

Electronic scientific and practical journal  
**INTELLECTUALIZATION OF LOGISTICS  
AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

**#31 (2025)**  
**June '25**



**WWW.SMART-SCM.ORG**

**ISSN 2708-3195**

**DOI.ORG/10.46783/SMART-SCM/2025-31**

ISSN 2708-3195



## Electronic scientific and practical publication in economic sciences

Electronic scientifically and practical journal “Intellectualization of logistics and Supply Chain Management” included in the list of scientific publications of Ukraine in the field of economic sciences (category "B"): **Order of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine dated October 10, 2022 No. 894 (Appendix 2)**

**Field of science:** Economic.

**Specialties:** C1 (051) – Economics; D3 (073) – Management

**ISSN** 2708-3195

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.46783/smart-scm/2025-31>

The electronic magazine is included in the international scientometric databases:  
Index Copernicus, Google Scholar

**Released 6 times a year**

**№ 31 (2025)**

**June 2025**

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In 2020, the International Center for Periodicals (ISSN International Center, Paris) included the Electronic Scientific and Practical Edition "Intellectualization of logistics and Supply Chain Management" in the international register of periodicals and provided it with a numerical code of international identification: ISSN 2708-3195 (Online).

Recommended for dissemination on the Internet by the Academic Council of the Department of Logistics NAU (No. 7 of February 26, 2020). Released 6 times a year. Editions references are required. The view of the editorial board does not always coincide with that of the authors.

Electronic scientifically and practical journal "Intellectualization of logistics and Supply Chain Management" included in the list of scientific publications of Ukraine in the field of economic sciences (category "B"): **Order of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine dated October 10, 2022 No. 894 (Appendix 2)**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46783/smart-scm/2025-31>  
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*BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND  
CONFLICT MEDIATION*

UDC 316.77:005.57:316.485  
JEL Classification: D74, M14, Z13.  
**Received:** 12 May 2025

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## **BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICT MEDIATION**

**Ganna Gurina, Serhii Podrieza, Valentyna Novak.** *"Building strong partnerships through strategic communications and conflict mediation".* This article deeply explores the critical role of strategic communications and conflict mediation in the context of post-war recovery in Ukraine. It emphasizes that the formation of strong and stable partnerships is a key factor for the country's successful economic and social revival. We examine the specific challenges of the post-war period, such as increased distrust, uncertainty, and emotional tension, which can hinder effective cooperation. The paper substantiates how transparent and adaptive communications help restore trust, foster a shared vision, and establish effective two-way dialogue among all stakeholders. Particular attention is given to the importance of rebuilding the reputation of businesses affected by the war. A significant part of the research is devoted to conflict mediation as an indispensable tool for preserving partnership relations and expeditiously resolving disputes. We analyze how mediation, unlike traditional legal methods, facilitates the search for mutually beneficial solutions and prevents

conflict escalation. The pivotal role of professional mediators as neutral facilitators, capable of guiding dialogue by focusing on parties' underlying interests, is highlighted. Their skills in transforming confrontation into constructive interaction are explored. The article also integrates international experience in negotiation and mediation, underscoring the universality of principled negotiation tenets and the importance of institutionalizing mediation practices. Finally, we propose an algorithm for building strong partnerships that combines communication and mediation strategies, which is fundamental for Ukraine's sustainable development and economic revival in the current environment. This comprehensive approach is critically important for creating a resilient business ecosystem and effectively implementing recovery projects.

**Keywords:** Post-war recovery, business communications, strategic communications, conflict mediation, partnership, trust building, dispute resolution, Ukraine, economic revival, synergy, economic revival.

