ROTTERDAM SCHOOL
OF MANAGEMENT
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

Research Abstracts
2014

BOOK OF GRADUATES

Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication

The business school that thinks and lives in the future

Contents

Preface

This year we celebrate the 16th graduation of the Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication Programme (MCC) at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. Seventeen (17) new graduates have officially become Master of Science in Corporate Communication as a result. We are proud to present the abstracts of the seventeen theses that have been written by the Graduates of this Master programme.

Including this year's graduates, the MCC programme has about 250 MCC graduates.
Many of them made a substantial career move after their graduation, which they were able to realise not only by the knowledge insights and skills gained by the programme, but even more by their own perseverance and ability to bring this into practice.

Over the last years they have been challenged with intensive courses, case studies, role plays, management games, the most recent academic theory and guest lectures from worldwide renowned professors of a diverse range of universities and businesses practitioners in order to support their goals to become even more successful communication professionals.

The new Masters of Science in Corporate Communication are:

Jacco Bartelds *(Ministry of General Affairs)*,
Marjolein Bijsterveld *(TAQA)*,
Eline Bijveld *(9292 Reisinformatiegroup B.V.)*,
Marisa Bourtin *(Bank for International Settlements)*,
Marion van Dam *(KPN)*, **Sara Magdelena Goldberger** *(European Parliament)*,
Ernestien Honning, **Jeroen Jongeling** *(Atrium Groep B.V.)*, **Annemarie Jongepier** *(Philips)*,
Christoph Lergenmueller *(Weber-Stephen Deutschland GmbH)*, **Marlies Maasdam** *(Mol Maasdam)*, **Michelle Medeiros** *(Roche Pharmaceuticals)*, **Esther Oostrom** *(Aegon)*,
Jolanda Quak *(RSM, Erasmus University)*,
Anna Saghabalyan *(Geoteam CJSC – Lydian International Ltd.)*, **Stefanie Wienhoven** *(Océ Technologies)* and **Lotte Zwijnenburg** *(Agudeza)*.

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 situations and challenges from practice in their own organisations and to relate these to the topics discussed in the lectures were inspiring and exciting.

In the sixteen years of the Master of Science in 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 Darthmouth College U.S.A.; *John Balmer* of Bradford University UK; *Joan Hemels*, Universiteit van Amsterdam; *Mark Hunter*, INSEAD; *Jan Kleinnijenhuis*, VU University Amsterdam; *Onno Maathuis*, De Positioneerders; *Michael Pratt* of University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign; *Davide Ravasi* of Bocconi University; *Betteke van Ruler,* UVA ; *Eliane Schoonman* of Issues Management Institute; *Gabi Schaap*, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen; *Majken Schultz* of Copenhagen Business School, Denmark; *Bob de Wit* of Nyenrode Business University and from our Faculty: *Guido Berens, Frans van den Bosch,* Dirk Brounen, *Gerrit van Bruggen, Fred Gertsen, Mignon van Halderen, Pursey Heugens, Muel Kaptein, Slawek Magala, Gerard Mertens, Lucas Meijs, Eric Waarts, Rolf Zwaan*, all working at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

It's also with great pride that we welcome *Drs. Bert Regeer* of Royal Shell Netherlands, who will present the 'Shell Netherlands Stimulation Award for Excellence in Corporate Communication' to the author of the 'best thesis' of 2014. 'The Andreas Innovation in Communication Award' will be announced by *Ing. Dries van de Beek*, Former Chairman of the Board, CCC BV. The winners are announced on the 21st of November 2014 during the official graduation ceremony.

I wish all the graduates a bright future with successful careers and I congratulate them with their accomplishment.

Prof. dr. Cees B. M. van Riel

Professor of Corporate Communication
Programme Director of the Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication programme

Confidence in ‘giving’

Jacco Bartelds

In order to realize countless objectives for public benefit, Dutch society is increasingly dependent on the philanthropic sector. This is mainly due to a diminishing government. The sector has entered into the Room for Giving covenant with the government, wherein agreements are made for obtaining a better cooperation. An important conclusion of the covenant is that trust should be enhanced through transparency and quality of supervision. This study will map out what charitable organisations do to obtain trust from the public and how this relates to the literature on trust.

Organisations can build trust by proving to be competent, benevolent and honest. These trust factors tell us something about the nature of the recipient of confidence. The way in which charitable organisations communicate on this subject with their stakeholders is also important.

Transparency is an important aspect in building trust. Transparency is a situation in which organisations and stakeholders have sufficient understanding of each other’s views, activities and achievements. An organisation can not determine unilaterally whether it is transparent, a consensus of its stakeholders is needed.

The study

To answer the question of what charitable organisations do to obtain trust, I have performed a qualitative study on 14 charitable organisations. The findings have been mapped through semi-structured interviews. In addition to the qualitative study, I have performed desk research. This research consisted of studying the websites and annual reports of the interviewed charitable organisations.

For the selection of the charitable organisations, the representation of various sectors within the charitable sector has been taken into account. The active membership of the Physical Inventory Verification (PIV) has been used as a starting point.

Conclusions

The study leads to three conclusions. The first conclusion is that charitable organisations use six strategies to obtain trust from their stakeholders. These are: 1) earmarked recruitment, 2) visibility/ name recognition, 3) connecting communication to requirements, 4) effectiveness, 5) professional organisation, and 6) transparency.

The second conclusion is that charitable organisations mainly focus on the trust factor ‘benevolence’. Sponsors do find it important that charitable organisations are competent and honest, but above all they are interested in the good intentions of the charitable organisations. The third conclusion is that regulation does not contribute directly to building trust. Regulation is, however, an important condition for trust, a so-called ‘dissatisfier’. But in order to really stand out in the world of charity, the organisations must aim at benevolence and competence. The younger generation of sponsors is not sedentary and wants to be informed quickly and succinctly. Communication should be adjusted accordingly.

Suggestions for further research

An interesting step for further research could be to measure the results per strategy. At this point it is not entirely clear to what extent each strategy influences trust. This research could be accomplished through a survey among sponsors.

The identified strategies also feature several elements that need to be examined. The effects of a trademark for example have not been further elaborated. The general impression is that a trademark should be provided, but it is not necessarily a prerequisite for trust.

Further research could also be done on the effects of the trust factors within the different types of charities. Literature does not show in which conditions focus on any of the three trust factors is the most effective. You may well ask whether integrity is more effective in the health sector or in the international aid sector. A further deepening hereof can be realised through giving the trust factors a weighting factor.

Another interesting aspect that emerged is the allowed cost of a non-profit organisation. The cost aspect is frequently named in relation to trust. It is, however, not clear what is to be considered an acceptable standard. The Wijffels code is a reasonable guideline. However, the organisations that score high within the boundaries of that code are often reminded of that fact. Communicating the added value of a professional organisation with paid staff could maybe offer a solution.

Recommendations for charitable organisations

The study shows that it pays for charitable organisations to focus on the trust factors benevolence and competence. These factors can be obtained by implementing the six identified strategies: 1) earmarked recruitment, 2) visibility/ name recognition, 3) connecting communication to requirements, 4) effectiveness, 5) professional organisation, and 6) transparency. Furthermore it is apparent that professionalising the organisation and the use of knowledge is a sustainable way to stand out. Although it lies slightly beyond the boundaries of this study, which focusses on mainly on charitable organisations, a recommendation to the entire philanthropic sector could be made. Monitoring the sector could enhance trust. However, it is important that this monitoring also considers impact and social benefit instead of focussing solely on output.

Jacco Bartelds

Jacco Bartelds (1974) is employed as communications advisor at the Ministry of General Affairs. In his function as protocol project manager, he is responsible for the coordination of the public appearances of the Prime Minister. Jacco holds a bachelor degree in facility management. After completing his studies, he was employed in several facility organisations and the hospitality industry. In 2002 he made the transition to communications.

In addition to his employment, Jacco has been active member of the board of the Zeldzame Ziekten Fonds. The Zeldzame Ziekten Fonds helps people with a rare disease. The organisation accomplishes this by publicising unknown, rare diseases and by raising money for research.

To what extent does public opinion have an impact on the reputation of a company?

Marjolein Bijsterveld

Over the last decades the accessibility of information on a company has increased tremendously and the perception towards companies has become more critical, making companies more vulnerable. Men and women on the street not only voice their concerns about a topic or company throughpoliticians, claiming to represent the public interest, or through the activist initiatives of nongovernmental organisations (NGO) who claim to act on behalf of 'the public' (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). Nowadays men and women on the street increasingly claim their own vision on a topic or company and spread that opinion themselves.

Via this thesis I would like to explore:
'to what extent does public opinion have an impact on the reputation of a company?'

To answer this question the cases Brent Spar, Deepwater Horizon, Unit-linked insurances and the bonus culture have been investigated via the perspective of four different stakeholders that have an impact on public opinion and reputation; pressure/ protest groups, media, politicians and the companies involved; Shell, BP as well as insurance companies and banks.

According to different definitions of public opinion, public opinion is about a collective of individual views, attitudes and beliefs about a particular topic. It is expressed by a large percentage of society that turns into a debate on what a government should or should not do. Public opinion forces governments to act in a way that will satisfy the demands of that large percentage of society. Taking a look at the definition of public opinion and the one on reputation you see there are many similarities as reputation is about what we think of a company, about a person, an object. It is a representation of the mind, it refers to 'what is generally said or believed about the abilities, qualities etc. of somebody/something'.

After reviewing literature and studies on public opinion and reputation it is quite logical that most research on public opinion is done in the context of public opinion and public policy and less in the context of a company and its market position. The opinion of the public may force politicians to introduce new legislation and regulation, and the opinion of a large group of people may affect the reputation of a company, but new laws say nothing on how the public thinks about a company.
New legislation may force a company to change its way of doing business (so the company sticks to the law), but it says nothing whatsoever about the reputation of a company. You will see this in the four cases. It is more than fair to say that the opinion of the public has had an impact on Shell, BP, the insurance companies and banks. It had an direct and indirect impact on their overall business strategy and their communication strategy. But the difference between the four cases is that what happened with the Brent Spar and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill were more or less stand-alone cases. In 1995 Shell revealed their plan to sink the oil storage and tanker loading buoy Brent Spar in the sea. Greenpeace objected to this plan as they feared it would set a precedent for another 130 existing buoys. As a reaction Greenpeace called for an international boycott of Shell. In the Netherlands they used the campaign 'the sea is not a garbage bag' to promote this boycott. The boycott made Shell change its plan for the Brent Spar, as the whole episode had hurt their reputation, it had hurt their license to operate.
BP did in fact the same. During Deepwater Horizon they did not change their strategy on sealing off the leaking well, but they did change their communication strategy to make sure their reputation did not get harmed even more. They changed their communication strategy to make sure they still kept their license to operate.
After these two crises were solved, politicians decided that new laws were needed to make sure what had happened could not happen again.

The cases of unit-linked insurances and bonuses are not stand alone cases. These are not cases that occurred at just one insurance company, or at just one bank. These are cases that occurred at all insurance companies and all banks, it occurred at companies active in the same line of business.
A car owner has the choice to drive by Shell and look for another gas station to get gas. For a policy holder it is more difficult to stand up and boycott insurance company A and change their insurance policy to company B, or to close their bank account and open a new one at a different bank.
Due to this reason insurance companies and banks felt less hurried to change their way of doing business, the disagreement of the public had less impact on their license to operate. In these kind of cases public opinion is therefore needed to create new regulation and legislation and to force to change via new laws.

The four cases may show that the opinion of the public had an impact on the companies.
But the central question is ***'to what extent does public opinion have an impact on the reputation of a company?'***
In its given definition 'public opinion is about a collective of individual views, attitudes and beliefs about a particular topic. It is expressed by a large percentage of society that turns into a debate on what a government should or should not do' it does not have a firm impact on a company's reputation. Public opinion may have an impact on a company, as due to public opinion new regulation is introduced and they have to change their way of doing business. But new regulation says nothing about the reputation of a company, it will not change the reputation of a company.

Marjolein Bijsterveld

My communication career started in 1999, when I created a new communication stream between the Netherlands and the USA for a scientific publishing house. Creating something new runs like a thread through my resume, creating new products, processes, communication strategies and even new communication departments. My curious nature has taken me through a variety of businesses, apart from the scientific publishing business I have worked in telecom, finance, automotive and in the oil & gas industry. Each business provided me with insights into people's reaction on various types of communication, and this aspect is what is the most appealing to me in the profession of communication: how a company can use communication to its advantage, internally as well as externally.

Lobbyists and Spin-doctors, Enemies or friends?

Eline A.M. Bijveld

Lobbying for industries with a negative reputation among governments is quite a challenge. This thesis analyses the causes of these problems in two steps. Firstly, an extensive literature study has been done, using especially Stakeholder Integration theory *(Heugens et al. 2002)*, Molenbeek *(2008)* about Spin-doctoring, Korsten about Lobbying *(2009)* and Adèr about Media *(2009).* Secondly, I did a case study on the tobacco industry. I selected this industry because of the negative image of this industry. The so-called tabaknee.nl case is investigated with in-depth interviews among spin-doctors, lobbyists and journalists.

The central research question of this thesis is:
How can lobbyists working for an industry with a negative reputation align the interests of the firms they represent with the interests of governments and other regulators?

According to stakeholder integration theory firms can strive for competitive advantage in building relationships with stakeholders they depend upon in four different styles:

- Buffering
- Co-optation
- Mutual learning
- Meta problem solving”
  (Heugens, et al., 2002)

The case study intends to reveal how lobbyist in the tobacco industry apply the above mentioned stakeholder integration techniques, which work well and which don’t and why?

