CORPORATE COMMUNICATION INTERNATIONAL at Baruch College/CUNY

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CONFERENCE ON CORPORATE COMMUNICATION 2012

June 5 – 8, 2012

Baruch College/CUNY, New York, NY USA

PROCEEDINGS

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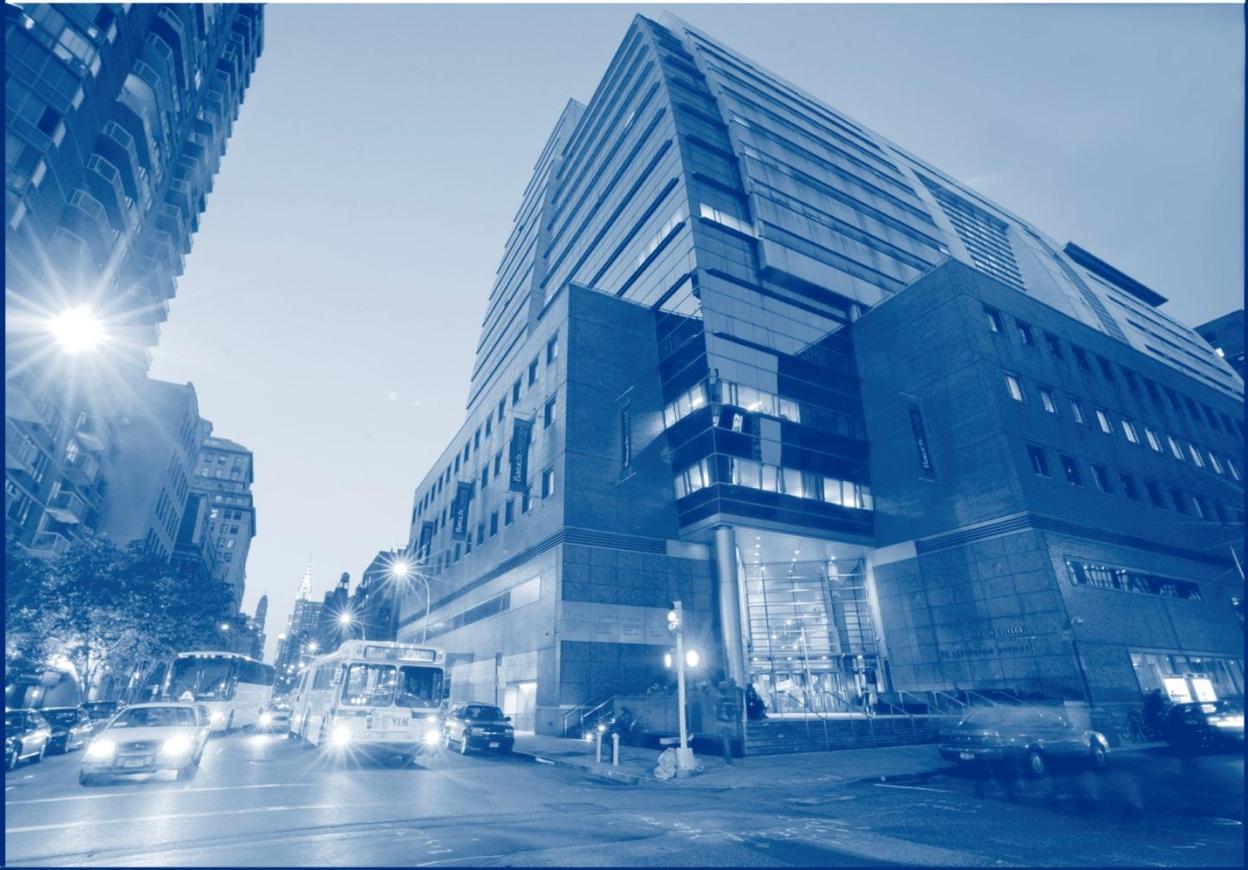
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Corporate Communications: An International Journal

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Proceedings of the CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2012

Transformation and the Corporate Communication Profession

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Rapid changes in global business practices, technology, and media require creative strategic integration of knowledge to "connect the dots"-- to see the patterns that others with more narrow training and experience do not.