**Ганна Гуріна, Сергій Подреза, Валентина Новак. «Побудова міцних партнерств через стратегічні комунікації та медіацію конфліктів»..** Ця стаття глибоко досліджує критичну роль стратегічних комунікацій та медіації конфліктів у контексті повоєнного відновлення України. Вона підкреслює, що формування міцних і стабільних партнерств є ключовим фактором для успішного економічного та соціального відродження країни. Ми розглядаємо специфічні виклики повоєнного періоду, такі як зростання недовіри, невизначеність та емоційне напруження, що можуть перешкоджати ефективній співпраці. У роботі обґрунтовується, як прозорі та адаптивні комунікації допомагають відновити довіру, сформувати спільне бачення та налагодити ефективний двосторонній діалог між усіма зацікавленими сторонами. Особлива увага приділяється значенню відновлення репутації підприємств, що постраждали від війни. Значна частина дослідження присвячена медіації конфліктів як незамінному інструменту для збереження партнерських відносин та оперативного вирішення спорів. Ми аналізуємо, як медіація, на відміну від традиційних юридичних методів, сприяє пошуку взаємовигідних рішень та запобігає ескалації конфліктів. Висвітлюється ключова роль професійних медіаторів як нейтральних посередників, здатних фасилітувати діалог, фокусуючись на глибинних інтересах сторін. Досліджуються їхні навички у перетворенні конфронтації на конструктивну взаємодію. Стаття також інтегрує зарубіжний досвід у сфері переговорів та медіації, підкреслюючи універсальність принципів принципових переговорів та важливості медіаційних практик. Зрештою, ми пропонуємо алгоритм побудови міцних партнерств, який поєднує стратегії комунікації та медіації, що є фундаментальним для сталого розвитку та економічного відродження України в умовах сьогодення. Цей комплексний підхід є критично важливим для створення стійкої бізнес-екосистеми та ефективного реалізації проєктів відновлення.

**Ключові слова:** Повоєнне відновлення, бізнес-комунікації, стратегічні комунікації, медіація конфліктів, партнерство, побудова довіри, вирішення спорів, економічне відродження, синергія, економічне відродження.

**Intraduction.** The full-scale invasion of Ukraine has not only caused devastating economic damage but has also fundamentally altered the landscape of business and social interaction. In the context of post-war recovery, it becomes critically important for enterprises, organizations, and even entire economic sectors, such as the

aviation industry, to not only survive but also to form and maintain strong, effective partnerships. These partnerships are the foundation for attracting investments, rebuilding infrastructure, integrating into international markets, and ensuring sustainable development. However, the process of building such relationships in a



post-conflict society faces unprecedented challenges, including increased uncertainty, a deficit of trust, emotional tension, and potential conflicts related to resource redistribution, changing rules, and overcoming trauma. In this context, strategic communications and conflict mediation emerge not merely as desirable, but as absolutely essential tools for management and development.

**Literature and Research Review.** Fisher, R., Ury, W. L., & Patton, B. "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In" (2011). This classic work presents the concept of "principled negotiation," which is a cornerstone of modern mediation and effective communication. The authors propose moving away from positional bargaining to focus on the parties' interests. They identify four key principles: separating the people from the problem (being soft on the people, hard on the problem), focusing on interests rather than positions, generating various options for mutual gain, and insisting on objective criteria. Klimczak, K. "The Role of Communication in Building Business Relationships" (2017). K. Klimczak's article highlights the fundamental role of communication as the basis for building and maintaining stable business relationships. The author examines how various aspects of communication – such as openness, trust, mutual understanding, empathy, and prompt feedback – contribute to strengthening partnerships. Bercovitch, J. "Mediation in International Conflict: An Overview of Theory, a Review of Practice" (2012). This work by J. Bercovitch, though focused on international conflicts, provides a deep theoretical understanding of mediation and its practical applications. The author analyzes different models of mediation, factors influencing its success (e.g., the level of trust between parties, the nature of the conflict, the mediator's qualifications), and the mediator's role as a neutral facilitator. Susskind, L., & Cruikshank, J. "Breaking the Impasse: Consensual Approaches to Resolving Public Disputes" (1987). In this work, the authors

explore a consensual approach to resolving complex public disputes, which is highly relevant for understanding business mediation. They advocate for including all stakeholders in the decision-making process and using facilitation to achieve mutually beneficial agreements.

While the internal challenges of Ukraine's post-war recovery are unique, global experience in business communications and conflict resolution offers invaluable lessons and methodological approaches that can be effectively adapted to Ukrainian realities. Foreign studies, particularly the works of D. Saunders, B. Barry, R. Fisher, W. Ury, and B. Patton, as well as J. Bercovitch, emphasize the universality of negotiation principles, focusing on interests rather than positions, and the importance of neutral mediation. These approaches, refined over decades in global business practice and international relations, demonstrate that even in the most complex situations, consensus can be achieved and mutually beneficial relationships preserved.

