

Book of Graduates' Research Abstracts 2008

PART-TIME EXECUTIVE INTERNATIONAL
MASTER OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2008 - Class of 2008



Book of Graduates' Research Abstracts

Table of Contents:

Preface

Programme

List of Graduates

Abstracts

Preface

This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Executive International Master in Corporate Communication Programme. Here we are proud to present the abstracts of the 13 theses that have been written by the Graduates of the Executive International Master Programme of Corporate Communication of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University in The Netherlands.

In this eleventh year we were able to allow thirteen new graduates to become Master of Science in Corporate Communication. This means that we have 155 MCC graduates. Most of these Mcc's made a substantial career move after their graduation. I sincerely hope (but also expect) that the same will happen to the Graduates of this year. This year 13 representatives of the business world and non-profit organizations can celebrate their graduation of a programme they participated in during two years of intense courses where they presented assignments, discussed the most recent academic theory and applied this to their daily life problems in their businesses. The participants graduating this year are:

Trix Aarts (Municipality of Utrecht), Lily Derksen (WL | Delft Hydraulics/Deltares), Maria Epitropaki (Voice Data Bridge), Nora de Jager (ING Group), Caroline Kamerbeek (Philips Intellectual Property & Standards), Gijs Meijer (FME-CWM), Marjolein van Noppen, Ger Peerboom (SABIC Europetrochemicals BV), René Reijers (Monogram Communication Strategies), Ilse Roggeveen (COA), Saskia Somberg (Ymere), Ruud Verheijen, Berly Walraven (Philip Morris).

I hope they have learned a lot during the courses we offered them in the past years. The least I could say, also on behalf of all the teaching staff that worked with them, is that we have learned a lot from them too. Their willingness to discuss practical problems in their own organizations and to relate these to the issues we discussed in the classroom were inspiring and exciting.

In the eleven year of the Master of Corporate Communication Programme we succeeded in creating an international programme that presents all leading experts in a teaching role. I would like to thank the following people (teaching staff) who contributed tremendously to the success of this programme: Paul Argenti of the Dartmouth College U.S.A.; John Balmer of Bradford University UK; Tom Brown of Oklahoma State University U.S.A.; Kevin Corley of the Pennsylvania State University; Charles Fombrun of the Stern Business School, New York; Janet Duckerich of Texas University in Austin, USA; Joan Hemels, Universiteit van Amsterdam; Onno Maathuis, Positioneringsgroep; Michael Pratt of University of Illinois, Urbana / Champaign; John Rossiter of the University of Wollongong, Australia, Majken Schultz of Copenhagen Business School, Danmark; Frank Thevissen Vrije Universiteit, Brussel Belgian; and from our Faculty: Frans van den Bosch, Gerrit van Bruggen, Pursey Heugens, Muel Kaptein, Swalef Magala, Lucas Meijs, Erik Waarts, and all working at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

The first Graduation Day in 1999 was a great success thanks to the joint effort of several representatives of the business world (Mr. D.J. de Beus of PGGM, Mr. Rob de Brouwer of Hoogovens and Mr. Dries van de Beek of the VSB-Fonds) and several professors of the Erasmus University. Alexander Rinnooy Kan (member of the Executive Board of ING Group) was the keynote speaker at that time. In 2000 it was a great pleasure to have Mr. Cees van Lede, Chief Executive Officer of the Executive Board of Akzo Nobel as our keynote speaker. In 2001 we proudly announced the CEO of Grolsch NV, Mr. Jacques Troch, who spoke about the social responsibility of a company. In 2002, Leendert Bikker (CEO of Euro RSCG Corporate Communications) gave a speech about 'Building Reputation'. In 2003 we welcomed Mr. Wim Dik, the former CEO of KPN, who spoke about reputation management. In 2004 we welcomed with great pleasure Mr. Frank Welvaert, Director of Social Responsibility at Johnson & Johnson Europe. In 2005 we have Mr. A.W.H. Docters van Leeuwen, Chairman of the AFM. And in 2006 we welcomed Mr. P. van Minderhout, Group Director Communications and Social Responsibility of TNT, who spoke about the 'Reputation Management at TNT'. In 2007 we proudly had Mr. J. Prast, Executive Vice President, Global Director of Corporate Communications of Philips as guest speaker, who spoke about "What does good look like in Corporate Communication".

For this year three MCC alumni's gave presentations about their career experiences with the theme "The Route to the Top". During the graduation event, two awards were handed out. Mr. Herman Kievits of Royal Dutch Shell, handed out the 'Shell Netherlands Stimulation Award for Excellence in Corporate Communication' to Ger Peerboom, for his thesis on "Management Efforts to Creating Alignment During Acquisitions". The Boer & Croon Innovation in Communication Award' is presented by Mr. Ron van der Jagt, Partner Boer & Croon Corporate Communication to Maria Epitropaki for her thesis on "Corporate Identity, Corporate Brand Management and Business Performance".

On the graduation event the dean of Bsc&Msc programmes Prof. dr. Erik Waarts announced the great news that the MCC programme was recently accredited by the NVAO (the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisations), resulting in an official Master of Science degree for the Programme. From this cohort onwards, MCC graduates will be entitled to carry the official MSc or Drs. title.

*Prof. dr. Cees B. M. van Riel
Director Corporate Communication Centre
and Chairman of the Part-time Executive International Master in
Corporate Communication Programme*

Programme

Friday, November 14, 2008

- 15.30 - 15.35 **Opening**
Prof.dr. Steef van de Velde,
Vice Dean of the Rotterdam School of Management,
Erasmus University
- 15.35 - 16.05 **'The Route to the Top'**
15.35 - 15.45 Ron van der Jagt (MCC),
Partner Boer & Croon Corporate Communication
15.45 - 15.55 Anoeska van Leeuwen (MCC),
Vice President Communications at TomTom
15.55 - 16.05 Mark Zellenrath (MCC),
Director Corporate Communications at Arcadis NV
- 16.05 - 16.45 **Presentation of the Diplomas**
Prof.dr. Cees van Riel,
Director Corporate Communication Centre
- 16.45 - 16.50 **Presentation of the Shell Netherlands
Stimulation Award for Excellence in Corporate Communication**
Drs. Herman Kievits,
Head External Affairs, Shell Nederland BV
- 16.50 - 16.55 **Presentation of the Boer & Croon Communication Award**
Ron van der Jagt (MCC),
Partner Boer & Croon Corporate Communication
- 16.55 - 17.00 **Closing Remarks**
Prof.dr. C.B.M. van Riel
- 17.00 **Party time**

List of Graduates

Trix Aarts	<i>First impressions last: A model for onboarding newcomers</i>
Lily Derksen	<i>Emotions beneath a new corporate umbrella Decision-making about the international corporate branding strategy during a merger of four professional organisations</i>
Maria Epitropaki	<i>The Corporate Brand Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card</i>
Nora de Jager	<i>Shareholder Meetings Dutch style: A superseded concept? Company confidential</i>
Caroline Kamerbeek	<i>The effect of new digital media on corporate reputations</i>
Gijs Meijer	<i>Reputation and Identity in the technology industry.</i>
Marjolein van Noppen	<i>Strong employer brands Interviews with Top employers about the importance of employer branding in a competitive labour market</i>
Ger Peerboom	<i>The Effect of Perceived External Prestige in Relation to the Management Efforts to Create Alignment during Acquisitions</i>
Reneé Reijers	<i>Driving Identification and Behaviour A study of the relationship between identity, identification, internal communication and strategic business alignment</i>
Ilse Roggeveen	<i>Are the identity and the reputation on one line? Investigation into the identity and reputation of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)</i>
Saskia Somberg	<i>Critical success factors for reputation management in the housing association sector.</i>
Ruud Verheijen	<i>The impact of Reputation on the effectiveness of Marketing Communication Triple Duty: A theoretic and pragmatic approach for building brands, driving sales and building your reputation at the same time</i>

Berly Walraven

*New Girls in the Old Boys Network:
Introducing SHEO's and lady leaders*



Trix Aarts

First impressions last:

A model for onboarding newcomers

Trix Aarts (51) is coordinator of the Sustainable Mobility and Air Quality Program of the municipality of Utrecht. This program includes the projects that contribute to the accessibility and the air quality of the city, e.g. the design and construction of a network of bus lanes, cycling lanes, but also mobility management and educating the citizens, creating awareness for sustainable mobility. Her main responsibilities are supporting the decision making process of city board and city council and coaching the communications professionals of the program.

Trix Aarts studied Human Geography at the University of Utrecht with a minor in Communications. Growing up in the Seventies she participated in a study into the position of female graduates of the school of Journalism in the newspaper sector. After finishing her study she started working for Word-Perfect Corporation. She implemented a network of certified training institutes in the Netherlands and was involved in the development and execution of the Large Account Program. After eight years she started working as a

housing association PWS Rotterdam. It was the first year after the so called "brutering" that made these associations independent. She developed a communication strategy and implemented a new house style. As of 1997 she has worked for local government, first in Amsterdam and later in Utrecht as a senior communication advisor.

S U M M A R Y

In the new benchmark report, “All Aboard: Effective Onboarding Techniques and Strategies,” Aberdeen Group found that while 86% of all organizations surveyed agree that it takes up to six months for a new employee to make a firm decision to stay with the company, 61% of all organizations either don’t offer a formal Onboarding program or end their Onboarding program within just one month. A solid onboarding program is important because it doesn’t only help to retain new hires but it also contributes to their development as full members of the organization.

This thesis gives an answer to the following question: “How can onboarding successfully contribute to the retention of new hires and to the creation of strategic aligned behavior so new hires can act as full members of the organization?”

Strategic Aligned Behavior is the degree of supportive behavior among key internal audiences, rooted in awareness and understanding of the ‘What’ and the ‘Why’ of an organization’s strategic intents. With the implementation of a new strategy not only top management but the whole organization must be involved to create strategic aligned behavior of the employees. The question here is how to create strategic aligned behavior of newcomers in an organization regarding an existing strategy in an organization.

Organizational socialization is the process involved in onboarding of new hires. In this thesis organizational socialization is seen from the perspective of employee communication. Findings in studies from social psychology are put in a theoretical framework of employee communication. The result is a model for the successful onboarding of new hires in an organization.

O R G A N I Z A T I O N A L S O C I A L I Z A T I O N

Organizational socialization is the process by which individuals become part of an organization’s pattern of activities. Socialization matters for both the organization and the individual. Individuals cannot become functioning members of organizations without socialization. And through socialization organizations can retain new hires for the organization and create commitment to the organization and Strategic Aligned Behavior.

Organizational socialization can be described as a learning process where information is transferred to the new hire. An organization has different tactics to shape this process and by doing so can influence the outcomes of the socialization process.

Every tactic is a continuum with no ends. One end concerns a group process directed socialization, strongly orchestrated by the organization (institutionalized socialization). The other end of the continuum is less orchestrated by the organization and is more focused on the individual instead of the group process (individualized socialization). Possible outcomes are custodianship, the new hire accepts his new role, content innovation, the new hire accepts his role but changes some content, or role innovation, the new hire changes also the role. Institutionalized socialization leads to custodianship (e.g. a military bootcamp) and individualized socialization leads to role innovation (e.g. consultant at an IT company). Most onboarding programs are somewhere in the middle of institutionalized socialization and individualized socialization. Three types of onboarding programs can be distinguished:

- Take over (tell and sell), the initiative for the socialization lies with 80% at the organization;
- Facilitate, the organization and the individual are both responsible for the successful socialization;
- Hand over (sink or swim), the initiative for the socialization process lies with 80% at the individual.

In the socialization process the confirmation of the identity of the newcomer and providing a mentor, who acts as a role model, are the most influential tactics an organization can use.

The individuals are not passively undergoing (any) onboarding program. At the encounter stage new hires often experience a reality shock resulting in uncertainty and anxiety. New hires are motivated to reduce those feelings and they will proactively seek for that information so they can use it to perform well. Therefore they are focused on information related to their tasks and role and how they are executing the job. Most newcomers they think that information about the organization is less useful in the encounter stage.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND STYLES OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

What type of onboarding program is appropriate for an organization depends on the organization's culture. One can distinguish four types of organizational culture:

- **Adhocracy.** These organizations are focused on innovation. They offer a dynamic, entrepreneurial and creative working environment. Employees have a large degree of freedom. The employee communication style of these organizations is accountability. The employees are accountable for their performances.

- **Family.** The employees of these organizations have a lot in common. They share an ideology or at least have the same values. Loyalty characterizes their attitude towards the organization. Personal development is important. Internal communication is focused on confirmation of the ideological views of head quarters. Therefore Living apart together is the dominant employee communication style.
- **Hierarchy.** These organizations have many rules. The working environment is very formal and structured. Employees act according to procedures. Rules & directives is the dominant communication style.
- **Market.** Profitability is the most important goal. These organizations have an external focus and a high degree of formalization. The working environment is highly competitive. The dominant employee communication style, Shared meaning, is focused to get support of the employees for the way the organization aims to a good performance.

As for the type of onboarding programs one can say that the type Hand over fits the adhocracy culture. This type of onboarding leads to role innovation and innovation is the main goal of these organizations. On the other hand the type Take over fits the hierarchy culture. This type of onboarding leads to custodianship of the role. Most onboarding programs are in between the two ends Hand over (individualized socialization) and Take over (institutionalized socialization).

Culture	EC style	Type onboarding program
Adhocracy	Accountability	 <p>Hand over <i>Facilitate</i> Take over</p>
Family	Living apart together	
Market	Shared meaning	
Hierarchy	Rules & Directives	

TOWARDS A MODEL FOR ONBOARDING

A solid onboarding program helps organizations to retain new hires and to create commitment and strategic aligned behavior of the newcomer to the organization. The socialization of a newcomer into an organization takes time. Most employers think a period of at least six month is necessary for the development of new hires into full members of the organization. During this period three steps can be distinguished:

- Discovering the basics
- Learning tasks and roles
- Sharing beliefs.

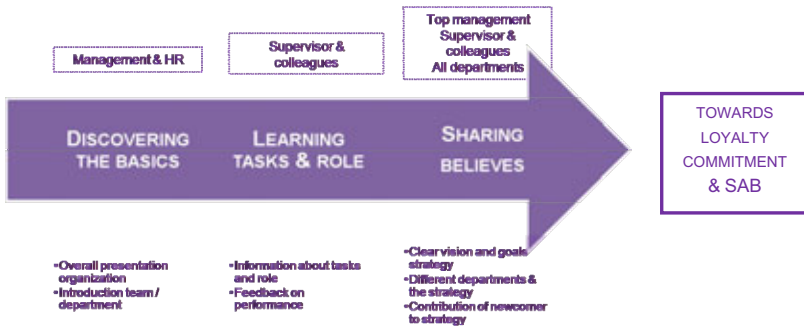
The first step is discovering the basics of an organization. The first days after the entry the newcomer is getting to know the building, his workplace, his colleagues, etc. The newcomer discovers the way the organization operates daily. Many organizations have an introduction program of one or two days, but even if there is no formal introduction at all, the newcomer makes this journey.

In the beginning newcomers will experience feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. He asks himself the following questions: Am I able to perform my tasks and role well, Do I fit into the organization (department) and Will I meet the expectations of the organization (supervisor). The newcomer is motivated to reduce those feelings. In this phase, Learning tasks and roles, he will be focused on information that helps him to execute his tasks and information about his performance.

When the new hire is more confident about his performance on the job than there is room for sharing the organization's beliefs (mission, vision, goals, strategy). In this phase it is important that the newcomer can comprehend the beliefs of an organization and that he understands these beliefs and his contribution to them and that he begins to support these beliefs in behavior. After this phase the socialization process ends and the newcomer becomes one of the colleagues.

A solid onboarding program in all types of organizations takes these phases into account. Within each phase the initiative can rest more with the organization or more with the individual, depending on the socialization goals an organization has. The phases are not separate from each other but each phase emphasizes another aspect in the process.

MENTOR & SOCIAL EVENTS



A solid onboarding program includes the availability of a mentor who acts as an advisor on the background and as a role model. Also social events on a regular basis, where the newcomers get to know each other and their colleagues, contributes to the socialization process. Such events can lead to organizational identification.

For the success of this onboarding model it is important that an organization has a vision, goals and/or strategy that is authentic and therefore supported by the employees. Furthermore it is important that the supervisors and mentors feel committed to the corporate strategy. The supervisor should not act as a mentor as well, because both have a different role in the onboarding process. The involvement of top management in the onboarding program is critical. They are the ones who can best welcome the new hires on the first day of the introduction program and introduce newcomers to the organization's beliefs. Finally the onboarding program should take earlier work experiences of newcomers into account.



Lily Derksen

Emotions beneath a new corporate umbrella

Decision-making about the international corporate branding strategy during a merger of four professional organisations

Lily Derksen (1961) is a communication professional with more than 12 years of experience in a leading international knowledge institute for water and subsurface issues, Deltares in Delft (formerly Delft Hydraulics). Her main duties in recent years were internal and external communication for a merger of four professional organisations and the development of the corporate positioning and branding strategy for the new institute, Deltares. After a five-year course at the ArtEZ Arnhem Academy of Visual Arts she achieved the

title of Bachelor of Fine Art. She started her career as a visual artist and worked in an interdisciplinary way, on the cutting edges of art, economics, culture and science. Assignments comprised both art and communication consultancy projects. To expand her knowledge in the field of communication she successfully participated in the course Communication Consultant, at Van der Hilst. Alongside running her own company she accepted the part-time job of PR officer with engineering firm Arcadis Euroconsult.

She is fluent in Dutch and English. She obtained a First Certificate in English at the University of Cambridge. The arts still play an important role in her life but so do science and philosophy. Painting used to be her work; now it's her hobby. She enjoys gardening and loves a good meal with a good glass of wine together with friends. Curiosity and a wide range of interests drive her as a person and as a communication consultant.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Introduction

When organisations merge, there is almost always a change in identity, so that existing corporate brands disappear or acquire a new position. During mergers, various identities are combined to form a single new identity. That identity is the basis for the corporate strategy and communication, the name, the visual identity and the corporate positioning of the organisation.

In this thesis, I describe a horizontal merger between four professional organisations. The merger partners adopted the new name as the basis for a discussion about the corporate branding strategy. *The central issue is whether the corporate strategy and communication of the new institute can serve as a guideline for the communication of the business units (i.e., the existing corporate brands).*

Should a new institute present itself as a single entity under the new corporate brand or as a collection of prominent business units? And what happens to the existing corporate names? What brand architecture should the institute use in the Netherlands, and which one abroad? The SIDEC model (Van Riel, 1994) was adopted as the basis for decision-making about these issues. This method employs a semi-structured questionnaire to find out how representatives of a multi-business company, in the main office and on the business unit level, want to handle the profiling of the organisational identity (visually and with respect to content). The model is an instrument for determining when it is relevant to use the corporate brand at the business unit level, and when it is more effective to use different brands for the business units. It is based on the assumption that business unit managers can take a more rational decision about the sensitive corporate branding strategy when they have certain information about the organisation at their disposal. Van Riel describes four factors that affect **Corporate Branding Strategy (C)**: the nature of the **Organisation Strategy (S)**, the nature of the **Internal Organisation (I)**, the uniformity or diversity of the **Driving Forces (D)** (personal motives and emotions) of the employees and the degree to which people believe that the corporate brand contributes to the **External Prestige (E)** of the business unit. He describes four identity structure types: stand-alone (every part has its own identity), weak endorsement (part of a parent brand), medium endorsement (prominent visibility of the parent behind the brand) and full dominance of the brand.

Decision-making about corporate branding strategy for mergers

Decision-making about branding strategy within a single organisation is a sensitive area in itself. When four merger partners are involved, it becomes even more difficult to channel emotions. That increased sensitivity is a result of the breakdown of existing organisational identities. Employees respond to the loss of this certainty in emotional ways.

They then have to identify with a new identity and a new corporate brand. In the case of mergers, there is usually a discrepancy between the levels of identification with the existing and the new brands.

There may also be additional factors that may affect employees' personal motives. Cultural differences may play a role and, usually, several leaders are involved. The nature of the organisation and the workforce can also have an effect.

Van Riel describes how driving forces often play a decisive role in the decision-making process. Susceptibility to the factor of driving forces is probably more acute when it comes to mergers. These forces appear to be the main factor in determining the attitude and the behaviour of employees with respect to the new corporate brand. What factors affect driving forces during a merger process? To what extent do they affect the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy and the outcome of that process?

The Deltares case

Four reputable knowledge institutes, WL | Delft Hydraulics, GeoDelft, the Subsurface and Groundwater unit of TNO and parts of Rijkswaterstaat joined forces on 1 January 2008 in an independent institute for delta technology, Deltares. The TNO unit was 'housed' with Deltares on a secondment basis. The merger has been adopted as a case for studying the decision-making process about corporate branding strategy.

The merger came about as a result of a report from the Wijffels Commission 'The strength of direct links' stating that knowledge institutions should collaborate more intensively. The report led to a government decision to establish a new knowledge institute for water and subsurface issues. The government provided the new institute - which was given the working name 'Delta institute' - with a guarantee for research financing for a period of five years. In addition to government work (40% of the turnover), the institute was required to be active in the commercial market (60%). The government appointed a change manager who was also to take up the position of general director after the merger.

WL | Delft Hydraulics was established in 1927 and it was involved globally in water management and hydraulic engineering. GeoDelft had been involved since 1932 in national geo-engineering issues. The Subsurface and Groundwater unit could trace its origins back to 1966. Its activities were mainly national in scope. The Dutch Directorate General for Public Works and Water Management ('Rijkswaterstaat') is a government organisation that has existed since 1798. The 'market partners' were partly dependent on government funding - 20% in the case of Delft Hydraulics and GeoDelft, 40% of turnover in the case of TNO - intended for research projects that contribute to maintaining the high standard of Dutch knowledge in the areas of water and the subsurface. The rest of the turnover came from the commercial market. The partners were financially healthy. Delft Hydraulics had a workforce of 360 FTEs, GeoDelft 220

and TNO 150. Rijkswaterstaat brought in 136 FTEs. Corporate TNO decided, for 'strategic' reasons, to second the unit. GeoDelft, Rijkswaterstaat and TNO all had strong reputations in the Netherlands. WL | Delft Hydraulics, working as Delft Hydraulics, had a strong global reputation.

Desired identity and corporate positioning for the new institute

The merger process took more than eighteen months. During that time, a communication working group and an external consultancy developed the desired identity and a positioning scenario for the Deltares brand. Management, staff and external stakeholders were involved in this process.

During the creation of the identity and positioning, the working group looked for associations that could help the institute on a corporate level. 'Delta technology', a new category, was adopted as the instrumental association. Delta technology is the term for an integrated approach (including exact and social sciences) to delta, river and coastal issues. It leads to sustainable solutions that are not only state-of-the-art in terms of the technology but also take societal developments into consideration. Deltares wishes to be the global authority in the field of delta technology. Emotional associations with the brand are located in the field of commitment to society. Deltares has an important task: to make a global contribution to establishing and maintaining possibilities for living, working and recreation in vulnerable delta areas. In short: 'Enabling Delta Life.'

Once the Deltares name had been decided on, a branding working group comprising business unit managers from the merger partners started work on the corporate branding strategy with assistance from an external consultancy. Rijkswaterstaat was not involved. In the Netherlands, Deltares made an abrupt switch to a single prominent corporate brand name. At the international level, contacts with stakeholders are much less frequent and media coverage is limited, so the working group looked at transitional arrangements. The crucial question was which existing corporate brand names could continue to be used for the time being in the international arena.

External factors affecting decision-making

- *The market (environment, prestige)*: There were considerable differences between the merger partners in terms of market share and reputation.
- The merger partners depended either in part or entirely on the government. A refusal to participate in the merger meant that they would not receive any more funding for knowledge development and would have to rely entirely on the commercial market. Knowledge development would have stagnated. That is not desirable for a country of which two thirds is below sea level. The initiative for the merger was largely motivated by Dutch political principles.
- *Privatization*: Rijkswaterstaat transferred its knowledge development task to Deltares. This led to a major reorganisation. The specialist services were shut down and a new Rijkswaterstaat organisation, The Water Service ('De Waterdienst'), was established.
- *Market assessment*: In 1995 and 2005, there were calls for substantial parts of GeoDelft to be transferred to engineering companies.
- *Climate change* underlined the urgency of an institute for delta issues.
- *A thriving economy*: None of the partners needed to enter into a merger.

Internal factors affecting decision-making

- *Strategy*: In addition to a merger, the creation of Deltares required all the partners to reorganize. They had to adopt new positions with respect to each other and to the government. Deltares will be tackling delta issues in an integrated way. This requires a different way of working. All this constituted a major intervention, with a new strategy as a result.
- *Internal organisation*: There was hardly any planning or control from corporate for the business units during the formation of the institute.
- *Leadership*: Different types of leadership play a role.
- All sorts of social and *psychological processes* affecting personal motives are involved in a merger. The existing social structures of four partners were put into the melting pot. From the point of view of individual employees, there was a threat to the social identity of their collective. The loss of an organisational identity implies a loss of control. Dealing with the loss often triggers a process of grieving, with the associated emotions.
- The *unequal merger* partners agreed that they would have an equal say in decision-making processes.
- *Nature of the organisation and the workforce*: These are critical, highly trained professionals.

- *History*: In the early 1990s, Delft Hydraulics and GeoDelft lost their government status. In 2007, Delft Hydraulics was the institute that generated most turnover from market assignments. The focus on the market was partly a result of the decline in government assignments/subsidy. The government was increasingly unreliable as a source of assignments. GeoDelft was more successful in achieving a balance between the market and research. The research subsidy for TNO was more reliable because it was structured on the basis of multi-year contracts.
- *Before privatization, Delft Hydraulics and GeoDelft* made up a single institute that was broken up because of limited synergy between the disciplines and the high level of differentiation in the market.