The case study: Tabaknee.nl

The foundation for youth smoking prevention *(Dutch: Stichting Rookpreventie Jeugd)* aims to make people stop with smoking. The website is divided into several elements. One of them is a page called ‘People behind the tobacco lobby’. People, lobbyists but also members of the government, researchers etc. are placed on this website with a picture and a little story about the reason why these people are ‘supporters of smoking’. For this thesis it is an interesting website, because it shows how sensitive this industry is in the eyes of other stakeholders. It shows directly what the influences of reputation and public image can be if (it seems that) you have strong ties with the tobacco industry.

Based on the key notions described in literature about stakeholder integration interviews were done among lobbyists of the industry, lobbyists of other industries, spokespersons and spin-doctors but also with journalists, I have asked questions about their daily jobs and how they would prefer their relations with other stakeholders. Based on the interviews, I was able to describe the four stakeholder types in the context of the anti-tobacco case. Two stakeholder integration types were already executed by lobbyists in this industry.

Buffering: There are different organizations where tobacco companies are united. These organizations do act as a lobby club for the interests of the complete tobacco industry. The different tobacco companies use buffering as a strategy to build strategic alignment between them and the spin-doctors. However, where for other industries buffering might be an advantage, for the tobacco industry this might be opposite because of the negative reputation of the Tobacco industry.

Mutual learning: There is no mutual learning between the lobbyists and the ministries.
However, the lobbyists do feel that they are learning from the Ministry. So it’s not mutual, but we can speak of learning here. The tobacco industry is taking the interests of the spin-doctor into account. In their eyes a strategic alignment based on this strategy and from both sides implemented, would be ideal.

Two types did not exist yet:
Co-optation: There is a wish from the tobacco industry to co-optate more with the ministries in general and with the spin-doctors specific. However, based on these interviews, the lobbyists do not think that a spin-doctor would see the same advantage in this co-optation as they do. In the eyes of the tobacco industry, a strategic alignment based on this strategy, would be ideal.

Meta problem solving: The tabaknee.nl case has three main stakeholders, namely the government, the tobacco industry and the anti-tobacco organizations. Based on this research, it seems that the tobacco industry wants to strengthen (or develop) the ties between the other stakeholders but the others do not respond positively to it. Lobbyists think there is much to gain by investing in a cooperative relationship and solving key problems together, however, because of their negative frame and reputation, the tobacco industry thinks the other parties don’t have the same wish. In the eyes of the tobacco industry, a strategic alignment based on this strategy, would be ideal.

By interviewing the professionals, combining that with the existing literature and my own experiences, I found out that lobbyists of an industry that has a negative image can use two key success indicators in order to reach their goals. These success indicators are: Building a strong and relevant network and provide added value to key decision makers. In order to implement these key success indicators, a lobbyist:

- should know who the key players are in order to build a relationship with them;
- needs to create a professional relationship that is focused on the interests of the company;
- is trustworthy;
- needs to know the needs of the key decision makers in order to provide added value to them;
- needs access to the companies information sources in order to provide added value;
- should have great bargain skills to create a deal that feels like a win-win situation.

For lobbyists, it is also important to know what they definitely should not do. There are two important failure indicators, namely manipulation of information and discrimination in providing >>

information, and building relationships that are not voluntary by for example blackmailing.

An important key player for the lobbyist is the spin-doctor. A spin-doctor is namely responsible for the development and protection of the reputation of the decision maker (Minister or prime Minister). A spin-doctor has power because of its strategic position in the Ministry. Therefore, it is important for the lobbyist to have a good relationship with this spin-doctor in order to gain access to the decision maker, even if he works for an industry with a negative reputation.

First, it is important that a lobbyist knows what the success indicators for a spin-doctor are. These are institutional knowledge and controlling the media agenda. In order to completely benefit from these success indicators, a spin-doctor:

- has access to institutional knowledge by its own knowledge or knowing someone who has;
- needs to be able to connect important information to others, otherwise a spin-doctor will never be able to profit from the institutional knowledge;
- should be a powerful argumentator in order to convince journalists, decision makers and colleagues/competitors of its right;
- should build a strong network with journalists;
- should be able to strategically use the toolbox of a spin-doctor: leaking, framing and interpretation;
- should always care for the relevance and news value of the information he or she provides to the media;

The failure indicators that would make a spin-doctor an amateur would be disloyalty to the decision maker and crossing the line between providing subjective information or lies to journalists.

This research was based on lobbyists working for an industry with a negative reputation. To prove that empirically, a case study on the tobacco industry is done. There are differences and similarities between lobbyists of the tobacco industry and other industries with a negative reputation. Taking all these similarities into account, my vision on this topic is that the key success indicators (and failure indicators) count for all lobbyists working for industries with a negative reputation. I do think however that the more negative the reputation of the industry is, the more important the key success indicators are for lobbyists to influence decision making.

Eline A.M. Bijveld

Eline Bijveld is a 23 years old strategic Public Affairs advisor at 9292|REISinformatiegroep b.v. She is responsible for strategic PA and PR and works in The Hague and Brussels. An interesting and fast moving environment where corporate communications play a huge role.
This crossroads between Public Relations and Public Affairs is also visible in her Master thesis, where she investigated the key success indicators for spin-doctors and lobbyists. Stakeholder Alignment between these groups appears to be of high relevance.
At january 2015, Eline will switch jobs to Hill and Knowlton, an international PR-firm focused on Public Affairs, corporate- and crisis communication.

Manager communications in an international organization: What more is needed in this multicultural mix?

Marisa C. Bourtin

We are living in a world of rapidly expanding globalization. Among other things, this means a steadily growing interaction of an increasingly wider variety of cultures. More and more employees are working in multicultural environments. But as anyone who has worked in an international context knows, the dynamics within these organizations – in this “cultural mix” – are quite different from those of a monocultural organization.

What kind of communication challenges do managers face in a multicultural work environment and how do they deal with these challenges to build line of sight, trust and engagement? That is the question considered in this thesis.

To explore the existing research relative to this enquiry, a literature review covered the areas of manager communications, face-to-face communications, intercultural employee contexts, employee line of sight, employee trust and employee engagement. Semi-structured, one-to-one, interviews were then carried out with a purposive sample of nine managers and nine reports, representing a variety of intercultural manager-report combinations and providing a sampling of employees throughout the various areas of a Swiss international organization. The purpose of the interviews was to delve deeper into four sub-questions:

- What are the intercultural challenges that managers face?
- To what extent do their communications in an intercultural communications context **>>**

- influence their reports' line of sight?
- To what extent do their communications in an intercultural communications context influence their reports' level of trust in the organization?
- To what extent do their communications in an intercultural communications context influence their reports' level of engagement with the organization?

Once the interviews were completed and transcribed, the grounded theory method *(Glaser & Strauss, 1967)* was used to analyze the collected data in three steps: coding of variables, axial coding and determining overarching themes.

The findings clearly showed that managers in an international organization face two main challenges: the language itself and differing, culturally-based norms and values. These language-based challenges were further divided into two sub-challenges: complete and thorough language comprehension and full understanding of various nuances of language. While the challenges of culturally-based norms and values were divided into two sub-challenges: norms and values of working; and norms and values of interacting.

In responding to these challenges, managers in an intercultural organization have found various ways to increase their reports line of sight, trust and engagement. To build line of sight in an environment where misunderstandings of various degrees are a frequent occurrence, they use communication governance and building a team-based line of sight. To increase levels of trust when multicultural opaqueness can sometimes cloud the setting, they provide substantive managerial support and ensure openness and transparency in their communications. And finally, to support engagement in an environment with a culturally disparate group of individuals, they create a personal connection based on trust, clarity and caring and strive to understand a report's personal motivations and act accordingly.

On a theoretical level, this research contributes to the understanding of the importance of manager communications in an intercultural working environment. The results generally validate current literature on the topics of employee line of sight, trust and engagement, yet also extend this literature by illustrating how each important managerial topic is managed in a multicultural context. For instance, while prior literature points to the importance of communication in building engagement, my findings show that in an environment of frequent language and cultural misunderstandings, transparent and constant communication is, in fact, critical, and must be implemented in order to provide continual clarification. Also, although openness and transparency are certainly important in any type of organization, in order to clarify issues that arise when dealing with different cultures and a range of different understandings, a real demonstration of substantive managerial support is necessary to build employee trust. Furthermore, with so many disparate cultures interacting on a daily basis, it seems that a report's personal relationship with their manager is even more important in an intercultural environment than in a monocultural one. When a report is floating in a sea of cultural interaction and often, confusion, they rely on the manger to provide their anchor.

On a managerial level, this research confirms the important role of managers in building line of sight, trust and engagement. The results of this study indicate that in an intercultural organization it is vital to implement a strict communication governance to combat the high level of misunderstandings that naturally arise. Constant, clear communication is the only way to clean the muddy waters. Furthermore the findings not only affirm the vital importance of the manager as a "pivot point" in the organization, they show that in a multicultural organization the manager-report relationship is the key to building both trust and engagement. Moreover, the findings clearly show that beyond

Marisa C. Bourtin

Marisa Bourtin is a communications professional with experience in a variety of international companies and organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). As a French-American dual national with a BA in Government from Georgetown University, Marisa speaks three languages fluently and has lived in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Switzerland and France.

Currently residing in the tri-national frontier where the borders of France, Switzerland and Germany converge, Marisa enjoys the challenges of creating expert communications in the midst of diverse cultures. An experienced writer and editor, she has worked in both internal and external communications and understands the importance of corporate identity and the value of delivering solid communication products tailored to diverse audiences. A collaborative team player who enjoys building strong working relationships in cross-functional environments, Marisa is a proactive self-starter with strong interpersonal skills, high enthusiasm and motivation. She currently lives in a small Alsatian house with two teenagers and a German Shepherd.

To contact Marisa, please visit her LinkedIn profile.

The Internal Strategic Alignment Loop How to assess and increase the effectiveness of internal communication in creating strategic alignment

Marion van Dam

Internal strategic alignment has become increasingly important for companies. A turbulent environment asks for employees who can act in line with the mission, vision and values of a company and therefore do not need exact instructions on how to operate. It also asks for employees who despite the turbulence still understand the company's strategy and are motivated to support it, resulting in being more engaged and delivering better quality of work.

This is where internal communication can greatly contribute, and is as a consequence becoming more and more a vital function in organizations. Having insights in the effectiveness of their interventions can help internal communications professionals to steer their activities and be impactful.

To be able to set goals and to improve results it has to be clear which drivers influence these results. What is strategic alignment, why it is important and what are considered to be the success factors of internal communications regarding strategic alignment as described in academic literature? What systems, internal communications/strategic alignment measurements, KPI's and ways of standard management reporting are currently used to assess and to increase the effectiveness of internal communication?

Successful implementation of strategy
Academic support can be found for the correlation between strategic alignment and the higher chance of successful implementation of a company's strategy; lower costs for attracting and retention of employees and the positive impact on the reputation of a company and the financial impact that comes with it, including the market premium of a company. Literature also shows that strategically aligned employees are a great attribute for creating and sustaining competitive advantage.
From studying the literature it becomes clear that to be effective, internal communication has to contribute to certain drivers or fields. Strategic alignment measures the effectiveness of internal communications and therefore must not only focus on the general principles of effectiveness of internal communication (like repetition, focus, quality of the media and reach) but also on the fields it should influence to be effective: strategic knowledge (including culture and values), company and leadership trust, facilitating dialogue and an open, transparent culture.

Remuneration
On the basis of my literature study I furthermore concluded that working together with HR and leadership is essential and this was confirmed by my empirical research. The empirical research shows that the effect of internal communication efforts has its limits and therefore working together with HR and business managers is extremely important. Optimal effects are attained when remuneration is dependent on internal alignment. Making internal alignment part of remuneration is seen as being highly effective.

My research into best practices of used KPI's and measurements shows that most of the used KPI's are focused on high level KPI's on the understanding of and attitudes toward the strategy. The measurements are mostly very practical and concentrate on the effectiveness of the media by looking at reach and impact characteristics and by analyzing content in impact and focus in content. My field research already indicated this would be the case. The lesson learned from the field research was that internal social media analysis could perhaps fill this gap. I did not come across a better research method than the Rep Trak Alignment Monitor that links outcomes to drivers and makes it possible to define more detailed KPI's.

My empirical field research confirmed that not applying 'the full feedback loop' from management goals to collaboration between HR, Communication and leadership and the remuneration of these parties diminishes the degree to which measurements can be valued or will lead to the right interventions. This complies with one of the conclusions from my literature study that reporting to management and a closed feedback loop with measurements that are linked to KPI's are important to continuously improve and take the right interventions.

Complete the loop
Based on literature study and empirical research I distilled the most important steps that will contribute in assessing and increasing internal strategic alignment. I call this model 'The Internal Strategic Alignment Loop'. The model demonstrates what steps have to be taken to complete the loop.

The Internal Strategic Alignment Loop
In my thesis I applied the Internal Strategic Alignment Loop to the company I work for: KPN. Based on my findings I made recommendations on all aspects on how to assess and increase the effectiveness of internal communication in creating strategic alignment.

