programs are often exposed to the importance of communications and storytelling as part of building a successful startup. However, those who only go through local incubation programs tend to stop at the idea generation stage, without going further into branding, media presence, or strategic messaging.

"It definitely feels like we operate in a bubble, building things for ourselves and celebrating among ourselves without much external engagement." One example he brought was the annual DigiTec event held in Armenia. DigiTec Summit is a global conference focused on how emerging technology-oriented countries respond to global challenges and opportunities, and the largest such event in the southern Caucasus region (DigiTec, n.d). While it's positioned as a global summit, its impact and participation remain largely internal. "They have very high financial requirements for participation. For example, if a Georgian startup decides to take part, it could face significant costs. Naturally, this makes it difficult for startups from other ecosystems, leading them to opt out due to what they perceive as unfair competition." While startups from other countries might bring valuable partnerships and media coverage, it seems that this aspect is not prioritized in the event's planning. Another point was that, when compared to

similar expos in other countries, such as Azerbaijan or Georgia, they receive significantly more media coverage outside of their own ecosystems than Armenia does.

He also wanted to emphasize that the lack of understanding around strategic communications isn't limited to tech founders or executives, it also extends to state representatives and government officials, which is a much deeper issue. "As a country, we struggle with positioning ourselves effectively on the international stage. One key reason is the lack of reliable statistics. However, in order to have strong, consistent data, we need to invest significantly in the field. With proper statistics, we could finally share truly compelling and credible information about Armenia." As said, startups often try to use storytelling to represent the country, which is excellent in theory, but in practice, it is not always done by professionals. "As a result, the narratives can sometimes come off as geghavari (provincial, unpolished) and lacking the sophistication needed to appeal to international audiences. Also, when it is done by the wrong people, who are not communications specialists, I think, it seems like Armenian founders are bragging rather than presenting the country, which becomes a reason for others to make fun."

The second interview was more focused on international coverage, budget, and hiring difficulties since the interviewee was the executive director and people ops of a tech company in Armenia. She mentioned that the most obvious effect of not involving non-technical professionals is that hardly anyone hears about Armenia beyond its borders. She continued that when international companies open branches here, it's usually because someone in leadership is Armenian. "Otherwise, they are more likely to choose a European country, not because we are not good enough, but because we do not actively promote ourselves or tell our story as a growing tech hub." She believes that this comes down to a lack of a structured communications strategy

at the national level. More importantly, there is a general lack of awareness about how necessary it is. Often, decision-makers focus on immediate needs, thinking, “We’ve got funding, engineers are building the product, so everything’s fine. But that mindset overlooks long-term goals like visibility, reputation, and global positioning. As a result, communications get postponed or ignored altogether, even though it’s a key factor in long-term success.”

In relation to the value that media and communications specialists bring, she mentioned that the first and most important benefit is increasing awareness of the company, which directly helps with hiring skilled engineers. Another key point is encouraging those engineers to actually come into the office. “Our former communications specialist played a big role in employer branding and helped make the office a more welcoming and engaging place for everyone.” She also noted that, depending on the type of product a company is building, it's also important to raise awareness not just in Armenia, but internationally as well, as that kind of visibility is crucial. “Beyond that, communications specialists can help engage with the broader tech community, stay informed about events, industry trends, and potential collaborations, and organize initiatives ourselves,” she continued.

To the question of what structural or mindset shifts would need to happen for Armenian tech companies to invest more in non-technical professionals, Mrs Harutyunyan mentioned that the biggest shift needs to be psychological, because the issue usually is not money, and it does not take millions to get started. Even with a small budget, companies can begin to integrate non-technical roles, at least partially. “What is missing is awareness. People need more exposure. It's mostly about not seeing the need or understanding that many challenges or strategic goals can actually be done by hiring the right non-technical professionals.” However, as said, working abroad or gaining experience in international companies can help them understand how much

value these professionals bring. Once they see that firsthand, they'll be more likely to bring that mindset back to Armenia.