Conclusion Deltares case

The case is a complex one. Within a short period of time, the reorganisation at Rijkswaterstaat and the merger of the four organisations broke open and redistributed the entire Dutch knowledge branch relating to water and the subsurface. This led to far-reaching changes in identity. The employee identification with the organisation was completely overhauled. An additional complicating factor was that - in the view of the employees - the merger had been imposed on them by the government. On the other hand, the merger and the new corporate brand were promising because of the story behind Deltares. The Deltares innovations will enhance the inhabitability of densely-populated delta areas throughout the world.

Theoretical background and goals of the study

The SIDEC model is a good basis for decisions about the corporate branding strategy. However, the complex merger situation, the nature of the organisations and the employees meant that there were a number of additional, intervening variables that had a major impact on the decision-making process. The theoretical background to this thesis was the wish to examine which additional factors in a complex merger affect the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy and the outcome of that process. The study examines the effect of:

- phenomena such as psychodynamic group processes and the responses of the employees to the loss of certainties;
- the nature of the employees and the organisations;
- the nature of leadership. There was a change manager appointed by the government and the general managers already in place. Together, they made up a temporary management body, the steering group.
- a participative approach to organisation identity and brand definition.

The particular merger conditions were incorporated into the SIDEC theory in order to improve the theoretical approach to decision-making about corporate branding. In the conclusion, I will make recommendations for improving the decision-making process

for mergers. The recommendations have been re-worked as a merger version of the SIDEC model. To arrive at the recommendations, it was necessary to acquire an understanding of all the factors affecting decision-making. To that end, the SIDEC model with the factors of Strategy, Internal Organisation, Driving Forces and External Prestige was applied to the Deltares case. Eight propositions and research (observations, literature search, online research and interviews/discussions) were then used to study the additional factors.

Conclusion application of the SIDEC model

The application of the model identified reluctance among the existing corporate brands to implement the new Deltares corporate communications strategy and to use the Deltares name internationally. This was due to a number of factors:

- inadequate identification with the delta technology category. Delta technology is relevant for the entire organisation and can be communicated as such. Most employees did not feel at home with the new, unfamiliar, delta technology and saw it as not being relevant for all activities.
- the perceived difference in the approach to the implementation of organisational objectives. Three partners had a national approach; one worked internationally. The management styles were very different. TNO and Delft Hydraulics were project organisations with a line management structure. GeoDelft was a network organisation with autonomous teams. Rijkswaterstaat had a government background, where accounting for processes plays a leading role. The market parties were more concerned with turnover.
- in the formation stage, there was not enough central policy with respect to functional management areas.
- the international market position and reputation of Delft Hydraulics. For Delft Hydraulics, the 'parenting advantage' provided by Deltares was inadequate. Of the four parties, only Delft Hydraulics had a strong international position. It wanted an 'endorsed' transition scenario for itself alone until the Deltares brand and delta technology had acquired enough authority in the minds of the stakeholders.

Dominant motives

The application of the model identified one dominant factor: the driving forces. Emotions and personal motives were the spectacles through which the partners viewed the SIDEC factors. As a result, the branding working group and the employees were not open to rational considerations in the branding discussion. Emotions defeated rationality and made the decision-making process difficult to manage. The driving forces were also 'stirred up' by a number of factors.

At the time of the discussion, there was no team spirit. Issues were examined in the light of the existing corporate brands. An 'us-and-them' atmosphere prevailed.

The strong identification with the existing organisation resulted in a vertical breach in identification with the new organisation. Furthermore, the discussion also resulted in a horizontal breach between the partners. The emphasis on their own identities generated even more emotions.

As well as being a new brand, Deltares also stands for the characteristics of the other merger partners. Against the background of the organisational identity theory, the question that arises is whether individual employees thought those new characteristics also apply to themselves. If not, were they prepared to re-define themselves?

During the decision-making process, the internal organisation had not been fully worked out. The resulting vacuum created opportunities for power play that adversely affected people's perspectives on the new corporate brand.

Resistance from TNO and Delft Hydraulics to delta technology stirred up emotions. In the case of Delft Hydraulics, this was caused by concerns about the loss of its international market position. The other merger partners became irritated by the - in their view - dominant behaviour of Delft Hydraulics. The emotions resulted in people hanging on to existing corporate brands and a reduction in identification with the new corporate brand.

Employee behaviour is the main factor for an organisation in terms of establishing a distinction from other organisations. In that sense, employee motives are crucial for the process of identification with the new corporate brand and decision-making about the corporate branding strategy. The degree to which the workforce identifies with their organisation is an important factor for the successful implementation of the corporate communications strategy and the new corporate brand.

On the basis of the SIDEC theory, a weak endorsement by the umbrella brand Deltares is desirable for international positioning. However, the branding working group arrived at a compromise in which all existing corporate brands were given international recognition in a slogan. The managing director of Delft Hydraulics vetoed this compromise. The change manager wanted to keep 'Delft' on board the merger and took, on the very next day, the authoritarian decision to maintain the Delft Hydraulics name in the Deltares logo for international use.

The weighting of the SIDEC factors shows the extent to which the corporate communication strategy can act as a guideline for business unit communication. In this way, the SIDEC model indicates which factors prevent or promote identification with the new corporate brand. The level of identification has implications for decision-making about the corporate branding strategy. Low levels result in people hanging on to existing corporate brands, and high levels mean they accept the new corporate brand. In terms of the branding strategy, the extremes of this spectrum are 'stand-alone' and 'strong endorsement'.

Summary of propositions

'When the stated motives for a merger fail to correspond to the merger partners' own motives and reasons, the partners' initially unstated reasons will become apparent later during the implementation process.'

The predominant focus was on the importance of Deltares for society as a whole. It was only after the government decision had been taken that all the implications were examined. Delft Hydraulics engaged in the process primarily to improve the relationship with Rijkswaterstaat. To this end, it looked as though it would have had to relinquish its freedom on the international market. 'Delft' saw this as an affront to its organisational pride. An argument for the relatively small and vulnerable GeoDelft was the continuity of the organisation. There was political pressure behind the participation of TNO. The University of Utrecht wanted to maintain its relationship with TNO and Deltares was assigned a second branch in Utrecht. TNO also attempted to bring Deltares under its wing. The seconded organisation postponed its decision to participate in full. The success of a merger depends upon getting all the motives out into the open in order to establish a basis of trust.

'Interaction between merger partners accentuates the characteristics and the values of each partner, but it also emphasizes the differences between the partners.'

Differences between groups confront observers with their own patterns of thinking based on experience and values from the past. Differences therefore result in the spontaneous creation of distance between people. This leads to a feeling that the world would be a better place if everybody had the same values as the individual. The outcome is an us-and-them feeling. The attribution of differences to group membership has another disadvantage. It easily turns discussions into a negotiation focused on winning or losing. In the case, differences were magnified. 'We are better because we are active internationally. A network organisation works best. Government thinking will undermine our market position.' During a merger process, it is important to learn to appreciate each other's positions in order to arrive at a shared future. Psychodynamic group processes can easily disturb this process.

'Employees who have participated in the creation of the new organisation identity have a more positive attitude towards the new corporate brand.'

The results of an online survey showed that employees, broadly speaking, had the same personal motives and the same ideal for Deltares. This was a positive basis for the construction of a new brand. They wanted a leading, international, innovative and committed institute. The positioning scenario for Deltares as a global authority that is committed to society matched their wishes. The adoption of delta technology resulted in problems. The employees were concerned that 'delta' was not a concept known to other countries, that technology evoked too many technical associations and that the delta technology combination, as an integrated approach, would be perceived as being

expensive. At their instigation, coastal areas and river basins were added. Internationally also, the communication emphasis will be on water and subsurface issues, and less on delta technology.

‘During mergers, leadership is a dominant factor in decision-making about corporate branding strategy.’

Changing behaviour is the essence of processes of change. This can be done by getting the employees to face up to facts in an appealing way. Information that targets emotions can generate the motivation needed to take action to change. In the case, the employees were not given adequate opportunities to ally themselves with the perspective of a new organisation with a strong corporate brand. The causes: the need for the merger was not widely supported; there was no clear structure or hierarchy for the formation of Deltares; management communication lacked appeal; inadequate chemistry and trust between the leaders involved resulted in inconsistent messages and ambiguous leadership; the formation process took too long.

‘The employees of a professional organisation want more facts and proof before they are prepared to change their behaviour.’

The sender and receiver often perceive the content of a message in a different way. Problems arise when the gap between the perceptions becomes too large. Management should align the perceptions so that communication is credible. One example was the communication relating to the appointment of the change manager. The government presented him as an independent officer. Since government was the main initiator behind Deltares, his independence was questioned by the critical scientists. Communications tended more to confirm the impression that the government was running the show during the merger process.

‘All sorts of organisational competitions are fought out on the playing field of branding strategy.’

Branding strategy can be abused to bring up issues about internal organisation, strategy and prestige / environment that are under discussion or that have not yet been addressed during the vacuum of the formation stage. Merger partners try to acquire power. The SIDEC model is an instrument for putting information in the open, thereby allowing for the rationalization of the decision-making process about branding strategy. The absence of that information makes the process emotional and awkward to control. Reversing this proposition provides a demonstration of the validity of the model. A branding issue can only be resolved when management has already developed the policy for internal organisation and a strategy in good time.

‘During mergers, employees go through a period of grieving. It is only during the final stages of this grieving process that they become receptive to change and only then that identification with the new organisation and the new corporate brand can begin.’

During mergers, a lot of certainties are transformed. Employees must accept the loss and learn to cope with the new situation. The emotional phases of the grieving process are: denial, aggression, bargaining, depression, resignation and acceptance. During the decision-making process, the employees were in the aggression and bargaining phase. At this point, they were unable to ally themselves with the new organisation and corporate brand.

‘Leaders who fail to communicate legitimate messages prevent their employees from looking to the future.’

Mergers evoke emotions. The task of a leader is to define boundaries for emotions by establishing a clear structure in the merger process and communicating legitimate messages. Legitimate messages are credible, they are conveyed at the right moment, they are consistent and meaningful, recognizable for the employees and focused on a higher goal.

The communication from the Delft Hydraulics director contained too many emotions of his own. Confidence in the future was lacking. He would have been better advised not to work through his grief in the presence of his employees. The GeoDelft director ‘pumped up’ his people for the merger. After his premature departure, the employees were overwhelmed by the reality, and entered into collective grief. In normal times, his behaviour was effective, but it was dysfunctional as preparation for a merger. The TNO line management wanted the merger, but their CEO put up resistance. The inconsistent messages resulted in the employees being caught between two stools emotionally. The steering group did not emanate confidence and therefore failed to provide the employees with the prospect of a strong new corporate brand. The change manager was the most strategic leader. He took careful decisions about when to inform the staff about which subjects.

The results of the propositions

The results of the propositions can all be traced back to the identification of the employees and business unit managers with the new corporate brand. They indicate which additional factors in a merger process help or hinder identification with the new corporate brand. They therefore affect the decision-making process about the branding strategy and the outcome of that process.

- Four of the eight propositions can be traced back to the issue of leadership. Leaders are responsible for strategic choices and they are expected to have carefully considered all consequences. When they fail to do so, the result may be resistance to the new corporate brand. The result is less identification with the new corporate brand.

- Leaders must create the conditions for bringing about the organisational change, providing employees with an appealing perspective on the change, and guiding them in the direction of the new situation. It has emerged that an appealing prospect, the communication of legitimate messages and structuring are important pre-conditions in a merger process for establishing empathy with the new corporate brand and making identification with the brand possible.
- The factor of time is also an important pre-condition for the decision-making process. Identification with the new corporate brand is not possible in the early stages of the grieving process. Picking the right moment about a corporate branding strategy proved to be crucial for the management of the decision-making process.
- Phenomena associated with mergers, such as psychodynamic group processes have an impact on identification with the new corporate brand. They can result in people hanging on to existing corporate brands, increased identification with those brands and a corresponding reduction in identification with the new corporate brand.
- The nature of the employees and the organisation has an effect on identification. Employees in professional organisations find verifiable communications very important. When they think there is inadequate 'proof' for underlying messages and a discrepancy arises between views, the result will be less identification with the new corporate brand.
- Participation in the creation of a new identity and corporate brand make employees more likely to identify with the new corporate brand.
- The absence of a policy for internal organisation and a strategy in the branding discussion creates opportunities for conflicts and power struggles between the merger partners. During a merger process, the positions, structure and strategy are not yet fixed. The lack of a strategy results in people hanging on to existing corporate brands, to the projection of irritation onto the corporate brands of merger partners and a corresponding reduction in identification with the new corporate brand.

Conclusion additional factors

Eight propositions were used to study the additional factors affecting decision-making. The complex merger process is a major event involving many emotions. They define, as it were, the process of identification with the new corporate brand. When the emotions of employees are channelled properly, there will be more opportunities for looking to the future and the probability of identification with the new corporate brand will increase. Participation in the creation of the new brand had a positive impact on motivation. However, the positive effect was overwhelmed by emotions. I have classified the factors that had a negative impact on emotions according to the extent of their impact on identification with the new corporate brand.

Leadership

Employees need support to get through the uncertain merger process and to ally themselves with the new corporate brand. A leader provides that support by structuring the merger process and communicating messages that are legitimate from the point of view of the critical, highly educated professionals. Structuring the process means creating good working conditions. A leader's conduct must also be credible given his important role as an example for others.

Management communication is an important instrument in successful organisation changes. The pre-conditions for effective management communication are a clear strategy and messages that have meaning for employees. Together, they provide frameworks and open up the prospect of a strong new corporate brand with which staff will ultimately want to ally themselves. Leadership has proven to be directly linked to the personal motives and emotions of employees. It makes a major contribution to the level of identification with the new corporate brand. Leadership has a major impact on the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy and the outcome of that process.

The change manager as a leader

In the early days of the formation of Deltares, the change manager established a structure by appointing 15 working groups. Quite soon, there was an uncontrolled proliferation of working groups (37). The result was a chaotic organisation for the formation with a negative impact on internal communication and employee perspectives on the future organisation. The decision to involve a large number of groups in the formation had both a Darwinian ('survival of the fittest') and a Machiavellian ('divide and rule') side.

On the other hand, the change manager did think carefully during the merger process about whether his conduct and messages were legitimate. He was not particularly focused on promoting identification with the new corporate brand. His position precluded being so. He was not yet the managing director and was not able to adopt a very prominent role as the 'flag-bearer'.

Many staff saw the change manager as a government puppet. The critical scientists continually appraised his messages and behaviour in terms of legitimacy (i.e. independence). The change manager was aware of this and, within the limits of his awkward position was able to achieve precisely those goals he had in mind.

The leaders of GeoDelft, Delft Hydraulics and TNO

The leaders of GeoDelft, Delft Hydraulics and TNO operated in a familiar organisational structure but were not aware enough of their conduct or the legitimacy of their messages. The various employee communication styles resulted in inconsistent messages. Emotions were given free rein and spilled out, for example during the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy. With their communication activities and their actions, the leaders failed to provide their workforce with an adequate perspective on the new organisation. They did not prepare their employees well for the merger. Identification with a new strong corporate brand failed.

The nature of the leadership

During the merger, there were different leadership styles, 'shared' leadership - the change manager and the leaders in place - and a leading body, the steering group. The steering group failed to convey confidence and leadership. This was a missed opportunity because they personified the merger on a small scale and could have provided an important example.

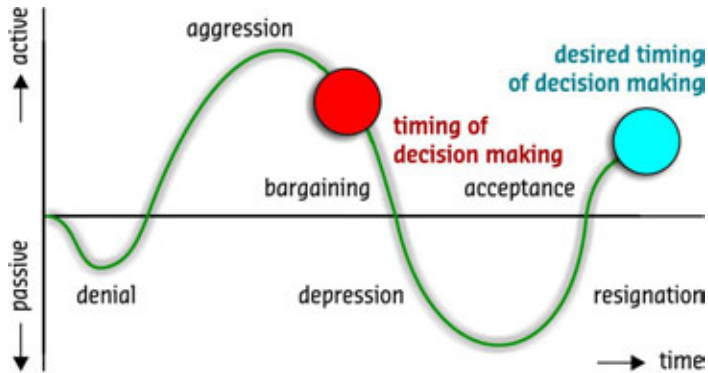
Although the leadership was not officially shared, the employees perceived it in those terms. Who was the most credible party, the leader in place or the change manager, the future leader? To whom should they turn? This ambiguity did not help in terms of providing the employees with a firm footing. It heightened emotions and had a negative impact on identification with the new corporate brand and decision-making about the corporate branding strategy.

Employees grieving process

It was only after the loss of the old identity had been accepted that it became possible - in emotional terms - to see the new identity and Deltares brand as meaningful. At the time (during the aggression and bargaining phase) when decisions were being made about the international corporate branding strategy, the branding working group and the staff were not able to ally themselves with the new organisation. They were talking tactics, not playing the ball. And the tactics have to be clearly defined before the ball can be played and decisions taken. Only then is it possible to establish a positive framework for the new organisation.

Another pre-condition for identification with the new brand is a sense of security for employees. Before the merger date, hardly any working conditions were created. In a merger process, everything is on the move, and the game rules and positions are unclear.

That employees were unable to align themselves with the new organisation emerged from their response to the corporate positioning. Delta technology is - when viewed objectively - appropriate for the desired identity. Nevertheless, during the decision-making process, employees rejected it. They were neither willing nor able to line up behind the new and the unknown. From their point of view, a new category and an unknown brand could never contribute to the prestige of their business unit.



If decision-making had taken place later, the employees and the business unit managers would not have been guided exclusively by their emotions. The decision-making process would have been easier to manage. During a merger, more time can help to damp down emotions in decision-making about the sensitive area of branding strategy, making identification with the new corporate brand more likely.

Interaction between merger partners

The discussion about the international corporate branding strategy was the first interaction between the merger partners in which the existing identities came under threat. During the decision-making process Delft Hydraulics placed the emphasis on its position as an international leader. It used the identity as a strategic weapon to retain control over the international market, and therefore over the future of Deltares. The other 'equal' partners sensed intuitively that this was a power play, and they deployed their strategic identity weapons. However, they lacked comparable international achievements. Other issues were drawn into the discussion in order to provide opposition. In the case of GeoDelft, this was the network organisation. The TNO unit brought in the international market of TNO as a whole. This was the start of a struggle that was about power, not about the branding strategy. The lack of a strategy and policy with respect to the internal organisation stoked up the flames even further. Old mixed feelings between Delft Hydraulics and GeoDelft came to the surface. The discussion

resulted in the rejection by Delft Hydraulics of the Deltares corporate brand. The branding strategy threatened for a while to turn into a 'deal breaker' for the merger. Branding strategy was abused as a way of adopting positions, with strategic identity characteristics and experience from the past being used to justify confrontations. It reinforced group identification among the merger partners, increased the distance between the partners and reduced identification with the new corporate brand. During a merger process, there is a good chance that interaction between the partners can have a negative impact on the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy and the outcome of that process.

The nature of the employees and the organisations

Communication was dominated by information about processes. This is not the way to challenge scientists, who are stimulated by substantive issues. In addition, the strategic plan was not challenging either; it failed to state the objectives that Deltares wanted to achieve and the strategic initiatives needed. Internal politics still played too great a role to allow hard strategic decisions.

Communication must always be credible; scientists are utterly uncompromising in their examination of evidence underlying information. Messages that are neither credible nor appealing reduce identification with the new organisation and the new corporate brand. This means that the nature of the employees and the organisation has an impact on decision-making about the corporate branding strategy.

Merger conditions incorporated in the SIDEC theory

In the case, it emerged that personal motives and emotions were the spectacles through which people looked, determining the level of identification with the organisation. Strong leaders are able to channel and mould emotions. They provide firm footing and supply employees with instruments that allow them to build bridges to the future so that they can identify with the new corporate brand. So leadership can be used as an important determinant factor in a SIDEC model for mergers. Leaders who can steer staff emotions have a positive impact on the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy and the outcome of that process. Leadership style is classified under internal organisation in the standard SIDEC model. In the merger version, leadership is in the driving forces factor. The superscript L in SI^LDEC shows the strong link between leadership and driving forces and shows the link with internal organisation.

The time factor proved decisive in determining the capacity of staff to identify with the new organisation and corporate brand. Time has a major impact on the decision-making process about the corporate branding strategy and it is therefore right to include it in the merger version. Managing the decision-making process becomes simpler when employees are emotionally able to ally themselves with the new brand.

Mergers are virtually always emotionally difficult for employees. Discussions about branding strategy are sensitive even in normal situations. They are highly inflammable in complex mergers. The **SI^LDECT model** takes this into consideration.

The corporate communication strategy is still a sensitive area, even six months after the merger. In particular, employees from the former Delft Hydraulics still don't feel comfortable with delta technology and Deltares. The proportion of Rijkswaterstaat projects is large (50%) and the focus on the international market is declining. That hurts, particularly because pride in the organisation was primarily based on international projects. Nevertheless, Deltares is still achieving international growth as a brand. In Singapore, a country with which Delft Hydraulics/Deltares has had an intensive relationship for some time now, Deltares is now the name that is used. In new projects too, clients soon switched to Deltares. The new brand would seem to inspire enough confidence. Successes and appreciation from the outside will result in more and more commitment. The more identification there is with the organisation, the more employees will start to see the corporate communication strategy of Deltares as an added value for their business unit. Ultimately, the entire workforce will feel at home under the new corporate umbrella.

Selection of references

- Maathuis, O. J. M. (1999), 'Corporate Branding' dissertation, Chapter 1,2,3 and 9.
- Cees van Riel (2003), 'Defining corporate communication' Peggy Simcic Bronn and Roberta Wiig (eds), Corporate Communication - a strategic approach to building reputation. Oslo, Gyldendal Akademisk pp 55 - 73.
- Cees van Riel & Berens, G. (2001). Balancing corporate branding policies in multi-business companies - Chapter 3 in 'Raising the Corporate Umbrella' by P J Kitchen and D E Schultz, New York; Palgrave pp 43 - 61.
- John M.T. Balmer and S.A. Greyser (2003) 'Managing the multiple identities of the corporation', California Mangement Review, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 72 - 86.
- Nicholas Ind and Matthew Bell (1999), Freedom and order: A partipicative approach to corporate branding, The journal of Brand management, Volume 7, Number 1 page 19 - 26.
- Onno Maathuis, Cees van Riel, Tom Brown, Kim Cramer (2006), Masterclass 'Corporate branding' RSM Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Paul Argenti (2007) Corporate Communication (fourth edition). McGraw Hill Education.
- Paul Argenti (2007) Masterclass 'Leadership and Communication' RSM Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Dutton, Dukerich (1991), Keeping an eye in the mirror: image and identity in organisational adaption, Academy of Management Journal, Volume 14 No 1, page 517 - 554.

- Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994), Organisational images and Member Identification, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, No 39, page 239 - 263.
- Ravasi, D&J. van Rekom (2003), Key issues in Organisational Identity and Identification Theory, *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 118 - 132.
- De Anzizu, Vansina, Mirvis, Hyde (Nestle- Rowntree), Franck (thomson Consumer Electronics, S.a.) Pedersen (Unisuys) (1992), Mergers and Acquisitions: Lessons from Experience, Working Document No 2., Centre for Organisational Studies (COS) Foundation Jose M. De Anzizu.
- John P. Kotter and Dan. S.Cohen (2002), *The Heart of Change. Real-life stories of how People Change their Organisations*, Harvard Business, School Press, Boston, Massachussets, USA.
- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler (2005), *On Grief and Grieving. Finding the meaning of Life through the Five Stages of Loss*.
- Jim Collins (2001), *The Misguided Mix-Up of Celebrity and Leadership*, Conference Board Annual Report, Annual Feature Essay.
- Cees van Riel (2005) Masterclass 'Employee Communication', RSM Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- David Dell and Robert J. Kramer (2003) *Forging Strategic Business Alignment*, Research Report, The Conference Board.



Maria Epitropaki

The Corporate Brand Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card

Maria Epitropaki is born in Athens, Greece. For the past 16 years she has been living and working in the Netherlands. Maria is a marketer with international leadership experience in branding, marketing and communication for international brands. Maria holds a BA degree in fine arts and history of arts, *summa cum laude*, from Athens Polytechnic University. She has studied fashion and design in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in The Hague. She holds a Master degree in the management of design strategy, *cum laude*, from Artez in Arnhem. Over the past years, Maria has managed the development of retail branding and marketing strategies for O'Neill, Dockers, Levis, where she was responsible for retail brand identity, retail marketing strategy, brand presentation and promotion programs for the EMEA wholesale and retail channels. She enjoyed managing multi-disciplined teams, external agencies and guiding international marketing

teams. She has worked in Hong Kong for D.D.S.A. as Design Strategist, responsible for the development of design and marketing concepts for international brands, like Adidas and Mexx. For her first Master in 1996, she developed in collaboration with FHV/BBDO a brand positioning model for Sweppes/Vrumona, aimed at the Dutch adult soft-drinks market, and based on a matrix of consumer values, behaviour patterns and market trends. This brand matrix was her inspiration for the development of the Corporate Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card for her MCC thesis. Since 2004, Maria is Brand Director by Voice Data Bridge, an entrepreneurial company in Directory Assistance and Contact Management services, for internet and mobile. Responsible for brand management and integrated ATL-BTL-Online communication for the brands 1850, 1820 and mijnLisa.nl, she initiated the development and launch of 1850 Directory Assistance, achieving market leadership. From 2005 to

2007 she has been marketing lecturer in the Part-Time Program of Commercial Economics in The Hague University, where she enjoyed motivating students and linking theory to practice in marketing. Maria feels 100% at home in entrepreneurial leadership positions that integrate brand-building with marketing and communication, having business development as objective. She likes to inspire multi-disciplined teams and initiate innovative marketing solutions, organizing the business processes along to achieve the results. Maria is driven by strategy and creativity; by organization and planning. Innovation and pragmatism in the service of brand and business. She sees branding as her work and her passion. Fluent in English, Dutch and Greek, Maria loves travelling and experiencing new international environments and cultures. When at home, she likes to spend time with family and friends enjoying the good things in life.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This master thesis focuses on the area of Corporate Brand Management and specifically on the managerial challenges and issues relating to Corporate Identity management, that link the concept to business decision-making. The thesis objective is to research the current theories on identity from a multidisciplinary perspective. To link the theories and methods on corporate identity management, in order to propose a practical management tool which links the concept of corporate identity and its counterparts, corporate image and corporate reputation, to business decision-making process.