The general public is dauntingly skeptical about corporate business practices, and this global reality demands constant and consistent demonstration of ethical behavior by corporate professionals, over and above a clear understanding of the transformations in media and business practices.

Three issues – Ethics; Technology and the social network; Political opportunities and risks within and across borders -- fuel the corporate communication transformation for multinational corporations. Meeting the challenge of these changes will be a key part of the strategy of successful corporations.

Ethics

In the light of popular opinion about business corruption and the perceived power gap between the corporation and the individual, corporations have struggled to re-articulate and reinvent the compact between the individual and the enterprise in a variety of formal and informal ways. Some of the more significant efforts in this direction set in the context of continuing concerns about business ethics.

The result of these concerns has been the emergence of formal "principles-based" codes of conduct, as well as the ongoing effort to rebuild public trust through the practice of Corporate Responsibility. The strategic adaptations taking place are an attempt to "normalize" the relationships between these social entities by making them both more transparent and more explicit in the context of new regulatory schemes in foreign as well as domestic operations. Corporate strategies in these critical areas include:

- Concerns about Corruption and Fraud
- Corporate Responsibility and the Corporation as Citizen
- Governance and the Global Corporation
- The Regulatory Environment for Ethical Global Practice

The growing perception of corporate communication professionals as counsel to the CEO and to the corporation suggests the nurturing of leadership capabilities in these critical areas.

Technology and the Social Network

The transformational impact of social media and Web 2.0 requires corporations to cultivate media and technology expertise. Successful corporations adapt to this rapidly changing technological, mediated, and ethical environment. Sustainable corporations focus on information relevant to

their success, and on being thought leaders in their business sectors through a tenacious pursuit of intellectual competence in the field. The complexity of operating in a multinational business environment with numerous constituencies also calls for professional expertise and familiarity with research tools and techniques.

The Internet has had a transformative influence on corporate communication from its beginnings to its current form as Web 2.0. That influence extends not only to the introduction of a wide array of new communication channels, but also to the very core of what we consider to be corporate communication. The extraordinarily high levels of interactivity and transparency enabled by the Internet have made the elemental practices of corporate communication – corporate reputation, employee communication, shareholder communication, community relations, and public affairs – unrecognizable to practitioners who entered the profession just a few years ago. For example, almost no multinational corporation sends a traditional "press release," using instead the "press room" section of its own website, as well as electronic distribution to all media outlets. And employee communication is almost exclusively done electronically from bulletin boards to holiday greetings; from vacation policies to benefits; from codes of ethics to letters from managers and executives.

The current transformation will continue, and it is likely that we will look back on this era as having changed not only the way companies communicate with these stakeholders, but the very nature of those relationships as well. We will be able to say in a few years that "the medium is the relationship," contrary to McLuhan's classic observation that the "medium is the message." Or perhaps we will adopt the concept proposed by Rich Teplitsky, head of the Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) Technology Section that "there are no more mediums, only messages."

Political Opportunities and Risks Within and Across Borders

In the first decade of the 21st century, a more truly global marketplace was created than had existed at any time since the decade preceding the First World War. Notwithstanding some reversals of this trend created by the global recession that began in 2008, the global marketplace created through the emergence of countries such as China, India, Brazil and Russia has transformed the nature of global relations for multinational companies.

There have been two principal drivers for this transformation. The first is the removal of regulatory barriers controlling foreign ownership of business assets in countries such as India and a parallel reduction in subsidies or protections for home grown industry champions. The second is the development of truly global supply chains involving wholly owned and wholly outsourced operations.

The combined power of these two shifts has brought about the decline of global corporate infrastructures based on having autonomous country or regional business units in favor of globally matrixed organizations. In these matrixed structures, responsibility for managing a brand globally, for example, could be headquartered in one country and transportation and logistics in another. In this model, employees responsible for marketing or transportation would report both to the global manager of their function as well as a country manager in their own country. Multiple reporting relationships become even more complicated in some contemporary organizations where an individual could be accountable to a country managing director, a global function leader, a key client relationship manager, and to the captain of an ad hoc continuous improvement task force. All of these developments have profound implications for the practice of global corporate relations, creating some new and reinforcing some old obstacles to effective corporate communication.