**Purpose and Objectives.** Strategic communications are the cornerstone of any successful partnership, and in the context of post-war recovery, their role is amplified manifold. This is not merely about information exchange but about the deliberate shaping of perceptions, building trust, and creating a shared vision for the future. In the post-war period, communications must be as transparent, honest, and future-oriented as possible to dispel uncertainty and restore faith in stability. This requires developing differentiated communication strategies for various target audiences – be they international investors seeking guarantees of security and profitability; local communities needing a clear understanding of recovery plans; or government agencies coordinating efforts. Of particular importance is the restoration of the reputation and image of enterprises, especially aviation ones, which may have suffered significant losses or been



associated with negative wartime events. Effective communications allow not only for informing about plans and achievements but also for rebuilding an emotional connection with partners and stakeholders, demonstrating a commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development. The communication process must be two-way, involving active listening and feedback, which fosters mutual understanding and prevents misunderstandings that can easily arise in negotiation situations.

Parallel to strategic communications, conflict mediation plays a crucial role in maintaining the viability and strength of partnerships during recovery. The post-war environment will inevitably generate new types of conflicts – from disputes over the redistribution of scarce resources, the restoration of damaged property and infrastructure, to issues related to legislative changes and the reintegration of various population groups. Traditional dispute resolution methods, such as litigation, are in this context excessively lengthy, costly, and often destructive to business relationships, which is unacceptable during a period when speed and consolidation of efforts are a priority.

### **Results, Analysis, and Discussion.**

Mediation, as a facilitated dialogue with a neutral third party, allows for preserving and strengthening partnership ties by focusing on finding mutually beneficial, consensual solutions. It creates a space for open discussion of problems, helps parties overcome psychological barriers and emotional tension, and facilitates the formation of "new" rules of cooperation that account for changed realities. The principles of confidentiality and voluntariness in mediation make it an attractive tool for businesses aiming to preserve their reputation and avoid public confrontation. Thus, mediation becomes not only a tool for resolving existing disputes but also a mechanism for conflict prevention, contributing to the formation of flexible and adaptive partnerships capable of quickly

responding to the challenges and opportunities of the post-war period.

The relationship between strategic communications and mediation in post-war recovery is synergistic. Effective communications reduce the likelihood of conflicts, and should they arise, they simplify the mediation process by creating a basis for dialogue. At the same time, successful mediation restores communication channels that may have been damaged by conflict and strengthens trust, paving the way for further productive cooperation. In the context of Ukrainian post-war recovery, where every resource and every partner is invaluable, investments in developing competencies in strategic communications and conflict mediation are critically important for building resilient and strong partnerships that will become the driving force behind the revival of the economy and society.

Recognizing the critical role of strategic communications and mediation in the post-war period requires not only theoretical understanding but also clear steps for their practical implementation. First and foremost, Ukrainian enterprises, especially in strategically important sectors like aviation, need to invest in developing internal and external communication departments. This means not only technical equipment but also enhancing staff qualifications in crisis communications, building a positive image, and effectively interacting with international partners and donors. The development of clear communication plans, including anti-crisis scenarios and mechanisms for rapid response to disinformation, is mandatory. It is also crucial to establish constant dialogue with local communities, as their support and trust are the key to the successful implementation of any recovery projects. This can include regular meetings, public progress reports, and the creation of feedback channels. In parallel, the institutionalization of mediation as a standard dispute resolution tool is critically important. This involves not only popularizing mediation services but also training qualified mediators who understand

the specifics of business processes and the sensitive aspects of the post-war environment. Enterprises should consider implementing internal mediation mechanisms to resolve conflicts between employees or departments, which, in turn, will enhance their ability to interact effectively with external partners. For international partnerships, specific mediation protocols can be developed, allowing for prompt responses to potential disagreements without resorting to lengthy and costly legal procedures. Such an approach not only minimizes the risks of disruption to recovery projects but also demonstrates a readiness for constructive dialogue and compromise, which is extremely appealing to external investors.

The expected results of such an integrated strategy are significant. Firstly, it will accelerate post-war recovery processes

by increasing the efficiency of interaction among all participants. Strong partnerships, based on trust and the ability to overcome conflicts, will become a catalyst for attracting necessary financial, human, and technological resources. Secondly, it will strengthen Ukraine's reputation as a reliable and predictable partner in the international arena, facilitating its integration into the global economy. Thirdly, it will create a more resilient and adaptive business ecosystem, capable of functioning effectively even in conditions of increased turbulence. Ultimately, the successful implementation of these approaches will contribute not only to economic revival but also to overall social cohesion, as effective dialogue and peaceful dispute resolution are the guarantors of stability and prosperity for the entire society.