Companies have been experiencing a period where the corporate identity landscape has become more active and more crowded: mergers, spin-offs, acquisitions and alliances, proliferation of dot.com and new technology companies and existing companies undertaking “re-imaging”.

Consequently, corporate identity management has become more salient, especially in and for the financial marketplace and for the media. In short, corporate identity has emerged as a “hot-topic”

for senior company management and those who advise them, as well as for academics.

Identity is undoubtedly seen as the foundational element of an organisation or brand and critical for positioning and competitive advantage of an organization.

As such, the corporate identity concept can make a valuable contribution to the practical field of business administration by explaining processes and predicting outcomes. Identity has the potential - being so fundamental to corporate level, to contribute greatly to strategic managerial issues and to be the driving force behind corporate brand management and business strategy implementation.

It appears that corporate identity - compared to other strategic disciplines, lacks a unifying practical managerial support system with standard strategic drivers, success factors and performance indicators. Corporate identity seems to be surrounded by an ‘elusive’ aura, making the concept and its management challenging. Transparency and clarification of the implementation process on one hand and, contribution and accountability to business decision-making on the other, could be a positive contribution to the practical field of business administration.

The key thesis question is formulated as follows: how to link the concept of corporate identity and reputation to managerial business decision-making?

Can a management process model be developed for corporate identity, based on existing theories and models that will support the key identity management phases: development and implementation, evaluation and strategic planning of identity?

What are the dimensions, benchmarks and standard measurable criteria for managing the corporate identity of an organization or brand, at a certain moment in time and within a certain environment?

The critical results of the master thesis are dimensions, benchmarks and measurable criteria, formulated in a management model: the Corporate Identity Valuator map and Balanced Score Card. The model indicates the critical steps for managers to develop, execute and evaluate the corporate identity of an organization, within the business strategy and in alignment with business processes.

The Corporate Identity Valuator map and Balanced Score Card proposes two things:

- **Critical Success Factors for Identity Development and Implementation**
- **Key Performance Indicators for Identity Evaluation and Planning**

For this purpose, existing theoretical notions and models on identity, image and reputation - as well as performance management systems, have been researched. The aim was to synthesize aspects from the different existing orientations on identity, reputation and business performance systems.

The overall objective being to build from those different perspectives a management process model to link these perspectives. Thus hoping to create a more coherent and unified practical model to guide the management of corporate identity in practice.

The approach to the theoretical study has been based on the review of key theoretical lines of thought in identity, reputation and business strategy and their linkage to four strategic interfaces that drive the management of corporate identity:

Corporate Self-Definition	↔	Corporate Self-Presentation
Corporate Identity	↔	Corporate Reputation
Corporate Brand	↔	Corporate Environment
Corporate Strategy	↔	Corporate Implementation

The four strategic interfaces - which drive managerial processes and business decision-making,

Have been linked to create a strategic framework for the proposed Corporate Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card.

The linkages are supported by a theoretical framework connecting key notions from four lines of thought on identity and strategy -outlined in the theoretical study part.

They are summarized below:

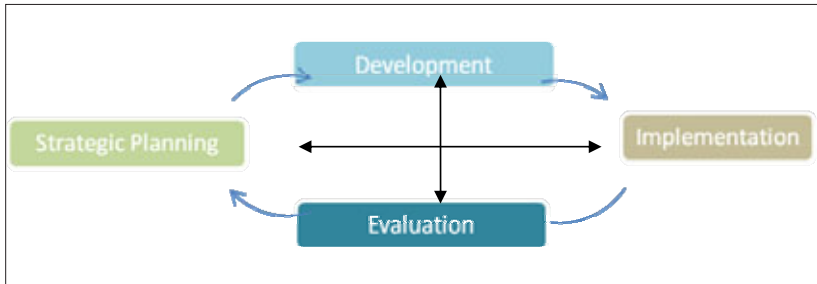
- 1) Key perspectives shaping Corporate Identity - linking it to Corporate Reputation
Internal perspective: Self definition (Identity attributes & competencies) \iff External perspective: Self-presentation (Reputation associations & experiences) (Albert & Whetten), (Birkigt & Stadler), (van Riel), (Fombrun), (Rossiter)
- 2) Key dimensions defining the Corporate Identity - Corporate Reputation alignment
Strategic dimension: Future/Desired states of Identity and Reputation \iff Implementation dimension: Present/Actual states of Identity and Reputation (Balmer), (MORI), (Gioia & Thomas), (van Riel), (van Rekom), (Elstak)
- 3) Multidisciplinary line of thought on Corporate Identity linking it to Marketing
Corporate Identity \iff Corporate Brand Management \iff Corporate Market Environment (John Balmer), (van Riel), (Fombrun), (Aaker) Stakeholder experience and satisfaction value \iff Supportive behaviour (Pine & Gilmore)
- 4) Strategic Planning and Development \iff Implementation and Evaluation Systems
Identity-Reputation alignment \iff Balanced Score Card Performance Management System (Balmer), (Mori), (van Riel), (Fombrun), (Kaplan & Norton)

The process followed from theory review to management model formulation, is illustrated below:



In order for any management model to be useful for business administration, it needs to support the ongoing managerial processes and to guide business decision-making. In practice such a process includes four phases: development and implementation, evaluation and strategic planning. Business decision-making processes are defined by objectives, benchmarks and measurable criteria. These are formulated in management models indicating the critical steps for managers to develop, execute and evaluate strategy.

The **corporate brand identity of an organization** can also be managed in a similar way. Moreover, it can be linked to business strategy and aligned with business implementation. The proposed Identity management model indicates criteria and metrics to support the Corporate identity management phases, illustrated below in a closed loop:



The **Corporate Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card** proposes a strategic approach and a performance management system that can enable organizations to translate a corporate brand vision and strategy into execution. It is working from four perspectives -representing the strategic and tactical facets of corporate identity:

Desired Reputation ↔ Desired Identity ↔ Actual Identity ↔ Actual Reputation

The degree of alignment between these four identity perspectives represents the Critical Success Factors for corporate identity during development and implementation. The alignment is defined by a gap/fit assessment between the identity facets, following the formula:

$$\text{NET SATISFACTION VALUE} = \text{EXPECTATION} - \text{EXPERIENCE}$$

In order to manage the corporate brand identity in line with mainstream business decision-making processes, management needs to link the corporate brand strategy to the four key business perspectives:

Business Growth, Business Performance, Business Processes and Business Appeal

The definition and achievement of business goals within each business perspective, define the Key Performance Indicators for identity effectiveness, during evaluation and planning.

Management should ask a number of critical questions during every phase in the business decision-making process. The Corporate Identity Balanced Score Card attempts to propose some practical answers to those questions.

Corporate Identity Strategic Planning: Desired Reputation \iff Business Growth

How should we be perceived by our key stakeholders in our market, in order to achieve our growth strategy - by sustaining ability to evolve and learn?

- We need to think about what we can be and how we can be optimally perceived.
- Read the signals from the market, identify the opportunities, understand the needs and drives of our key stakeholders and connect them to our vision.
- Define: needs and priorities, drives and aspirations, functional and emotional benefits of stakeholders.
- The objective: achieve position maximization in market by creating demand for our brand.

Corporate Identity Development: Desired Identity \iff Business Performance

How should we define our brand in order to succeed financially with our business strategy - by meeting the expectations of our stakeholders?

- Translate the market signals into a brand promise based on our strengths and vision.
- Put the promise at the heart of the business. Manage with the will to meet the promise.
- Define: attributes, heritage, vision and mission, values and culture, competencies and USP's that meet the stakeholder's expectations.
- The objective is to achieve competitiveness by holistic brand management

Corporate Identity Implementation: Actual Identity \iff Business Processes

How should we organize our brand processes to project a strong identity in order to succeed with our strategy - by satisfying our key stakeholders?

- Put synergistic systems and programs in place. Make the brand promise everyone's, everyday business.
- Make resources, cooperate not compete. Link personal performance to brand performance.
- Define: product portfolio, branding, behaviour and communication.

- The objective: achieve productivity by putting efficient brand structure and systems in place.

Corporate Identity Evaluation: Actual Reputation \iff Business Appeal

How are we currently perceived by key stakeholders in our market, in order to achieve our vision and goals - by delivering experiences that meet the expectations of our key stakeholders,?

- Every single brand experience counts. Achieve consistency of brand purpose and promise across all corporate touch points with the key stakeholders.
- Define: brand meaning and associations, reputation value, direct experience, mediated experience.
- The objective: achieve revenue maximization by creating a holistic brand experience.

The proposed management model for corporate identity consists of a strategy map and of balanced score cards, illustrated below.

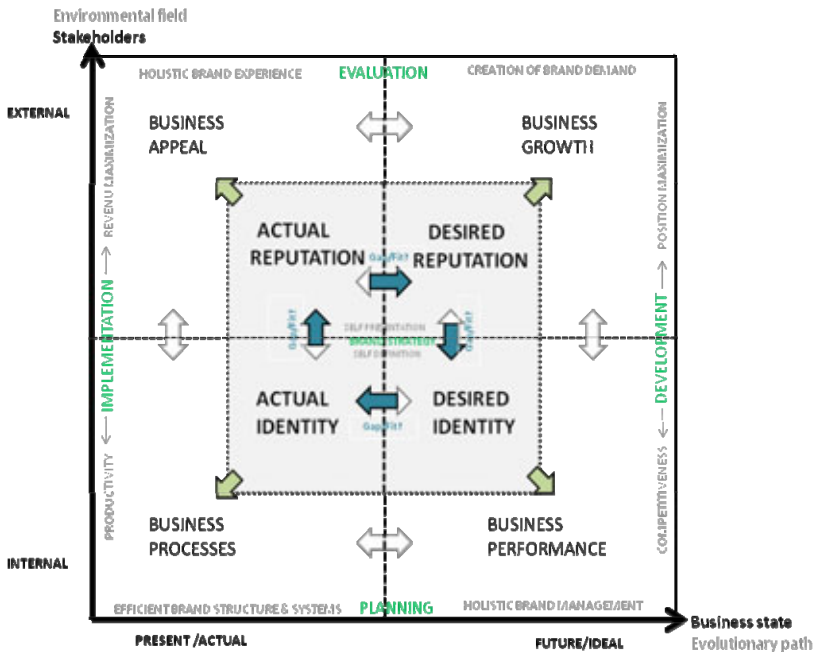
The Corporate Identity Valuator map merges the critical questions asked during business decision-making processes. The Corporate Identity Balanced Score Cards that accompany the strategy map indicate Critical Success Factors and Key Performance Indicators for corporate identity management:

- Identity Development and Implementation - Critical Success Factors => ALIGNMENT
- Identity Evaluation and Strategic Planning - Key Performance Indicators => LINKAGE

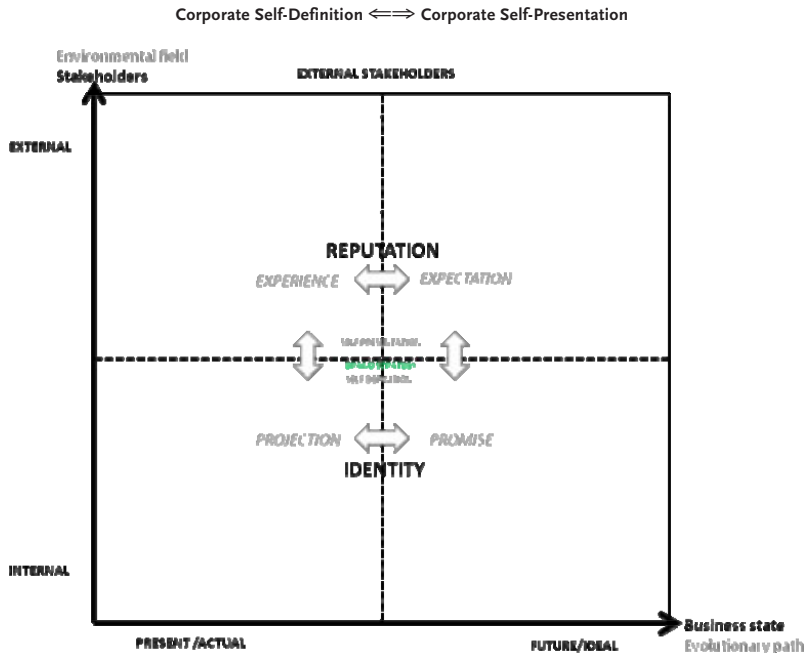
The key propositions flowing from the management model are formulated below, followed by demonstrating how the strategic interfaces build the model in steps and the model explanation:

- Identity management can be driven by standard criteria and performance indicators.
- Identity management can be linked to strategic planning and business performance management

CORPORATE IDENTITY STRATEGY MAP & BALANCED SCORE CARD - FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT: 'THE CORPORATE IDENTITY VALUATOR'

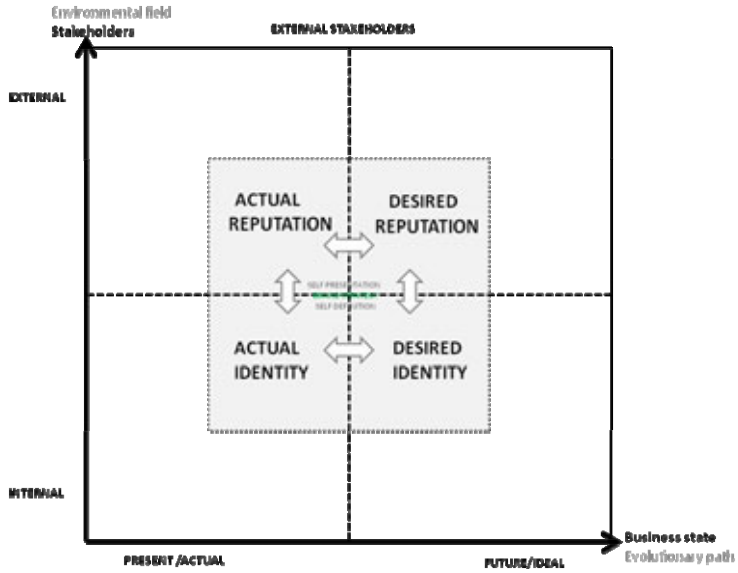


EXPLAINING THE MODEL: DEFINING THE BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR CORPORATE IDENTITY STRATEGY

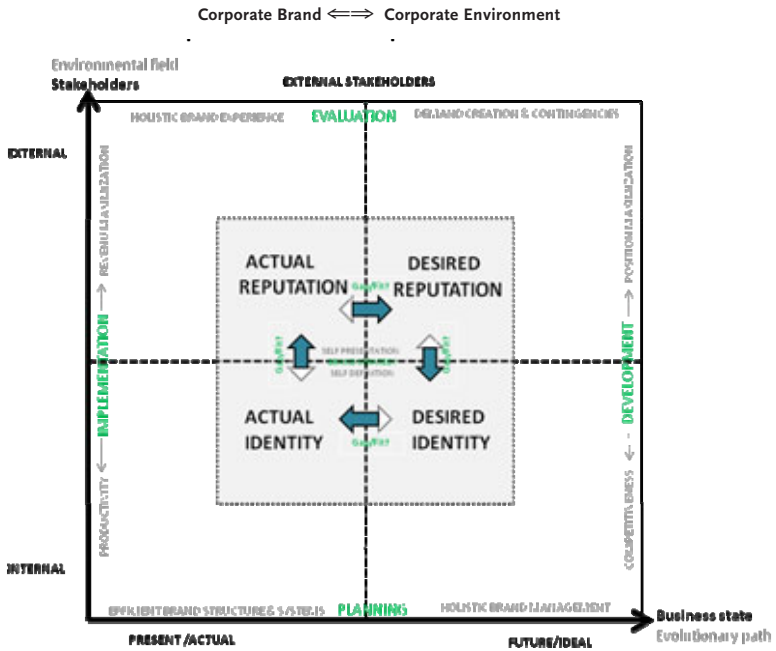


TRANSLATING CORPORATE IDENTITY STRATEGY INTO CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT WORKING FROM FOUR INTERLINKED BRAND PERSPECTIVES:

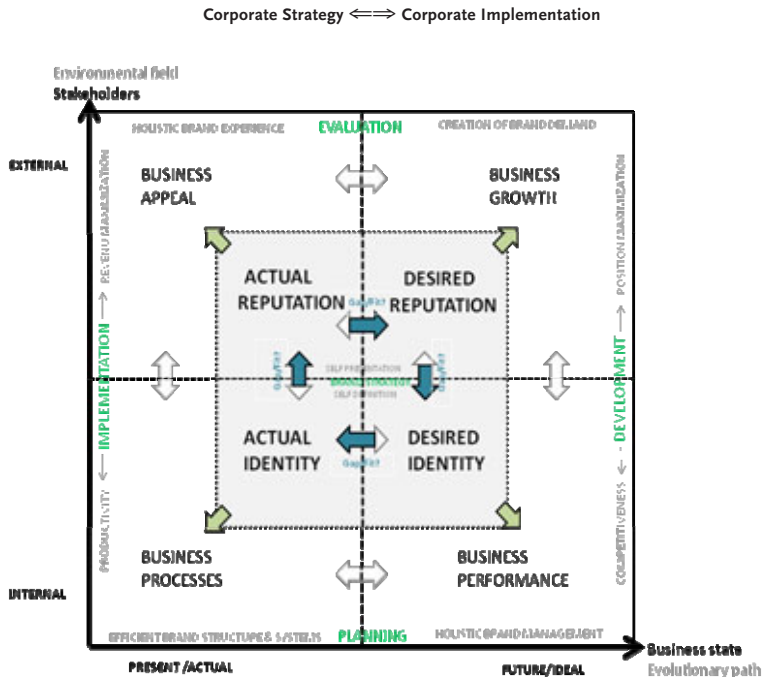
Corporate Identity \longleftrightarrow Corporate Reputation



ALIGNING THE FOUR CORPORATE BRAND PERSPECTIVES - MEASURING AND IMPROVING GAPS



LINKING THE GOALS OF THE CORPORATE BRAND PERSPECTIVES TO THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES



EXPLAINING THE MODEL: THE CRITICAL STEPS BY CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT

If corporate brand identity is the central organizing principle of the business, being the core of business strategy and the key driver of business results, then:

- What are the critical success factors for the development and implementation of corporate identity?
- What are the key performance indicators for evaluation and planning of corporate brand identity?

In developing and implementing an identity one must examine the organization’s past and its present situation, its current position and where it wants to be. Managing identity is taking a comprehensive view of an organization’s activities, how these are being identified and how the stakeholders perceive the organization. It involves long-range planning, ongoing evaluation and represents an integral part of corporate business strategy.

The aim of corporate brand management is to minimize dissonance between corporate identity and corporate reputation. That is exactly the aim of the Corporate Identity Balanced Score Card.

The first step in the strategic alignment of identity management is evidently the definition of a Desired Reputation that drives Demand Creation in the market and is linked to Business Growth goals. The business plans ahead effectively and efficiently to build value into its brand and achieve business growth in an ever changing market. This is a step that requires the business to move and evolve with stakeholder attitudes and behaviours, by defining the stakeholder's expectations on:

- Needs & priorities
- Drives and desires
- Functional benefits
- Emotional benefits

The second step is to translate the Desired Reputation into a motivating but realistic Desired Identity that drives the Brand Management strategy and delivers against the set Business Performance goals, by defining the company promise to stakeholders on:

- Key attributes & heritage
- Mission & vision
- Values & style
- Competencies & USP's

The third step -once the Desired Identity is formulated, is to implement it consistently and effectively, by putting management systems and programs in place, empowering employees and facilitating synergistic programs for Actual Identity, supported by efficient Business Processes, on:

- Product Portfolio
- Symbolism/branding
- Total Behaviour
- Total Communication

The fourth step is to ensure that the brand identity lives consistently through all the brand touch points achieving Business Stakeholder support by creating an appealing positive Actual Reputation:

- Meaning & associations
- Reputational value
- Direct sensory experience
- Mediated sensory experience

**BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR
CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT SUMMARIZED:**

Key Performance Indicators	Objective	Critical Success Factors	Criteria
Desired Reputation  Business Growth goals	Achieve position maximization in the market by creating demand for the corporate brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read market signals, identify the opportunities - Understand the needs and drives of key stakeholders - Connect them to vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - needs & priorities - drives & aspirations - functional benefits - emotional benefits
Desired Identity  Business Performance	Achieve business competitiveness by holistic brand management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put the promise at the heart of the business. - Manage with the will to meet the promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translate market signals into a brand promise based on strengths and vision. - Put the promise at the heart of the business. - Manage with the will to meet the promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attributes & heritage - promise & vision - values & style - competencies & usp's
Actual Identity  Business Processes	Achieve high brand productivity by putting efficient brand structures and systems in place Well run operations correspond to high-impact brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put synergistic brand programs in place. - Make the brand promise everyone's, everyday business. - Make resources, cooperate not compete. - Link personal performance to brand performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - product portfolio - symbolism/branding - total behaviour - total communication
Actual Reputation  Business Appeal	Achieve revenue maximization by creating a holistic brand experience for stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every single brand experience counts. - Achieve consistency of brand promise across all corporate touch points - Follow the stakeholders journey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meaning/associations - reputation value - direct experience - mediated experience

**DEMONSTRATING THE USE OF CORPORATE IDENTITY
BALANCED SCORE CARD TO ACHIEVE ALIGNMENT
BETWEEN THE STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL IDENTITY -
REPUTATION PERSPECTIVES:**

CORPORATE IDENTITY BALANCED SCORE CARD

How should we ideally be perceived* by our key stakeholders, in order to achieve our growth strategy by creating the right expectations by our stakeholders?

- OBJECTIVE:** position maximization
MEASURE: brand demand creation
TARGETS: business growth KPI'S
INITIATIVE: define stakeholder needs & priorities, drives, aspirations, functional & emotional benefits

DESIRED REPUTATION	CUSTOMERS & PUBLIC	INVESTORS & BOARD	EMPLOYEES & PARTNERS	CIDUC SCORE - CENTRALITY (1-10) - IMPORTANCE (1-10) - UNIQUENESS (1-10) - CONTINUITY (1-10)
INITIATIVES TO MEET EXPECTATIONS: *			- DELIVERY (1-10)	
PRODUCTS & SERVICES ----- ----- ----- -----
INNOVATION ----- ----- ----- -----
LEADERSHIP ----- ----- ----- -----
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ----- ----- ----- -----
WORKPLACE ----- ----- ----- -----
GOVERNANCE ----- ----- ----- -----
CITIZENSHIP ----- ----- ----- -----
SCORE		-----	-----	TOTAL SCORE

ACTION

- THE DESIRED REPUTATION TOTAL SCORE REPRESENTS A 100% VALUE = **BENCHMARK**
- COMPARE IT WITH THE TOTAL SCORE ON THE DESIRED IDENTITY SCORE CARD
- THE ASSESSMENT OF THE GAP/FIT SCORE MEASURES THE NET STRATEGY VALUE

➔ **NET STRATEGY VALUE:** DESIRED REPUTATION SCORE - DESIRED IDENTITY SCORE = —%

CORPORATE IDENTITY BALANCED SCORE CARD

How should we define* our brand & business in order to succeed financially with our business strategy -by meeting the expectations of our stakeholders?

OBJECTIVE: competitiveness maximization
MEASURE: holistic brand management
TARGET: business performance KPI's
INITIATIVE: define company promise on competencies/heritage, vision, mission, values/culture, USP's

DESIRED REPUTATION	CUSTOMERS & PUBLIC	INVESTORS & BOARD	EMPLOYEES & PARTNERS	CIDUC SCORE
INITIATIVES TO MEET EMBEDDED PROMISE:*				- CENTRALITY (1-10) - IMPORTANCE (1-10) - DELIVERY (1-10) - UNIQUENESS (1-10) - CONTINUITY (1-10)
PRODUCTS & SERVICES ----- ----- -----
INNOVATION ----- ----- -----
LEADERSHIP ----- ----- -----
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ----- ----- -----
WORKPLACE ----- ----- -----
GOVERNANCE ----- ----- -----
CITIZENSHIP ----- ----- -----
SCORE		TOTAL SCORE

ACTION

- THE DESIRED IDENTITY TOTAL SCORE CAN REPRESENT A DEVIATION FROM THE BENCHMARK
- COMPARE THIS SCORE WITH THE TOTAL SCORE ON THE ACTUAL IDENTITY SCORE CARD
- THE ASSESSMENT OF THE GAP/FIT SCORE MEASURES THE NET IDENTITY VALUE

➔ **NET IDENTITY VALUE:** DESIRED IDENTITY SCORE - ACTUAL IDENTITY SCORE = —%

CORPORATE IDENTITY BALANCED SCORE CARD

How are we executing* our brand processes to project a strong identity, in order to succeed with our strategy -by satisfying our key stakeholders?