The conversation with the third interviewee was more based on public relations overall in Armenia, to understand the misconceptions and the landscape of that profession in Armenia. In her speech, she mentioned that she personally began her career in the international sphere back in 2006, where PR was already established and integrated into operations. Over the years, the situation in Armenia has changed considerably. PR has gradually started to be considered in different sectors. She mentioned that today, even if organizations do not have full-fledged PR departments, many of them have at least one dedicated specialist. However, the IT industry is a bit different. Because of its specific advertising culture, there seems to be a limited understanding of what PR actually does. "This lack of clarity often begins at the management level and, to be fair, it's common across many sectors, not just IT." As someone who has taught at the university level, she mentioned that she has seen firsthand that many students entering the PR field have major misconceptions. They tend to associate PR with personal PR or what we call "black PR," and associate it primarily with social media management. There's this widespread belief that managing social media automatically makes someone a PR specialist. "A PR professional today must understand digital platforms and have the tools to operate in a digital world. But that doesn't mean that PR begins and ends with social media. Our role goes far beyond that. Unfortunately, the lines are still quite blurred for many." Mrs Ayvazyan also highlighted that over time, especially with the growth of the media environment, mainly with digital platforms, PR began to change. It now incorporates digital tools and often overlaps with marketing. This sometimes leads to confusion: in many companies today, PR and marketing are seen as interchangeable, or one is expected to replace the other. "People say things like "you're

doing PR again” in a sarcastic or even negative way, which creates a dismissive perception of the profession. This misuse of the term contributes to a very surface-level understanding of what PR actually is. As a result, many people, including decision-makers in companies, don’t really grasp the full scope and strategic value of communication and media specialists.” To the question of what she thinks can be the reason for these specialists not being included in the tech industry, she mentioned, “The tech industry, in particular, tends to conflate PR with digital marketing. Often, companies will hire one or two marketing specialists and believe that’s sufficient to cover everything from platform management to promotion. But that approach misses the strategic dimension of communication.” To understand further the level of professionalism of the local non-technical specialists, a question arose about the challenges that Armenia faces when working with international media. The interviewee said that the local specialists have a lack of experience in working with international media, and the absence of strong connections with foreign journalists, especially given her position and their company’s experience. When comparing local talents to Georgia, there is a clear difference. Georgia hosts international journalists a lot, which helps create a well-connected media environment. Armenia, on the other hand, hasn’t had that same opportunity for exposure. She also mentioned the lack of education and training. For instance, in university programs, there’s rarely any focus on how to work effectively with international journalists. “I am sure you, too, now that you are a graduate with a communications degree, were not taught how to work with international media, from the big picture to small nuances.” Thus, local media techniques often differ greatly from international standards, and without that awareness, communication efforts can smoothly fail. Mrs Ayvazyan also discussed an important missing element of Armenia and the international media. She mentioned that storytelling is not a strong skill among many local journalists and communications professionals

in Armenia. “If we want to be seen and covered by international media, we need to tell an interesting and strategic story. Unfortunately, even when international journalists visit Armenia, they often struggle to connect with local sources or identify a clear story, the central narrative.” When coming back to the tech industry, she highlighted that even though local tech companies often try to promote themselves internationally, without communication specialists’ help, the messaging ends up lacking structure and focus. “An example that came to my mind is TUMO. It began as a local initiative, but with a clear and effective communication strategy, they gained widespread recognition in Armenia, even among people who are not directly involved in the tech or education sectors, including older generations, who are aware of what TUMO does. That level of visibility is the result,” spotlighted the interviewee. She concluded that Armenia has a big potential for telling stories that represent individual companies, and contribute to nation branding.

Theme 2: Budget and Resource Limitations

Out of 17 responses, only five people stated that budget constraints were the reason they do not hire communications or related specialists. This shows that even if tech companies may understand the importance of the role, they do not have the funding to prioritize it. So, based on such cases, visibility and branding are sacrificed, especially in small or early-stage companies. Another option in the survey that had five responses was that they do not employ such specialists because the existing team (HR, leadership, etc.) already handles public relations or communications-related duties. Another common answer related to one of the research hypotheses was companies facing difficulties in finding good specialists, which received three responses stating they struggled to find and fill such positions.

When asked, “What challenges have you faced when integrating media/PR professionals into your company?” 26,1% of respondents selected that they have a limited budget for hiring these roles.

The open-ended question “Do you think the lack of media/PR professionals in tech affects Armenia’s international visibility as a tech hub? Why or why not?” got answers related to budget and resource limitations. Here is what respondents stated: “No, they are struggling with building the right product and finding the right clients, the latter one is done by sales people or business developers. They don't need PR because mostly they don't have the extra finance, PR is considered something extra and something that, as a founder, you consider after series A or a seed,” “Not sure. Probably yes. It required specific knowledge to handle tech media/PR, which unfortunately is not the strongest side of our professionals yet,” “I think it affects us. We are having big events, like the recent WCIT, but there was silence in the international media, and nobody talked about it. We shared locally, and we were happy. I don't think that Armenia as a country has communications or media specialists who are working in that direction to bring attention to the industry. It affects because the more popular you are the more investors you will have, and more international offices will open their branches here.”