Focus on Recent Research

The CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends Study 2011 (See the CCI website for the report at: *www.corporatecomm.org/studies.html*). The "CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends Study 2011" included in-depth interviews in addition to the series of survey questions, for the corporate communication officers who chose to participate in the interviews confirms corporate communication as a strategic management function and has significant implications for professional practice worldwide, centered on these ten key findings:

- There has been a transformation of the corporate communication discipline through dramatic consolidation of internal and external functions -- marketing, public relations, and employee relations. Increases in internal focus are supported by greater budgets for corporate culture, intranet, and employee communication functions. Increases in external focus are shown through increased budget levels for reputation management, issues management, government relations, and social media functions. These increases underscore the advantages of empowering employees and customers.

- Increased pressure on corporate communicators as a result of continuing static budget and staff levels reflects the continued uncertainty in the global economy. Modest budget (28%) and staff (27.4%) increases reflect overall corporate caution in response to the global economic downturn, contrasting sharply with decreases in 2009. Nevertheless, communication executives remain optimistic that their budgets will **not be "among the first to be cut"** (88.2%), reflecting the value of the function. Decreasing resources continue to drive corporate communicators to accomplish even more with less. The situation creates an opportunity to leverage the corporation's culture and its employee "ambassadors" through media technology to add strategic advantage and value.

- Increased attention to corporate culture and employee communication is a response to continued uncertainty in global economic conditions, business model transformation, and the networked enterprise. Renewed internal focus is driven by an understanding of the employees' essential role in the networked enterprise and the need to boost employee morale, and reflect reluctance to commit resources to hiring additional staff. This presents an opportunity to position for either an economic recovery, or continued global economic weakness.

- Dramatic increases in complexity and speed are in response to social media's role and importance in corporate practice. Continued increases in the communication officers' responsibility for the social media function (84.3%, *up 6.3% from 2009*) and its budget (74.5% *up 10.5% from 2009*). There is also an increased use of vendors for social media (38.8%; *up from 28% in 2009*). The opportunity is to focus new technology internally and externally for clearly defined strategic purposes.

- Communication executives continue to see their primary role as "counsel to the CEO" and "manager of the company's reputation." Reputation management continues to grow in importance and in budget allocation. Strategic communication counsel has been cited as the primary role for corporate communication officers since the first CCI Study more than a decade ago. Reputation management requires a strategic partnership with the CEO.

- Corporate communication's responsibility for the management of Investor Relations has dramatically decreased. It is the lowest responsibility for the management of the IR function (15.7%) and budget (7.8%) since the first CCI Study and this reflects corporate uncertainty. However, corporate communications is overwhelmingly engaged with the Annual Report function (70.6%) and budget (60.8%). Communication with shareholders, the capital markets, and other stakeholders during a weak economy remains essential in maintaining positive relationships. Such uncertainty offers an opportunity to develop and communicate strategic understanding of the volatile business environment.

- Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (2010) aligns with leading practices. Most (75%) communication officers report that the new legislation has had "no," "limited," or "minimal" impact on corporate communication, adding that their transparency policies were in place before the legislation was passed. This provides an opportunity to demonstrate that your organization takes regulatory reform and consumer protection seriously, as well as to help regulators and lawmakers understand your businesses.

- The *Citizens United vs. the Federal Election Commission* Supreme Court decision (2010) highlights that leading corporate communication practices re-enforce non-partisanship. Communication officers report that the U.S. Supreme Court ruling has had "no," "limited," or "minimal" impact on corporate communication, adding that their corporate political campaign contribution policies are long standing and transparent. This situation offers an opportunity to demonstrate that your organization exercises its financial and political influence responsibly.

- Corporate communication officers report decreased use of vendors to help with critical functions, as well as slight increases in Media Relations, Public Relations, Community Relations, Intranet, and Social Media. They also report decreased use of vendors to help with critical functions, but slight increases in their use for Media Relations (up 3.9%), Public Relations (up 5%), Community Relations (3.6%), Intranet (1.5%), and Social Media (10.8%). Complexity and uncertainty drive the use of vendors, "interns," and "contingent workers," but dependence on outside experts may be at the expense of developing internal capability and expert counsel. However, global agencies do offer experience and expertise without long-term commitment.