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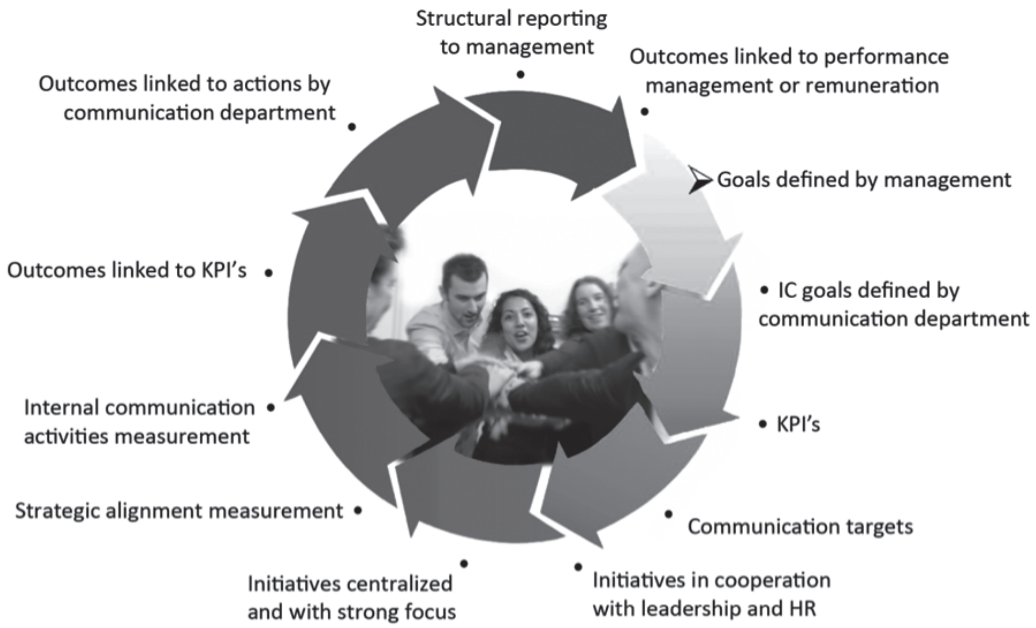

The Internal Strategic Alignment Loop

Measurement gap

I recommend further research to fill the measurement gap between (overall) alignment figures and day-to-day interventions and opportunities to steer alignment. Most of the used KPI's are focused on high level KPI's on the understanding of and attitudes toward the strategy. The measurements are mostly very practical and concentrate on the effectiveness of the media by looking at reach and impact characteristics and by analyzing content in impact and focus in content.

I also recommend research to see if the RepTrak Alignment Monitor can be combined with employee engagement research.

All this would most certainly mean a next step on the road of the so called reputation journey as described by the Reputation Institute, improving cross-functional implementation and accountability.

Marion van Dam

Marion van Dam is Head of Internal Communication and Corporate Media at KPN, the largest IT and telecom company in the Netherlands. She is an all-round communication professional and manager, with 30 years of experience in corporate communication and organizational change communication. During her career she has gained experience on all aspects of corporate communication at listed companies such as Heineken, Ahold, Delta Lloyd, KLM and KPN. She has a deep interest in corporate communication and strives to be on the front line of new developments or to initiate these developments herself. Coaching talented young people inspires her greatly. She is passionate about leadership communication, strategy communication, crisis communication and the professional use of corporate and social media on a high level for external and internal communication.
Studying at the Corporate Communication Centre of the Rotterdam School of management at Erasmus University has been a privilege and a pleasure to her.
Marion has two sons (students) and loves all things Italian, travelling and EDM (electronic dance music).

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Elections to the European Parliament; Communicate or Perish

Sara Magdalena Goldberger

Why should an institution communicate? Indeed, why should anyone communicate at all? It is a question that communicators have asked ourselves since the beginning of our profession and is likely a question that will never be truly answered.
But this is the basis for this thesis where I ask the question about how the European Parliament could communicate towards us citizens. This distinction is important because the European Parliament also engage in other type of communication, and this has not been a part of this research.

The thesis "European Parliament – communicate or perish" stands on several legs. I use existing literature in institutional communication, public policy and issues management. I also use research on the recent European elections, and the materials developed for the 2014 European elections by the European Parliament Communications department. The publicly available strategies developed by the European Parliament Communications department also form an ingredient in the thesis. I have conducted one in-depth interview.

I synthesize and integrate this literature and interview and expand on one major point: European Parliament communications towards us citizens. As a result I have a identified a gap in the current research for other researchers to build on and to enhance theory building and research activities in the area of political communications.

In this dissertation I have tried to close a gap in the communications research on institutional communications, the gap in political communications between of pan-European communications and the European Parliament.

This type of communication is an activity that spans over several communications practices, notably: institutional, public policy, corporate and issues management. It was some difficulties to find literature, much of the literature in political communication has national angles and/or looks at individual >>

political parties which makes it unsuitable for this pan-European project. It is much the same with the rest of the material.

With increasing powers to the European Parliament and its elected members more decisions are moved away from the national parliaments, so how the European Parliament communicates is of increasing importance. Why is this of any interest? And why should this piece of research be done? Whatever one thinks about the European construct, federalists or non-federalist and everything in between, the European Parliament is the only directly elected body we as Europeans have. It is also the only body we as EU citizens can hold accountable for its actions which is why the communications done by this body is of utmost interest. In a period where the EU construct is under heavy criticism and more and more feel alienated with and left out of our society the EP communication is of even more importance since this is almost the only foundation on which we as citizens can form our opinions. In other words it is of utmost importance that the EP communications is non-partisan and factual. Why? Not only because it is a question of Parliament's integrity but it is also a question of citizen's trust. Furthermore the EP in itself is almost the only non-partisan information source about the EP that we as EU citizens have access to. We as citizens must be able to trust that this information does not in any way or form try to influence us and our stand-points. The fact that so few citizens bothered to vote is not only due to that the EP lacks branding and feels far away from us citizens, nor is it because there is a general downward trend in voter turnout. I am convinced that one reason for the low voter turnout is that the EP feels out of touch with [our] reality and the communications is so bland it doesn't speak to us.

Sara Magdalena Goldberger

Sara Magdalena Goldberger is Swedish and is an expat since 1998 when she left her native Sweden for Belgium.

During her long career in international corporate communications Sara has gained a broad spectrum expertise from both the private and public sectors. The industry she is most familiar with is the ICT industry, where she has worked with a variety of sectors e.g. e-commerce, cyber security and privacy. Sara's jobs have taken her over Europe and she has lived and worked in five countries. The past few years Sara has been working at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Corporate Messaging about innovative technologies. How to deal with complex topics?

Ernestien (F.E.) Honning

I love to look for new possibilities to deal with sometimes contrasting emotions to connect people and inspire them to create sustainable opportunities. This is also the challenge I see in the scientific, technological innovations that are difficult to explain. Something slight only has to go wrong or resistance be so strong that public support can completely disappear. As in the case of shale gas, for example, or in medical innovations that cause ethical issues to rear up. The question is: how can communication managers use corporate messaging to deal with this?

My thesis concerns the obstacles and incentives to creating support among the general public in respect of complex topics. The literature contains little of note specifically on this area, so I have explored this subject on the basis of the following research question:

Which dimensions of sender, message and receiver support mutual understanding between an organisation and the general public in respect of new, complex technologies?

The ultimate aim is to arrive at a set of managerial guidelines that communication managers can use for their corporate messaging when communicating about complex technologies.

Research

From theory through practice I have gone in search of the answers. Firstly, I looked at the underlying theories. My literature study brought me to a valuable list of pragmatic points that should be incorporated in the communication strategy >>

for corporate messaging about complex technologies aimed at creating public support. In order to get an overview of these theoretical assumptions, I have used the well-known communication model with the sender, message and recipient of Shannon & Weaver of 1948 *(Van Riel, 2012a).*

From the theory I began to look at the practice. To this end I selected twelve diverse assumptions for a theory-building case study: what is it that we can learn from the case histories concerning introductions of complex technologies? For this qualitative research I described and then analysed four cases: the addition of fluoride to drinking water *(1946-1976)*, the transgenetic bull Herman *(1990-1996),* the storage of CO2 in Barendrecht *(2007-2010)* and finally the introduction by ING of big data *(2014).* The sources of information were articles from newspapers and journals along with online news items concerning the Dutch context of the case. These public sources provide an impression of the public opinion. Using the case descriptions, the reasons for success or failure were examined as well as how this can be linked to the twelve selected assumptions. This resulted in lessons learned from both a theoretical and case-historical perspective, lessons that are, one for one, pragmatic communication tips for corporate messaging in communicating about the diffusion of complex technologies.

Building trust by using the Basic Blocks of Complex Communication.

The results of my research suggest that the communication of complex topics is a complex process in which it is crucial to build trust. My recommendation is therefore to ensure that people trust in a complex technology and feel that it is theirs. And making it theirs is, in fact, all about bringing an innovation closer in order to develop a mutual understanding between an organisation and the general public.

While the results of the case study cannot be fully generalised, I have developed the Basic Blocks of Complex Communication on the basis of the lessons learned. It is a valuable initial step towards a practicable management tool for the corporate messaging of complex topics.

Sender

- Use the Alignment Factor steps as valuable preparation.
- Be conscious of the effects of reputation and build trust.
- Look at how you can establish your cooperation strategy (if needed).
- Develop communication strategy for interpersonal networks.
- Use all aspects of rhetoric: logos, pathos and ethos.

Message

- Use client orientation and empathy geared to heart and mind.
- Seek a connection with emotional and fast thinking.
- Check which information is also required: evaluation-information, innovation characteristics.
- Analyse the route for information processing + which associations.
- Make conscious choices in timing, framing, stories and formulation.

Recipient

- Make conscious choices in stakeholder priorities.
- React to resistance in a conscious way.
- Know that media are mirrors and that social media can generate impact.
- Be open to learning as an organisation; also in respect of consequences.
- Do not start building a relationship at the end, but start with alignment.

The Basic Blocks of Complex Communication provide a quick overview of key points as a kind of checklist in communicating about innovations. Courage and confidence in the power of innovation are by themselves not enough. The right preparation and making well-considered choices based on theoretical concepts are essential for such a complex process as the introduction of complex technologies. The interests, investments and years of research that go with innovations are, after all, substantial.

The future

What does this imply for the future? How much resistance can the Basic Blocks of Complex Communication prevent? Qualitative research can check the results of the lessons learned against the introduction of a new innovation as well as my vision of the theory. It would also be interesting to probe further into a case to look more closely at ethical alignment or fear. We have no crystal ball but we can prepare ourselves well and give innovations a helping hand through corporate communication with strategic corporate messaging. This is where a follow-up study can contribute. Ultimately, it is about creating public support and working together to get developments moving ahead.

Ernestien (F.E.) Honning

"I love nothing more than searching for new possibilities.
To connect people and to inspire them."

Ernestien Honning (1972) is strategic and creative. She is an authority on communication to children and young people. Communication advisor for geology, energy and sustainability. And the creative brain behind campaigns for Accenture, CliniClowns and Pharma Bio Research.

Ernestien has followed her own route to building up her knowledge and experience: a Bachelor in Creative Communication extended with a course in Concept Development and now a Master in Corporate Communication, for which she made a study of corporate messaging for complex or contentious innovations. These studies are complemented by 10 years of professional experience as a copywriter for various Amsterdam-based agencies, 4 years as a communication advisor at TNO and 7 years as an independent consultant for a nice mix of satisfied customers.

For companies that face new challenges, Ernestien couples a fresh strategic perspective with pragmatism. Her personal approach, creativity, talent for writing and engagement are key factors here. Outside her work, Ernestien revels in the small Marie-Julie together with her beloved Eltjo and is a fan of GIJS, food and all kinds of sustainable, local initiatives.

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Protecting Reputation During a Crisis

Jeroen Philip Jongeling

Establishing a crisis communication response strategy in a way that protects corporate reputation.

"Expression of sympathy and admittance of responsibility are key determinants of the effectiveness of an organizations' response statement in relation to its reputation"

Food safety is a growing global concern and impacts both consumers and businesses worldwide. While much of the world's food supply is safe, recent high profile cases underline the potential danger of food-borne illnesses to consumers. These food related diseases affect tens of millions of people, kill tens of thousands each year and cause billions of dollars in healthcare-related and industry costs annually. Extended global supply chains and lack of adequate control mechanisms may be some of the key reasons. Up until a few decades ago, government agencies were responsible for monitoring food safety standards. Third-party certification is emerging as a prominent and influential regulatory mechanism in both the public and private spheres of the global food supply chain. FSSC 22000 is one of these leading global food safety certification schemes.

By achieving certification against FSSC 22000 organizations demonstrate to their employees and customers that food safety is important within the organization and that they are aware of current food safety issues. However, there may still be incidents where a serious food safety related crisis occurs at a site holding a certificate from FSSC 22000. Therefore, the objective of this research was to establish a crisis communication response strategy that FSSC 22000 may apply, while experiencing a food safety related crisis involving a FSSC 22000 certified organization, in a way that protects its reputation. With the results of this research, FSSC 22000 will be able to develop a crisis communication plan, that provides a hands-on guide on responding to a crisis involving an organization that is certified against the FSSC 22000 standard.

Response Strategies

In general, a crisis can be defined as a serious event that potentially negatively affects an organization and/or its stakeholders if the situation is not handled properly. Crisis communication represents the actual responses an organization uses to address the crisis and have both verbal and nonverbal aspects. The moment a crisis hits, corporate reputation is under threat. From the perspective of FSSC 22000 a crisis as outlined in the research question is an unintentional event that an external agent tries to label as a crisis. Several researchers suggest that the right crisis communication response strategy applied to a crisis of this specific type, can restore stakeholder trust and confidence and protect corporate reputation.

The literature review proves that there are two most important determinants on the effectiveness of an organizations' response statement in relation to corporate reputation: expression of sympathy and admittance of responsibility. These two determinants are interlinked. An organization's response to a crisis can be more effective in producing a favorable effect from stakeholders when the statement of sympathy is combined with a statement of responsibility, compared to the statement of responsibility without any sympathetic expression.