As presented under the first theme, the question “What is the biggest obstacle preventing these professionals from being recognized as key contributors in tech?” got only one response related to the budget limitations, stating “I believe budget limitations first of all”.

With respect to the budget limitations, the second interviewee mentioned that money is not the issue here. “People merely do not realize there is a need, maybe because of gaps in education.” She continued that many decision-makers are deeply focused on their own industry and assume that what they need most are better engineers or technical specialists. “The idea of

hiring non-technical professionals often doesn't even cross their minds." She cited that there is definitely a need to raise awareness and educate people about the value of these roles.

"Interestingly, people who have worked abroad or returned from international companies tend to recognize this need and start taking steps in that direction. Even if there was no budget planned for it, they often find ways to allocate some funding because they understand the impact."

The last interviewee mentioned that for small and new startups, especially, budget constraints can be a major issue, because they operate with limited resources and try to build a successful product, and it is natural that the focus will be on product development. "In that context, communication will become secondary. But for big enterprise companies, the budget is not the problem; understanding why they need it is a problem," concluded Mrs Ayvazyan when asked to share her thoughts on budget restrictions as a main reason for an ineffective integration of communications, media, and public relations specialists.

Discussion

This section will discuss and analyze the findings presented in the findings section, taking into consideration the research questions and hypotheses that guided this capstone. By examining both the survey and expert interview outcomes, it becomes apparent that while the value of media, PR, and communication professionals in Armenia's tech sector is increasingly recognized, significant gaps remain in their full integration and utilization. The findings suggest that although companies acknowledge the importance of non-technical roles, specifically in brand building, social media management, and crisis communication, there are persistent challenges related to resource distribution, organizational priorities, and cultural perceptions of

what constitutes "essential" expertise in a tech-driven environment. This discussion will explore these themes in depth, comparing the results to existing literature, identifying consistencies and discrepancies, and highlighting the broader implications for Armenia's goal of positioning itself as a regional tech hub.

The data gathered throughout the research showcase that one of the research hypotheses is rejected, which was that tech companies within the Armenian ecosystem have budget restrictions, thus they do not hire specialists who are not technical, because based on the survey only 5 respondents mentioned that they have budget constraint that is why they do not hire such professionals. Also, when asked about the challenges they faced when integrating media/PR professionals into their company, only 26,1% of respondents chose that they have a limited budget for hiring these roles. That being said, the research hypothesis suggesting that the budget is the reason for non-technical specialists' non-involvement in the Armenian technology ecosystem failed to gain empirical support.

The second hypothesis also had a sub-hypothesis, about resource limitations, suggesting that even though tech companies in Armenia are interested in hiring communications specialists, they do not find qualified specialists with relevant tech industry knowledge, which becomes a barrier to their inefficient integration. The question regarding this received just three answers, noting they struggled to find and fill such positions. However, in the open-ended questions, the survey received answers that were slightly touched upon that issue as well, such as mentioning that they do think that media communications affect on country's ecosystem success, however it needs specific knowledge to handle tech media/PR, which unfortunately is not the strongest side of Armenia's professionals yet. Another answer stated that they are not confident that Armenia as a country has communications or media specialists who are working towards that direction to

bring attention to the industry. Another empirical support regarding this sub-hypothesis was provided by one of the experts, noting that although startups often use storytelling to represent Armenia, it is mostly not always done by the right professionals, and as a result, lacks the sophistication needed to attract international media. So, to understand why startupers, for example, try to do it themselves lies in one of the findings provided by survey results, which was not part of the research question or hypothesis, providing a new perspective to the questions raised throughout the research. Results of the survey showed that other specialists, such as human resources specialists, leadership team, and other, not related specialists within the company, are handling the PR tasks, which is concerning, reinforcing that communications specialists are undervalued. This further shows that companies not only fail to recognize the value but also perceive PR as a role that does not necessarily require expertise, assuming that anyone can manage it. During one of the expert interviews, this concept was also mentioned by Mrs Ayvazyan, who highlighted that anyone nowadays who can take pictures and run social media accounts is considered a communications specialist. This is concerning from two perspectives, on one hand, the management does not grasp the importance of these specialists and allows nonspecialists to work towards building connections and handling PR-related tasks, on the other hand, even if they do confirm the need of communications in their company, the line between social media managers and communications managers are blurred even for the specialists themselves, which creates further chaos and misconceptions around this position.