- Communication officers report the development of an expanded skill set, with even greater emphasis on business acumen and the ability to articulate ideas and to persuade others. The demographic profile of top Corporate Communication officers describes a communication officer who is younger (56% 40 – 55; *in 2009 60% over 50*); better paid (48% above $300k; *in 2009 33% above $300k)*, better educated, and mostly male (75%; *in 2009 66.7%).* Because corporate communication executive officers are "middle-aged", and 1 out of 4 is paid over $500K, they might take advantage of the opportunity, and consider the different experiences between them and their staff in employee communication. They could then develop the business competencies of new staff and the leadership experience of managers.

These findings offer a clear picture of the dramatic transformation of the corporate communication profession over the last four to five years as a result of the three powerful forces

(discussed in Goodman, CCIJ Vol. 16 No.3, 2011, pp. 176 – 178.) – globalization, web 2.0, the networked enterprise (corporate business model) -- that have transformed the principles and practices governing the relationship between the corporation and its stakeholders:

For 2011 the overall goal of the "CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends Study" was to outline and analyze the *state of the art* for corporate communication practice in publicly-traded, multinational companies. It was determined in the first CCI study in 2000 to focus on publicly traded companies for several reasons. First, information in such companies is public and more readily accessible. Second, public companies are often in the vanguard of corporate practices because of the pressures of the capital market, their need to respond to the media, and the realities of the global marketplace. And finally, public companies have a greater understanding that their "license to operate" comes from public approval and is maintained by public trust.

The CCI Study 2011 continues the studies from 2000 to 2009. The results of these studies are posted on the CCI website at www.corporatecomm.org/studies.

The CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2012

The annual CCI Conference on Corporate Communication is a clear opportunity for corporate communicators to develop professionally and to bring value to their companies. It is also an opportunity for scholars to share their knowledge and research. It has been the premise of this conference that relationships among scholars and practitioners are an essential element of the social glue that binds civilized people together. And international meetings are important to build and maintain trust among professionals with common interests and goals, but who are disbursed around the world.

It is in this spirit that once again corporate executives and university scholars met at Baruch College/CUNY, New York, New York to exchange information and explore communication from a global perspective.

The CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2012 is intended to:

- Illuminate the interest in corporate communication as a strategic function in organizational success.
- Explore the influence of globalization on the corporate communication profession as it relates to theory, practice, roles, processes, and ethics.
- Continue as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among industry and university representatives.
- Indicate trends and provide analysis for communication professionals, university faculty, and others interested in corporate communication.
- Disseminate the conference discussions through the publication of the conference Proceedings, and selected in *Corporate Communication: An International Journal.*

The three-day conference features speakers from: Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Italy, Latvia, Malaysia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey, USA and Viet Nam.

The papers published here were selected based on a peer review process. They were edited for the Proceedings by Christina Genest, CCI Associate Director, with the editorial assistance of students and graduates of the MA in Corporate Communication, Department of Communication Studies, Baruch College, City University of New York (New York, NY): Ellissa Corwin, Samantha Gouy, Melissa Logan, Kelly Phillips & Michelle Sack and and the students

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Annual Reports As Autobiography

A Tale of a Television Company

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Once straightforward, accounts of a company's activities and fiscal performance in the preceding year, annual reports (ARs) have grown polysemic as they become enriched with graphics, visuals, and texts. Accordingly, they serve as important framing devices through which a company can narrate its own story. Using the ARs of ABS-CBN, one of the biggest television networks in the Philippines, between 1996 and 2010 as a case study, this paper seeks, at the theoretical and methodological levels, to apply Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework in the study of ARs and, at the practical level, to highlight ABS-CBN's corporate self-personification. Findings indicate the utility of CDA in understanding the annual report, both as imbued with meaning on its own and in relation to its stakeholders. Moreover, findings explicate ABS-CBN's narrative about its standing as a national yet increasingly global network that has faced significant challenges in the course of 15 years.