Experiment

To examine the effect of different responses on FSSC 22000s reputation, an E. coli infection was simulated to induce feelings in participants sampled from Licensed Certification Bodies, one of FSSC 22000s primary stakeholder groups. This fictional crisis was caused by Horizon Meat Corp., a fictional company, due to a violation of its internal food safety management requirements. Horizon Meat Corp. achieved certification against FSSC 22000. The experiment contained a fictional news article that portrayed the incident, response statements, and an online survey. A total of 142 respondents read the fictional news article and read one of four different response statements as a combination of responsibility admittance (active versus passive) and sympathetic expression (high versus low).

Results

This research suggests that the way FSSC 22000 responds to a food safety related crisis at a certified organization has little effect on the way FSSC 22000, as the scheme owner, is perceived by its Licensed Certification Bodies. For all of the four groups there was a positive effect on reputation, meaning that FSSC 22000s response statement positively influenced its reputation. After reading the NYT news article, the average value of reputation was well above the midpoint on the 5-point Likert scale. This improved for all groups after reading the response statements. Both High Sympathy responses had a stronger positive effect on reputation than both Low Sympathy responses. The strongest (positive) effect on reputation was induced by a High Sympathy/Passive Responsibility response. The weakest (positive) effect on reputation was induced by a Low Sympathy/Active Responsibility response.

Jeroen Philip Jongeling

Jeroen Jongeling (1974) is a seasoned communication professional with more than 15 years of experience in the field of stakeholder management, issues management and public affairs. Over the years Jeroen was hired by clients in a variety of industries to oversee projects on three different continents. In 2007 he founded a communication and PR agency specialized in working for nonprofit organizations, within the already existing organization of Atrium groep. Since then he holds the position of managing director of the agency. He advises clients in strategic issues and designs and executes public affairs and issues management strategies to be implemented with a dedicated team of professionals.

In this role, Jeroen is currently also responsible for managing the global brand and communication program of the Foundation for Food Safety Certification, the world's third largest food safety management certification system. The thesis 'Protecting Reputation During a Crisis' was made largely possible by his involvement with this organization.

What is the effect of Senior Management of ING Insurance / Investment Management on the overall engagement in times of organizational change?

Annemarie Jongepier

In times of change (or crisis), such as today, there is a great need for strong leaders. This requires someone who is leaping ahead: a leader. Others must accept, because a leader requires that other people voluntarily follow.

For NN Group, it has been a bumpy road in the last years, and 2014 does not look any smoother. ING Group will continue to work on several restructuring plans in the coming period and continues preparations for a standalone future of the European Insurance/Investment Management businesses.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that employees are engaged and stay focused on their day-to-day business in order to successfully change its culture and realize the needed strategic change as NN Group is preparing for a standalone future of the European Insurance/IM businesses. Regardless of the outcome of the overall divestment process, this will ensure success for ING.

My research has shown that all respondents (managers and employees) found focus decisiveness and honesty most important to the role of a leader. Trust and honesty was seen as the most important characteristics of the team manager. All participants mentioned trust and honesty as key. It all starts with trust. If there is no trust there is no relationship.

Most participants mentioned trust, focus, clarity and open and honest communication as the most important thing they need from their (Senior) manager in times of change. Employees desire trust, timely, honest, transparent communication, with no hidden agendas especially during time of change. Some employees also found it important to have more interaction with and support from their manager in times of change. It seems people management is now the most important aspect of the job of a manager, even more important than the normal day-to-day activities.

Companies that continue to take a tactical, short-term approach to communicating with key constituencies will find it increasingly difficult to compete. Developing an integrated, strategic approach to communications will be critical to success.

Lesson 1:
Senior managers must be involved.

The CEO and other top leaders, including the CFO, must understand the importance of communication and leverage communications strategically with all their constituents.The Management Board within ING Insurance are not visible enough and therefore effective communication cannot happen. They isolate themselves both physically and psychologically from other employees on the 8th floor in ING House which is prohibited for unauthorized employees. Communication from the Management Board to all employees can sometimes be seen as faceless and not sincere as no or little upward communication exists.

To accomplish this, the current role of Communications should change as well.
First of all, senior management should recognize the philosophy that 'Employees will perform better when top management shows a leadership vision that is inspiring'. Much of the content is about 'we' topics, or the nature and purpose of the organization and its mission. The climate, therefore, has to be open-minded, a place where employees feel that they can co-design a strategy and its implementation. As a consequence, employees should be made to feel that they are taken more seriously than is needed in other organizational types.

Lesson 2:
Communications must be integrated

The slogan 'You matter', introduced in November 2013, which together with the new brand, has been communicated to internal and external audiences without a proper introduction.
As this communication has not been integrated with real proof points employees do not feel that they matter to the NN Group organization as nothing has been changed internally since the slogan and brand has been introduced. Therefore it is seen as an empty promise.

Lesson 3:
Structural integration of communications

Internal communication should increases trust in management and results in a higher degree of Organizational Identification and it decreases self confidence with individuals.

Lesson 4:
Communications must have a long-term orientation.

It has been suggested that the most enduring companies are those that focus on the long term, have a strong set of values and are proactive rather than reactive in communicating.

ING Insurance/IM is in the process of building a strong, stand-alone company that cares for its customers, employees and investors.

All communication and activities are aimed to become IPO ready; ready to go to market in 2014. NN Group wants to build a strong, stand-alone company that cares for its customers, employees and investors. This is a clear statement; yet, it is not clear to employees what kind of company ING Insurance wants to become after the IPO.
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Lesson 5:
Top communicators must have broad general management skills.

All too often, the corporate communications function is a dumping ground for tactical managers who are uncomfortable with the quantitative skills needed for success in other functions. However, effective communications professionals are those who speak the same language as senior executives and have a deep understanding of the business and its strategy.

Annemarie Jongepier

I completed my Bachelor in Business Communication in 2002. I have over 10 years of working experience in the fields of internal communication, project communication and change communication. I have great experience with leading and executing various (big change) projects such as Readiness (split up Bank and Insurance within ING) and the communication around the split up of ING Real Estate. Cultural change is thereby of great importance. In all these projects connecting, informing and motivating employees is key.

What concerned me during all these change projects is how to engage employees even during tough times. Employees are the most value assets of a company.

My thesis reflects my passion for change, leadership and employee engagement. The International Master of Corporate Communication was a great learning experience which gave me a lot of insight.

I recently started as Internal Communications Specialist at Royal Philips in Amsterdam.
I live together in Leidschendam with Alex and our son Thijs (6).

Crisis Communication through Social Media / Learnings from the Costa Concordia, MH370 and MH17 crisis

Christoph Lergenmueller

In the landscape of social media the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), developed by Coombs (2008) and oriented on crisis communication on traditional media, is still a valid and useful guiding framework for organizations struck by a crisis. This structure allows organizations to communicate strategically with their stakeholders in the time of a crisis. Nevertheless, the model needs to be extended to suit today's social media landscape.

Today the relevance of social media has emerged from its origin as a tool to get in touch with friends on a private basis to one of the most frequently used communication channels for organizations, news and the public. Additionally, du to the increase in reach, the trustworthiness as well as the credibility of social media as an information source has increased (Kavanaugh et al. 2012). These developments require that organizations have to develop an effective crisis communication strategy for social media channels.

Based on the widely acknowledged Situational Crisis Communication Theory, by Timothy Coombs (2008), a qualitative case study, this research analyzes three different real life crisis scenarios with the goal of revealing how effective crisis communications in the current social media landscape needs to be executed.

After analyzing the common literature on crisis communication with a special focus on Coombs´ SCCT and social media the three cases are >>

evaluated using the SCCT as a conceptual looking glass. The result of the multiple case study research is a detailed analysis of the crisis communication on social media by the corporations by investigating, how the crisis communication on Facebook develops over the course of a crisis and analyzing interactions between organizations and the user ommunity on Facebook..

According to the research, the SCCT can still be understood as the theoretical, evidence proved effective framework to strategically shape responses to the challenges a crisis poses to an organization's reputation of an organization. Even nowadays SCCT allows a crisis team to align the specific situation with an adequate response. Coombs´ SCCT is a partially rudimental foundation for crisis communication, as the framework does not take in consideration, that social media has a sustainable impact on crisis communication by lifting the crisis communication on a new level and conveying moods, emotions and perceived responsibilities amongst stakeholders. Therefor social media calls for an adaption and extension of Coombs´ framework.

All cases, which are part of the research, show similar influencing factors, which may be attributed to the chosen media channel, Facebook. Some of these factors are not being considered by Coombs. The findings indicate that Coombs´ model needs to be developed incorporating social media, paying tribute to the technical possibilities to react timely and comprehensively, and to start a dialog directly with the corporations´ stakeholders.

Stakeholders are demanding full coverage of honest information from the very beginning and information updates throughout the whole crisis. They are expecting that the organization takes responsibility, at least in regard of protecting victims and relatives from further damage at an very early point of the crisis. To fulfill these expectations organizations need to focus on a timely reaction.

The direct link to the stakeholders sheds a new light on the role of emotions in crisis communication, which should be more intensively taken into consideration by the SCCT. Terms such as "likes", "friends" etc. which are constituent characteristics for Facebook, point out that not the crisis itself triggers emotions but also the media Facebook is an emotional platform. How to deal with these emotions is one of the many challenges if using Facebook in crisis communications.

Going in hand with the two-way communication the model also needs to consider that social media can be used as a monitoring tool to grasp the perceived responsibility for a crisis in the eyes of the stakeholders, which may rapidly change on the background of the ubiquitous media attracting supporters and opponents of a corporation. Additionally the eventually changing attitude in the Facebook community may be perceived by the crisis team early in the crisis and can be handled proactively.

The proposed recommendations for crisis communication are:

- developing a crisis communication plan with a special focus on social media,
- planning to react timely with the focus on strategic aspects of the responses,
- responding directly, using the opportunities for a two-way communication,
- honestly and adequately addressing emotions,
- scanning reactions and changing attitudes and adapting responses to changing, communication style and content,
- always react strategically, being aware of the close relation between perceived, responsibility by stakeholders and responses (SCCT).

Christoph Lergenmueller

Christoph (1988) works for Weber-Stephen Deutschland GmbH, Central Europe branch of the Weber-Stephen Products LLC, the cult brand and the world's premier manufacturer of charcoal, gas and electric grills and grilling accessories. Being responsible for external communication such as marketing campaigns, the corporation's public and blogger relations and social media appearance, as well as creative projects such as all motion pictures projects, Christoph could gather a wide and profound facet of expertise in the field of brand management and external communication. His latest and must acknowledged project was the 2014 football world cup campaign with football world star and German international Thomas Müller.

Christoph holds a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Business and Economics with a specialized focus on / a major in Marketing. Before working for Weber-Stephen, Christoph could gather a brought facet of experiences trough different internships at Pall Corporation, a leading supplier of filtration, separation and purification technologies, DB Schenker, the freight branch from Deutsche Bahn and market leader in Germany, and working in a publishing firm. Having lived in the USA for almost two years Christoph was able to enrich his international cross cultural experiences and language skills.

Employees as reputation enforcers / How can employees be facilitated to act as ambassadors in a Network Society?

Marlies Maasdam

Who can better defend and build a corporate reputation than those who work for your company? In a network society it becomes more and more essential to facilitate employees at all levels to engage with stakeholders, add value to the conversation and challenges stakeholders are facing. Stakeholder perceptions of actual company behaviour are nowadays the lead driver of enterprise value, of reputation. They no longer believe the ‘stories’ and promises developed and carefully orchestrated by the corporate communication department.

Technology has enabled us to interact, innovate, share knowledge and develop collaborative meaning and sensemaking in whole new ways. This growing interconnectedness between individuals through technology offers great opportunities as well as serious challenges within organizations to create, maintain and develop meaningful connections and conversations between employees and stakeholders.

Main question

The impact of employees and their communication ‘power’ on building or breaking reputations has increased in a network society. However, literature is not really clear on what tools and management interventions are effective in developing employees’ supportive behaviour in building reputations, especially in a network society with fundamentally changed wants, needs and expectations of stakeholders.

The objective of this thesis is to develop a better understanding on how the characteristics of the network society can be used and integrated effectively in enabling employees to act as ambassadors of the organizations’ reputation. In a network society, how can leaders create a stimulating environment for employees to become ambassadors of the organizations’ reputation?

Main dimensions on which organizations are changing

This thesis explored through literature study the main characteristics of the network society, the importance of employees as reputation enforcers in a network society and theories explaining how Reputation Building Behaviour can be enhanced.

Four dimensions were distinguished from my literature study on which organizations are changing from more traditional to more networked organizations as a result of the shift towards a network society:

1. Power structures
2. Stakeholder communication
3. Autonomy support
4. Product & services development

Case study approach

Three organizations, Salesforce, ISS Facility Services and Zeiss were researched through a case study approach to develop a deeper understanding on how and to which extent leaders are steering on the more network or traditional society characteristics within these four dimensions and how this impacts and stimulates employees to show Reputation Building Behaviour.

Findings

Within the four dimensions I found in total 6 aspects that are real differentiators in steering and facilitating employees to act as ambassadors, leading to the following grounded model.