This delivered additional proof of how important it was to address the value of strategic communications. One of the interviewees, Mrs Harutyunyan, brought up an interesting idea, suggesting that these are the result of education gaps and an engineering-centric mindset. Decision-makers think that as long as they have engineers building the product, the company is

in the right direction, overlooking long-term goals like visibility, reputation, and global positioning. As a result, non-technical hirings get postponed or ignored.

A further significant point that emerged during the interview with Mr. Osipyan was the comparison between other countries in the region and what is done differently, in terms of openness and collaborations. For example, according to the data published on the Digitec expo, in Armenia, held annually, it is officially promoted as a regional startup expo, however, it is more concentrated on Armenian startups. While this issue is not directly connected to the research question, it definitely affects the country's positioning, the way Armenia is presented and communicated to the international media. Being open to partnerships and inclusive of other ecosystems would have made a great impact in terms of media coverage, partnerships, and country branding. The discussed case was when, having high tariffs for other countries during the expo, the same startup decided to participate in the INMERGE expo held in Azerbaijan. There, a Georgian startup won the main prize, bringing noteworthy international attention and positioning the host country as an attractive setting for startups. This clearly spotlights that the main national strategy of communications is lacking, allowing each organization and individual to make decisions based on their own feelings and perspectives.

An equally meaningful consideration, which was directly linked to one of the literature (Mashiah, 2024) discussed throughout the paper, was the importance of tech storytelling. Different countries and regions, especially ones aspiring to make their countries recognized as a successful tech hub, use strategic high-tech marketing to position their countries. This was also discussed during an expert interview, where Mrs Ayvazyan mentioned the example of TUMO as a successful case of positioning Armenia as a tech-savvy country. TUMO's success and the narrative they had built around it have received a lot of international media coverage, helping to

shape Armenia's global image positively. That narrative has been a powerful tool in branding Armenia internationally, and this example also helped many other countries to build TUMO, and they always mention Armenia when covering TUMO. This is the perfect example of how the right communication will help the country and its reputation.

These findings fail to support my second hypothesis, which proposed that companies recognize the need for such roles, however, they either face budgetary constraints or struggle to find qualified specialists in the field. Based on the results, the first hypothesis proposing that Armenian tech companies do not hire non-technical specialists, because they lack awareness of their strategic value, is supported throughout the research and is confirmed.

In summary, the completed survey and expert interview data expose a consistent trend. While many tech companies recognize the importance of having a communications strategy on a country level important element to achieve the goal of becoming a successful regional tech hub, the majority of the decision-makers prefer to handle communications-related actions themselves, also confirming that the companies do not have any financial limitations. With this, it is evident that decision-makers in Armenia's tech sector do not have a clear understanding of what communications and media specialists are necessary in their strategies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research explored the role of communications, public relations, and media specialists in country branding and in remaking the country's image on the global stage as a regional tech hub, with a focus on the country of Armenia. The paper focused on understanding why these professionals are not successfully integrated into the Armenian tech industry and whether their strategic value is recognized by the main decision makers in the industry. The

research was conducted with two leading hypotheses: first, that companies do not hire non-technical professionals because they lack awareness of their strategic importance; and second, that companies face either budgetary constraints or challenges in finding qualified specialists with tech industry knowledge.

The analysis of primary data collected from surveys and expert interviews using thematic analysis through a qualitative approach provides strong support for the first hypothesis. Although the majority of tech companies admit the growing importance of branding, positioning, and engagement, particularly in areas such as social media and reputation-building, these roles are often filled by non-specialists within the company, such as HR or leadership staff. The blurred interpretation of what a PR or communications specialist accomplishes, together with the assumption that these duties can be handled by anyone with digital skills, supports the conclusion that the core value of strategic communication is not fully understood by decision-makers in Armenia's tech ecosystem.

However, the second hypothesis failed to gain support from the data. Financial restrictions were rarely mentioned as a cause for not hiring communication professionals, and only several respondents quoted difficulty in finding skilled specialists.