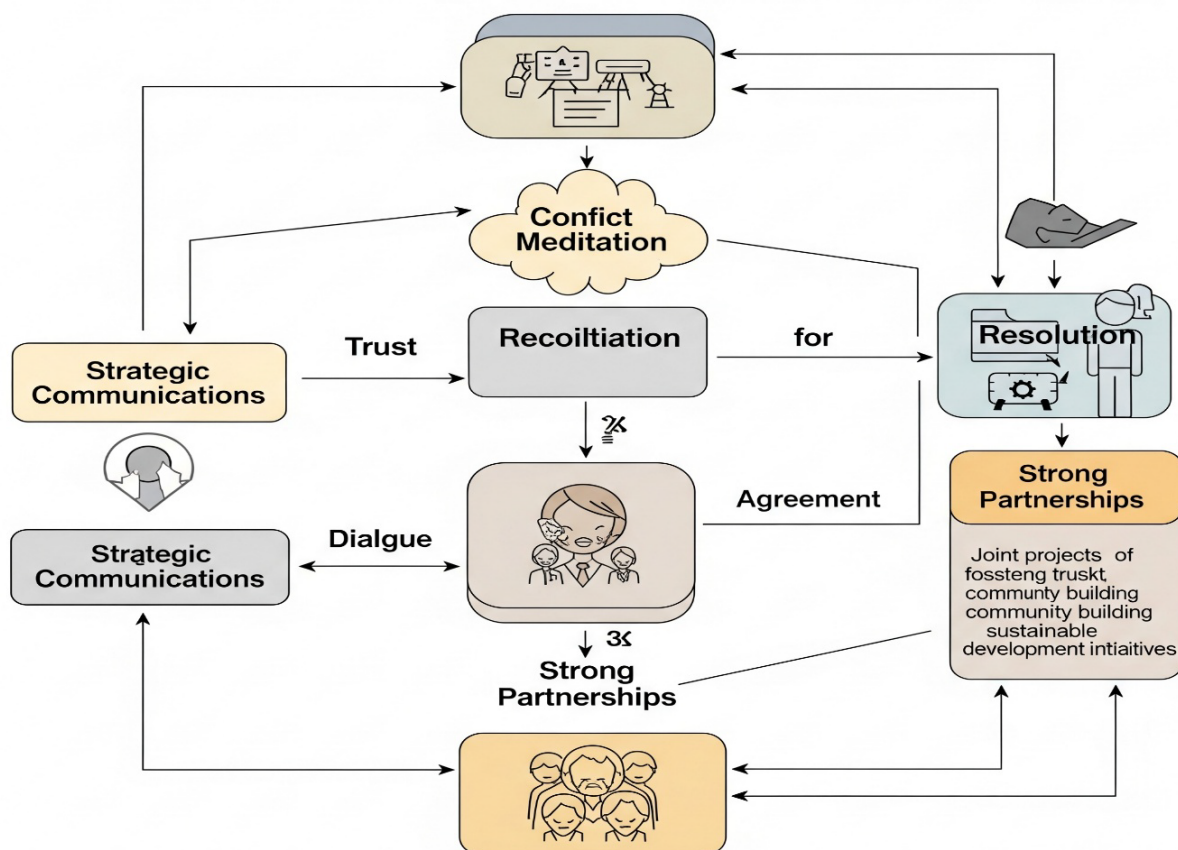


Figure 1 – Diagram of Strategic Communications and Conflict Mediation.  
 Developed by the authors based on [1, 7, 9]

This diagram illustrates a step-by-step process where strategic communications and conflict mediation interact to form strong partnerships. Key elements such as trust, dialogue, and resolution underscore their crucial role in achieving long-term peace.

In the context of Ukraine's complex post-war recovery challenges, professional mediators emerge not merely as negotiation facilitators but as true architects of dialogue and trust. Their role extends beyond classic dispute resolution, acquiring strategic significance for consolidating society and the economy. A mediator in the post-war period is not just a specialist in negotiation techniques; they are, first and foremost, an independent and impartial third party capable of creating a safe space for open communication even between parties with deep disagreements or traumatic experiences. This is especially important when emotions and mutual claims can hinder the rational search for solutions, as often happens after large-scale conflicts.