OBJECTIVE: Productivity maximization
MEASURE: Efficient brand systems
TARGET: Business processes KPI's
INITIATIVE: define execution of product portfolio, branding, behaviour and communication programs

ACTUAL REPUTATION INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE EXECUTION*:	CUSTOMERS & PUBLIC	INVESTORS & BOARD	EMPLOYEES & PARTNERS	CIDUC SCORE - CENTRALITY (1-10) - IMPORTANCE (1-10) - DELIVERY (1-10) - UNIQUENESS (1-10) - CONTINUITY (1-10)
PRODUCTS & SERVICES
INNOVATION
LEADERSHIP
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
WORKPLACE
GOVERNANCE
CITIZENSHIP
SCORE		TOTAL SCORE

ACTION

- THE ACTUAL IDENTITY TOTAL SCORE CAN REPRESENT A DEVIATION FROM THE BENCHMARK
- COMPARE IT WITH THE TOTAL SCORE ON THE ACTUAL REPUTATION SCORE CARD
- THE GAP/FIT SCORE ASSESSMENT MEASURES THE NET POSITIONING VALUE

➔ **NET POSITIONING VALUE:** ACTUAL IDENTITY SCORE - ACTUAL REPUTATION SCORE = —%

CORPORATE IDENTITY BALANCED SCORE CARD

Following our key stakeholder’s journey, how are we currently experienced* in our market, in order to achieve our vision and goals -by meeting the expectations of our key stakeholders?

OBJECTIVE: revenue maximization
MEASURE: holistic brand experience
TARGET: business appeal KPI’S
INITIATIVES: define associations, meaning, reputation value, direct & mediated sensory experiences

ACTUAL REPUTATION	CUSTOMERS & PUBLIC	INVESTORS & BOARD	EMPLOYEES & PARTNERS	CIDUC SCORE - CENTRALITY (1-10) - IMPORTANCE (1-10) - DELIVERY (1-10) - UNIQUENESS (1-10) - CONTINUITY (1-10)
INITIATIVES TO DELIVER EXPERIENCE*				
PRODUCTS & SERVICES ----- ----- ----- -----
INNOVATION ----- ----- ----- -----
LEADERSHIP ----- ----- ----- -----
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ----- ----- ----- -----
WORKPLACE ----- ----- ----- -----
GOVERNANCE ----- ----- ----- -----
CITIZENSHIP ----- ----- ----- -----
SCORE		-----	-----	TOTAL SCORE

ACTION

- THE ACTUAL REPUTATION TOTAL SCORE CAN REPRESENT A DEVIATION FROM BENCHMARK
- COMPARE IT WITH THE TOTAL SCORE ON THE DESIRED REPUTATION SCORE CARD
- THE GAP/FIT SCORE ASSESSMENT MEASURES THE NET REPUTATION VALUE

➔ **NET REPUTATION VALUE: DESIRED REPUTATION SCORE - ACTUAL REPUTATION SCORE = —%**

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES :

Key Benchmarks

- **One key benchmark, business strategy acts as overall organizing principle**
- Identity and reputation are the dual representations of positioning and brand value
- Identity and identity mix can be managed directly as opposed to reputation
- Desired reputation is the key positioning benchmark and starting point for the alignment
- Desired reputation is the key benchmark and driver of desired identity
- Desired identity is the key benchmark and driver of actual projected identity
- Actual projected identity is the benchmark and key driver of actual reputation
- Desired reputation is the key driver and benchmark for actual reputation

Critical Success Factors

- **Alignment between the actual and desired identity-reputation states is critical for strategy success**, where desired states are acting as benchmarks for the actual states in the process
- Gap/fit assessment between the actual and desired identity-reputation states define the net values of identity and reputation
- Alignment between desired reputation and desired identity measures **net strategy value**, a performance indicator for competitiveness
- Alignment between desired identity and actual identity measures **net identity value**, a performance indicator for business productivity
- Alignment between actual identity and actual reputation measures **net positioning value**, a performance indicator for flawless execution
- Alignment between desired reputation & actual reputation measures **net reputation value**, a performance indicator for stakeholder support and business appeal

EVALUATION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PHASES :

Key Performance Indicators

- **Identity is foundational driver for business strategy and benchmark for implementation**
- Linkage of brand identity strategy with the four business strategy perspectives and targets: business performance, business processes, business appeal, business growth
- Linkage of the desired and actual states to implementation business measures like: position maximization, competitiveness, productivity and revenue maximization
- Per perspective, definition and agreement on: objective, target, measure, initiatives

- Desired image is the key positioning benchmark, linked to business growth and innovation
- Desired identity is key strategy driver and can be linked to business financial performance
- Actual projected identity is indicator for productivity, linked to business processes / systems
- Actual image is indicator for stakeholder behaviour and can be linked to business revenue

To illustrate the Corporate Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card, an existing business case on corporate brand identity is reviewed and analysed, illustrating the benefits for using the model and demonstrating how the model works.

The purpose of any model is to *explain* a situation and to predict outcomes. This empirical illustration attempts to explain the success of corporate brand performance in a brand management case, using the Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card process.

The empirical illustration follows the line of decision-making process, indicating success factors and performance indicators to support the managerial process in corporate brand management.

The criteria for selecting the case? A best practise situation. Philips, a corporate brand that consistently scores high on brand rankings like the Interbrand / Business Week best global brands, the Reputation Institute RepTrak and the Business Week Innovation ranking.

The Philips sense and simplicity brand promise. Make simplicity king:

When Gerard Kleisterlee took the helm of Royal Philips Electronics in 2001, the Dutch conglomerate's empire included TVs, lighting, medical devices, and semiconductors. The missing key: a coherent brand. "We had to choose whether Philips was a company built around its core technologies or one built around its core brand," says Gerard Kleisterlee, who presided over a healthy 14% gain in global brand value in 2007 and a further 8% gain in 2008. He wisely chose the latter.

Is the Philips corporate brand identity managed in an integrated way? Moreover, is it linked to Philips business strategy and aligned with Philips business implementation? The empirical illustration tries to explain the strong performance of the Philips brand and to demonstrate the criteria and metrics that support the Philips corporate identity management phases, using the Corporate Identity Valuator and Corporate Identity Balanced Score Card process.

The Philips Corporate Identity Valuator, demonstrates the four perspectives - representing the strategic and tactical facets of the Philips corporate identity:

Desired Reputation ↔ Desired Identity ↔ Actual Identity ↔ Actual Reputation

The degree of alignment between these four identity perspectives represents the Critical Success Factors for Philips corporate identity during development and implementation. The alignment is defined by a gap/fit assessment between the identity facets, following the formula:

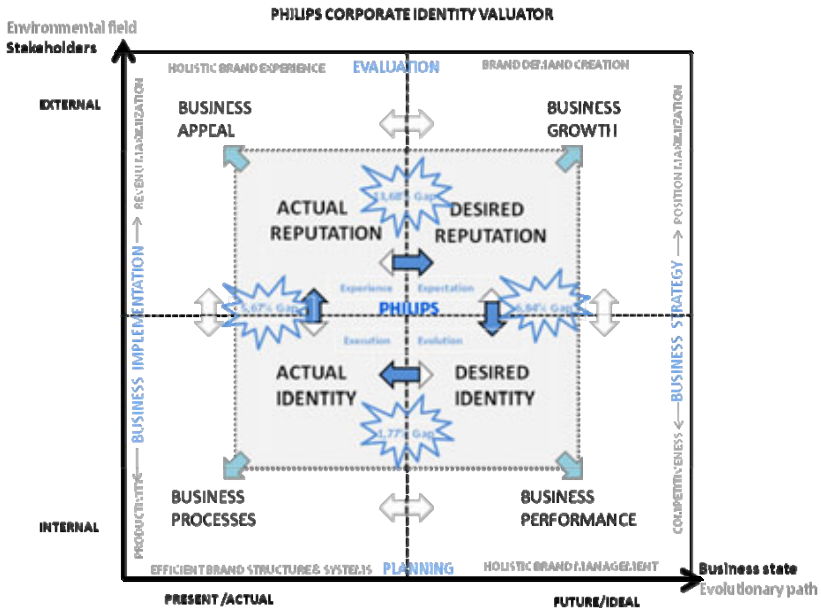
NET SATISFACTION VALUE = EXPECTATION - EXPERIENCE

The Philips Corporate Identity Valuator, demonstrates the link of the corporate brand strategy to the four key Philips business perspectives. The setting and achievement of business goals within each business perspective, define the Key Performance Indicators for identity effectiveness, during evaluation and planning - to be assessed with the Corporate Identity Balanced Score Card:

Business Growth ↔ Business Performance ↔ Business Processes ↔ Business Appeal

Using the Corporate Identity Valuator and Corporate Identity Balanced Score Card, the Philips corporate identity and the 'sense and simplicity' brand promise were reviewed. The management process model appeared relatively straight forward to use - and fun. It offers a clear framework for the managerial process and business decision-making, being development and implementation, or evaluation (as was the case with Philips) and planning. Being a close-loop, it offers the opportunity to start at any time, with any of the four managerial phases.

The Philips corporate brand management process and the evaluation of Philips corporate identity is outlined below in the Philips Corporate Identity Valuator:



The key conclusion is that, Philips does quite a great work with strategy execution. There is only a minor gap of 1,77% between the strategy development and the strategy implementation of the Philips Corporate Identity. However, we can conclude that Philips faces two average challenges with their strategy and positioning values, respectively presenting a 6,84% and a 5,67% gap. This results into a total reputation gap of 13,68%.

The reputation gap is primarily caused by 2 nearly equal gaps on Philips strategy and positioning. At a quick glance, the key challenge area might be the ‘Consumer Lifestyle’ business area, probably a somewhat vague and too broad of a strategy proposition without much added value or differentiation - as opposed to Healthcare and Lighting, compared to Philips competitors.

Regarding positioning, the associations on the product portfolio and the communication of ‘Consumer Lifestyle’ might be rather weaker than those in the Healthcare and Lighting.

Also, there might be confusion between the different positioning versions of this business area:

'Technology', versus 'Consumer Lifestyle', versus 'Consumer Products'?!)

The Philips brand touch point experience - especially in retail and wholesale, might also add to the gap, by not letting the consumers fully experience the brand, as desired.

THE PHILIPS CORPORATE IDENTITY VALUATOT RESULTS:

- THE DESIRED REPUTATION TOTAL SCORE **8,48** REPRESENTS A 100% VALUE = **BENCHMARK**
- THIS IS THE MASTER BENCHMARK IN THE WHOLE ALIGNMENT PROCESS
- COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL SCORE ON THE DESIRED IDENTITY SCORE CARD: **7,90**
- THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS GAP/FIT MEASURES THE PHILIPS NET STRATEGY VALUE SCORE:

➔ PHILIPS NET STRATEGY VALUE: DESIRED REPUTATION - DESIRED IDENTITY = 6,84%

- THE DESIRED IDENTITY SCORE **7,90** REPRESENTS A **6,84** % DEVIATION FROM ITS BENCHMARK
- COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL SCORE ON THE ACTUAL IDENTITY SCORE CARD: **7,76**
- THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS GAP/FIT SCORE MEASURES THE NET IDENTITY VALUE SCORE:

➔ PHILIPS NET IDENTITY VALUE: DESIRED IDENTITY - ACTUAL IDENTITY = 1,77%

- THE ACTUAL IDENTITY SCORE **7,76** REPRESENTS A **1,77%** DEVIATION FROM ITS BENCHMARK
- COMPARED WITH THE SCORE ON THE ACTUAL REPUTATION SCORE CARD: **7,32**
- THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS GAP/FIT SCORE MEASURES THE NET POSITIONING VALUE:

➔ PHILIPS NET POSITIONING VALUE: ACTUAL IDENTITY - ACTUAL REPUTATION = 5,67%

- ACTUAL REPUTATION SCORE **7,32** REPRESENTS A **5,67%** DEVIATION FROM ITS BENCHMARK
- COMPARED WITH THE SCORE ON THE DESIRED REPUTATION SCORE CARD: **8,48**

- THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS GAP/FIT SCORE MEASURES THE NET REPUTATION VALUE:

➔ PHILIPS NET REPUTATION VALUE: DESIRED REPUTATION - ACTUAL REPUTATION =13,68%

The Sense and Simplicity brand promise was initiated in 2004. It was derived from close analysis of the outside world and marketplace and built on the strengths of the company, like understanding of customers and consumers, and the breath taking technology capabilities of the Philips research and development labs, the vision and mission: the DESIRED REPUTATION - DESIRED IDENTITY alignment.

Traditionally, Philips has not been seen as a company with a very strong brand identity. And, as we have seen with brands and brand building, any strong brand is built on consistent and relentless association with a promise: the ACTUAL IDENTITY - ACTUAL REPUTATION alignment.

Nowadays, Philips focuses on 'sense and simplicity'. The entire company understands that in order to build a brand, the brand ideas have to encompass everything the company does: the DESIRED IDENTITY. How employees write e mails, how they develop strategy, what sort of products they create, how the products are advertised, what the offices look like, how products and services are presented at trade fairs are all important. In short, the Philips brand is created by everything the company and the employees plan and do: the ACTUAL IDENTITY- ACTUAL REPUTATION alignment.

"Your role in Simplicity begins with every action you take. I encourage you to take a searching look at everything you do ACTUAL IDENTITY and consider the way it affects our organization. Challenge anything that does not fit with our brand promise, and take every opportunity to empower our customers through simplicity ACTUAL REPUTATION." Gerard Kleisterlee, March 2007.

The function of management is to ensure that all corporate identity programs reflect the organization and its goals in a consistent and positive manner, reinforcing each other. An identity program is not a 'quick fix' to a problem of corporate communications, nor should it be seen as a cosmetic that can represent something the company is not.

The best brands follow their stakeholders' journeys so that they provide effective, consistent and appropriate messaging throughout the expectation \iff promise \iff execution \iff experience cycle.

And that is exactly the benefit that the Corporate Identity Valuator could offer organizations: a framework, a path to follow that journey.

In developing and implementing an identity one must examine the institution's past and its present situation, its current position and where it wants to be. Managing identity is taking a comprehensive view of an institution's activities, how these are being identified and how stakeholders perceive the organization. It involves long-range planning and represents an integral part of corporate business strategy. **The aim is to minimize any dissonance between corporate identity and corporate reputation and achieve the highest possible alignment between the strategic and tactical aspects.**

There is clear recognition that without the right brand identity and promise there is no business. Brand identity strategy must therefore live within the business strategy itself. Whilst owning a strong brand identity may deliver an opportunity for a brand, a true brand lives in the space reserved for the business in the stakeholder's mind. Therefore, linking the strategic and tactical aspects of corporate identity and corporate reputation to the four business perspectives is of paramount importance.

How can firms improve their internal brand performance?

One answer is linkage of brand identity to business perspectives, through performance metrics; although the industry appears slow to realize it. Only a very small minority is actively tying brand performance to financial goals and outcomes. Findings from studies indicate that influential brands are built on two key things:

- 1) Consistency of purpose and promise: a uniform presentation of the brand externally and across all brand touch points
- 2) Thorough management and rigorous internal standards: these brands integrate with finance and BU's and use metrics and research to track performance.

At the end of 2008, brand practitioners are justifiably externally focussed. Financial systems that link brand performance to personal reward and budgets are rare.

The most successful brands of 2008, however, will likely deliver against a Balanced Score Card. And that is exactly what the Corporate Identity Balanced Score Card could help organizations do.

Like important relationships, brands offer key benefits - especially in times of trouble. But they don't do this on command or on the spot. They do this as a result of ongoing investment and commitment.

Given this, it makes good strategic sense for CEOs to pay careful attention to brand identity, especially in the midst of turmoil and doubt. After all, most of one's rivals are likely to be running away from brand. So there is competitive advantage to be had.

The corporate identity process has definitely to start by the boardroom. Not only during the planning and evaluation decision-making but also during the development and implementation process.

Of course any superior strategy execution requires a system, not a series of diverse projects performed in different parts of the organization.

Most organizations have parts of a strategy management system, such as strategy planning, product management, design, marketing, operations, sales, HR planning, or performance reporting.

But they function as silos, losing much of their potential value through lack of integration. Companies generally fail at implementing an identity strategy or managing identity operations because they lack an overarching management system to integrate and align these two vital processes.

Integrated approach to identity management: organization or business unit should act as 'brand unit'. This means that different departments: from R&D, design and product management; to marketing and communications; to sales, operations and customer service, should have the same overarching brand KPI's: the same brand objective, aligned measures and targets.

Initiatives could be of course diverse.

Organizations could make use of best management practices for the Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card implementation:

Mobilize corporate identity through executive leadership: ownership and active involvement of management in corporate brand management process.

Translate brand strategy into operational terms: using the four business perspectives to link identity to business goals and, the Corporate Identity Valuator map to measure any gaps between the strategic and tactical aspects of corporate identity and reputation.

Align the organization to the strategy: coordination amongst the business units, staff units, shared service centres; establishment of integrated brand processes.

Make strategy everyone's everyday job: communication, education, alignment of personal objectives, and linkage of compensation to brand performance KPI's.

Make strategy a continual process: regular strategy meetings and updates of the Corporate Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Cards.

In companies with powerful brands, the brand identity and the business are all bound up together, and finding hard, fast lines of demarcation between the two is difficult like BMW, Philips, Google, Apple or Starbucks.

In such organizations, there is a collective understanding that the business would simply not exist, or at least not perform as it does, without the corporate brand. It shapes the idea of what the company is, at its core; where it is going in the larger market; and the end toward which it is travelling.

You can see the force of this understanding at work - in some companies, it evokes the passion of a person serving a higher purpose. You can see its reach and depth in virtually every aspect of the company, from financial reporting to supply chain management to product innovation.

Brand building isn't a separate exercise from the day-to-day running of the business. It is integral to it and it is a continuous journey. And that is exactly the purpose and the benefit that the Corporate Identity Valuator could offer organizations: a framework, a path to follow that journey.

Recommendations for further research. Two next steps for further research can be identified:

- 1) An applied experiment to test the validity of the Corporate Identity Valuator and Balanced Score Card empirically within the corporate environment.
- 2) A statistical application of the model on a number of best practice and worst practice situations, in order to draw conclusions on the gap/fit margins for highly successful, average and poorly performing corporate brands.



Nora de Jager

Shareholder meetings Dutch style: A superseded concept?

Company confidential

Nora de Jager (1951) works at ING Group in Amsterdam as a senior communications advisor. She joined ING in 1991, just after the merger of NMB Postbank Group and Nationale-Nederlanden. She started her professional career in 1972 at the Legal Department of the European construction group HBG, which was acquired by Royal BAM Group in 2002. Before her position at ING, Nora had a career of more than 20 years at the Foreign Service of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, which she joined out of interest for other cultures and languages and her love of travelling. The Foreign Service first brought her to Brussels where she worked for the Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU, followed by assignments to the Dutch Embassies in Rome, Washington, Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Lisbon in successive order. Her last assignment was in Poland (Warsaw) where she was Head of the Consular section.

After the signing of the Schengen Treaty, the Consulate was scaled down and her assignment came to an end. Instead of accepting another assignment, she left the Foreign Service and returned to the Netherlands. Although she has held various positions at ING, Nora has always been involved with the coordination of the annual report, and the organisation of the general meeting of shareholders, which is the subject of her thesis.



Caroline Kamerbeek

The effect of new digital media on corporate reputations

Caroline Kamerbeek (1963) is Director of Communications at Philips Intellectual Property & Standards (IP&S). In this function she has a global responsibility for the reputation of Philips in all IP and standard related matters. She manages media relations, issues management, crisis management, speeches and text writing, internal communications, internet, intranet, IP branding and marketing communications. IP&S is responsible for the creation and value extraction of Philips' intellectual property portfolio consisting of 60,000 patents, 29,000 trademarks, 43,000 design rights and 2,000 domain names. Philips IP&S has 26 offices in Europe, the United States and Asia and plays a major role in the global knowledge economy. At IP&S she manages a team of 5 communication

professionals in the Netherlands and China. In the past seven years she developed an internal communication program, stimulating dialogue between IP&S employees and Executive Management, creating awareness and support for the Philips and IP&S strategy. Within Philips she develops projects and built a global network of communication and business contacts, improving IP&S' position within Philips. She has initiated and coordinated external activities for complicated IP issues, such as the industry campaign for the European Software Patent Directive in 2006 and IP awareness programs in China and Taiwan. She cooperates with national and international government bodies and IP organizations to set up initiatives to improve IP knowledge and awareness in industry

and media. She has managed Philips' reputation in the IP area in many complicated IP cases by developing a solid issues and crisis management system. She developed marketing communication campaigns for licensing programs and introduced global licensing and IP asset deals. Before joining Philips in 2001 Caroline had various communication and public relation functions at Vodafone, Car-glass and Berkhof-Jonckheere (buses and coaches). Caroline Kamerbeek has a bachelors in languages at the Hogeschool Zuyd in Maastricht. She is fluent in Dutch, English and French. She followed various professional courses in communications. She is member of the Philips Corporate Communication Council and of the European Association of Communications Directors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies have caused tremendous changes in society. One of the results is a completely different global media landscape. Besides traditional media we see an array of new media, especially on the Internet: news websites, blogs, peer-to-peer platforms and activist websites which appear like mushrooms and communicate quickly and without physical borders.

Being responsible for the reputation of Philips in the area of intellectual property and standards, I have encountered serious challenges in the past years in the way digital media operate with regard to global issues. News items, big or small, circulate around the globe very fast and via an array of new media sources, sometimes causing a corporate media crisis in just a few hours.

As Corporate Communication professionals we should ask ourselves whether we are prepared for this new media landscape. What is the effect of those new media sources on our companies' reputations and aren't our tactics and strategies too much focused on traditional media?

The intention of the thesis was to get a better view of the effect of new digital media on corporate reputations. The results from research combined with the communication theories led to some interesting conclusions and recommendations for further research.

This thesis does not focus on the intellectual property area or on the reputation of Philips. This thesis describes the digital media landscape and the effect on corporate reputation in general.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

With the research I wanted to get a better insight in the way new digital media functions and find practical solutions to better manage corporate reputation in times of crises and when dealing with issues.

CENTRAL QUESTION

What is the effect of new digital media on corporate reputations?

- What are the characteristics of the new digital media landscape?
- Can new digital media have any impact on corporate reputations?
- How do Corporate Communication professionals deal with the new digital

III. SCOPE OF THE THESIS

The thesis focuses on corporate reputations of *multinational companies*.

The current digital era shows a broad range of new digital media. In the thesis I limited the research to new digital media *on the Internet*. Although blogs got a lot of attention I also described other digital news media on the Internet as I think these media are all part of the new media landscape corporate communication professionals have to deal with.

The thesis focuses on external communications as part of the Corporate Communication function. Its intention was not to find solutions for improving brand, marketing or internal communications strategies.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD: GROUNDED THEORY AND MIND MAPPING

As the field of new digital media is rather new, not much scientific literature was available. Instead, relevant data from 67 sources (articles, books and websites) were used to get a better view of the digital media landscape. In addition, 19 interviews with corporate communication professionals and three journalists were held. The total research resulted in 1654 quotes from both literature and interviews which were compared via the Grounded Theory of Glaser. Another tool used for the analysis of the data is Mind Mapping. To show how this tool was applied, various Mind Maps are used as illustration in the thesis. The regrouping of data resulted in six main areas. In these areas data were again compared and analyzed.

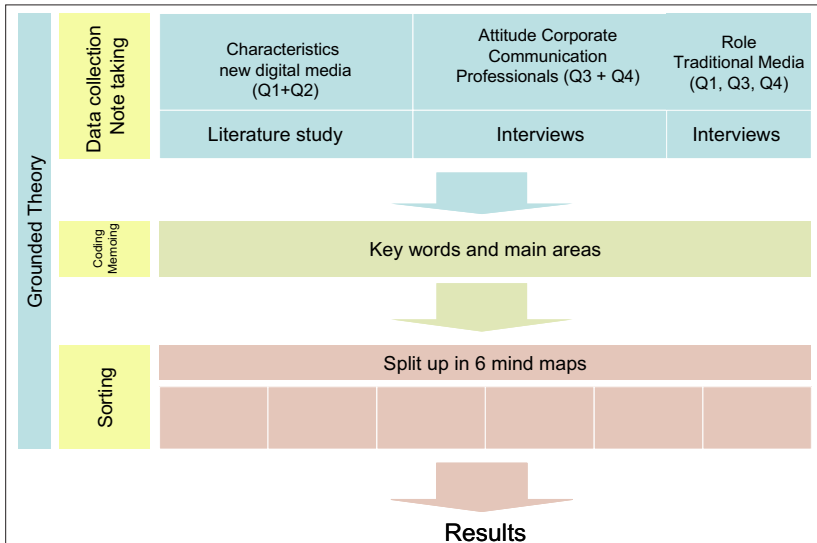


Figure: Schematic overview of the research method used

V. THEORY USED TO EXPLAIN THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL MEDIA

To find valid answers to the central research question I looked at the following theoretical areas: Corporate reputation, the effect of mass media on public opinion, the role of two-way communication and Corporate Communication management.

In the communications theories I saw a constant move of power assigned to both media and audience. The power game between the audience and *Big Media* is also a recurring topic in the descriptions of the digital media landscape. Therefore, looking at the results of the research part of the thesis we can surely draw parallels between the characteristics of the digital media landscape and the various communication theories of the past 60 years.