Empowering structures:
1. Top-down shared clarity and transparency on vision, goals and expectations
2. Centrally developed tools to unlock and share information and knowledge in a structured way
Stakeholder engagement:
3. (online) Platforms and tools to share, contribute, participate and add value to the conversation
4. Active, visible executive team
Autonomy support:
5. Stimulating pro-activeness and self-determination
Product and services implementation:
6. Engaging in long-term relationships at all levels

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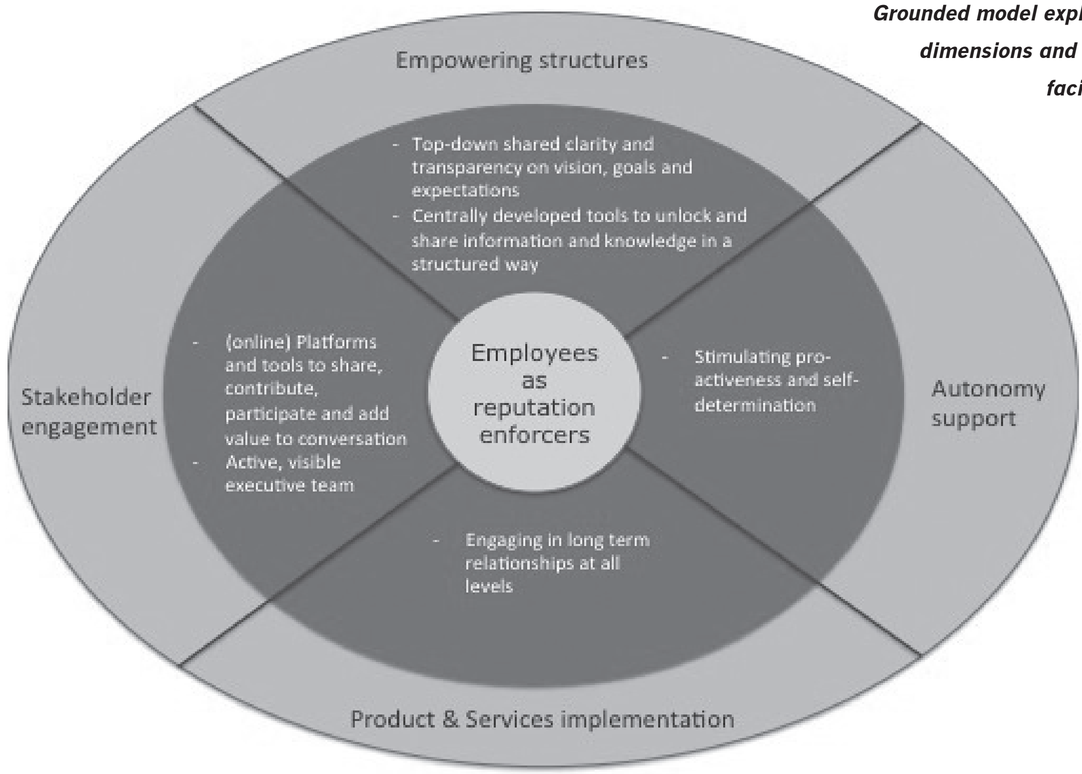
Grounded model explaining differentiating dimensions and aspects to steer on in facilitating employees as reputation enforcers



Theoretical contribution

While prior literature remains silent on the changing role and growing importance of leadership in networked organizations, leadership and more specific the role of top-management can be an important differentiator in the success of developing employees' supportive behaviour in building reputations:

- in being absolutely open and transparent with regards to their own vision, targets, goals and the way they want to achieve these targets;
- in being visibly and actively involved in the day-to-day business on the inside and outside in a transparent and open way;
- in repeating what the focus should be, even more in networked organizations.

Another finding contributing to prior literature on network societies is that hierarchies truly disappear in developing new ideas, new ways of thinking and building long-term relationships with stakeholders. Finally, with the growing complexity of society and organizations, stakeholders expect partnerships and expect 'integrated solutions'. This advances existing literature in the sense that self-determination, sensegiving and sensemaking processes become more relevant at all levels in organizations in the network society.

Managerial implications

In the transition to become a more network oriented organization, in empowering employees to actively engage and contribute in finding new answers to the challenges of their most relevant stakeholders, I would advise organizations to first develop and implement online tools and platforms. Online tools and platforms are essential in facilitating employees to act as reputation enforcers in a more and more networked society. In order to stay relevant for stakeholders and engage in long-term relationships I believe that online tools and platforms will become a hygiene factor, a necessity in unlocking and sharing knowledge and information, in contributing, participating and adding value to conversations on relevant topics for stakeholders, for clients. In finding new solutions in a collaborative way, across organizational boundaries. I strongly believe that if organizations who are still more 'traditional oriented' don't invest and make the transition to a more 'network oriented' organization on the dimensions and aspects I distinguished - even organizations with a long history and a strong reputation - will sooner or later go down instead of up.

Marlies Maasdam

Marlies works as a managing partner of a boutique consulting company, offering customized perspectives and practical tools to leaders, management teams in aligning corporate strategy with individual ambitions and talents. Marlies is passionate about creating an environment together with leaders and team members to commit themselves to the strategy and ambitions they want to realize and to support each other in realizing these ambitions.
Marlies has an extensive background in leading and facilitating leadership teams and individuals in strategy and leadership development, in organizational consulting to increase (strategy) commitment and alignment within and across teams. She has held various (interim) management positions, initiating and directing strategic change projects and developing high performing teams in challenging and demanding business environments.
Marlies works for a variety of private and public organizations in a wide range of sectors and geographies and holds two Bachelor degrees in Education and International Business and Management. She is also a certified facilitator and coach. Studying at Erasmus University has brought Marlies new insights on relevant organizational and corporate communication topics. She is able to apply these insights directly in her work with regards to the organizational challenges her clients are facing, especially in the more and more networked society.

High Performance Communications Departments

Michelle Bernardo de Medeiros

The main objective of this paper is to identify and explore the essential elements for the development of a High Performance Communications Departments (HPCDs) which are able to constantly deliver successful communications programs positively impacting in the development and maintenance of a good reputation.

Nowadays the importance of reputation for organization's effectiveness is extensively studied in the academic world, described in the business media and experienced by executives in daily business. Reputation management became an important discipline and the understanding of mechanisms that influence creation and maintenance of an organizations' reputation are more relevant than ever in the modern business environment.

As we are evolving in the reputation management discipline - defining criteria and paths for this journey, evaluating and publishing rankings of companies with best reputation - it is reasonable to ask if the importance companies' gives to communications and how those departments are structured makes any difference in the in the orchestration of reputation management inside corporations.

Having that question in mind and analyzing the methods applied in traditional business to identify characteristics of High Performance Organizations (HPOs), we should be able to propose a set of best practices in the corporate communications field. Therefore, the central question of this thesis is if by studying commonalities in structures, competences, strategies and processes of communication departments inside companies with a proven record of good reputation we should be able to define a framework able to transforming regular communications departments into High Performance Communications Departments (HPCDs).

First it is needed to identify and define in which areas we will be comparing the characteristics and similarities among those companies with best reputation. If we apply the equivalent broad spectrum of patterns identified in HPOs (High Performance Organizations) and assume they are also relevant in HPCDs (High Performance Communication Departments) literature will points us to the following set of values:

- people management and the need to have an empowered and highly skilled team,
- systems and process to guarantee quality,
- structure and resources to delivery results,
- clear strategy and alignment with business goals.

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The central part of this thesis is a broad explorative analysis which considers these four areas or drivers of high performance listed above as starting points of an extensive literature review concerning theories of excellence in communications management, these excellence characteristics were analyzed and classified in the high performance drivers. The literature review was also fundamental to corroborate the hypothesis that the four drives selected are comprehensive enough and applicable to communications.

Based on the literature review, a categorization of excellence theories and best practices is proposed where the identified success factors are classified and established as drivers of HPCD model, as in explained in the following:

HPCD model:
Driver 1 - Skills & Capabilities

This drive emphasizes the importance of constant development of an efficient team with the right set of profile, skills and capabilities, a strong fit in the company's culture, a deep understanding of communications disciplines and business acumen that leads to strategic thinking.

It analyses the potential of the communications department as a dependency of professionalism and qualification, meaning that "potential depends in large part on the body of knowledge and professionalism that practitioners bring to bear on public relations problems" and "practitioners with more education in and knowledge of public relations are more likely to be in the dominant coalition, to be in the manager role, and to practice two-way *symmetrical model of communication* – all attributes of excellent public relations" *(Grunig, E. James, 1992:139)*

For Joep Cornelissen *(2004)* "what people bring to the communication job in terms of expertise, competences and skills is a crucial element in the effective functioning of corporate communication and influences how corporate communication is being seen by managers from other functions within the organization".

HPCD model:
Driver 2 - Strategy & Alignment

This drive emphasizes the need of communication practice to be aligned with and contribute to the corporate strategy with the purpose of building, protecting and maintaining the company's reputation by creating and retaining strategic partnerships and delivering consistent messages across the company and its strategic constituencies.

It reinforces the concept of strategic management, implying that "if public relations makes organizations more effective by building long-term relationships with strategic constituencies, it is only a small logical jump to deduce that public relations must participate in the organization's strategic planning and that communication programs must be managed strategically to have that effect". *(Grunig, 1992:117)*

In addition, "companies that continue to take a tactical short-term approach to communicating with key constituencies will find it increasingly difficult to compete. Developing an integrated, strategic approach to communications will be critical to success". *(Paul A. Argenti, Robert A. Howell and Karen A. Beck –2010)*

HPCD model:
Driver 3 - Structure & Management

This drive stresses the importance of having the communication department properly structured and situated inside the organization. This important factor impacts on the reach of communication effectiveness, also determining the level of strategic contribution in the decision-making process and the integration and alignment of communication.
The concept is widely discussed in the literature which considers that "how companies organize corporate communication is of crucial importance to the strategic planning and coordination of communication programmes towards different stakeholders. Organizations that have not adequately organized their communication often send out conflicting messages and fail to make a consistent and strong impression on their stakeholders" *(Joep Cornelissen, 2004).*

HPCD model:
Driver 4 - Process & Procedures

This drive gather evidences that clarifying process and protocols guarantees the quality of communications practice, promoting integration and improvements. The documentation and standardization of the communication process enables benchmarks and sharing best practices, cost and timing reductions and also constant improvement. That process includes the constant measurement and evaluation of communications programs and activities.

Findings of the *Excellence Study* prepared by the IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) supports this general idea of the importance of establishing and developing internal process in communications and suggests that "every public relations process, especially the technical ones, should be improved constantly in an excellent department" and that "public relations departments, like other organizational units, must develop internal systems for implementing and monitoring their activities. Planning, monitoring and evaluating are as important for public relations as for any organizational function". *(Grunig, 1992: 244, 225)*

With the conceptual framework defined a research was conducted to assess its applicability, the main goal was to compare the communications departments from 30 companies with best reputation accordingly with "100 Global RepTrak™" from Reputation Institute, and determine their similarities with the HPCD model.

Key Words: High Performance Communications Departments, Excellence in communications management, Communications Skills & Capabilities, Communications Strategy and Alignment, Communications Structure and Management and Communications Process and Procedures.

Michelle Bernardo de Medeiros

Michelle is a Public Relations professional with more than 15 years of experience in Latin America. Michelle joined Roche Latin America in 2011 as Regional Director of Communications and has extensive experience in the communications field both with corporate as well as agency.

Prior to Roche, Michelle worked with Intel Corporation as Public Relations Director for Brazil. Michelle has held key communications roles in corporations such as Claro Telecom, Unibanco and Hill & Knowlton, on the agency side. Michelle holds a bachelor degree in Social Communications from FAAP (Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado) and a Post-Graduation, Marketing Communications from ESPM (Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing)

Gamification The Engagement Game

Esther Oostrom

People procrastinate planning for the financial future. Although they see the urgency to explore their financial future, only 10% spends time on it (Wijzer in Geldzaken, 2013). In order to change this, Aegon started a campaign in the Netherlands to make people financially more knowledgeable. The heart of this campaign is Speeljetoekomst.nu. This online platform uses game-elements to give its users a playful insight into their financial future and how certain life events may affect it. The platform not only facilitates users to precisely overview their future financial possibilities, it also presents a supposedly dry subject in such a way that it becomes fun and arouses interest. From September 2012 till today over 370.000 people visited the online platform and spend over 3,5 minutes playing their financial futures.

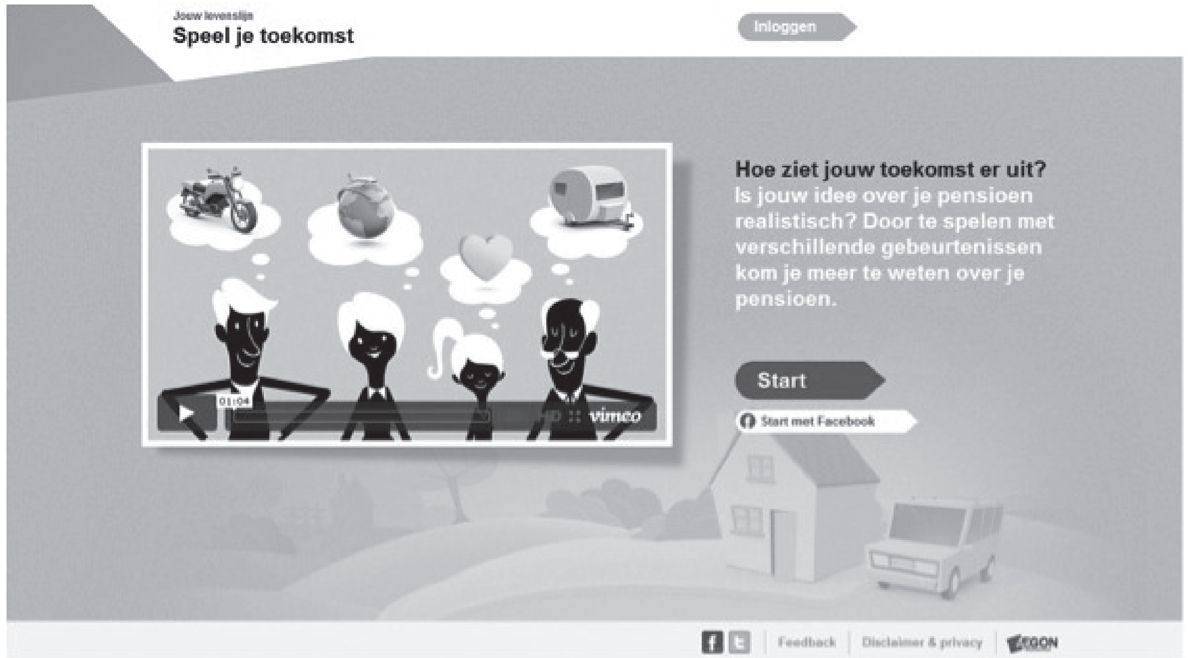
The success of Speeljetoekomst.nu seems to be the result of the application of Gamification: the use of game elements and game design techniques in a non-game context. In Speeljetoekomst.nu game elements like an avatar, feedback, a narrative, a guide, challenges and rewards were used.