It is precisely the mediator's neutrality that allows parties to move away from positional disputes and focus on their underlying interests and needs. Mediators possess skills in active listening, empathy, and reframing, which enables them to rephrase accusations into constructive requests, and hostility into a search for mutually beneficial alternatives. They help conflict participants articulate their positions, understand the other side's perspectives, and jointly generate solutions acceptable to all. In the post-war business environment, where disputes may arise regarding the restoration of property rights, the distribution of compensation, terms of new contracts, or the reintegration of employees, the mediator becomes the "bridge" that helps avoid paralyzing litigation and preserve business ties.

Moreover, the mediator's role is not limited to incidental conflict resolution. An important aspect is their ability to facilitate preventive mediation and build a mediation culture within enterprises and among partners. This means teaching parties skills in

constructive communication, identifying potential conflicts at early stages, and utilizing internal mechanisms for their resolution. For aviation enterprises, with their complex structure and numerous international contacts, such a culture is critical for maintaining operational continuity and rapid recovery. Mediators can also play a significant role in facilitating strategic sessions and negotiations for forming new partnerships, where they will ensure balanced discussion, clear formulation of agreements, and minimization of future risks. Thus, investments in developing a body of qualified mediators and their integration into the system of business relations will be an important step towards creating a stable and prosperous economic environment in Ukraine.

During Ukraine's post-war recovery, as society and the economy face unprecedented challenges, the establishment of strong and adaptive partnerships is not merely desirable but a vital condition for sustainable revival. The experience of both domestic and leading international scholars clearly demonstrates that the architects of these robust connections are strategic communications and conflict mediation, which, in their synergy, form an unbreakable foundation for trust, cooperation, and development.

In the post-war context, where increased uncertainty, resource scarcity, and emotional tension can easily lead to conflicts, transparent, purposeful, and empathetic communications become the primary tool for reputation rebuilding, stakeholder informing, and shaping a shared vision for the future. This requires enterprises, including the aviation industry, to invest in two-way dialogue that ensures feedback and adaptability to changing realities.

Simultaneously, the institutionalization of mediation, guided by qualified and impartial mediators, is critically important for the prompt and constructive resolution of inevitable disputes. Mediators, by focusing on interests rather than positions and facilitating the co-creation of mutually beneficial

solutions, help parties preserve business relationships, avoid lengthy litigation, and transform conflict into an opportunity for further cooperation.

Thus, the comprehensive implementation of strategic communications and mediation practices is not just a tactical

step for resolving current issues, but a strategic investment in forming a resilient and flexible business ecosystem in Ukraine, capable of successfully overcoming challenges and building a prosperous future.