The following theories were used to explain the effect of new digital media on public opinion regarding corporate reputations:

1. Multi-step flow

One of the characteristics of the digital media is the radar function and the news dissemination function. In addition, many digital media are managed by specialists or dedicated people in a certain area. It is therefore interesting to see what influence *digital opinion leaders* have on public opinion. I used the multi-step flow theory to explain the effect of the opinion leader role of digital media.

2. Agenda setting

The topic of *dedicated people* who are active in their own field of interest can also be looked upon from a different angle, namely internet communities acting as a group of friends with the same interest. To explain the effect of these internet communities I used the agenda setting theory of Rogers and Dearing's (1987), as this theory also talks about the effect of *interpersonal communication* which is similar to the communication in internet communities.

3. Spiral of Silence

Anonymity is a major characteristic of the digital media landscape. Anonymity makes it easier for people to speak up and send out their message, even when it is a controversial one. Could this not have influence on the so-called 'spiral of silence' of Noelle Neuman? We will look into that as well.

4. Effect of two-way communication

A clear characteristic of the digital media landscape is that internet enables conversation and dialogue. What is the importance of that characteristic for communication with stakeholders? To explain the role of two-way communication, I used the convergence model of Rogers and Kincaid and the two-dimensional framework of Grunig (1992).

5. Reputation management

In this thesis I looked at two types of reputation: the corporate reputation of companies and the reputation of blogs and other digital media. Both reputations were important to explain the answer to the central research question. The role of both reputations is explained by means of the theory of Fombrun and van Riel, describing the ingredients for star reputations.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. On the central question of this thesis

What is the effect of new digital media on corporate reputations?

- What are the characteristics of the new digital media landscape?
- Can new digital media have any impact on corporate reputations?
- How do Corporate Communication professionals deal with the new digital media landscape and how can they improve their approach?

New digital media such as blogs, news websites and activist websites are a fact of life and are part of the media landscape. These media can have an impact on public opinion and can be both a threat and an opportunity for corporate reputations. It is the task of corporate communication professionals to adapt to the new media landscape in order to safeguard their company's reputation. The current wait-and-see attitude of many corporate communication professionals will not be enough to face the challenges.

New digital media have different characteristics from traditional media: they are faster, more interactive, have no physical boundaries and they are more designed around the needs and interests of individual people.

Although digital media are often not meant to generate news, many of them have such a role in the media landscape. They can be opinion leaders for both media and public, they can put topics on the media, public and policy agenda's and they can have an alert or radar function for Main Stream Media. This radar function works both ways. Main Stream Media pick up news from digital media; digital media pick up news generated by MSM.

New digital media have different rules which are not always easy to follow for corporate communication professionals. First, they are about two-way communication in which readers become writers and vice-versa, second, digital media, especially blogs, are not hampered by any journalistic code. Third, anonymity is also an important aspect of the digital media landscape and one that can have impact, both on the digital media as on corporate reputations. Anonymous sources may seem less credible and reliable and can therefore have less impact. But anonymous sources can also build a reputation in their field of interest and be more open because they are protected by their *on-line identity*. These kinds of anonymous sources can have significant impact on public opinion and thus on corporate reputations. For corporate communication professionals it has become very difficult, if not impossible, to control the new media landscape. However, good preparation can help. Analysis of the company's position and the preparedness of the communication department will help to improve the situation.

2. The effect of new media on public opinion

2.1 OPINION LEADER FUNCTION OF NEW DIGITAL MEDIA

In the *two-step flow* and *multi-step flow* theory the role of opinion leaders is described as being a source and a guide to others, thus influencing public opinion. This *opinion leader* function can also be discerned in the new media landscape:

- a. New media can have an *alert* or *radar* function for Main Stream Media (MSM). Some MSM closely follow blogs and other digital media with a good reputation in a certain area. This way, digital media have a clear *opinion leader* function.
- b. Communities are built around personal interests. In these communities people listen to the most respected persons. These respected persons can also be seen as *opinion leaders*.

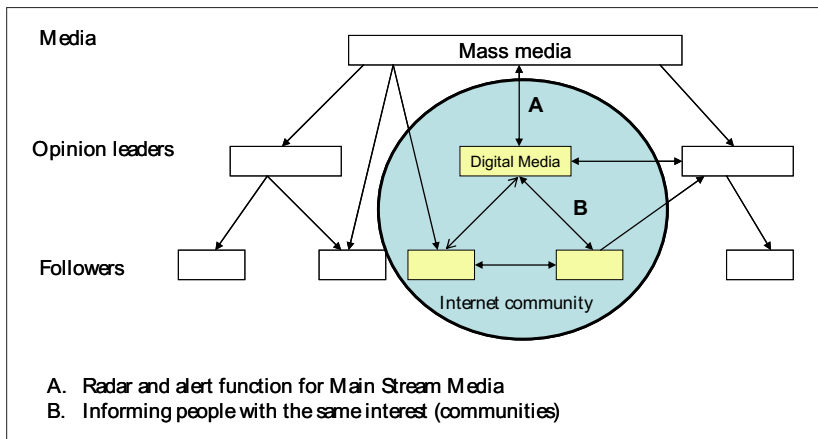


Figure: The multi-step flow model adapted to the new digital media landscape

2.2 AGENDA SETTING ROLE OF NEW DIGITAL MEDIA

New digital media can have an effect on public opinion because they can put topics on the public agenda and on the media agenda. This agenda setting role works as follows:

- a. New digital media can be seen as a form of *interpersonal communication*, serving as an alternative source of information for people with the same interest. This way, topics can be put on the *public agenda*.
- b. If a topic is given a *lot of attention* in the digital media, for example by pressure groups or special interest groups, new digital media can boost an issue onto the *media* or *policy agenda*.

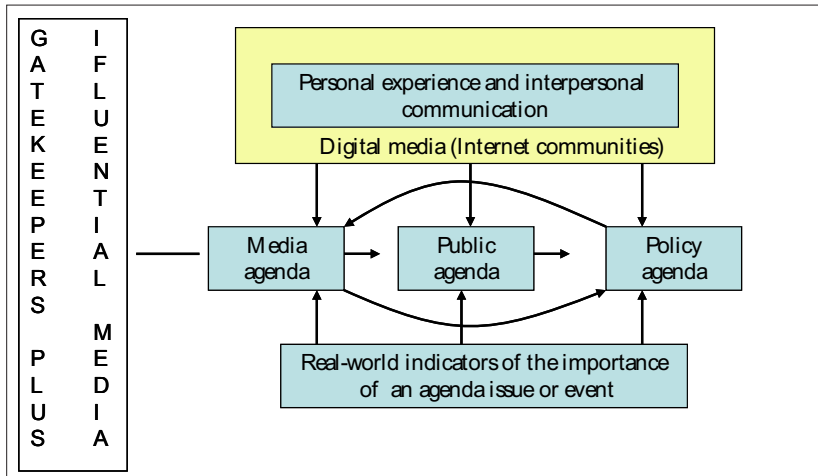


Figure: The agenda setting model of Rogers and Dearing (1987), including the role of digital media on the media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda.

2.3 AGGREGATOR OF NEWS IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

New digital media can function as an aggregator of news both in speed and in number of distribution outlets. If you combine speed with the fact that we live in a *global village* as described by Marshall McLuhan, the only conclusion can be that this must have impact on corporate reputations. Due to time and space constraints it has become much more difficult to coordinate communication activities, especially in crisis and issue management.

2.4 EFFECT OF ANONYMITY

A clear characteristic of the new digital media landscape is that people can hide their identity. This *anonymity characteristic* of the internet can have three effects:

- a. People can hide their identity and say things on-line that cannot be used against them in the physical world. One could say that people are freer to give their personal opinions. Looking at the *Spiral of Silence*-theory of Noelle Neumann (1974), one could conclude the following: Neumann: "The more individuals perceive these tendencies and adapt their views accordingly, the more one faction appears to dominate and others to be on the downgrade. Thus, the tendency of the one to speak up and the other to be silent starts off a spiralling process which increasingly establishes one's opinion as the prevailing one."

Conclusion: anonymity on the internet could stimulate people to give their opinion. This way, the spiralling process would be *hampered* by anonymous opinions. There could be *more* opinions than just the dominant ones.

- b. Research by Noelle Neumann showed that only a few people will persist in their 'contra' opinion. These people are called the *hard core*, they are so convinced of their own opinion that they are not willing to adapt their opinion or remain silent. This *hard core* will continue to spread their message and initiate a new spiralling process. It is a matter of persistence: those who will continue to raise their voice will be heard.

Conclusion: as people can remain anonymous on the Internet, it might be easier for them to persist in conveying their opinion and thus *initiate another spiralling process*.

- c. However, it needs to be said that results found in chapter VI indicate that anonymous sources are less credible unless the anonymous source has built a good reputation under a pseudonym.

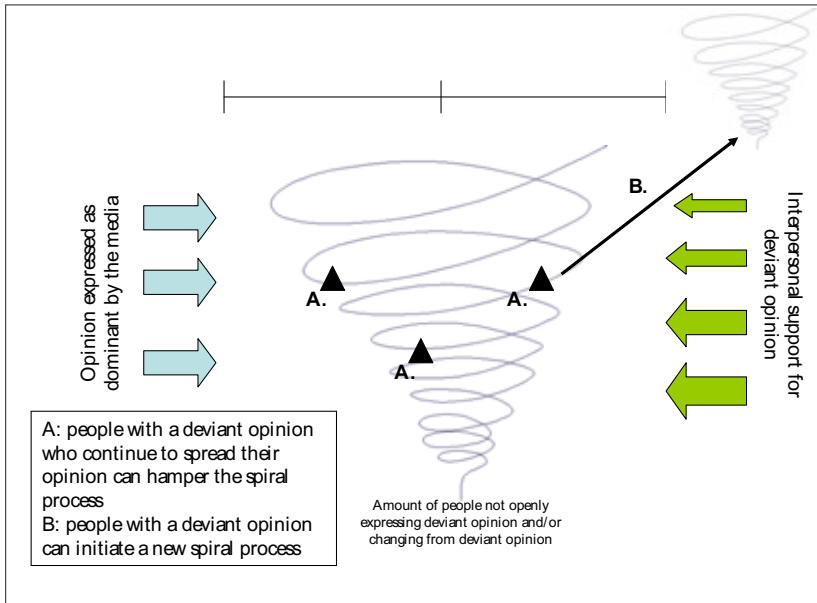


Figure: The spiral of silence-model of Noelle Neumann showing the effect of digital media.

2.5 REPUTATION OF DIGITAL MEDIA

The effect of digital media on public opinion largely depends on their reputation. As mentioned in a study by Wanta and Miller (1995): 'Agenda setting is more likely to take place when respondents think the media are credible'. From the research part in this thesis can be concluded that one cannot talk about the reputation of the New Media Landscape. There are thousands or even millions of new media which all have a different reputation. Their reputation depends on their credibility in the on-line community. *The only way for Corporate Communication professionals to know the credibility of a digital medium is by monitoring and being on-line themselves or by hiring external sources.*

2.6 NEW DIGITAL MEDIA: A TOOL FOR DIALOGUE

A clear difference with the Main Stream Media is that we see more conversations between people on-line. People can participate and the audience has a clear voice. Looking at the Convergence theory of Rogers and Kincaid (1981) and the Grunig's model of two-way symmetric communication, one can conclude that new digital media fit into this dialogue model of communication. In case of conflicts or issues it helps to

create a common understanding of the situation. However, as indicated by Betteke van Ruler (2005), it depends on the communication consciousness of an organization whether the organization is prepared to open itself and be more transparent.

3. The role of the corporate communication professional

The global media landscape has changed. Digital media will not disappear and can have impact on public opinion and thus on corporate reputations. Corporate communication professionals need to adapt to the new media landscape. From the interviews can be concluded that many professionals are not fully ready for the digital media landscape. This *wait-and-see attitude* will not be enough to face the challenges.

3.1 HOW CAN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS DEFINE THEIR POSITION IN THE NEW DIGITAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE?

In order to define a strategy for the new digital media landscape corporate communication departments first need to define their starting position. They can do this by looking at two important elements. First, they should look at the *relevance* of the digital media landscape for their company. Second, they have to check to what extent they are *ready* for the challenges of the new digital media landscape. When the starting position is clear it will be much easier to define which strategy is needed to face the challenges in the digital media landscape.

3.2 THE NEW MEDIA READINESS BAROMETER

In fact, the two elements described above are like a barometer. A *barometer* is an instrument to measure atmospheric pressure. Once you know the pressure you know what weather you can expect and you know how to react. For that reason I baptized the tool: the *New Media Readiness Barometer*. By answering the questions of the Readiness Barometer, corporate communication professionals get a better view of their current position. On the next page the Readiness Barometer is described in detail.

NEW MEDIA READINESS BAROMETER
Step 1: Define the relevance of new digital media for your company
First should be defined how <i>relevant</i> the digital media landscape is for your company. Important aspects are the product range and company reputation, the kind of industry the company is part of and the issues it has to deal with. Questions that should be answered are:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does your company manufacture or sell products for the consumer market? 2. Does your company deal with sensitive issues? 3. Is your company active in the ICT or High Tech industry? 4. Could your company get easily involved in a crisis (for example, environmental, health, chemical, political, financial)? 5. Does your company have a good reputation? <p>Note: Every time you answer a question with 'yes', the relevance of the digital media landscape for your company increases.</p>
Step 2: Define to what extent your company is ready for the new landscape
Once the relevance of the digital media landscape is clear, the Corporate Communication department should define whether they are <i>ready</i> for the digital media landscape. To this end they need to do an internal assessment of the strengths of the Corporate Communication department's capabilities with respect to the new digital media landscape. Important factors are communication consciousness of the company, level of professionalism of the media relations, crises and issue management and the availability of resources, either financial or human. Questions to be asked are:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is it easy for your company to be open to external influences (think of stock quoted, confidentiality)? 2. Is your communication department aware of and active in the digital media landscape? 3. Do you have a strong and responsive media relations function? 4. Are you well prepared for global issues concerning your company? 5. Do you have enough financial or human resources in your communications team? <p>Note: Each question answered by 'no' increases the possibility you are not yet ready for the new media landscape.</p>

Figure: The new media readiness barometer

VII. THE FUTURE OF THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

This thesis described the current situation of the media landscape. We can only guess what will happen in the future. However, looking at the *results* part of this thesis, two possible developments could be discerned:

1. **Digital on-line media will become more professional.** Some blogs are already introducing codes of conduct or merge with high quality Main Stream Media. Both developments will have a positive impact on the quality and credibility of digital on-line media.
2. **Main Stream Media are looking for a different role.** Until today they had an important role as gatekeeper. It now looks like this role will be replaced by a role as *filter*, creating clarity in the massive offer of (digital) information.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The digital media landscape offers many, many opportunities for new research. However, I really would like to know more about the following topics:

- Based on the theory of Robinson (1976) we could, on the one hand, distinguish people who are involved in internet communities (=social networks) and get their information from *opinion givers* in that network. On the other, there are those who are not so involved in internet communities and might be more susceptible to a one-step influence emanating from the Main Stream Media. Does it really work this way and can the groups be described?
- In the applied literature not much information was found on the profiles of the internet user. It would be interesting and useful to know who is on-line and who is not.
- It would also be interesting to know which kind of new media strategies one could apply based on in-depth analysis of some best practices.



Gijs Meijer

The Reputation and Identity of the Technological Industrial Sector

Gijs Meijer (1974) is working for the Association FME-CWM. The Association FME-CWM is the association of enterprises in the technological industrial sector. FME has around 2.750 members (in metal, plastics, electronics and electro-technology), employing more than 260.000 people.

Within FME Gijs is working as an advisor Industrial Policy and Health & Safety. In this role he is responsible for the relations with external and social groups, research and political lobby within the Dutch and the European Parliaments. He is also

project leader of the FME-input for the National Industry Memorandum. In this Memorandum the Dutch government sets out it's vision of the importance of the Industry to the Dutch Economy and of the development that the industry faces.

Before his present function, Gijs was political advisor of the Dutch Liberal Party (VVD). He was responsible for the political debate within the VVD (content and organization) and Secretary of the VVD National Election Program 2002.

Gijs started his career at Central Industry Group (CIG). CIG is a group of companies providing industrial goods and services to the international maritime sector.

Before successfully completing the Master of Corporate Communication at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University in 2008, Gijs graduated in Law and Public Administration at the University of Groningen in 1999.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Introduction

The Technological industrial sector is one of the most important sectors of the Netherlands. It is represented by the Association FME-CWM. Around 2.750 organizations (metal, plastics, electronics and electro-technology), employing some 260.000 people, are members of FME.

The Association FME-CWM is the employers' organisation and trade association for the technological industrial sector. The activities in the sector cover engineering, manufacturing, trade, industrial maintenance and industrial automation. The members enjoy a total turnover of 69 billion euros, of which 56% is generated abroad. The companies in the sector strongly differ in size, activities, clients, markets.

For many years the reputation of the technological industry has been one of the most important matters of the sector. For many people the technological industry is synonymous with dirt and pollution. It is also known for its vulnerability to economic cyclical problems. This is remarkable, because many of the companies in this sector belong to the leading companies in the world for their specific disciplines. According to companies themselves, they are not dirty or polluting, on the contrary, they are very successful in all aspects. The everyday reality however is that the companies lack highly qualified employees and that the recruitment of younger people in the sector is much too low. Also the attention the technological industry receives from the government and from politics, is not optimal. Many people think that improving the image of the industry is an important solution to this problem. The reputation of the technological sector is therefore on top of the priorities list of many companies. Therefore it is even more remarkable that very little research has been done on this subject.

For these reason research needs to be undertaken on the causes of the poor reputation of the technological industry and which solutions could improve that reputation.

Research plan

In this research I focus on the identity of the technological industry. The communication of an organization about its identity is crucial for managing the perception of the external stakeholders. The basic assumption here is that possible differences in perception on the identity are the underlying cause for a bad reputation. To discover the identity of the technological industry, nine CEO's from companies from the technological industry and nine external stakeholders, closely associated with the technological industry, were asked what characterizes the technological industry. A distinction was made between the current situation and the desired situation. That way four identity-types can be distinguished.

Outline different Identity-types

	From within the organization	From external stakeholder
Current situation	Projected Identity	Attributed Identity
Desired situation	Desired Identity	Desired Attributed Identity

- Projected identity: The actual internal and external characterization of the organization;
- Desired Identity: The desired identity by the organization;
- Attributed Identity: The actual identity that external stakeholders attribute to an organization;
- Desired attributed identity: The expectations external stakeholders have of the desired identity of organizations.

I have incorporated these identity types and the differences between them in the Identity-Gap model (figure 7). In this model I have identified Four Gaps. Gap 1 between the Projected Identity and the Desired Identity, Gap 2 between the Attributed Identity and the Desired Attributed Identity, Gap 3 between the Projected Identity and the Attributed Identity, and Gap 4 between the Attributed Identity and the Desired Attributed Identity.

Based on this model, insight can be obtained on how the companies view the identity of the technological industry and how the external stakeholders view this identity. The essence of this model is that a bad reputation results when different identity types don't match and gaps exist. To narrow these gaps, the model subsequently differentiates between identity gaps and communication gaps.

I assume that an identity gap occurs when the current identity doesn't match the desired identity and that this gap can only be narrowed by a change of the identity.

A communication gap occurs when through insufficient or bad communication the identity types from within the organization (the projected and desired identity) don't match with the types of the external stakeholders (the attributed and desired identity).

In figure 7, I consider Gap 1 and Gap 2 identity gaps that can be narrowed by a change in identity. It is for example unlikely that a company, that does not see sustainability as an identity characterization, will suddenly in the future make sustainability an authentic identity with communication (Gap 1). The same applies to an external stakeholder that doesn't currently attribute sustainability to a company. If only

communication changes, then that vision will not change in the future (Gap 2). From earlier research we know that a similarly communicated, non-authentic identity will not be attributed to the organization by the external stakeholders.

I consider Gap 3 and 4 as communication and identity gaps that can be narrowed by a change in identity as well as by communication, and by a combination of both. For example, because the stakeholders don't understand the communication. In such a situation a organisation can decide to reconsider its communication and adjust it where necessary. Such a gap can also exist because stakeholders do understand the communication, but they don't believe it because the things they do are not in line what they say. Than the organisation will reconsider its identity. If the communication of an organisation isn't understandable or believable, a combination of both strategies is necessary.

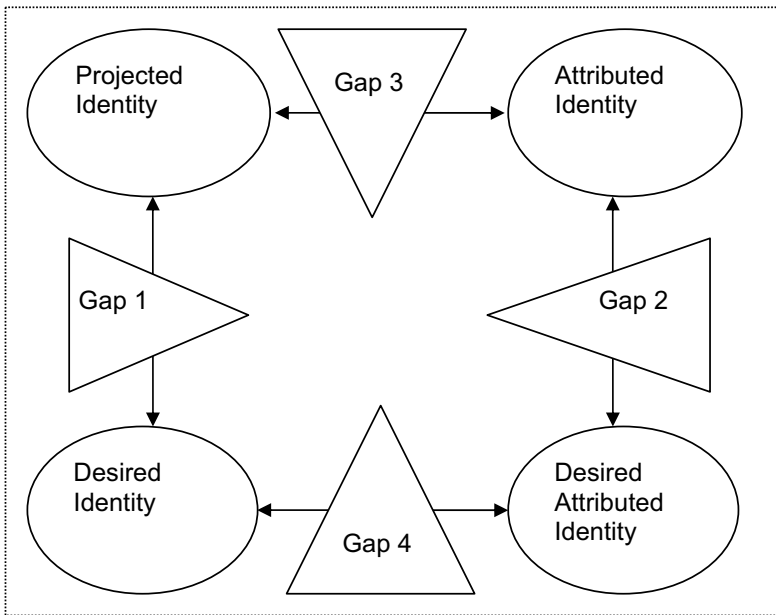


Figure 7: Research model: Identity -Gap model

RESULTS:

The research delivers five main results:

- 1) Within the technological industrial sector there are gaps as described in the Identity-Gap model. There is a Gap between the Projected Identity and the Desired Identity (Gap 1) and between the Attributed Identity and the Desired Attributed Identity (Gap 2). As said before, I will label those gaps as Identity Gaps. The research shows that in the technological industrial sector there are identity gaps for the characteristics Sustainability, Emotion and Employer Activities. The sector and the stakeholders would like to see that the sector would strengthen its identity for those characteristics.
- 2) There is also a gap between the Projected Identity and the Attributed Identity (Gap 3) and the Desires Identity and the Desired Attributed Identity (Gap 4). I label those gaps as Identity as well as Communication Gaps, because changes in the identity and changes in the communication can bridge these gaps. Also for these gaps there is a gap for the characteristics Emotion, Sustainability and Employer Activities. To bridge these gaps, the research shows that there are changes of communication and identity for those three identity characteristics necessary.
- 3) The research shows that the sector can bridge Gap 1 & 2 by changing its identity. They can do this in a dialogue with the external stakeholders in a “consensual system of meaning”. The sector can also bridge the gap by choosing a new business strategy.
- 4) The research shows that Gap 3 & 4 can be bridged by effective communication, by adjusting the identity, or by a combination of both. The identity characteristics can be bridged in the same way as the identity gaps 1 & 2 are bridged. To narrow the communication gaps the sector has to communicate more strategically and sometimes pro-actively. The negative evaluations concerning emotion and sustainability can be changed and the technological industry sector can more clearly make their statements about sustainability to the stakeholders. It is important that the communication of the sector is authentic. More transparency of the sector will strengthen the authenticity. As with the identity gaps, an intensive dialogue with the external stakeholders can help to bridge the communication gaps. The companies should also better use the branch organization for their communication. A branch organization is a perfect way to sustain a dialogue with external stakeholders. The development of a Sustainable Corporate Story (SCS) will help the industry to formulate the common starting points for the communication.
- 5) The interviews also show that the companies and the external stakeholders think that the visibility and the transparency of the sector is too low. Above all, both groups think that it is very difficult to define the technical industrial sector. In the research I assume that the activities in the field of adjusting the identity and communication will also solve the problem of lack of definition and visibility of the technological industrial sector.



Marjolein E.C. van Noppen MSc

Strong employer brands

Interviews with Top employers about the importance of employer branding in a competitive labour market

It was in the late 1990's that Marjolein van Noppen (1974) a student of Business Administration at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam (EUR) debated the issue of majoring in Human Resources Management (HRM) or Marketing Management (MM). After some deliberation she graduated in November 1999 with a major in HRM but with a broader background in marketing. HRM and MM was clearly an unusual combination, but one that she found stimulating.

In 2000, working life began and while Marjolein focussed on HRM, she began to realise that she missed MM and conversely while working in the field of MM, she longed for HRM. After a couple of

years, she came to the conclusion that, when both disciplines were combined, the sub discipline of labour market communications would be created. This was a revelation.

Labour market communications, as part of employer branding, takes place in the context of three major disciplines: HRM & recruitment, MM & branding and Corporate Communications (CC). While already well grounded in HRM and MM, Marjolein began to study CC at the Rotterdam School of Management, enjoying the return to an academic environment.

In November 2008 she successfully completed the Executive Master of CC at the RSM/EUR.

Having worked for multinationals such as Philip Morris Ltd and Ernst & Young, Marjolein is now looking forward to continuing her career in the dynamic field of Corporate Communications/ Employer branding.

When Marjolein is not working, she can be found competing on the tennis court with her tennis team, horse riding, jogging beside the river with Madonna (on her iPod), laughing in the pub with her friends or at home with her family, enjoying time spent with her three year old son Julius.