Being responsible for the Aegon brand in the Netherlands, I was surprised by this results and it made me wonder: is Gamification useful for motivating people to learn only, or can it be used to engage consumers with the Aegon brand? This question has led to the thesis “Gamification: the Engagement Game”. This thesis studied how Gamification can be used to create customer brand engagement and strengthen the brand. The objective was to evaluate the online platform Speeljetoekomst.nu on three different aspects: Gamification, Engagement and the impact on the brand. The methodology used to answer the thesis question involved both quantitative and qualitative research.

Gamification impacts brand strength

From the quantitative research about the impact of Gamification on brand strength can be concluded that the website speeljetoekomst.nu has a positive impacts on the Aegon brand:

- The visitors of Speeljetoekomst.nu are significantly more positive about Aegon than the general public.
- The website scores higher on each image statements compared to other measurements.
- The website is relevant to the visitors, it is likeable and they think it is fun and believable.
- This in turn has a positive effect on how visitors assess the brand.



- And results in a significantly higher preference of visitors of the website for Aegon.

Three drivers of engagement

To determine how Gamification can increase engagement, qualitative research was done using the Ground Theory Approach. In total 14 experts were interviewed. The interviews were coded on three levels: open coding, axial coding and specific coding. The findings of this study show that Gamification increases CBE because game elements influence three drivers of engagement.

1. ***Experience:*** Gamification offers consumers a new experience with the brand. This experience is created by the sub-drivers aesthetics, structure and newness. Game-elements as a narrative, playfulness and quest(ions) can be used to create experience.
2. ***Involvement:*** Gamification creates involvement between consumers and a brand. This involvement is the result of the sub-drivers access, relatedness and reciprocity. The avatar and feedback systems are examples of game-elements that influence involvement.
3. ***Meaning:*** Gamification creates meaning to the consumer by the sub-drivers purpose, value and enhancement. Meaning is triggered by the use of game-elements as rewards, and challenges.

Recommendations for future research

This study is the first attempt to develop theory about how Gamification can increase CBE and strengthen the brand. Future research might consider researching the effects of Gamification over a long-term period and test whether the >>

three identified drivers (experience, involvement, and enhancement) also apply to engagement in other company-related games.

Gamification: the engagement game

I predict that Gamification will become a new tactic in brand engagement strategy in the near future. There are several reasons why I believe this.

Firstly, it is different from traditional, non-interactive advertising because of the experience it offers through its design, interaction, feedback systems, structure, playful elements and newness.
This is relevant for the new generations since they are growing up in an interactive world where games and serious gaming play a tremendous role in everyday life.

Secondly, Gamification makes online platforms and information very accessible. A gamified website doesn't ask too much effort from the visitor, it makes things easy to do, can create a flow which makes the costs of participation low. Since consumers are encountering thousands of messages a day and don't spend a lot of time on gathering information about brands, Gamification can help brands to attract consumers to their platforms by making it as accessible as possible.

Thirdly, Gamification has meaning since it has to have a clear purpose that fits the needs of consumers in order to get them to play. These goals and the possibility of giving consumers new knowledge and skills which are valuable rewards, make that you can learn from it.

Fourthly, it is a useful strategy for financial service providers to engage with consumers since it offers them a chance to get to know the brand before buying an expensive long-term focused product which impacts the financial future and involves a lot of money. Using Gamification makes it easier for consumers to personalize the meaning of the brand and its product to their lives. It makes it easier to build relatedness through the elements as feedback, interaction, empathy and reciprocity. This enables consumers to make purchase decisions based on their needs.

However, creating engagement is one challenge, keeping consumers engaged is another. From the interviews I've learned that the effects of Gamification on engagement with brand are short-term effects. In order to create an enduring engagement with the brand, it is necessary to build in incentives for consumers to keep getting back to a gamified platform. If not, the positive impact on the brand will eventually drop back. Or even worse! It may negatively affect the brand constructs because people become disappointed that nothing happened after the positive experience. Consequently I refer to Gamification as the engagement game!

Esther Oostrom

Esther Oostrom is an experienced communications professional who has spent more than 14 years at Aegon working in different positions. Esther started her career at the University of Maastricht after graduating International Business Studies in 1999. Her personal interest for online developments inspired her to write a thesis about the possibilities of online personalized advertising with the title 'Internet marketing: the future is now'.

In 2000 Esther started working at Aegon the Netherlands as a product marketer and was responsible for the development and introduction of several internet savings and investment products. In 2005 she started working at the department of Communications as an advertising manager for the Aegon brand. In the last three years she has been working as the Manager Brand & Social Media in the Central Communications department in the Netherlands. In this position she was responsible for the development and introduction of Speeljetoekomst.nu in 2012. This online platform uses Gamification (a relative new concept) in order to motivate people to learn about their financial futures. In 2013 this online platform was rewarded with two Red Dot awards: a Best of Best in interaction design and the Grand Prix in communication design! Esther has always enjoyed working at Aegon because of its dynamism, culture of possibilities; strive for innovation and its relevant purpose.

When Esther started with the summer course for the master of Corporate Communications, she did expect to complete the whole master. However, the interesting electives, the international students, an exclusive study trip to New York with the opportunity to visit some of the world most famous companies, and again an innovative for a thesis, made her to complete this master. She will actually miss it!

Servant Leadership How servant leadership characteristics interrelate

Jolanda Quak

The goal of this thesis is to find out how the characteristics of servant leadership interrelate. The first chapters of this thesis provide a literature review on the construct and the environment in which leadership operates.

The main conclusions from this literature review are:

- Much research is based on the 'philosophical' concept of servant leadership and there is no consensus on its' definition. As a consequence researchers find or appoint traits in literature that they interpret as servant leadership.
  The downside of this method is likely for bias to occur: many attributes can be found as positively influencing followers, which are also not necessarily part of servant leadership. Models and definitions have emerged according to the own interpretations of the researchers.
- Leaders work in an environment that requires demands from leadership. An important aspect of the external environment for servant leaders are the economy, national culture and reputation. There seems to be a link that servant leadership could actually be instrumental for reputation management, which is alignment and the authentic way of communication.
- The context of the company refers to its internal demands such as the company culture. It takes time for people to adjust to new strategies because norms and values that people have cannot be changed overnight Alignment is needed in order to execute the strategy successfully. The difficulty of implementing the strategy is the interaction between the manager and the employees. Therefor alignment is a concept that we can use in analyzing how servant leadership works. This is what leaders need to be wary of.

Methodology

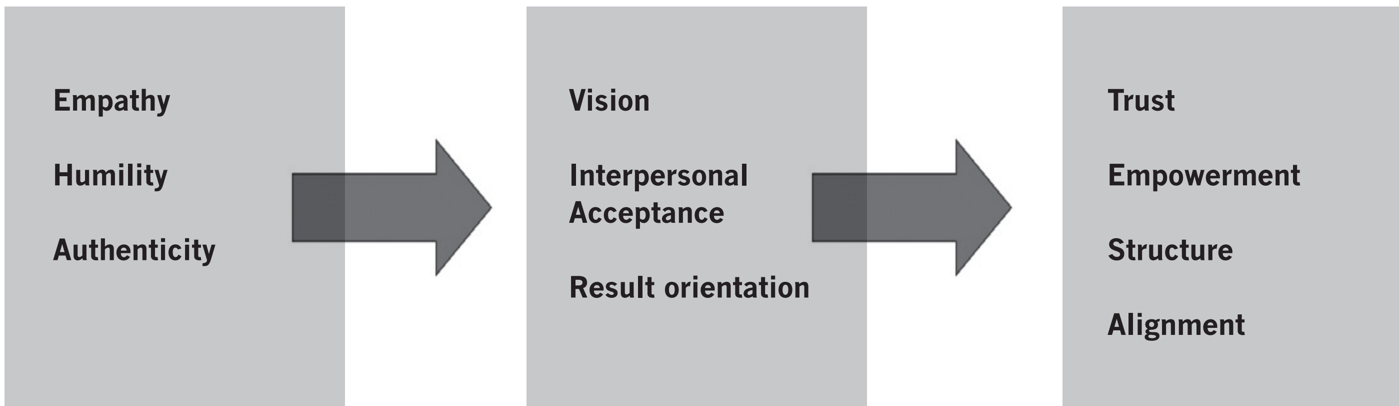
Because of the free interpretation of servant leadership traits by researchers and lack of definition on what leadership is, this research is exploratory in nature. First of all I focus on the dyadic relationship between the leader and follower which is key for servant leadership.
To reveal the operational use of the servant leadership traits, qualitative semi-structured interviews have been conducted. The interview questions are based on the elements of the internal and contextual environment that influence leadership, such as culture, economic climate etc. The data collection is among people who have leadership knowledge, such as recruiters, people in a leadership advisory role. I approached them through my network.

Findings of this thesis

There are three characteristics that can be considered the antecedents for servant leadership: empathy, humility and authenticity. They can be developed through moderating behavior. These three characteristics can then ensure the following behavioral outcomes of leaders:

- Creating a vision is being able to express the strategy. In order for people to believe in you and to be a strong presenter of that vision you need to be authentic and passionate and visible. You need to know what other people need (empathy) and what they are good at (humility) and what are the right conditions for them. Then you can offer them a vision, a line of sight (goal orientation).
- Result oriented behavior: You need to be aware of your environment, need to know the capabilities of yourself and your team (empathy), then you need to be decisive (result oriented behavior) in order to set the goals (vision).
- Interpersonal acceptance: interpersonal acceptance is a very difficult trait to assess for and it is definitely no reason to let people do things without commitment, it does not necessarily mean approving all behavior but noticing it without judgment. Authenticity helps in accepting unconditionally, because you know what your thoughts are and you can separate them from the other person. But what we also see here is that empathy and authenticity are needed first in order to have 'interpersonal acceptance'.

The behavior that the leader displays, will create the right conditions for the follower: trust, empowerment, structure and alignment. >>



Conclusion
We can conclude that empathy, humility and authenticity are the mental states or personality traits that really matter for leadership and can be developed through moderating behavior. These three characteristics can then ensure the following behavioral outcomes of leaders: interpersonal acceptance, result orientation and a expressing a vision. Through these behavioral outcomes, leaders can create trust and alignment. They will create the right conditions for the follower to be motivated; the followers will feel empowered or are given structure where needed.

Recommendations
For followers to be motivated and be aligned it is important for leaders to work on their following internalized states of authenticity, humility and empathy. These internal states can only be achieved through moderating behavior, reflection and feed-back from subordinates. Leaders need to stay true to themselves and only then they can make others feel valued and happy!

Jolanda Quak

When I was at high school I was interested in people, different cultures and languages. Therefore I choose to study International Management. I did not want to focus on one particular field and this study was broad. After my studies I left off for Australia where I started working at Océ.

In Australia I experienced a different culture, met new people, learned a new language and got my first 'real' job. I met great people from whom I learned "how to create more value for the customer". I still apply this in my current profession at Rotterdam School of Management where I work as Project Manager Having spent four years in Australia, I then returned to The Netherlands and held several (marketing) positions at i.e. Samsung and Heerema Marine Contractors. Then I found out that I wanted to specialize more to have focus and decided to study Corporate Communication. This study has given me lots of insights and taught me to see things from a different perspective.

The impact of environmental NGOs / CSOs on the business environment in post-communist countries

Anna Saghabalyan

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, post-communist societies and newly independent states found themselves in a new socio-economic and political situation. Some of the post-communist and post-Soviet states managed to embrace political and economic change and transform smoothly into what is usually called electoral democracies, with free market economies. Others are still experiencing hardships defining their political and economic model, with distort¬ed democracies, rigged elections, oligopolies and uncompetitive economies.

In both cases, from the very beginning Western democracies offered institutional help to build what are called "civil societies" that according to one of the well-known representatives of the civic concept, Polish thinker and former dissident Adam Michnik, was supposed to put constant pressure on governments to coerce reform *(Gorski, 2007).*

This took the form of intensive creation of Non Governmental or Civil Society Organizations (NGOs or CSOs) in post-communist countries funded by Western governments and institutions, that were called to carry out different missions of enlighten-ment, capacity building, and watchdog activities, to help enhance Western or European values such as democratic elections, freedom of speech, freedom of media, good governance, human rights, minority rights, etc. >>

In the next two decades there a significant amount of research was produced on whether or not these institutions and organizations were efficient in reaching tangible goals and helping to promote Western values in the East.

In the case of successful states, was it in fact the achievement of civil society bringing these states up to Western standards, or was it the political and economic realities that shaped the future of some successful Eastern European states? And if the NGOs or CSOs really played a significant role, then why did they fail to bring democracy and better governance into less successful post-communist state? After all, CSOs are still well funded by Western governments and are visibly active in some less democratic post-communist countries.