Moreover, the findings displayed that Armenia does not have a cohesive, national-level communication strategy to promote its tech ecosystem abroad. Relevant examples from neighboring countries, such as Georgia and Azerbaijan, mentioned by interviewees, showed the importance of transparency, partnership, and storytelling in creating international perception.

Despite the valuable insights provided by this research, there were limitations, such as relevant information about the data on the number of decision makers in Armenia's tech sector. Another limitation was the public information on how many employees tech companies employ

in Armenia, and how many of them are non-technical. One more important limitation was finding out how the country and the government take steps towards this issue, which further explains why this research was an important step forward this issue.

In conclusion, Armenia's technology industry is undoubtedly developing and making lots of success stories locally, however, the lack of collaboration with communication and media specialists in the field creates a barrier to making those stories be heard internationally and getting coverage, bringing partnerships, funding and recognition to the country positioning as a regional tech hub. Addressing this gap and shifting the perceptions of how these non-technical roles are viewed is the success that can be achieved by supporting education, awareness at a leadership level, and commitment to a long-term strategy, both on the company and government levels.

It is important to mention that, this study about country branding and the importance of integrating communications specialists has some limitations and biases, including the lack of secondary data about Armenia's tech industry, country positioning, and any type of data references related to the topic focused on Armenia, which may not provide a complete picture of the topic.

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Appendix

1. What is the name of the company? (Optional)
2. What is your role in the company?
Founder/Co-founder
HR Specialist
Other (please specify)
3. How many employees does your company have?
1–10
11–50
51–200
201+
4. How many people do you have in your company as decision-makers.
 4. What stage is your company currently in?
Early-stage startup (pre-seed/seed)
Growth-stage startup (Series A and beyond)
Established tech company
5. Does your company currently employ media, PR, or communication specialists?
Yes
No
Planning to hire soon
6. If yes, how many media/PR/communication professionals does your company employ?

1
2–5
6+

7. In what areas do these professionals contribute to your company? (Select all that apply)
- Marketing & Brand building
 - Public relations & media relations
 - Internal communications
 - Crisis management
 - Content creation & storytelling
 - Employer branding & recruitment marketing
 - Other (please specify)
8. If your company does not employ media/PR specialists, what are the main reasons? (Select all that apply)
- Lack of necessity for our business
 - Budget constraints
 - Difficulty finding qualified specialists
 - Lack of awareness about the value of these roles
 - Other (please specify)
9. To what extent do you believe media and communication professionals contribute to the success of a tech company? Scale of 1–5, where 1 = not important at all, 5 = extremely important)
10. What impact should media/PR professionals have on a company's growth? (Select all that apply)
- Enhancing brand reputation
 - Increasing media coverage
 - Improving internal and external communications
 - Managing crises and public relations issues
 - Boosting customer engagement and trust
 - Driving marketing and sales efforts
 - Shaping the company's public image
 - Bringing industry partnerships and networking
 - Strengthening employer branding and talent acquisition
 - Other...
11. What impact do media/PR professionals have on your company's growth? (Select all that apply)

- Increased brand visibility
- Better investor relations & fundraising success
- Improved hiring & employer branding
- Stronger crisis communication & reputation management
- No noticeable impact
- Other (please specify)

12. What challenges have you faced when integrating media/PR professionals into your company? (Select all that apply)

- Difficulty aligning communication strategies with business goals
- Lack of understanding of tech industry nuances
- Limited budget for hiring these roles
- No challenges faced
- Other (please specify)

13. Do you think the Armenian tech ecosystem would benefit from more media/PR specialists?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

14. What support would help tech companies better integrate media/PR professionals? (Select all that apply)

- Training programs on tech-sector communication
- Government incentives for hiring communication specialists
- More networking opportunities between media/PR and tech professionals
- Increased awareness of their value in tech businesses
- Other (please specify)

15. Do you think the lack of media/PR professionals in tech affects Armenia's international visibility as a tech hub? Why or why not?

16. What specific business challenges could media/PR professionals help solve in your company?

17. When thinking about successful Armenian tech companies, how much of their success do you think, non-technical specialists contribute?

- Very little
- Somewhat little
- Moderate

Significant

Very significant

18. What would be the most immediate consequences if non-technical contributors were removed from a tech company?
 19. What is the biggest obstacle preventing more non-technical professionals from being recognized as key contributors in tech?
 20. Do you think there is a bias in Armenia's tech industry that favors technical roles over non-technical ones?
-