Marjolein van Noppen
mecnannoppen@hotmail.com
T +31 (0)6 1 27 26 23 1

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

'Every individual employee should be treated as a customer and every customer as a member of the company.'

*Tim Ambler & Simon Barrow in The Journal of Brand Management,
Vol. 4 No. 3 (1996)*

Master Thesis of Corporate Communication

Title: Strong employer brands

Sub title: Interviews with Top employers about the importance of employer branding in a competitive labour market

A short overview...

What is the secret of companies that have the best reputation in the labour market? What is the key to their success in generating a great recruitment image? Do their employer brands show similarities with their employer brand? And if so, what are these similarities?

In this master thesis, top employers share their experiences concerning their successful employer branding strategies. Subjects under consideration are: current challenges in the labour market such as recruiting generation Y and diversity issues, the playing-field of employer branding, internal organisation, the development and implementation issues of a labour market strategy and the relationship between the corporate brand and the employer brand. The results are of value to anyone working in the field of corporate communications, labour market communications, employer branding and/or recruitment.

Content of this executive summary

1. Thesis approach and methodology
 - 1.1 Background and subject of the thesis
 - 1.2 Research objectives
 - 1.3 The methodology of the research
 - 1.4 Definition of the problem and the sub questions
2. The three most significant research results
 - 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 Result 1: the common ground between strong employer brands
 - 2.3 Result 2: behaviours key to the success of strong employer brands
 - 2.4 Result 3: the mutual relationship between the corporate brand and the employer brand
3. Summary of the characteristics of strong employer brands

I BACKGROUND THEORY OF THIS THESIS AND METHODOLOGY

I.1 BACKGROUND

In today's labour market, the competition to recruit top talent is fierce. In order to successfully operate in 'the battle for talent', companies must have an outstanding recruitment image. They must consider themselves as an employer brand (EB). The EB is the focus of the discipline of *employer branding*, which is the subject of this thesis.

Employer branding centralises the organisation as the EB emphasises labour market communication. Tim Ambler & Simon Barrow, considered to be the founding fathers of employer branding, define the EB as follows: 'The EB can be defined as the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing organization'.

In comparison with other business fields, little academic research has been conducted into employer branding, as it is a relatively new discipline.

Existing publications on this subject mostly deal with the practical implications such as how to develop labour market campaigns and how to create career websites. Existing publications mostly address employer branding from either the marketing approach or the human resources perspective.

I.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The *objective* of this thesis is to give a strategic view of the specialism of employer branding. It addresses the EB from the integrated perspective of the following three related business disciplines, see figure 1.1:

- Human Resources & Recruitment
- Marketing & branding
- Communications

Two *research objectives* were formulated:

1. To map out the relationship between the corporate brand and the EB;
2. To reveal the shared characteristics of strong employer brands and what makes them distinguishable from other employer brands.

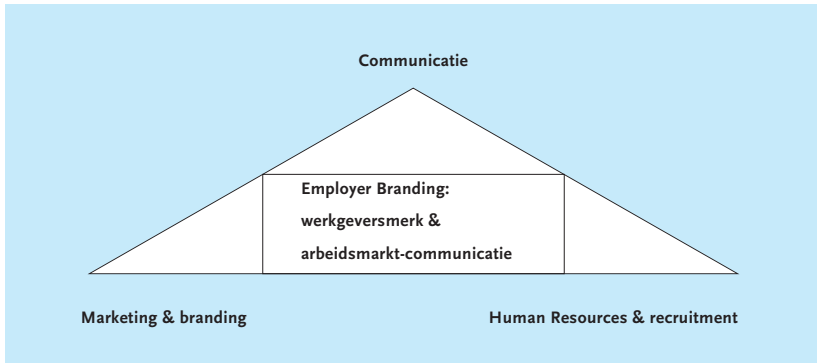


Figure 1.1 The three players in the field of employer branding: Communication, Marketing (branding) and Human Resources (recruitment)

1.3 THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

In order to research these objectives, two areas of investigation were followed:

- **Literature research:** An exploration of the current challenges in the labour market and the current position of the specialism of employer branding;
- **Practical research (*empirical study*):** This area of study consisted of *face-to-face* interviews. The interviews took place in March and April 2008. All of the respondents worked in the field of employer branding, labour market communication or recruitment.

Purpose of the empirical study

The purpose of this study was to answer the research question: ‘what makes an organisation EB strong and distinguishes it in comparison with its competitors?’

Target group of the results of the empirical study

The results are of value to anyone working in the field of corporate communications, labour market communications, employer branding and/or recruitment.

Sample of the empirical study

The sample consisted of the Top25 employers with the best reputation at the Dutch labour market in 2007, published by *Intermediair* in October 2007, see appendix I. There are three specific reasons why the Top25 selected by *Intermediair* was chosen:

1. it focused solely on the image of the companies involved;
2. the research was published recently;
3. the sample was relatively large: 6300 highly educated respondents.

Each of the 25 companies were approached to participate in the empirical study. More than anticipated agreed to take part: 18 companies contributed, a response rate of 72%. These 18 companies are underlined in appendix I.

1.4 THE PROBLEM DEFINITION AND THE SUB QUESTIONS

The **problem definition** was formulated as follows:

How can an organisation position itself in a differentiated way as an attractive employer in a highly competitive labour market?

The four sub questions, as derived from the problem definition, were formulated as follows:

Research objective 1:

the relationship between the corporate brand and the EB:

1. What is the relationship between the corporate brand and the EB? Which criteria must be met here?
2. How do the corporate brand and the EB influence each other? Is the communication one-way or is there a mutual dependency?

Research objective 2:

the similarities between strong employer brands and their differentiating abilities

3. What are the antecedents of an EB? What are its consequences? Which values and benefits effects the EB?
4. Which of these components makes a strong EB? What makes a strong EB distinguishable from its competitors, thus enabling a sustainable competitive advantage?

2 THE THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH RESULTS

‘Virtually anyone agrees that the old covenant between employer and employee -under which companies offered at least a measure of job security in exchange for adequate performance and some exhibition of loyalty- is dead.’

*Robert H. Waterman, Jr. e.a.
in Harvard Business Review on finding and keeping the best people*

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Employer branding requires the definition of the identity of a company or organisation, its position and its value proposition in the labour market. A value proposition is a description of the *values* and *benefits* an organisation has to offer as an employer to its (potential) employees. The value proposition of an EB is shown in table 2.1

The value proposition of an EB			
Emotional values (soft values)		Rational values (hard values)	
<i>social benefits</i>	<i>psychological benefits</i>	<i>Economic benefits</i>	<i>Functional benefits</i>
Examples:			
Team work	Passion	Primary Labour standards (salary/ wage)	Job content
Affiliation	Emotion		Kind of work
Cooperation	Social Corporate Responsibility	Secondary Labour standards (retirement, savings schemes, days off, working hours)	Development/ grow possibilities
Collegiality	Fun Satisfaction Respect and status Self expression Self realization		Career possibilities

Table 2.1 ***The value proposition of an EB.***

The Top25 companies offer an attractive value proposition for (potential) employees. They are considered to have 'strong employer brands', which leads to a sustainable competitive advantage in the labour market.

What exactly is it that makes an EB strong? Do strong employer brands have a common ground? And if so, what are their characteristics?

2.2 RESULT I:

THE COMMON GROUND OF STRONG EMPLOYER BRANDS

The results of the research show that strong employer brands have the following characteristics:

A strong EB meets the condition that it emphasizes emotional (soft) values as well as rational (hard) values:

- **Emotional (soft) values:** Employer brands can communicate social benefits as well as/ or psychological benefits. Strong employer brands appear to emphasize 'psychological benefits'. It responds to the psychological needs of the (potential) employee. It embodies passion, it elicits emotion. (Potential) Employees value the importance of Social Corporate Responsibility (SCR), hereby fulfilling the (psychological) need of being of important to someone else. It is currently attractive for people to want to contribute to society;
- **Rational (hard) values:** Employer brands here can communicate economic benefits as well as/ or functional benefits. Strong employer brands communicate especially functional benefits. They put an emphasis on personal development. Companies with strong employer brands stress the possibilities of career development and (personal) growth.

Due to these common characteristics, strong employer brands are hard to distinguish from one another. But a differentiated value proposition at the labour market is a 'must' in the battle for the best employees.

So how do organisations, with strong employer brands, differentiate themselves from each other?

2.3 RESULT 2:

BEHAVIOUR AS THE KEY TO SUCCESS OF STRONG EMPLOYER BRANDS

The answer lies with the employees of the organisation. People are the key to its success. They must exhibit the values and benefits as stated in the EB. The behaviour the organisation and its employees, day in and day out, illustrates the validity of the claim of the EB. The burden of proof lies with them. Their supporting behaviour of the values and benefits as stated by the EB makes the value proposition believable. Virtual or personal communication with the recruitment target group plays a key role here. Companies who will be successful in 'living their EB', will be the winners in the labour market during the battle for talent.

2.4 RESULT 3:

THE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CORPORATE BRAND AND THE EB

The corporate brand and the EB are indissolubly connected to each other. They can reinforce one another:

- The research results show that the corporate brand can reinforce the EB. The EB can 'piggy back' on the reputation of the corporate brand. Conversely the corporate brand can function as the EB when the existing company does not define the EB.
- This reinforcement also counts the other way around: the EB can also reinforce the corporate brand. The EB can replace the corporate brand where the corporate brand does not exist. Furthermore, the EB can give an integrated view of the organisation as a whole in all its aspects (the portfolio perspective) whereas the corporate brand has a more polarised perspective.

3 SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG EMPLOYER BRANDS

'One thing you know for sure: You (and only you) are responsible for your own career in this new economy, so you'd better not fail.'

Bruce Tulgan, Managing the talent wars

Characteristics of strong employer brands

With relation to the relationship between the corporate brand and the EB:

- Strong employer brands are connected to- or a derivative of the corporate brand;
- Strong employer brands have the same name as the corporate brand. The corporate brand reinforces the employer brand, functioning as an 'endorser';
- Strong employer brands are not always accompanied by a recruitment slogan. They may also use the corporate slogan.

With relation to the values and benefits that an employer brand encompasses:

- Strong employer brands are consistent in the values it communicates. This contributes to the credibility of the organisation as an employer;
- Strong employer brands emphasize emotional- as well as rational values. They do not stress one particular value;
- Strong employer brands emphasize both psychological and functional benefits. Social- and economic benefits are less emphasized.

Other characteristics:

- Strong employer brands are a result of an intelligent labour market strategy;
- Strong employer brands are continually well maintained. Investment is key. As a result, these employer brands are clearly noticeable in the labour market, at times of both boom and bust;
- Strong employer brands touch a sensitive chord. They create an emotional bond. The recruitment target group must be able to 'emotionally' identify itself with the employer brand;
- Strong employer brands are based on the identity of the organisation. This contributes to the credibility of the organisation as employer;
- Strong employer brands consist of similar antecedents (components). The components of strong employer brands are a dynamic business, appealing products or services and a charismatic CEO.

'The problem is that, with so many employers engaged not just in retention efforts but also in massive recruiting efforts, the retention bidding wars turn into recruiting bidding wars. And it is a vicious cycle, driving up the cost for these organizations of employing the best people, without increasing retention much at all.'

Bruce Tulgan, Managing the talent wars

APPENDIX I

Top25 Organizations with the best image at the labour market 2007

(The underlined organizations were participants of the practical research/empirical study)

1. Rabobank
2. Philips
3. Shell
4. ING
5. Unilever
6. KLM
7. ABN AMRO
8. Heineken
9. Fortis
10. Koninklijke Ahold
11. TNO
12. Politie (Police)
13. AkzoNobel
14. Nike
15. KPN
16. Ministerie v Buitenlandse Zaken (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
17. Gemeente Amsterdam (Community of Amsterdam)
18. DSM
19. Schiphol
20. KPMG
21. Sara Lee/ D.E.
22. PricewaterhouseCoopers
23. Belastingdienst (Tax Authorities)
24. Capgemini
25. Ministerie VROM
(Ministry of Housing, Land-use planning & environment management)

- Source : Intermediair, issue 42, the 19th of October 2007;
- This research takes place yearly. It consists of organizations in the profit sector as well as the non-profit sector;
- n = 6300 respondents (highly educated with at the most ten years of working experience).



Ger Peerboom

The Effect of Perceived External Prestige in Relation to the Management Efforts to Create Alignment during Acquisitions

I studied building architecture at the HTS in Heerlen.

Although finalizing my study successfully, my interest in space travel became a more professional one when I joined Fokker Space and Systems in Amsterdam. Starting a career in the field of public relations and communications.

After some very exiting years with Fokker, I moved to the chemical industry with a marketing communication assignment at DSMs plastics division in Geleen, followed by several other marketing and internal communication positions in other divisions of DSM.

From the moment that DSM decided in 2000 to sell its petrochemical activities, it was my challenge to organize the communication efforts of that unit. In that position I succeeded in developing and implementing successfully a dedicated communication approach to prepare the organization for the move to SABIC, mid 2002.

Within the new formed SABIC Europe organization it became my role to organize and steer all the European corporate communication activities in close cooperation with my colleagues in Saudi Arabia, Asia and the USA.

In that position I was closely involved in the development and execution of the communication process during the acquisition of Huntsman Petrochemicals in the UK (2006) and the acquisition of GE Plastics in the USA (2007).

For me the most favorite and interesting theme in communications is how to deal with multiple identities in relation to different cultural environments.

THE SUBJECT

The petrochemical industry, a fast growing global industry, due to the growing demand of plastics in our society in the western world, but also more and more in new economies in the east and developing countries.

This industry, for many years dominated by players from Europe and the USA, quite often founded and owned by oil companies who saw the petrochemical industry as a next step in the chain after refining oil. Players from Asia became more prominent in the nineties of the last century.

In the past five to ten years, the whole playing field of the chemical industry has changed due to the fact that the size of the companies has grown from a national to a European level and even more to a global level. Next to that also more and more alliances have taken place by and with players in the Middle East which were not prominent present in this market field before the turn of the century.

All these changes in the petrochemical industry have taken place via many acquisitions over the years. Acquisitions which showed a pull back from those companies direct involved in the oil business and as mentioned earlier, the entrance of several Middle Eastern companies. Some of the currently main players in the global petrochemical industry are DOW, BASF, Borealis, Lyondell Borealis and SABIC.

THE REASON TO CHOOSE THIS SUBJECT

SABIC (Saudi Basic Industries Corporation - www.sabic.com) acquired successfully in the past six years three companies in the (petro)chemical industry. In 2002 DSM Petrochemicals, in 2006 Huntsman Petrochemicals and in 2007 GE Plastics. In all three acquisitions I was involved in the communication process. First at the side of the company that was sold (DSM Petrochemicals) and later at SABIC as the company who acquired (Huntsman Petrochemicals and GE Plastics).

I have seen from the inside of the companies in the past 8 years how the perceived external prestige (PEP) of employees is of influence on management efforts to come to alignment. Therefore with this experience in mind I wanted to study or and how the PEP really is of influence on the management efforts that should lead to employee alignment.

PROBLEM

Although several authors have already reported on the impact of PEP, but so far nothing was focused on the impact of PEP on specific acquisitions. In this thesis I have focused on how PEP impacts the management efforts to come to alignment of the workforce during several acquisitions done by SABIC. Is it the PEP that influences the management efforts? Is it the other way around? Do the management efforts influence the PEP and so create the alignment with the employees? Or is the question relevant processes which work in another way?

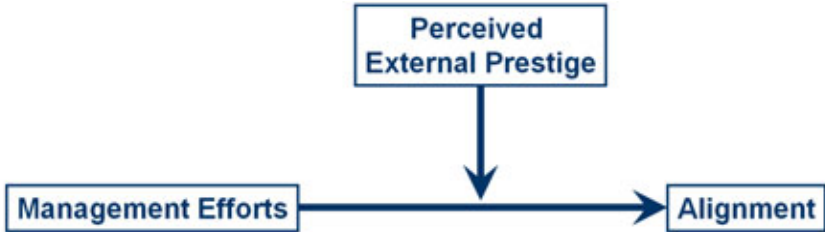
PERCEIVED EXTERNAL PRESTIGE (PEP)

Perceived External Prestige (PEP) stands for ‘become aware or conscious of a source from outside the subject’ and ‘widespread respect and admiration attracted through a perception of high achievements or quality’ as mentioned by the Oxford English Dictionary. In this context I have chosen for the definition defined by Dutton (1994) as: “Perceived external prestige represents how an employee thinks outsiders view his or her organization (and thus him- or herself as a member thereof)”.

The PEP will be of great influence on the way employees will act within a company, especially when it comes to acquisitions; for employees a period of uncertainty; for a company often a matter of focus or lack of that. Therefore it will be important for a company to define clearly how they want to influence the PEP by a clear strategic aligned behavior (SAB), described by van Riel and Berens (2008) as: “The degree of supportive behavior among key internal audiences, rooted in awareness and understanding of the ‘What’ and the ‘Why’ of an organization’s strategic intents.”

FOUR MODELS FOR STUDY

The effects of the management efforts and the PEP on the alignment with the employees were studied during the phases in an acquisition process.



Model 1 - Management efforts lead to alignment while PEP influences the process

In this model management efforts are initiated to create alignment with employees. These processes of management efforts can be influenced by the PEP. This will have its impact on the alignment with the employees. Depending on a positive or negative PEP, the effect can be strengthening or weakening the alignment.

When this happens, it will mostly be unexpected. Timing and intensity is not known and can hardly be controlled by one of the involved acquisition parties.



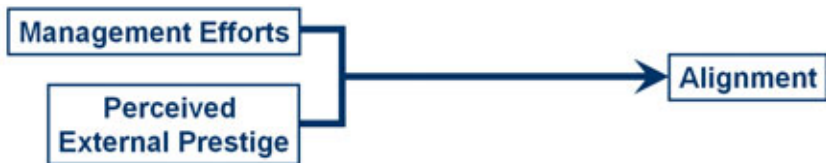
Model 2 - Management efforts influences PEP and leads to alignment

In this second model, the PEP is influenced by the management efforts and will lead in the end to alignment with the employees. Questions in this case: Which kind of alignment takes place? Is it the alignment via the PEP based on the (by the company) wanted 'Strategic Aligned Behavior' (SAB)? Or is it the alignment on basis of the PEP only? Which is influenced by many other internal and external factors. In other words, who controls what? And then the logical question comes up if this really is a situation wanted by a company and its SAB or even by the employees themselves?



Model 3 - PEP influences the management efforts and leads to alignment

The described situation in this model is the situation in which management efforts are the best in control of the alignment that takes place with the employees. In this situation the PEP makes sense to the management efforts. But also in this situation a lot of comfort is created for the employees as they do not have to worry about the PEP as that is under control by their parent company. Of course in this case talking about a negative PEP, it is doubtful or at least a comfort zone that still exists.



Model 4 - Cooperation between management efforts and PEP leads to alignment

In this fourth and last model the cooperation between management efforts and PEP will lead to the alignment with the employees. This means that management efforts have no direct influence on the PEP. It is up to the employee to decide how he/she interprets the management efforts and how his PEP, and what these will mean for the alignment.

For a company the issue is if this model is workable at all since with your SAB, you don't have only limited influence on the alignment. As mentioned before, depending on a positive or negative PEP, the effect can be strengthening or weakening the alignment.

METHODS

Measuring the effects of PEP and management efforts on the employee alignment is done in this thesis on basis of three case studies. The case studies were set-up on basis of the methodology as described by Persey Heugens (2001), I used the method described as: “An exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context.”

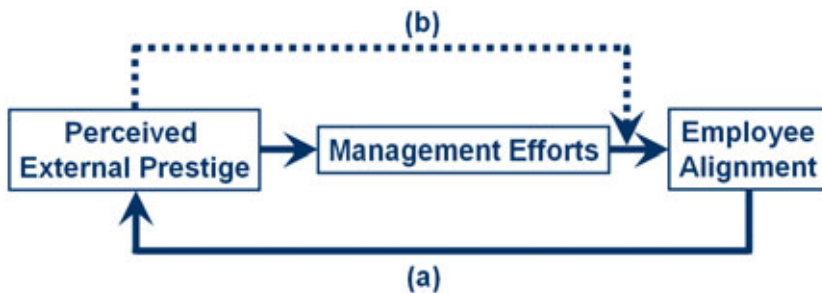
The case studies were all set-up on the same basis.

1. The companies
 - The international ranking in the chemical industry and within the Fortune World’s Most Admired Companies;
 - Description of the company at the moment of the acquisition.
2. Timeline of the acquisition.
3. The acquisition process seen by the selling company.
4. The acquisition process seen by the employees.
5. Testing the model:
 - Managerial efforts versus the alignment;
 - Perceived External Prestige (PEP);
 - Alignment.
6. What does work and what does not?
7. Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

On basis of this study using the three case studies I came to the conclusion that model 3 was the best model to go for, but adapted with an alternating process and inclusion of the influence as described in model 1. Model 3 works well as long as some considerations are taken into account.

- It is not a one time process, but an alternating process in which the employee alignment plays a critical role because this change in the employee alignment, also create automatically a change in the PEP. By doing so also the effect of the strategic aligned behavior (SAB), which is supported and driven by the management efforts will further be strengthened. It leads in the end to the addition of arrow (a) in the model given in the figure below.



- When the PEP is influenced by the alignment process, this means that the management efforts will have effect on the employees. It is of course uncertain if these effects are negative or positive. In both cases they will be of influence on the behavior of the employees and the way they will judge any kind of signals they receive from the outside influencing of the PEP and the way the PEP will work. When these signals from the outside are strong enough to influence the PEP, it will be necessary to understand this as soon as possible and act in a proper way to create more and proper alignment with the employees which will lead (again) to adaptation of the PEP.
- The arrow (a) will not change direction the other way around from the PEP direct to the alignment, because then the PEP would exclude the management efforts. Alternatively this could bring them in a position as illustrated in model 4, which would also lead to a dominating role of the PEP, a situation in which you do not have any control any more on the alignment other then indirect via the PEP. In the here discussed cases it was clear that this is an absolute unwanted situation and will in no way help to create the right alignment in a process of any acquisition. It would create confusion and uncertainty by the employees and it would also demonstrate that there is misalignment between management efforts and employee alignment and most of all there is lack of confident and trust. To build that up again would cost a lot of time and that is one of the factors you miss during an acquisition as also detailed in consideration number eight.

- In model one it became clear that you need to be prepared (in cases of acquisition processes) for any kind of unexpected influence on the PEP in the process towards alignment with the employees. This means the PEP is not influencing the alignment itself directly, but it could influence the process of the management efforts (arrow (b)). Any kind of uncontrolled influence is of course not wanted; you have to accept this as a given fact. Due to the fact that you know this can happen at a certain moment in the process, you can prepare yourself; assign your management efforts and get via that route control on this situation. Several examples were discussed with the three cases. Most of these events are taken place outside of the direct sphere of influence like disasters, economic crisis, etc.
- Of importance is that in the case of acquisitions the management of the part that is going to be sold, feels and is accepted as part of the employee group: 'one of them'. This is not always an easy job, especially not in a case where the start of the communication process fails. There needs to be a good kind of common ground and common understanding to create confidence and most of all trust. Therefore it is crucial to have short communication lines, which will help to avoid that other factors can (negatively) influence the managerial efforts and the SAB efforts of the management.
- Due to the fact that the management has very short communication lines to the employees, they are also able to absorb the changes in PEP and bring them into the management efforts. This alternating process will help the employees to move also from the identity of the former parent company towards the identity of the new parent company quite easily.
- Processes need to be simple, flexible and realistic. The acquisition processes will not take a long time (as shown in the examples). When processes are simple, it will also be possible to react very fast and flexible to any kind of changes internal as well as external and that is exact what is needed to bring the PEP into the position to feed the management efforts on a constant basis.
- Seen from the point of view of the selling company, it is always easy to judge the good and the bad of the communication process of someone else. When you, as buying company, could influence at the beginning of an acquisition process which model to be followed by the selling company, it would help to understand much better the way communications works in a company. But you could also help to build a positive PEP Due to reasons of confidentiality, competition laws and strategy of the acquisition, this seems to be not really feasible.

- When the selling company gives room to create an independent identity, then it is more a matter of balancing act with the concept of multiple identities, to create a positive PEP towards the acquisition. In one of the cases this worked well and was also steered as such, for the two other cases, this is less clear. At least in one of the cases it did not seem to happen because of the strong ties with the parent-brand, at that moment the most admired American company.
- The idea of working with the multiple identities is based on quite some theory as developed by Whetten and Freeman and will show in practice that controlling the multiple identities, means also controlling much more the outcome of it; the commitment given by people to an organization an acquisition process.
- Keep in mind that most acquisitions take place within the time frame of less than a year. In two of the studied cases seven and nine months in total. This means you need to consider on beforehand very carefully how you want to act in communicating with your workforce. As a company that is already for a longer period aware of this, it can bring measures in place and prepare the organization to work alongside the lines of model 3. This will avoid that you run in the end into a situation as described with model 2 and model 4.
- In one case there an exception w.r.t. the time frame. Keep in mind before the real acquisition process started, they first had to work through the whole carve-out (almost nine months). After that, it took the company almost a year to run the whole acquisition procedure.
- Using a model like this is very strong cultural and geographical focused. Due to the fact that management efforts in the Americas, Asia and Europe differ often much, it is possible that the effect of the PEP in those countries could differ much of the conclusions made in this study.
- The model is of course based on experiences of the described acquisition cases and does not take into account that a company could also choose on purpose not to communicate or let the PEP lead the process. In that case it is up to the choice of the organization how the model will work. In many cases they then will rely more on the principle as discussed in the models 2 and/or model 4.