Although different approaches suggest a slight difference between the "NGO" and "CSO" concept, unless defined as "NGOs" in the literature or interviewees, we will refer to "NGOs" as "CSOs" throughout this paper, as Civil Society Organizations may also refer to a wider spectrum of civic organizations.

While this thesis will offer a scholarly perspective on the general weaknesses of CSOs in post- communist countries, including academic findings on the causes of the failures and shortcomings of the CSO activities, it will mainly focus on one type-environmental CSOs in post-communist countries.

Other CSOs called to strengthen democratic institutions and work on issues like elections, human rights, and civic freedoms, do not necessarily interact directly with the economic realities and businesses on the ground and are more involved with state institutions. Environmental CSOs, by definition, deal with a wider concept of economic development and business activities that shaped post-communist countries in the last two decades.

By focusing on CSOs interactions and their impact on extractive industries in some post-communist countries, this research will particularly try to answer the following questions:

1. ***Do environmental CSOs in post-communist countries affect the behavior of companies and governments in environmental management? Are they successful in pursuing policy change on environmental issues?***

2. ***Do environmental CSOs themselves practice Social Responsibility and do they themselves formulate a shared value agenda with the larger society? How do their activities affect businesses and economic development so much needed in the newly emerged states?***

3. ***Is the donor community successful in fulfilling their mission of bringing a western culture of checks and balances with the help of civil society into the post-communist world in the case of environmental CSOs?***

Based on the notion of shared value *(Porter, Kramer, 2006, 2011)* this paper will examine whether it is the businesses or the CSOs that offer more shared value to post-communist societies and whether or not CSOs in post-communist societies are as successful in pushing businesses to act responsibly as their counterparts in Western countries. Finally, we will look at how CSOs contribute to the important agenda of development and social well-being in these countries.

Porter and Kramer in their article "Strategy and Society" (*Porter, Kramer, 2006*), suggest that "If governments, NGOs, and other participants in civil society weaken the ability of business to operate productively, they may win battles but will lose the war, as corporate and regional competitiveness fade, wages stagnate, jobs disappear, and the wealth that pays taxes and supports nonprofit contributions evaporates"

Qualitative research for this thesis, namely interviews with representatives of extractive industries in some post-communist countries and representatives of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), as well as diplomatic missions, show that often environmental CSOs have brought little influence toward policy change on environmental management and have instead focused on attacking particular business projects that do not necessarily contribute to the environmental threats described by the CSOs, and offer instead economic benefits to the countries and communities.

By choosing confrontation versus cooperation, some environmental CSOs not only fail to push businesses to act more responsibly but instead delay investments and employment opportunities for economically impoverished regions in some post-communist countries. This is one of the common ideas shared by most of the interviewees in this paper.

case of many post-communist countries, CSOs also fail to reach to grassroots and increase their membership, thus operating in isolation from larger society. The incapability of post-communist CSOs to reach out to their own societies is observed in most of the research materials quoted in this paper. *(e.g. Evans et al, 2006).*

Available research data describes as a common issue for many post-communist countries the isolation and marginalization of the Western-funded CSOs as a result of tailoring projects to please the donor, rather than seeking support with the larger society.

You can't have a healthy society, unless you have healthy companies that are making a profit, that are employing people and that are growing

. --- Michael Porter---

Conflicts with communities, often fueled by perceived threats described by CSOs, result in economic problems not only for the companies but also for the communities. Joint research from a number of universities, led by Queensland University, finds that major, world-class mining projects with capital expenditures of between US$3 and US$5 billion suffered roughly US$20 million per week of delayed production in net present value terms as a result of community conflict. Additionally, In the case of initial mineral exploration (early reconnaissance work), interviewees estimated that around US$10,000 is lost for every day of delay in lost wages and the costs of maintaining an exploration camp. *(Franks et al, 2014).*

While this is true in the case of many developing countries in South America and elsewhere, in the

Additionally, many researchers observe that it is the tendency of Western donor organizations to cover failures or to exaggerate the success of CSOs in emerging economies to be able to justify their own existence in front of their parliaments and governments in the West. *(Mendelson, Glenn, 2002).*

Based on the strategic communication framework (Argenti, Howell, Beck, 2005) this paper will examine how effective the communication of CSOs is with the larger society. Who are the primary and secondary constituencies of the environmental CSOs in post-communist countries?

There is some indication in the literature reviewed for this thesis, that Western-funded CSOs in post-communist countries do not aim their messages at presumably primary **>>**

(Argenti, Howell, Beck, 2005) constituencies for them- larger society, governments or businesses-but rather aim at showing “results” to the donor to secure further funding and tailor their activities and policies according to the rules set by the grantors. Thus their primary constituencies become the donors, rather than their own societies.

Accountability of the CSOs is another issue observed in the literature reviewed. Some researchers point out that unlike governments that have to be reelected, and businesses that have to have profit, performance standards of CSOs are not consistent. Another issue is the lack of accountability to society. Given the financial and political muscle of official agencies, there is an obvious fear that donor funding may reorient accountability upwards, away from the grassroots, and bias performance-measurement toward criteria defined by donors. *(Edwards, Hulme, 1995).*

Additionally interviewees, who have contributed to this paper, highlight a lack of accountability of CSOs as a major obstacle for a constructive dialogue. While CSOs are not held accountable by the donors for what they say and do and can have unfounded or defamatory statements, businesses have to be careful in their communications as they are accountable to shareholders or institutional investors.

Another commonality in the literature observed as well as in the interviews conducted suggests that, so far, environmental CSOs in various post-communist counties were unable to achieve significant policy change. There may be several reasons for this according to both the literature observed and interviews conducted for this research: from a lack of capacity to a lack of common policy as well as a lack of clear demand on behalf of the grantors to reach out to primary constituencies- larger society. *(Mendelson, Glenn, 2002), (Uhlin, 2006).*

Thus based on various findings of this paper, the conclusion suggests several issues to address to make the work of environmental CSOs more efficient:

1. **IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILTY.**
   This includes accountability regarding actions and words, clearer goals and deliverables, and transparency on financial flows. This also addresses the issue of corrupt practices.

2. **REDEFINING THE PRIMARY AUDIENCES**.
   Demand of more grassroots work from CSOs on behalf of donors is vital to increase the efficiency of CSOs. Instead of continuously communicating their results to the donor and aiming their actions at securing the next grant, CSOs can deliver tangible results only when they aim their messages at their own societies and engage with them. This also includes transparent and results-oriented engagement with economic players.

3. **KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING**.
   Unless CSOs mature professionally and refine their messages and actions, it will not be possible to count on tangible results as unfounded accusations and claims will always be dismissed by governments and businesses and will not resonate widely with the public. The donor community should impose certain professional criteria on funding the activities of CSOs.

4. **REDEFINING THE COMMON GOOD AND SHARED VALUES WITH SOCIETY.**
   The donor community needs to encourage CSOs to build their strategies in line with the general benefits for society. If CSOs continue to act in isolation from others, including economic realities and fail to consider the common good for society, they will unlikely be helpful in building more effective societies, states, and economies that is, overall, in the common interest of the countries and the societies they operate in.

Western governments spend the money of their taxpayers to help build democratic institutions and civil society in post-communist and more so in post-Soviet countries. There is a need to assess the efficiency of this funding so far and look for shortcoming to be addressed. If civil society institutions are isolated from the rest of the players of the society, especially economic realities, they will not be able to influence policy change. This thesis will identify some of the shortcomings and look for solutions for CSOs and especially environmental CSOs to be more efficient in post-communist and post-Soviet countries.

Anna Saghabalyan

Born 18.12.1976, Yerevan, Armenia
MA in Linguistics (Yerevan State Linguistic University 1993-1998), 17 years of experience in Journalism and Public Relations.

Started career as a Journalist and news presenter at a local TV station while still a student.
In 1998 started working at Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (US Congress funded RFE/RL) Armenian Service. Covered all major political and economic topics, social development stories, conducted dozens of interviews, with influential politicians, cabinet members, foreign diplomats, ambassadors, visiting high-level foreign officials, etc.

During 10 years at RFE/RL spent several months a year at RFE/RL headquarters in Prague, Czech Republic, covering international news and writing analyses on international developments.
In 2001- 2005 was the editor of RFE/RL Armenian youth service, coordinating the work of a team of 7 young journalists.

In 2008, after 10 years as a Journalist at RFE/RL was invited to lead the communications departments of Civilitas Foundation, founded by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs. From 2008- 2011 worked as Director of Communications for the Foundation as well as lead the communications activities of the former Foreign Minister, a Member of Parliament now.

From 2012 to date is the Public Relations Manager of Geoteam CJSC, a subsidiary of Lydian International, Canada TSX listed, a junior mining company with its flagship Amulsar project in Armenia. Since then was working on enhancing the reputation of both the project as well as the mining industry, promoting knowledge on responsible mining among local constituencies in Armenia. Despite huge challenges due to traditionally low reputation of mining in the country, the project and the company stand out among many constituencies in a better light due to different and more responsible practices as well as intensive and open communication.

Heads up for change! Insights how interpersonal aspects contribute to successful cascading during strategic change

Stefanie Wienhoven

Global business environments continually change. Organizations will need to change to remain competitive. In general two views on strategic change implementation are distinguished. One is the structural view on strategic change implementation. This traditional perspective on strategy change is fed with the idea that change has to do with modifying the structural characteristics of the organization and monitoring the effect of techniques and actions. In this perspective, the interpersonal and behavioural elements of strategic change are traditionally overlooked and misstep on that what they are trying to transform, in the first place the attitude of the employees. Research learns that the success rate of strategic change programs is only 30%. This implies that a change is not an easy thing. Therefore the other view that is gaining more interest, this is the cognitive view on strategic change. The cognitive view on strategic change assumes that the attitude and behaviour of the members of the organization towards the change are a result of how the members perceive the change.

The initiators of the change are in the lead when initiating and implementing a change. Their main task is to create strategic consensus to positively influence the perception and behaviour of the employees. This perception and behaviour both are result of the information and communication process that takes place during the change process. This requires leadership and communication skills from the leaders. During a strategic change, the cascading model is often applied as the communication model or as part of the communication strategy. After the decision for strategic change is taken, the CEO informs the leadership team, who in their turn explain things to middle management, who will in their turn transfer the message to the front-line employees. The information is passed from top to bottom following the organization scheme. Successful cascading is a crucial success factor for the implementation of the change. Cascading is an interpersonal process as it is concerns all the members of the organization (from manager to CEO, from supervisor to subordinate). At the same time this communication strategy seems not always successful. This is the starting point of my thesis. The objective of it is to work towards a model that offers insight into the interpersonal aspects of cascading contributing to successful strategic change.

The interpersonal aspects are:

1. ***Vertical and lateral interaction***
   Vertical interaction has two dimensions. The first is top-down. This downward interaction is important to 'sell' the strategy to the organizational members. The second dimension of the vertical interaction is bottom-up. This upward interaction provides management mostly information on accountability to leadership. The lateral interaction refers to the horizontal information flow that occurs both within and between departments.

2. ***Knowhow***
   Employees need knowhow to understand the vision of the new organization and they need the knowhow to take responsibilities for their own actions.

3. ***Defensive routines***
   'Defensive routines' is the collective name for informal non-supporting behaviour that is observed during a change.

My research findings partly confirm existing research and partly advance the literature. These new insights lead, in my perspective, to better cascading and thus ultimately contribute to successful implementation of change.

The most important findings are:

1. Attention should be paid especially to the quality of the top-down interaction; the fact that top-down interaction takes place is not enough. Quality makes a big difference.

2. The implementation of strategic change suffers if not only the quantity of bottom-up interaction lacks behind; if both quantity and quality lack behind this can seriously damage the change process.

3. Lateral interaction is not only a source of information; managers can really inspire and help each other.

4. One of my most important findings is that an organization should not depend too much on a 'voluntary' dedication of a manager in transferring knowledge. An organization should measure and guard this transfer of knowhow through management KPI's to optimize this intangible aspect.

5. A manager can make use of the intelligence of his team to come with better solutions to implement

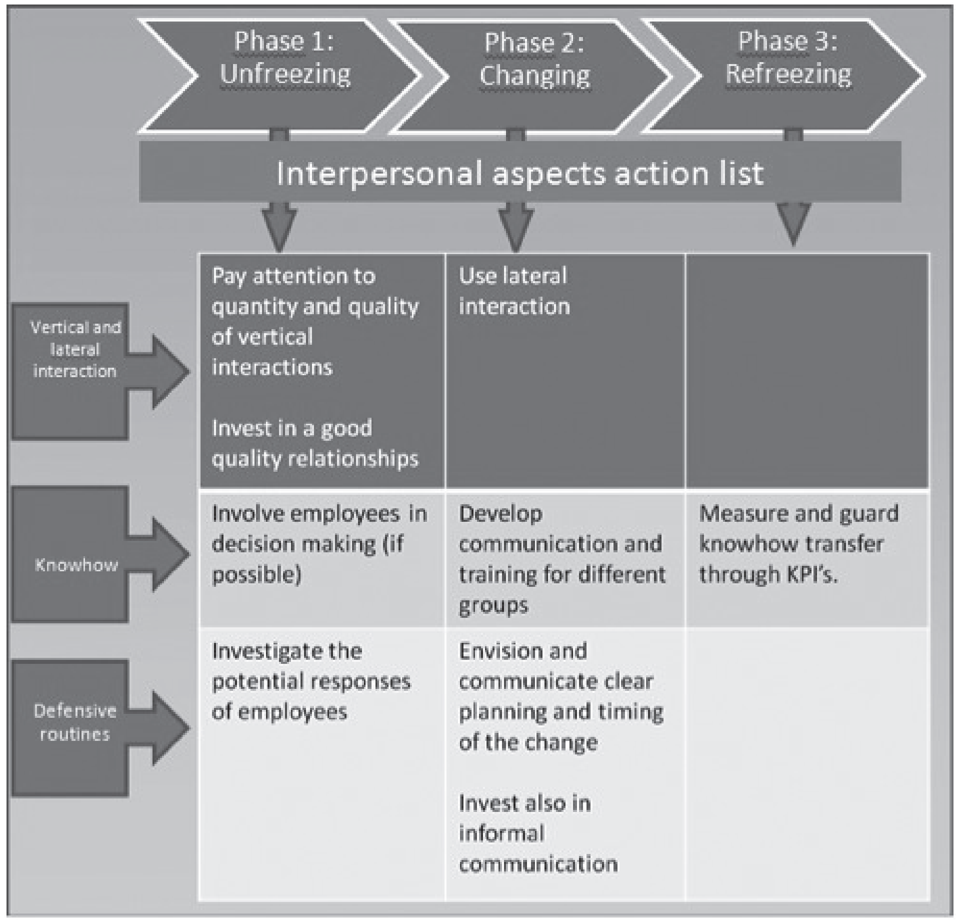
the change. In this way not only the uncertainty of the employees is reduced moreover it also reduces the uncertainty of the manager.