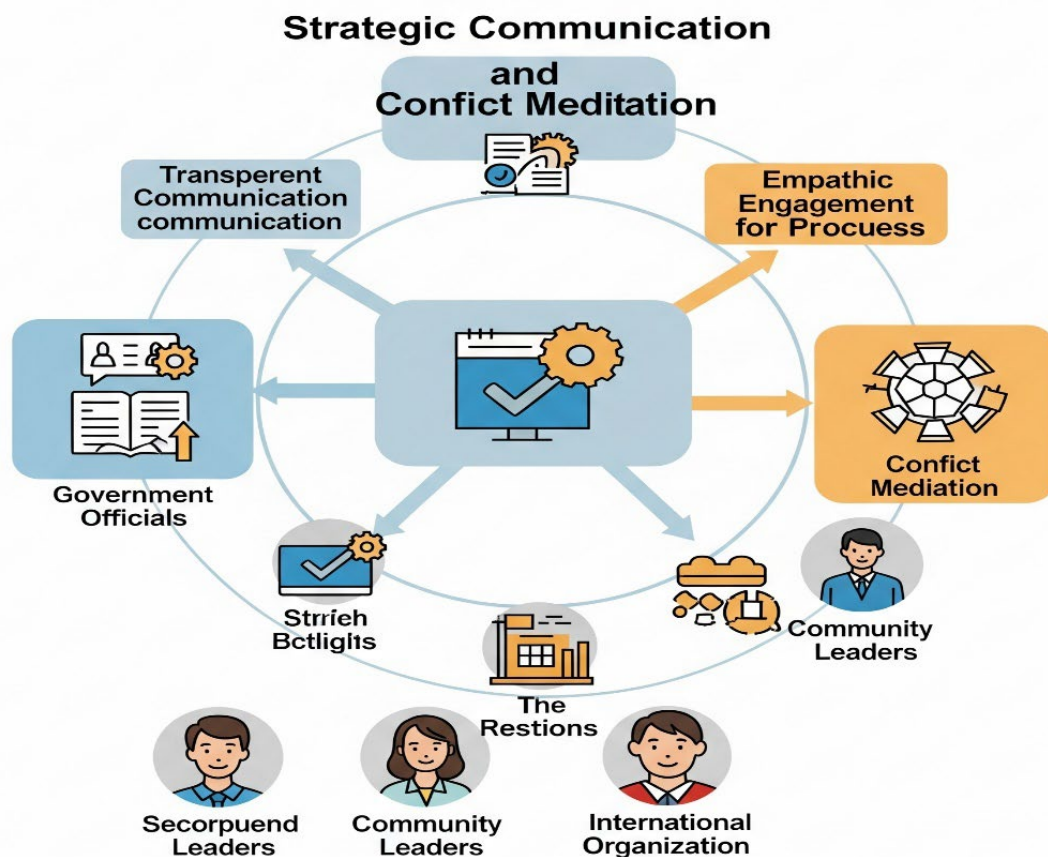


Fig. 2. Synergy Between Strategic Communication and Conflict Mediation in Building Resilient Partnerships for Post-War Reconstruction.  
 Developed by the authors based on [2, 5, 6]

This diagram illustrates the synergy between strategic communication and conflict mediation in building resilient partnerships for post-war reconstruction. It highlights how transparent communication, empathy, and consensus contribute to successful cooperation.

For Ukraine, this means the necessity of not blindly copying, but intelligently borrowing and adapting the best global practices. For example, the concept of "value creation" through negotiation, as opposed to

"value distribution," is critically important for attracting international investments and forming long-term partnerships in reconstruction projects. Instead of each party focusing solely on their benefits, a joint dialogue should aim to maximize overall benefit for all participants. This requires Ukrainian managers and negotiators to develop skills in integrative negotiations, the ability to see the bigger picture, and to find creative solutions that meet the interests of all stakeholders.



At the same time, foreign mediation experience emphasizes the importance of formalizing and institutionalizing this process. In many developed countries, mediation is a recognized and often mandatory stage of resolving business disputes before resorting to court. The establishment of professional mediation chambers, certification programs for mediators, and extensive educational activities within the business community can significantly increase the effectiveness of conflict resolution in Ukraine. Special attention should be paid to mediation in conflicts with an international element, where cultural differences and the absence of a common legal framework can complicate dialogue. Here, J. Bercovitch's experience in international mediation is particularly relevant, showing how a neutral intermediary can help overcome these barriers.

Thus, lessons from foreign experience confirm that strategic communications and mediation are not just tools, but a philosophy of relationship management that allows for transforming conflict situations into opportunities for cooperation. Adapting these approaches, while considering the specifics of the post-war context, will ensure Ukraine not only a faster recovery but also the formation of a more stable, flexible, and trusted business culture capable of thriving in the new world order.

**Conclusions.** Ukraine's post-war recovery isn't just about rebuilding what's destroyed; it's a fundamental transformation of society and the economy that demands new approaches to interaction and cooperation. As this article demonstrates, at the heart of this process lies the establishment of strong, resilient partnerships, which serve as the driving force for attracting resources, implementing projects, and ensuring sustainable development. The key architects of these

partnerships in the extremely complex post-war context are strategic communications and conflict mediation. Strategic communications, grounded in transparency, empathy, and two-way dialogue, are more than just information exchange; they are a deliberate process of restoring trust, forming a shared vision, and overcoming uncertainty. They enable enterprises, particularly in the aviation industry, to effectively engage with various stakeholders – from international investors to local communities – and rebuild their reputation.

In parallel, conflict mediation is an indispensable tool for managing the inevitable disagreements and disputes that arise during a period of massive change. It allows for conflicts to be resolved quickly, confidentially, and with a focus on preserving business relationships, which is critically important for the continuity of recovery processes. The role of a qualified mediator as a neutral facilitator is central to transforming confrontation into constructive dialogue and finding mutually beneficial solutions. The integration of domestic and foreign experience confirms that the synergy of these two approaches creates a powerful mechanism for forming adaptive and flexible partnerships capable of overcoming challenges and leveraging post-war opportunities. The proposed algorithm serves as a practical guide for implementing these principles, ensuring a systemic approach to relationship management.

Thus, investments in developing strategic communication competencies and institutionalizing mediation practices are not merely expenses, but a strategic investment in Ukraine's future. They lay the foundation for a stable and prosperous business ecosystem that will contribute not only to economic revival but also to overall social cohesion and stability in the post-war period.

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