Renée Reijers

Driving Identification and Behaviour

*A study of the relationship between identity, identification,
internal communication and strategic business alignment*

Renée Reijers is a communication professional with additional background in marketing and account management. She works as Account Director for a boutique agency who

specializes in the technology industry. She supports clients in positioning themselves in their markets and in communicating with their target groups in an excellent way. Working mostly on

external communication, the MCC elective on identity really fascinated her - resulting in this thesis on identity and behaviour.

Key concepts:

Identity, Desired Identity, Perceived Identity, Perceived External Prestige, Identification, Internal Communication, Behaviour, Strategic Business Alignment.

INTRODUCTION

Writing this article in November 2008, many companies go through changes. Due to the financial crisis and the uncertain economics situation worldwide, companies look for ways to deal with change. This could mean that quite a few of them will go through strategic changes, varying from slight adjustments to complete turnarounds. One of the challenges is to get staff to buy into a new strategy and to get them to act in a way which contributes to the strategic goals.

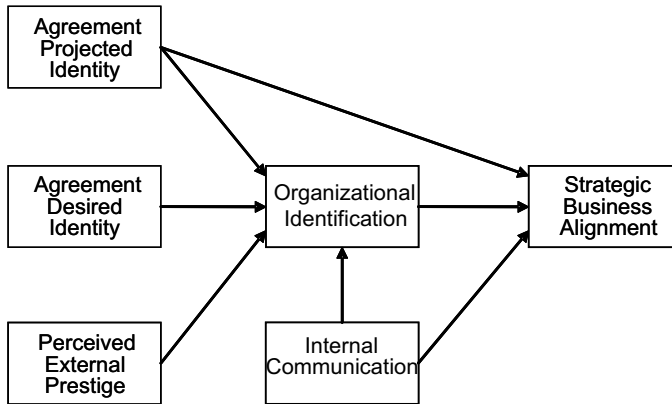
The main aim of this study is to research how identification and strategic business alignment (SBA) are impacted by organizational identity. SBA is behaviour that contributes to strategic objectives. For example if the strategy of a company is to move from small customers to large enterprises, then people who develop products for enterprises contribute to the strategic goals, whilst people who sell to the smaller customers do not. Traditionally, studies on identity and behaviour have argued that identification - i.e. how people relate to an organisation - influences behaviour. When people identify positively with an organisation they would more or less automatically show behaviour that contributes positively to the organisation. However, recent studies have shown that identification is not a strong driver for behaviour. Other factors play a more important role. As strategy is the guideline for companies in what they want to achieve and how they want to achieve it, SBA should be an objective of any organizational change.

The results of this study indicate that projected identity and internal communication (IC) are important drivers for both identification and SBA.

CONCEPTS AND MODEL

The central research question for this study was: "What is the influence of the sense-giving strategies desired and projected identity, perceived external prestige (PEP) and IC on identification and SBA?" Based upon theory it has been hypothesized that desired identity, projected identity, PEP and IC positively influence identification and that projected identity, IC and identification positively influence SBA.

This is visualised in the following hypothesized model:



A theoretical description of the framework's concepts:

Organizational Identity (OI)

OI is the malleable perception of an organisation by insiders. For an organisation, identity is relevant as it creates identification. Identity is described in values - for example 'innovative'. A characteristic is quite general, so it is supported by a descriptive label. For example for the characteristic 'innovative' the label could be: 'Always the first on the market with new technologies, but also constantly finding new ways to please customers'. Labels can be translated into actions.

This thesis looks at two top-down identity types: desired identity and projected identity. These are also called sense-giving strategies, as they give direction to members of an organisation.

Desired Identity

The desired identity of an organisation is what the organisation ideally could be in the eyes of senior management. For strategic changes, management does not convey important concepts through the existing identity but through a visionary identity. Having a clear desired identity is not sufficient to drive a change in identity. A recent case study showed that despite creating a very clear desired identity and introducing organisation changes, the envisaged change did not occur until it could be embedded in day to day operations. Another case study on identity ambiguity shows that as soon as leaders of a company engage in exemplary behaviour, the desired identity is adopted throughout the whole organisation.

Projected Identity

Projected identity is “The strategically planned, operationally implemented internal and external self presentation and actions of an organisation. The self presentation and actions are based on an explicitly defined corporate mission, long term goals and a well-defined desired image”. Projected identity is conveyed through all internal and external communications and behaviour. The goal of projected identity is to influence employees. As people feel attracted to organisations which hold and communicate the same values as they themselves do, it can be argued that the degree to which people agree with and can identify with a projected identity influences their identification with the organisation.

Perceived External Prestige (PEP)

PEP indicates how an employee feels the organisation he works for is judged by third parties and how he is judged as part of that organisation. Studies have shown that PEP also influences identification. One of the reasons people identify with a group is to increase their self esteem. The more prestigious an organisation, the higher its potential to stimulate its employees’ self esteem through identification.

Identification

Identification is relevant for organisations as it creates commitment, cooperation and in-group bias. For individuals identification is important because it fulfils a very basic need to belong. It also provides meaning and it gives self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is the need of individuals to achieve a positive social identity. It implies that people will try to sustain or even increase the prestige of their group, because an attractive group identity contributes to their individual standing.

Internal communication

Communication is a powerful tool in identity processes, as it enables the dominant coalition - i.e. the ‘influencers’ - to prescribe what the organisation is and should be. Internal communication plays an important role in change processes. Different circumstances require a different use of identity types. During change it is important to communicate a clear desired identity, but if an organisation seeks behavioural change then projected identity needs to be addressed primarily.

Strategic Business Alignment (SBA)

SBA is the degree to which employees understand, support, and are able to execute the organisation’s strategic initiatives. This means that employees understand and familiarise themselves with the strategic goals and act accordingly. Creating this alignment is vital for organisations as companies rely on their employees to achieve the strategic goals.

CASE STUDY AND RESEARCH

To empirically research the framework a study was done at the Dutch office of an international company in document management. The company - in this study called InformationCom - recently went through a rebranding and the integration of the organisation. Several brands have been brought under one brand, in one organisation. The Dutch office has 1500 employees.

After the literature study upon which the framework was based, the next step was to analyse the materials used to communicate with the employees in the period leading up to the rebranding. This was followed by two rounds of interviews with two separate research groups: the five members of the rebranding project team and six senior managers. These groups were chosen because the first group formulated the values for the company's desired identity - based on the corporate values - and the second group is crucial in conveying the desired identity to the employees. The content of these interviews was analysed to establish the desired identity and SBA characteristics.

The quantitative research consisted of a survey under 639 employees with a response rate of 40,2%. The primary goals of the survey were to test the hypothesized model and to research how much the employees of InformationCom NL agree with the desired and projected identity as well as their score on the other concepts. For the survey a questionnaire was developed, organized around the theoretical concepts. Input from the interviews was used to describe the concepts desired identity, projected identity and SBA. More generic questions were used to survey PEP, identification and internal communication. All questions could be answered using a five-point scale.

RESULTS

Qualitative research

Desired Identity

Data obtained in the interviews was analysed separately for the two research groups (project team members and managers) to see if they would generate different values for the company's desired identity. To translate the interview data into values, it was analysed in three steps. The first step was to select statements referring to desired identity, the second step was to group the statements and label them. Thirdly, labels were grouped and linked to values. The table below compares the official company values with the results of the interview analysis. The numbers between brackets represent the number of times a statement related to this value was mentioned out of a total of 126 statements related to identity.

InformationCom NL Values	Project Group	Managers
Customer Centric	Customer Centric (14)	Customer Centric (7)
Productivity Driven	Productivity Driven (4)	
Committed to Growth	Committed to Growth (19)	Committed to Growth (32)
Responsible and Sustainable	Responsible and Sustainable (13)	
Reliable Worldwide Player	Reliable Worldwide Player (6)	
Human	Human (8)	Human (8)
	Honest (3)	Honest (3)
		Entrepreneurship (11)

Projected Identity

To identify the values of the projected identity the same method of analysis was used as for desired identity. The statements were selected from material used to inform employees about the rebranding, such as presentations, internal and external magazines and the official kick-off meeting. The following table contains the top 10 values found in this analysis.

InformationCom NL Values	Projected Identity
Customer Centric	Customer Centric
Productivity Driven	Productivity Driven
Committed to Growth	Committed to Growth
Responsible and Sustainable	Responsible and Sustainable
Reliable Worldwide Player	Reliable Worldwide Player
Human	Human
	Honest
	Ambitious
	Innovative

Strategy and SBA

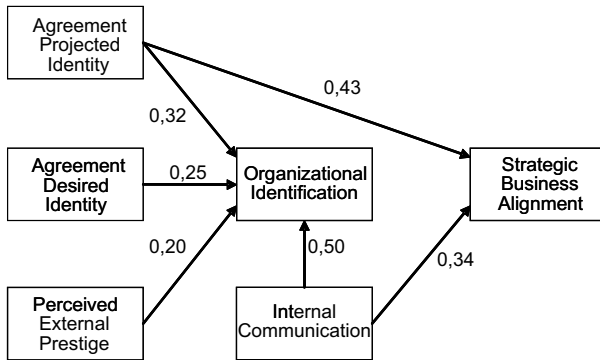
During the interviews behaviour that would contribute to the strategic goals was discussed. The interviewees were not able to clearly describe SBA, however they did indicate that they expected the desired identity values to contribute to SBA.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The objective of the quantitative research was twofold. Firstly to research the hypothesized model and secondly to see if the employees agreed with the desired and projected identity and to obtain their opinion on the other concepts.

To test the full research framework and the hypotheses two regression analyses were carried out.

The analysis on identification shows that organizational identity is significantly influenced by: desired identity, projected identity, perceived external prestige and internal communication - of which internal communication and projected identity are most important. The SBA analysis shows that SBA is significantly influenced by internal communication and projected identity, but not at all by organizational identity. Based on these findings this thesis' model can be depicted as follows:



The higher the score for the relation the more the dependent variable is influenced by the independent variable.

The following table shows the most important values of the regression analyses.

	Organizational Identification	Strategic Business Alignment
ADI	0.2468 *	
API	0.3242 **	0.4361 **
PEP	0.1955 *	
IC	0.5034 **	0.3369 **
OI		0.0627(not significant)
N	258	258
R	0.4151	0.3663
Adjusted R	0.4056	0.3588

** p <0.001 * p<0.10

Additionally each concept's average, standard deviation and reliability was determined. All concepts scored high on reliability. Desired identity scored very high with an average of 4.2, indicating that the employees agree with the management vision. The other averages ranged from 3.3 to 3.6, indicating is positive, but there is room for improvement. An overview of all scores:

Concept	Average score	Standard Deviation	Reliability
Agreement Desired Identity	4.2	0.39	0.84
Agreement Projected Identity	3.5	0.45	0.72
Perceived External Prestige	3.5	0.45	0.73
Identification	3.6	0.48	0.64
Internal Communication	3.6	0.48	0.69
Strategic Business Alignment	3.3	0.54	0.81

CONCLUSIONS

Looking at the central research question for this study: “What is the influence of the sense-giving strategies desired and projected identity, perceived external prestige (PEP) and IC on identification and SBA?”, the most important conclusions are:

Internal Communication and Projected Identity are the strongest drivers of Identification.

Identification is positively influenced by Internal Communication, Project Identity, Desired Identity and Perceived External Prestige.

SBA is driven by Internal Communication and Projected Identity, but not by Identification.

For management during change processes these conclusions have several implications. Projected identity requires careful consideration. It is the total of all communication activities and has a strong influence on both identification and SBA. When management clearly shows what the company is and should be, then employees will more likely act according to the company's goals. Management should do this every day and to everybody, not only during the yearly management. This might seem a cliché, but how often is it practised? Try connecting your activities to your strategy three times a day for a month and talk about it! It will help to stay focused as an individual and as a company.

When developing a communication strategy for a change process focus on communicating about the strategy and objectives behind the change process. On an operational level clearly steer the content of you internal communication, in briefings make clear how articles should relate to the strategy. When developing visuals make sure they align with your strategy. In short: live the strategy and talk about it!

KEY LITERATURE

- Kotter, J.P., 1997 *Leading Change*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston Massachusetts, USA
- Van Riel C.B.M., Berens G. and Dijkstra M. (2005), 'The Influence of Employee Communication on Strategic Business Alignment' ERIM Report Series Research in Management.
- Elstak, M.N. (2007), 'Flipping the Identity Coin', Promotor: Prof.dr. C.B.M. van Riel, ISBN 978-90-5892-148-2
- Corley, K. G. & Gioia Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Johnson Graduate School Cornell University. Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49 (2004): 173-208.
- Gioia, D.A., M. Schultz & K. Corley (2000), 'Organizational Identity, Image and Adaptive Instability, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol 25 (1), pp.63-81.



Ilse Roggeveen

Are the identity and the reputation on one line?

Investigation into the identity and reputation of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)

Ilse Roggeveen (1970) is Team Manager Communication with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). Besides this function, she is engaged in strategic advice, issue management, and crisis communication.

Before her appointment as Team Manager in 2004, she was communication adviser with the COA primarily engaged in external communication. She set up an alliance with the Ministry of Justice and other partners in the asylum chain to obtain integral communication. As project leader she developed and implemented a new company logo.

Before her COA period, Ilse held various communication positions mostly in the aviation industry; such as her year-long internal communication function with Transavia airlines. As a self-employed she gave communication advice to businesses for several years. Her career in communication started at an advertising agency.

Ilse's education includes economics, marketing, journalism, and communication. She considers most content of these programmes to be integrated in the study of Master of Corporate

Communication. Ilse finds that the communication practice and her management experience form an excellent combination. Her extensive insight originates from her professional experience in profit and non-profit organisations, as well as her involvement in the advertising branch itself and with clients. This composition of education and experience provides her with even more dimension to the profession.

Communication flourishes and fascinates.

ilseroggeveen@gmail.com

S U M M A R Y

Are the identity and the reputation of the COA on one line? What if they're not? How would an organization benefit if they are? One of the pillars of identity is behaviour. Corporate behaviour is often so obvious and basic that it 'reveals' the organization's true identity. It affects the organization's reputation. This type of behaviour is actually called corporate personality or authenticity.

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) attends to the reception of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. It interacts with the ministry, social security administration agencies, interest groups, municipalities and the general public and operates nation-wide. The COA, as it were, manoeuvres between these parties. Being a social service it is often in a tight spot. Everybody has an opinion on asylum seekers, but solutions are seldom heard. Nobody wants asylum seekers in their backyard, but once they are they don't want them to leave.

How does the COA operate in this area of tension? What does the COA involve and what are its identity and reputation? A good reputation would obviously make things easier, enable them to increase their ambition to broaden their tasks.

COA members identify with their organization. But what do they identify with? In other words: what is the COA's identity? Does the COA identity match with the projected or desired identity of its management? Are there any transverse connections, or alignments? In other words: does the COA identity match the perceived external prestige and reputation? Is this '*what you see is what you get*', or is authenticity?

Having read the Dutton & Dukerich Port Authority Study (1991) it is interesting to search for parallels and valuable lessons for the COA. Port Authority members were inconvenienced by negative publicity, and external pressure made them oppose to the organization's inhumane policy.

Alternatively, does the COA compare with the cases treated by Elstak, Van Riel & Pratt ('Why identify?', 2008)? Their investigation of these cases shows that the Projected Identity affects the COA members' actions and behaviour more than the identity they perceive.

Formulation of the problem

This thesis deals with the question whether there is a gap between the COA's identity and its reputation by means of the following underlying questions:

1. What is the COA's Projected Organizational Identity?
2. What is the COA's Perceived Organizational Identity?
3. What is the COA's Perceived External Prestige?
4. What is the COA's Reputation?

Intended result

In answering these questions, it is interesting to notice an organization strengthening, assuming an organization is strongest when its identity and reputation align. An aligned organization is capable to 'survive' in bad times. It usually performs better, gains more respect and confidence in present or other (new) tasks and therefore attracts better and new staff, putting the vicious circle in an 'upward' motion.

By drawing parallels with the Port Authority Study (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991) and 'Why Identify?' (Elstak, Van Riel & Pratt, 2008), subject investigation results in a number of recommendations for optimally aligning the COA through the following 'Alignment model'.

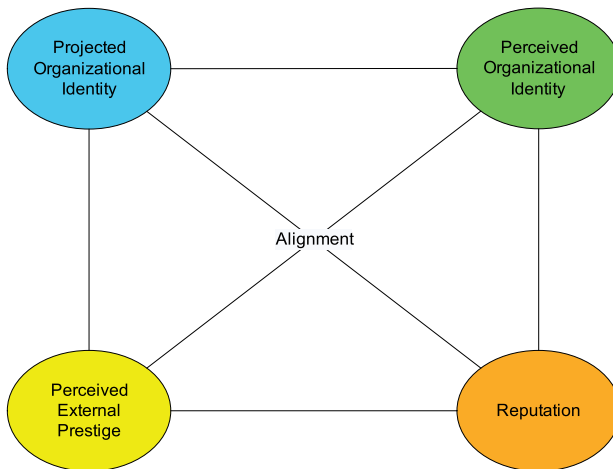


Figure: 'Alignment' model

INVESTIGATION

Method and Approach

To answer the aforementioned questions within the context of this investigation, internal documents were consulted, investigations were used, and interviews were held. Although the conclusions may contain small differences in interpretation with respect to terminology or properties, these have been included in the weighing.

Projected Organizational Identity

The Projected Organizational Identity has been investigated on the basis of the Projected Identity properties in plans and communications.

Perceived Organizational Identity and Perceived External Prestige

The Perceived Organizational Identity and Perceived External Prestige have been investigated on the basis of several interviews (both solo and in focus groups) with members 'perceiving' this identity, 'carrying' it. Members selected for this investigation come from all corners of the organization, working centrally or decentrally, and performing various duties.

The Perceived Organizational Identity has been investigated by means of spontaneous associations of the members and projected properties.

For the Perceived External Prestige the members were asked about the COA's prestige in general. They were also presented with the Reputation Institutes Reprak™ (2006) reputation drivers: leadership, citizenship, performance, products & services, innovation, workplace and governance.

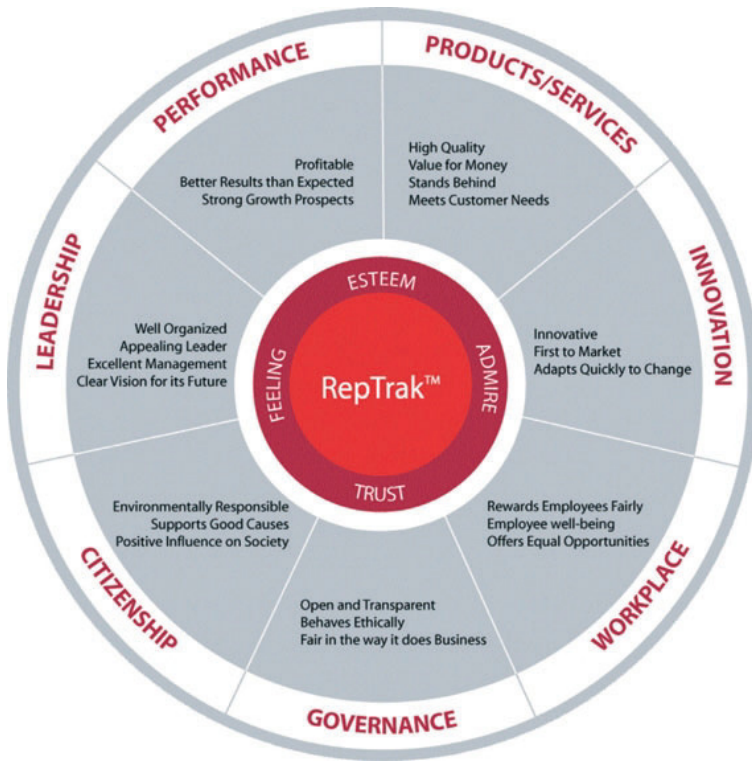


Figure: The Reputation Institutes Reptrak™ (2006)

Reputation

Subject partial investigation has been performed with the use of various existing investigations held among the general public and external stakeholders. For the media section a quick-scan was carried out.

OUTCOME

The outcome of the investigation has been processed, weighed and listed into the following overall view.

		Outcome							
Reprtrak pillars	Projected Properties	P1 - P2	P1 - P3	P1 - R	P2 - P3	P3 - R	P2 - R		
performance	professional result-oriented skilled	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓		
	procedure-oriented made to measure (for all target groups) human-oriented passionate quality facts-oriented	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
leadership	future-oriented constructive	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓		
citizenship	surrounding-conscience relationship-oriented society-conscience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓		
governance	integer transparent open respectful	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	invest in people inspiring employer	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗		
innovation	proactive	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓		
P1	Projected Organizational Identity	✓	≥ 50% positive drivers	✓	✓	aligned	✓		
P2	Perceived Organizational Identity	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
P3	Perceived External Prestige	✗	≥ 50% negative	✗	✗	not aligned	✗		
R	Reputation	✗		✗	✗		✗		

Figure: Outcome

COMPARISONS & CONCLUSIONS

The main and most striking outcome of the investigation:

P1 ≠ P2

The Projected Identity largely insufficiently matches the Perceived Identity.

P2 ≈ R

The Perceived Identity is virtually equal to the reputation and only shows a difference in workplace.

Innovative ≠ positive

The COA claims to be innovative, but does not feel innovative, think it does not appear as such and is not perceived as such.

Workplace ≠ positive

Workplace is considered diversely and is not on one line.

Product = positive

The product scores well in all respects.

Governance ≠ positive

Governance is not considered absolutely positive nowhere; transparency and openness surely need improvement.

Citizenship = positive

Citizenship is sufficiently aligned.

In de Port Authority Study by Dutton & Dukerich (1991), a case on a transport and property organization, members started opposing to the inhumane, changed policy of the organization with respect to homeless. They could no longer identify with the organization which even resulted in a negative self-image. The COA is an organization for the reception of asylum seekers. Although its tasks do not include defending the target group interests, COA members are criticized for them. This has an affect on COA members.

Reviewing 'Why Identify?' by Elstak, Van Riel & Pratt, learns that identification only partly defines the identity. The other part is defined by consistency, or perseverance. In difficult times, like recessions, reorganizations, and changes, the latter is even decisive. A transparent, consistent Projected Identity is therefore essential.

Overall conclusion

The overall image is fragmented. The COA shows a number of so-called gaps of alignment. Perhaps one should not want to be all-in-one, such as innovative, which is aligned in this case, except for the Projected Identity. Although an organization will never score 100%, some gaps must be sealed to make the organization stronger.

The most crucial points for improvement for the COA are the:

- gap between the Projected Identity and the Perceived Identity;
- Workplace;
- Reputation.

Recommendations

On the basis of the outcome of this investigation, the following is recommended:

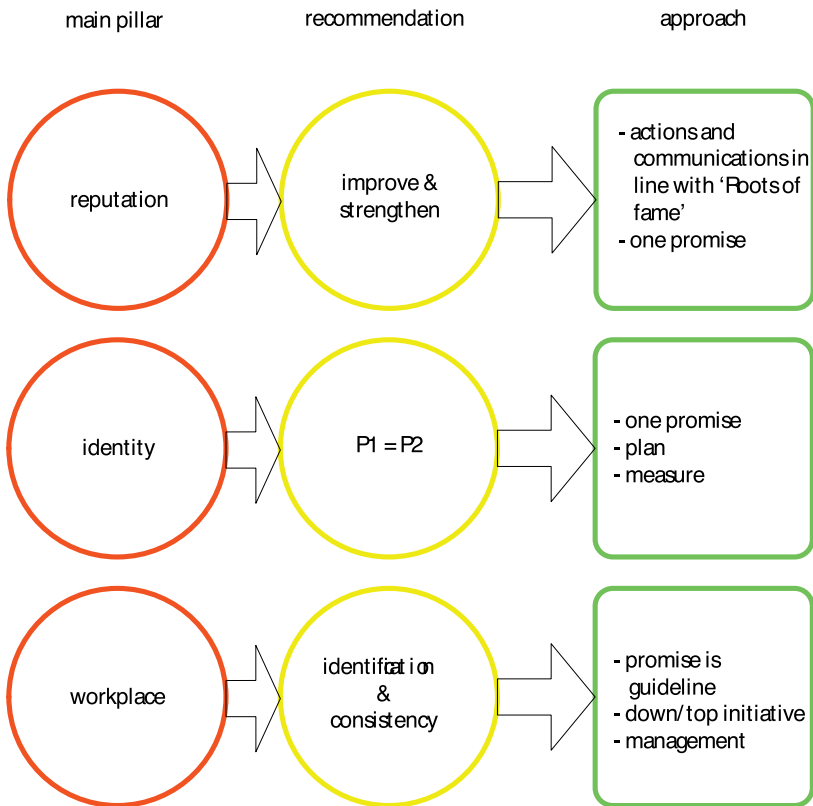


Figure: Recommendations

Focus on promise

Take one promise which is used as a guideline and actually applies (authenticity). Then strike out all other key words and go for *less is more*. This applies to internal and external target groups.

Promise

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) is a professional reception organization which makes an active effort for the society and respectful treating of people. In doing so, the COA provides an inspiring and dynamic work field.

One key promise that meets or will meet the desired and perceived properties so that it aligns with the organizational strategy and members identify with it (push/pull effect). The key promise should also cover the ethical aspect, the social character, COA as employer and the primary process.

Reputation

Even though the reputation is not negative, it could not be called positive either. As such, it has little meaning. The reputation can be strengthened by:

1. one promise which is used as a guideline;
2. structurally building-up the reputation: compare each communication, action, or behaviour with the 'Roots of fame' (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), and measure regularly to be able to manage your reputation.