6. This study confirms this finding but also shows that the difference of the information needs not only lies in the kind of information that is brought across, it is also the approach of this information transfer that can be totally different.

7. Communication on a clear planning and timing may help to prevent resistance.

With the identification of above mentioned insights I am able to develop a process model that addresses the interpersonal aspects per phase of the strategic change. Starting point of this model is that all aspects are important during all phases.

The model shows which interaction should be emphasized in each of the phases.



When a strategic change is initiated I would recommend the change initiators and the involved communication professionals to address three important steps related to the three interpersonal aspects.
By taking these steps the cascading process is positively influenced.

1. Determine how the interpersonal aspects can be optimized for the organization and for the change process. For instance if there is a risk that bottom-up interactions are not organized this should be taken into account when preparing a communications plan.

2. Secure the quality of interpersonal aspects as much as possible. Measure and evaluate the communications process.

3. Use the process model as a navigation tool to determine if all aspects are addressed during all phases and whether emphasis is laid on the right interaction per phase.

Stefanie Wienhoven

Stefanie Wienhoven is an experienced communications professional who has spent 14 years of her career at Océ-Technologies, working in many different parts of that organization. Stefanie started her career at Océ within the Training Center. First as a Technical Writer, followed by the job Customer Trainer.

After four years of training colleagues and customers throughout Europe and the US she moved into international Product Marketing and was part of a very diverse and dynamic team. In that team she was responsible for product introductions and international customer events. After Océ became part of the Canon group, she found a new challenge as Communication Manager for the site in Venlo.

Stefanie has always been very proud on Océ's innovative products, services and her work for this company. Before starting her professional career Stefanie studied Information Works at the Hogeschool Midden-Brabant in Tilburg.

Stefanie lives together with Paul and in her free time she enjoys sporting.

The communication factor in innovative organizations / a story about the butterflies in the corporate communication office

Lotte Zwijnenburg

To be accountable in the much more data-driven culture of innovative organizations communications should claim its stake in creating social capital for the organization. The value that corporate communication can add to social capaital reveales the importance of three area's: boundary management, behavioural science & dynamic network analysis and multi-identity-management. The AC|DC-model (developed by Mahroum e.o.) could be of use to create a metric of social capital: showing an organizations absorptive and development capacity. It is suggested that the newly introduced C-suite seat: the CDO (Chief Digital Officer) is the manager of the social capital and if corporate communication takes leadership on the new competences the CDO might as well be the former CCO.

New era

Technological developments have spurred new ways of interaction and increased not only the amount of information but also the processing power to make sense of the gathered data. We are at the tipping point of knowledge creation: artificial intelligence and automated data-gathering will span our scope of insight: advanced analytics can predict multiple-futures real-time, based on human (inter)action. Embedded into applications (that are spiced with business rules) it can also take action.

These developments create a hyper-dynamical environment that has a profound impact on how we as humans and organizations operate. Horizontalization changes the direction of the flow of interaction and enables us to combine paradoxes of competition and collaboration through a multi-stakeholder approach.

Innovative organizations

Innovative organizations thrive well in this new environment. The concept of an innovative organization is less clear. By examining the cornerstones of organizations: strategy, structure and culture an attempt is made to coin the core elements that 'nourishes' the innovativeness of organizations to five principles and five cultural concepts.

Organizational innovation

Further investigation in the impact of innovation on organizational performance revealed the importance of organizational innovation. The pace of change dictates a more decentralizaed structure to be able to adapt and a coordination that allows more autonomy and an iterative way of working, embedded in a culture that rewards exploration and learning. Digitalization has made it possible to organize resources much more resilient resulting in a new 'dandelion' framework of collaboration through social netwoks of multi-disciplinary teams across the boundaries of the organization. This open and more networked structure puts challenges in the management of collective meaning and shared identity.

Social Capital

In innovative companies social capital is the differentiator. Together with the need for organizational innovation and the emerging multi-networked structure the importance of insight on the organization culture has increased. Especially with regard to the capacity to access, anchor and diffuse (tacit and implicit) knowledge. The density and intensity of interaction influences this capacity. The AC|DC model (Mahroum) is suggested as a means to track organziational collaborative performance. To manage information and interactivity more emphasis shoud be given to enhanced network-analysis and boundary management: especially to the rules that govern access, bonding and shared-meaning.

Strategy, structure and culture

To understand the impact of digitization the basic model of organization in which organization strategy, structure and culture are aligned with the communication strategy, stucture and culture is adapted. Digitization makes the information-layer an autonomous component that influences organizational performance and competitiveness, thus a third layer of interaction that resides in between the operational and communication layer. The foundation for this third layer is based on the organizational value of information that increases when the context is less stable, which is the case in this era of dynamic change. Operational activities deliver information that is stored and interpreted, but also uses information from the enterprise information management system to make (automated) operational decisions. The communications layer is a mediator or broker of meaning. Through communications we give meaning to information and create knowledge. At the center or core resides the organziational identity that shapes and is shaped by the stakeholders that are relevant to create messages, contribute information and drive operational performance. The organizational system is embedded in a context (environment) that influences the system. The members in this system aim to align all layers to maximize the viability of the core.

Ownership of information

Defining the information layer as a separate entity gives raise to the question of ownership. Who governs the information strategy, structure and culture of the organziation? The usual suspect: the CIO and information specialists are explored (through interviews, third-party surveys) but no satisfying answer has surfaced. The CIO's certainly see the opportunity but focus mainly on the operational system and have been seperated from business thinking in most organizations. The CCO's understand the multi-stakeholder perspective and are experienced managers of the relational-orietation of buisness. But they have kept themselves too far away from the mathimatical implications of information in most organizations. The perfect ‘governer’ for the information layer knows how data-driven decision-making drives organizational performance, yet has retained the sensibility of content creation and the creation of meaning. Both sides are necessary to build and support the structure and culture of innovative organizations. Yet both sides have reservations about creating immediate sources of competitiveness.

CDO

Which leaves the floor to a new ‘director’: the Chief Digial Officer. In some organizations the CEO or former Marketing Officer has taken this seat. This has improved alignment (CEO) and provides a roadmap to make the transformation to ‘the new age’. In other organizations CMO and sometimes CCO have energized the organization with pilots and practices on how to engage and interact with customers, employees and other stakeholders. Just a few organizations are taking their first steps in balancing the stabilizing approach of alignment with the fragmenting approach of decentralization. The wisdom how to reach a productive and sustainable balance might come from a network of ‘communities of practice’ and the science of chaos: that investigates simplicity (patterns) in dynamic complex systems. This way of immersive strategy plotting should be coached by the CDO.

Communication competence

For communications focus on its capacity to manage interaction and the contribution of information and knowledge in and across the boundaries of the company creates added value to the social capital of the organization. To manage the social capital a good understanding of network dynamics and nudging of the absorptive capacity across organizational boundaries is necessary. It also creates the challenge in developing practices to shape the multi-identification framework within the dandelion structure which allows for diversity yet shapes unity. In the multi-network structure communications is part of the multidiciplinaire teams. By monitoring the team-contribution to social capital they can make a valuable contribution to these ‘communities of practice’. This enhanced capability of communications is coined ‘scientific boundary management’ to stress the art of communication science (or bahavioral economics as it sometimes is called).

Immediate source of value

If communications embraces the opportunities of this new era, communication professionals will be cherished teammembers and might even create immediate sources of value by also leveraging their competences as digital interaction-strategist, community managers or boundary-balancers beyond the organziational borders.

Lotte Zwijnenburg

Lotte Zwijnenburg (1968) started her carreer in old-school networking at the dutch association of the bicycle and automotive industries (RAI Vereniging), then joined Fresco: a team of geeks that ‘tinkered the web’. This started her journey of exploration of the digital word and how on- and off-line can invigorate eachother. She experienced the pitfalls and opportunities of the digital world firsthand at the agencies and (financial) corporates she joined thereafter. The digital environment has matured and continues to grow smarter and more immersive every day which inspires her to keep exploring the application of new options and its practical use for human interaction.

**Because Lotte started her digital journey at an early stage she can understand the data driven world with a creative mind, combining facts with imagination. Her vast experience in digital communcation helps her to quickly recognize implications and opportunities for organizations. With her own company AgudezA: an atom in a web of digital specialists, she inspires companies and students to explore the digital and business-world and supports them to set, implement and realize ambitious goals in a realistic way.
In real-life she likes to sculpture preferably in marble, which might well be an allegory of the work she does as a consultant: shaping tenacious resources to reveal their beauty.**

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Thesis Coaches

Prof. dr. Cees B.M. van Riel

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Cees B.M. van Riel (1951) is professor of Corporate Communication at the Rotterdam School of Management/Erasmus University. He is director and founding father of the Master of Science in Corporate Communication programme (MSc degree programme) at the same business school.
Further he is the co-founder of the Reputation Institute (www.reputationinstitute.com) in New York. In 2011 Cees van Riel has received the Pathfinder Award, the highest academic honour bestowed by the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) for his contribution to research in the field of corporate reputation and strategic alignment. Cees van Riel has published articles in prestige journals as The Academy of Management Journal, Long Range Planning, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Marketing, and ten books.
His best known books are *Principles of Corporate Communication* (1996), *Fame & Fortune* (2004) and *Essentials of Corporate Communication* (2006), *The Alignment Factor* (2012).

Paul A. Argenti

**Professor of Corporate Communication
The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth**

Professor Paul A. Argenti has taught management, corporate responsibility, and corporate communication starting in 1977 at the Harvard Business School, from 1979-81 at the Columbia Business School, and since 1981 as a faculty member at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business. He has also taught as a visiting professor at the International University of Japan, the Helsinki School of Economics, Erasmus University in the Netherlands, London Business School, and Singapore Management University. He currently serves as Faculty Director for Tuck's Leadership and Strategic Impact Program, its Brand and Reputation programs, and Tuck's executive programs for Novartis, Hitachi, and Freddie Mac.

Professor Argenti is the author of many textbooks, such as 'Corporate Communication' *(sixth edition 2013)*, 'Corporate Responsibility'; Argenti co-authored (with Courtney Barnes) 'Digital Strategies for Powerful Corporate Communication'*(2009)*. Other books include 'Strategic Corporate Communication' *(2007)*, 'The Power of Corporate Communication' (co-authored with UCLA's Janis Forman), and 'The Fast Forward MBA Pocket Reference' (several editions).

Professor Argenti has written and edited numerous articles for academic publications and practitioner journals such as Harvard Business Review, California Management Review, and Sloan Management Review. Professor Argenti also blogs regularly for Harvard Business Review, the Washington Post, and US News & World Report and appears frequently on radio (NPR) and television (CNBC) commenting on topics related to communications, reputation, and corporate responsibility.

Dr. Mignon D. van Halderen

Leading Thoughts
Research, advice and teaching on corporate communication

Mignon van Halderen (PhD) is an independent consultant operating at the interface of corporate advice, research and (executive) teaching. She advises companies on thought leadership, increasing the impact of a company's (identity) expressiveness efforts and (re) building trust/legitimacy. She lectures and coaches students on the same topics and works on academic papers to ground her knowledge and expertise in solid academic theories and frameworks. Through her 10 years' experience *(2002 – 2012)* at the Corporate Communication Centre of RSM Mignon has become skilled in taking an evidence-based approach to business problems (both qualitatively and quantitatively) and making academic models useful for a business audience. Mignon's expertise in corporate language is focused on how companies express their identity expressions by means of framing, storytelling, decoupling etc. On this topic, she has published an article in the Corporate Reputation Review in which she compares the identity expressions of six international oil companies. She also works on several other papers, including a case study in which she investigates how BP and Exxon's impression management tactics evolved against rising legitimacy challenges and a conceptual paper in which she summarises the use of different framing techniques.

Dr. Guido A.J.M. Berens

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Dr. Guido Berens is an Assistant Professor at the Corporate Communication Centre (department Business Society Management) of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He earned his doctoral degree in Corporate Communication from the Erasmus Research Institute of Management (Erasmus University) and Master degrees in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Nijmegen. Guido's research interests include reputation management, corporate social responsibility, and public affairs. His research has been published in the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Management Studies, and Journal of Business Ethics, among others. Guido teaches research methodology in the Master and PhD programmess at RSM.

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The Netherlands

Editors
Graduates 2014
and Corporate Communication Centre

Design
Nienke van Look, concept & ontwerp
Rotterdam

Publisher
Corporate Communication Centre

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