IDENTITY

P1 = P2; Make sure the Projected Organizational Identity aligns with the Perceived Organizational Identity

1. one promise
2. draw up a realistic plan bridging the gap one step at the time, assuming the current situation, going towards predefined final goals. Measure the progress regularly.

WORKPLACE

Create a proper, inspiring workplace and offer something to hold on to

1. deal with the organizational identification (see also the Port Authority study), by organizing a down/top approach;
2. create something to hold on to and stability (see the Elstak, Van Riel & Pratt study) for instance by consistently using one promise in each communication. But primarily it is a task of management.

What could be in the way of implementing these improvements?

- Legislation or task setting;
- Funds and means;
- Changing management; external consultancy advices differing from this plan;
- No organizational focus.

TO CONCLUDE

Everything is connected, nothing is independent: the identity affects the reputation and vice versa. An approach should therefore be integral, both internally and externally. On top of this, it should be kept in mind that, provided it is transparent of course and implemented consistently, the Projected Identity has a leading role. But make choices and focus. Break down potential barriers and head towards an identity that aligns with the reputation.



Saskia Somberg

Critical success factors for reputation management in the housing association sector.

Saskia Somberg studied American Studies at the University of Amsterdam and Public Relations & Mass Communication at the University of Utrecht where Prof. Anne van der Meiden was in charge of the programme. She did an internship at the US Embassy in The Hague and graduated on a thesis on the American

Information Agency (USIA) which mission was; 'to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and American Institutions and their foreign counterparts'. Saskia worked as head of the Communication department of the Social Service of

Amsterdam. Since 2000 she has been working as head of the Communication department of Woningbedrijf Amsterdam which later became Ymere, the largest Housing Association in the Netherlands. Now she is Director of Communications at Ymere.

THESIS SUMMARY

Introduction

The image of the housing association sector has suffered some damage since 1995. Since then, housing associations have functioned more independently from government bodies. This new position has created responsibilities and generated expectations, which they have not always been able to fulfil in the eyes of the public.

As they function as “social real estate businesses”, housing associations are “hybrid” companies. On the one hand, they are commercial real estate enterprises expected to generate a financial profit, while on the other hand they also have a responsibility to society and are expected to also provide a return to society.

During the last decade, the expectations of the public have increased dramatically with regard to the (social) returns to be delivered by housing associations.

Within the above framework, this thesis aims to discuss some of the problems relevant to the impact of reputation on the ability of associations to fulfil their social responsibilities in the Netherlands and to demonstrate how reputation management can work in the sector.

The main problem

The main problem which this thesis aims to resolve is therefore how associations, within the framework of their specific sector, can work to improve their reputation. In other words, what are the critical success factors for a successful reputation management strategy for housing associations in the Netherlands?

Component problems which are resolved in the process include:

1. Which issues are presently relevant to reputation in the housing association sector?
2. How do most of the housing associations in the Netherlands deal with reputation management activities?
3. What are the critical success factors with regard to reputation management by top international companies?
4. What are the critical success factors with regard to reputation management in the Dutch real estate sector?
5. What does an ideal and typical reputation management strategy look like in the housing association sector (4-step plan)?
6. How can this ideal and typical reputation management strategy be applied to a specific case: the Ymere housing association?

The answers found to the main and component problems lead to several conclusions which will be presented at the end of this thesis.

The research methodology

The research methodology chosen for the issues under consideration here consists of three components: a literature study, interviews, and a specific case study.

1. Literature study:
 - a) into several important aspects of the concept of reputation
 - b) a desk study of the housing association sector
2. Qualitative research into best practices at 11 real estate companies in the Netherlands, carried out via interviews with management on the topic of identity and reputation
3. Analysis of historical developments with regard to the reputation of Ymere

The importance of reputation management in the housing association sector

This thesis shows quite clearly how important a good reputation is for housing associations. As the result aimed for by housing associations, added value for society as a whole, is difficult to define and measure and only becomes visible in the long term, confidence and trust play an important role for stakeholders when it comes to establishing links and working together. For Ymere, a strong reputation is even more important at present due to the recent merger in 2008, the expectations created by this merger, and the credit crisis, which will intensify competition in the real estate market.

What are housing associations, how are they different from commercial real estate companies, and what tasks will they face in the coming years?

Housing associations are organisations which focus on building, managing and renting out affordable housing without the intention of generating a financial profit. Housing associations differ from commercial real estate companies because they must immediately utilise their resources for the benefit of public housing and because they have strong local roots in view of their long-term responsibility for housing local residents in the area where they are based. The tasks and challenges they face include: building enough housing units, improving the quality of these units, increasing the variety of housing available and restructuring local areas and neighbourhoods, and assisting demographic groups which are in need of extra care. An extra challenge which they face over the coming years is to support the policies of the present government which focus on individual neighbourhoods and aim to improve the perspective offered to residents of underprivileged neighbourhoods.

Reputation issues in the housing association sector

Generally speaking, housing associations are perceived as organisations whose right to exist is assured for the future. However, the general public thinks that they have not adequately fulfilled their social responsibilities. There are four main issues related to identity and reputation:

- housing associations have specific identity issues which they must solve individually;
- the sector as a whole must do a better job of managing public expectations by engaging in an ongoing dialogue with its stakeholders;
- such a dialogue is a precondition for generating the kind of two-way traffic via which the housing associations and society as a whole can influence each other on an ongoing basis; after all, housing associations must become more integrated into society and give society as a whole more of a say;
- last but not least, housing associations must do a better job of informing the public of the added value that they represent.

If these four issues are resolved, the result will be an improved reputation for the individual associations and the sector as a whole.

How do housing associations manage their reputation?

With very few exceptions, most associations do not put any serious effort into reputation management. At almost all associations, management does not analyse and use the results of their communication efforts as input for further management activities. Most associations do not aim to differentiate themselves in the market and have no serious ambitions in this respect.

The results of the BBRM (Building Business Reputation Monitor) studies over the last four years, taken in connection with the information available about associations which have actually worked to improve their reputation in a systematic and structured fashion, make it clear that the conclusion reached in previous studies, namely that there is no relationship between communication style/vision and reputation, is in need of serious revision. “Best practices” applied by such associations include: reputation management is a fixed item on the agenda; reputation management strategy is supported by top management; efforts are made to “set the agenda”; the business is managed on the basis of core values. The two associations which do have reputation management as a fixed item on the agenda have been at the top of the ranking listed by the Building Business Reputation Monitor for some years now. The Woonbron Housing Association stands out as a result of the added value provided by its “open” and “distinctive” type of management as exemplified by the general manager of the association. According to the BBRM 2007, Ymere stands out as a result of the consistency of its communications, which is also due to its monolithic market strategy.

Success factors for reputation management at leading companies

Studies have shown that there are five basic principles underlying a strong reputation. These basic principles apply all over the world and are referred to as the “Roots of Fame”: visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency and consistency.

The study involving 11 commercial real estate companies indicated that five of these companies adopted an offensive/ pragmatic approach to reputation management, four companies took an offensive/strategic approach, two of the organisations took a defensive/pragmatic approach, and none of the organisations studied adopted a defensive/strategic approach.

The critical success factors for reputation management named by top managers from the real estate sector include:

- demonstrating leadership (providing a good example);
- proactive and strategic relationship management;
- a monolithic market strategy;
- a transparent and distinctive positioning and profiling;
- elements which can be characterised as an authentic component of the organisation and which are part of its genetic code;
- an internal college or business school which also communicates the identity of the company.

An ideal and typical reputation management strategy

These new insights make it necessary to rework the previously formulated reputation management strategy, consisting of 10 steps, into a new 4-step strategy with sub-steps.

New elements herein are:

- ensure that an ongoing dialogue and a continual process of mutual interchange and influence between the association and society (aimed at anchoring the association in society) is a fixed part of the corporate policy cycle;
- develop an internal academy or college which contributes to the internal alignment of employees with the strategic goals of the association;
- align your relationship management with your ambitions in terms of reputation;
- promote communication/expressiveness via: visibility, consistency, authenticity, transparency, and distinctiveness; ensure that this also applies to the “flagship components” of the organisation.

Implementation of reputation management: Ymere case study

The example of Ymere demonstrates that reputation management carried out in accordance with the four main steps of the step-by-step plan can be successful in the long term. The reputation management activities at Ymere can be further strengthened by implementation of the new elements in the step-by-step plan as formulated in the course of this research. Points to focus on in this regard are:

1. structural two-way traffic/communication to ensure that the association is anchored in society;
2. relationship management;
3. visible leadership;
4. alignment of internal stakeholders with the corporate strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion to be drawn from this thesis, as demonstrated by the example of Ymere, is that associations which work on their reputation in a structured and consistent fashion over a longer period of time in accordance with the 4-step plan can successfully establish a strong reputation. The point of departure here is that the “core-business” of the association (products and services) is of the required quality.

RECOMMENDATION

This thesis also makes it clear that associations, in their role as real estate entrepreneurs with a “social” image, are essentially different from commercial real estate companies. Society expects more of such associations in terms of the degree to which they offer (local) society the opportunity to exert influence on the policy and goals of the organisation. This extends further than what is generally referred to as transparency. Furthermore, such associations are expected to make it clear to the public that they represent added value for society. This means more than simply “demonstrating social concern”. The degree to which they fulfil the expectations of society in this area also impacts the degree to which stakeholders value them. It can therefore be recommended that the aspects associated with the seven reputation builders of the Building Business Reputation Monitor be modified accordingly.



Ruud Verheijen

The impact of Reputation on the effectiveness of Marketing Communication

*Triple Duty: A theoretic and pragmatic approach for
building brands, driving sales and building your reputation
at the same time*

Ruud Verheijen (1965) was Head of Marketing Communications at Postbank for more than 5 years. During this time he was responsible for the successful and award-winning campaign 'The Blue Lion'. The Postbank became the Advertiser of the Year in 2006 and won the SAN Consistency Award 2007 for the best and most consistent campaign in the last 5 years in the Netherlands.

Ruud started his career in advertising. He worked his way up from junior account executive to client services

director at some of the biggest Dutch advertising agencies such as FHV/BBDO, Publicis and TBWA\|. During this time his focus was always on Building Brands and Driving Sales through Integrated Advertising Campaigns.

After 15 year's in the advertising industry he made a surprising switch to the 'client-side' by taking on a job at one of the biggest advertisers in the Netherlands: the Postbank.

There, his interest for the company-behind-the-brand

was aroused. Ruud joined the MCC Program in 2006 in order to increase his knowledge about Reputation, Reputation management and how Reputation influences Marketing Communication and vice versa.

In 2008 he started a new adventure: his own interim-management, consultancy and training firm called "zaaien en oogsten". To sow and to harvest your brands and reputation for more effective communication!

For more information go to: www.zaaienoogsten.nl.

S U M M A R Y

An introduction to the thesis.

Being a marketing communication professional my special interest was aroused by the fact that a strong reputation of a company also has a positive effect on the relationship with the individual consumer.

Because *if* a strong reputation of 'the company behind the brand' really influences attitude and behavior of (future) customers, than all marketing people, communication professionals an ad people must be fully aware of these facts. Especially when they are developing large-scale advertising campaigns.

Especially in the current market situation. Where it has become extremely difficult to reach and influence consumers because of various market trends;

- Ad Saturation → The effectiveness of mass media is diminishing. Consumers receive thousands of commercial messages in one day through a growing amount of media like tv, radio, ads, banners, billboards, non-spot sponsoring, etc...
- Product Parity → A mortgage from Rabobank, Postbank or Bank of Scotland? Sport shoes from Nike, Adidas or Puma? Energy from Nuon, Essent or Eneco? The differences in quality or uniqueness in offerings are very low.
- Consumer Expertise → Consumers are becoming Marketing experts. Advertising is losing some of its original power because consumers are recognizing the efforts of advertisers more and more.

These trends reinforce the fact that reputations matter a great deal. Because it creates differentiation and competitive advantage, which is of great value, especially if you consider that reputation influence the buying behavior of consumers.

In my field of expertise, Marketing Communications, is traditionally concerned with influencing knowledge, attitude and behavior of consumers towards a product or service. Now Reputation plays its part. But how?

'A strong Reputation makes your marketing communication more effective' is a much-heard proposition in our field of work. But has this proposition ever been proven? This topic is the main subject of this thesis.

In other words: what is the effect - if any - of a strong reputation on marketing communications ?

The thesis structure

The innovative character of this thesis lies in the fact that it gives a thorough insight on if and how a strong reputation influences marketing communication. And it offers a pragmatic approach for all communication professionals (including advertising people).

Based on existing academic literature (chapter 3 of this thesis) one can come to the conclusion that Reputation indeed has its impact on the effectiveness of Communication. But that this has never been shown for specific ad campaigns (and especially not in the Dutch market).

This is the main reason why this thesis wants to investigate - based on 5 years of research material of the Dutch market - if there is a connection between a strong reputation and effective marketing communication campaigns (chapter 4, 5 en 6).

Based on the findings, this thesis introduces a pragmatic approach to develop marketing communication campaigns that are very effective and strengthen your reputation at the same time (chapter 7).

This so called “Triple Duty-Step-by-Step plan” can help all communication professionals to work simultaneously on brand targets, sales targets and strengthen the overall reputation through large-scale campaigns.

The thesis result

The most important findings of this thesis are

- *For all ad people, marketers and all other (marketing) communication professionals it is important to understand that in the academic literature it has been proven that companies with a strong reputation are selling their product and services easier!*
- *Based on academic literature one may come to the conclusion that there are several indications that Reputation has an impact on the effectiveness of communication, but that this has never been shown for specific ad campaigns (and especially not in the Dutch market).*
- *Visibility (read: a high amount of media-spending and/or free publicity) is not a discriminating factor for the influence of a strong reputation*
- *Marketing communication campaign of the Postbank and Rabobank are more effective than their competitors, because of their strong reputations*
- *Practitioner's recognize the importance of a strong reputation, but they see reputation management as the sole domain of corporate communications*

- *The seven drivers of reputation are not taken into account by the development of Marketing communication campaigns*
- *However... successful advertising creatives are using the Reputation of an organization as their starting point*
- *They are unconsciously competent!*

Introducing Triple Duty

Successful advertising creatives are unconsciously competent when it comes to integrating reputation drivers for marketing communication campaigns.

And that is good news.

Because there is fertile ground to sow and to harvest your reputation for more effective communication!

That is the reason why this thesis introduces the Triple Duty Step-by-Step Plan! An instrument for all marketing people, communication professionals, ad people and corporate communication professionals. With one goal in mind: bringing them all together in actively working on a strong reputation.

Triple Duty Step-by-Step Plan

Step 1:

Know the Reputation of your organization

Step 2:

Know which reputation-drivers need to be fixed

Step 3:

Know the Power of Your Brand

Step 4:

What should the campaign do for your brand?

Step 5:

What should the campaign do for your reputation?

Step 6:

Make an attack plan for 3 years and describe the 5 dimensions of expressiveness of an organization

Step 7:

Write a briefing for your agency in Triple Duty Style!



Berly Walraven

New Girls in the Old Boys Network:

Introducing SHEO's and lady leaders

Berly Walraven is senior manager corporate communication. During her bachelor study at the HEAO Communicatie (Fontys) in Eindhoven (1990-1994) she started working as PR Officer within the new established European factory facilities of Fujifilm Tilburg. Here she had the opportunity to build the PR section from scratch. After a successful build-up within a Japanese company, Berly would like to do this again in a different market. 7 years (1997) later she became supervisor of the Marketing

Communication department of the newly founded Libertel B.V. (now Vodafone) in Maastricht and introduced various concepts for the Dutch market. Two years later (1998) she was recruited to join Philip Morris Holland B.V. in Bergen op Zoom as Manager Communications for the Dutch market/affiliate to introduce a new communication philosophy called PM21, build to address the issues properly the company faces. She was responsible for all external and internal communication.

Within Philip Morris Holland B.V. Berly was able to follow several leadership development programs and developed her interest in female leadership. Berly also headed the internal female leadership network. In this way she could combine her leadership skills with her communication abilities. In autumn 2008 she successfully completed the executive Master Corporate Communication at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Objective of research

The employment rate of women in the business world has grown in recent decades. Several studies worldwide show that the number of female leaders is significantly less than the number of male leaders, especially at the top of government and business. There is no gender balance. In this thesis is argued that if gender diversity primarily is seen as a strategic business issue and not primarily as a women's issue is approached, the most effective plans may arise to address it.

Based on the Issue Management literature (Dutton, Zyglidopoulos, Pursey, 2003), extensive desk research and my empirical research among 10 experienced experts and practitioners, it is shown how this strategic issue by means of organizational and communications-related issue management strategies can be addressed as effectively as possible and so to evolve the issue in the Issue Life Cycle.

Findings

These strategies, called 5 key stimulus include:

1. Provide vision and strategy on gender balance

Only when a clear vision and strategy on gender diversity is put down, the rest of the organization will perceive it as a serious change process which must be worked at (when no clear vision and strategy is put down, it will work against gender balance and initiatives will be seen as a hype-blowing). The top management of the organization will have to decide what they want to achieve in gender diversity (%) and how it wants to achieve. The latter often comes down to positioning of new leadership for diverse and complementary teams.

Two elements are essential here:

- Defining a starting position based on own business case (which is based on research on how the organization is doing at the moment, including the organization's environment/including the formulation of targets in time/policy adjustments + multi-target approach for new leadership of men and women)
- Directing commitment to results, including expressions of support and commitment of top management.

2. Integrate diversity in policies of the organization

Integrating a diversity focus in present policies is a crucial way to change the current culture in terms of gender diversity. In particular HR initiatives need to be taken in the creation of diversity balance. The following processes should be changed so incrementally:

- Recruitment activities (adapt to attract women)
- Retain and promotion policies (optimization of flex arrangements, non linear career paths and age limits customization)
- Leadership programs (at least 30% women representation, no age limit)
- Coaching & Mentoring (of current women by men in senior management layers)
- Creation of gender awareness training and skill building for multi-target audiences
- Aid to new, complementary teams to learn to appreciate differences
- Monitors use of flex arrangements by men.

3. Ensure diversity infrastructure

Structure follows strategy. As gender diversity is such a specific issue to 'resolve', a split should be made between the role of catalyst of the result and responsible for the result so that a kind of cross-pollination may take place. This is created by:

- The appointment of a Diversity Task Force or Manager who is a facilitator of the issue and ensure business case, initiatives, progress, reporting. The diversity manager does not own the issue of gender diversity. This should be the senior line management, because they are responsible for the actual changes. This is fully in line with the theory of Dutton et al (2001) and Wittenberg-Cox and Maitland (2008) have written about this.
- To (re) activate a women's network to support the business case, leadership qualities of women and empowerment of women. Including the creation of a network that provides increasing visibility of women.

4. Organize communication

Communication must ensure that the available internal and external communications media/tools are tailored to the gender diversity goals. Extent, intensity and tone of voice of communication is dependent on positioning towards the issue and on the basis of its own business case. Importance of a comprehensive approach to ensure that all stakeholders are hedged and that the specific issue is embedded in the broader context. Because the communication and mobilization of resources is depending on the organization and therefore may be diverse, a split has been made between internal and external objectives:

Internal communication plan to achieve the following objectives:

- The objective on gender diversity is to ensure for realism organization wide, so that the internal perception of gender diversity keeps pace with developments in society in order to avoid a defensive attitude or views on positive discrimination.
- Furthermore internal communication is aimed at clarifying specific business case and desired culture. It creates understanding, for example, in differences between men and women and thus complementary teams.
- Internal communication shows desired behavior. Show where women are appointed successfully based on qualifications and competence.
- Creates acceptance and support for gender diversity manager role and initiatives to gender balance.

External communication plan. Depending on the chosen position, there are 3 types of objectives:

- **Reputation objectives.** When an organization chooses to achieving a 'leading' position, according theory Wartick /Heugens (2003) and Zyglidopoulos (2003) in the field of gender diversity, the communication should mainly focus on obtaining an advantage over the competition (profiling) or an attractive employer with the aim to win more women (yards).
- **Platform objectives.** This communication will mainly serve to focus on getting support from external stakeholders in chosen policy, positioning (targets) and activities.
- **Organization's interest targets.** When an organization has chosen to appoint more women to generate (additional) sales in a certain product category or to enter into (new) joint ventures or to ensure for future workforce the communication will focus on gender diversity as it brings.

5. Organize reporting

Reporting on the impact and added value is important to the change process to succeed. Only when everyone is regularly confronted with the successful outcome of objectives, change will really get moving. This includes:

- Measuring and recording progress report on performance.
- Apprehending and explaining differences.
- From an issues management perspective it may also be considered to refine the communication based on the progress in the issue life cycle.

The 5 identified key stimulus that I've formulated on the basis of my desk research give overarching 'process' steps that will help an organization to resolve the issue of gender diversity. The findings from my interviews give a more concrete and nuanced understanding of how these 5 steps can be completed. See the table below.

5 strategic steps to resolve the issue gender diversity	Filling in strategic steps based on preferred 'Issue Selling Moves' from my qualitative research/interviews
Provide vision and strategy on gender balance	To establish vision and strategy, gender diversity should be defined as a business issue. Through presentation, bundling, formality and involvement moves, it is the responsibility of management to extend this vision and strategy.
Integrate diversity in organization	By communication related issue selling strategies like bundling moves and involvement moves and organizational related issue selling strategies like choice-of-channel and formality moves
Ensure diversity infrastructure	By organizational related issue selling strategies like formality moves and involvement moves
Organize communication	By communication related Issue Selling strategies like presentation moves, bundling moves and continuous proposal making, even as organizational related moves like involvement moves
Organize reporting	Based on business case/presentation moves

Table 1: Interpretation identified key stimulus based on interviews

On the basis of above findings, I have developed the following process model to most effectively resolve the issue of gender diversity.

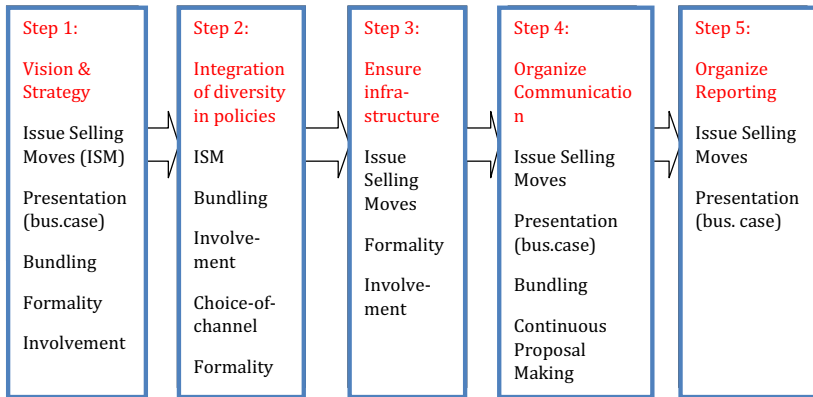


Figure 1: Process Model for gender diversity resolve issue

CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation around gender diversity in the Netherlands, is of such a nature that really changes are urgently needed. It would even be a strategic blunder when organizations leave this too long, especially because the benefits seem obvious.

Organizations that lift blockades for women, will in the coming years be as a magnet for women who know what they want. Not only would these organizations absorb easily their deficits because of aging, the quality and results of this organization will increase by the diversity balance.

Organizations need to act as a push factor to this. Governments can facilitate by subsidizing childcare, tax benefits, quota system, specific grants but also by requirements on procurement and thus act as a pull factor. Of importance is monitoring this process, and thus the evolution in the Issue Life Cycle, and to consider what initiatives are needed to avoid arrest. Quotas and targets are the mechanisms to make progress.

There are a number of organizations in the Netherlands (including TopBrainStorm, Opportunity, Woman Capital, Direktion, Lof) who take the lead in encouraging organizations to resolve the issue of gender diversity. What is missing at this moment is a kind of overarching, stimulating platform, which in the short term takes a number of tasks in the development of the issue. If this will be done, the issue may well accelerate. Those tasks are:

Firstly, the current women in senior / middle management level in organizations much more can be used as ambassadors. These are often women who are of an internal women's network. They can share offered information within their organization and generate important feedback for the platform. It would also increase the understanding of what women can experience. Perhaps the platform can even act as a women's interest group.

An example of this: the SHEO campaign is a fantastic initiative (TopBrainStorm 2008). The campaign, which includes advertising and TV series, is aimed at the female CEO, called SHEO, is equal natural as the CEO. However, with the help of all female ambassadors (and therefore all networks), this campaign may get a larger range. The launch could be done on a nationwide day of the SHEO / lady leaders (International Women's Day perhaps?).

In addition, to prevent the issue remains seated in the women's arena, the campaign can be supported by a broad media business approach by inviting prominent male economists' to say something 'about the issue of gender diversity. Target could be, a sort of collective indignation on why we underperform in such a way in the Netherlands in the field of gender diversity.

Secondly, there is a very important stakeholder, the works councils, which practically are not involved in the issue, have a prominent role to play and who needs information / training on this.

Thirdly, I also see such a gap for recruitment/search agencies. How many agencies are really working on a diverse range of complementary teams? And who makes clear to decision makers that there are mechanisms whereby women can be excluded from the recruitment process?

Of course, the latter task can be one of HR professionals. In order to create gender balance it is important to recognize that the current situation is not always based on equal treatment between men and women and that promotions are not always based on competencies. This is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects in the cultural change to resolve the issue of gender diversity. It also makes clear that gender diversity should not be in the playing field of HR but belongs to the responsibility of the top of an organization.