Keywords: Philippines, Annual reports, Corporate personification, Television, Critical discourse analysis

The Structure and Content of ARs

The annual report (AR) is a corporation's summary of the previous year (Subramanian, Insley, & Blackwell, 1993). Originally, the AR comprised a letter from the chair (Marino Jr, 1995) and a straightforward presentation of requisite financial information for the use of shareholders and stockbrokers (Penrose, 2008). Indeed, the balance sheet, the auditor's report, and the cash flow and income statements remain the most important sections of the AR among current and prospective investors who use it to make financial decisions (Alattar & Al-Khater, 2007). However, others argue that the AR's narrative section is more important than the financial reports it precedes, because it provides context to the presented data (Penrose, 2008).

The chair's letter used to be the main, if not the only, part of the AR's narrative section. However, the narrative has since been enriched with thematic content presented using graphical (Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008; Courtis, 1997; Penrose, 2008), visual (Anderson & Imperia, 1992; Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008; Bujaki & McConomy, 2010; Ditlevsen, 2012; Pasadeos & Yeap, 1991), and textual (Hyland, 1998; Rutherford, 2005; Tewari, 2011; Yuthas, Rogers, & Dillard, 2002) elements. Together, these elements help portray the corporation to its increasingly diverse audiences (Campbell, McPhail, & Slack, 2009), because, while the AR is still primarily designed for current and prospective investors (David, 2001), it now also has to communicate the company and its previous year to employees (Anderson & Imperia, 1992), customers, and other stakeholders (Tewari, 2011). From being a purely financial report, the AR has become a key strategic communication tool for promoting investor and public relations (Ditlevsen, 2012). Accordingly, the production of ARs is a big business, amounting to US$5 billion as early as 1994 (Poe, 1994).

The AR's changing nature has been the subject of research for nearly two decades. Pasadeos and Yeap (1991) find that the physical content of ARs has changed to make space for the additional textual matter. However, they do not notice an increase in illustrations, and surmise

that designers focus on the variety, rather than on the quantity, of visuals and graphics. Lee, meanwhile, notes the importance of visuals, which he says are used to influence various external stakeholders (Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008). David (2001) looks at ARs across five decades and notes the combination of graphic design and photography in their recent iterations. She says that recent ARs use the "page-design techniques of magazines" (David, 2001, p. 205). More recent studies reinforce the continuing changes to the AR, particularly the evolution of its narrative content and aesthetic elements (Campbell, McPhail, & Slack, 2009).

Beattie, Dhanani, and Jones (2008, pp. 181-182) say that the transformation of the AR "from a rather dull financial document to a colorful marketing and public relations document in which the financial statements are relegated to a technical 'appendix'" is "a result of the changing corporate reporting environment." The inclusion of internal stakeholders (such as employees) and external stakeholders (such as the members of the firm's host society) as audiences of the AR reflects what Beattie, Dhanani, and Jones (2008) identify as changes in legislation, regulation, and management practices. Moreover, according to Tewari (2011), intense business competition compels companies to include corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in their ARs as a way to create positive images for themselves and to differentiate them from their competitors.

Corporate Personality and ARs as Narratives

Today's ARs, with their texts and images, thus convey "the personality and philosophy of the firm to the readers" (Anderson & Imperia, 1992, p. 113). ARs provide a way to understand corporate personality, an abstract concept that has received much attention in recent literature. Corporate personality, according to research, manifests through the actions of an organization as a unit (Melewar, 2003), the behavior of its employees (Ashman & Winstanley, 2007), or the adjectives used to describe the organization and its employees (Kim, Baek, & Martin, 2010; Sung & Yang, 2008). Chun and Davies (2006, p. 139) define corporate personality in terms of how "a stakeholder distinguishes an organization, expressed in terms of human characteristics".

Corporate personality is important because stakeholders use it as a benchmark for their relationships with an organization. For instance, Chun and Davies (2006) argue that agreeableness—which encompasses warmth, empathy, and integrity—is one of the five factors of corporate personality very important to employee satisfaction. Moreover, they argue, agreeableness as a whole promotes levels of satisfaction among employees and customers. Competence, enterprise, chic, and ruthlessness are the other factors that Chun and Davies (2006) identify. Other researchers have created different typologies for corporate personality. Keller and Richey (2006, p. 76) say that successful businesses have traits pertaining to the heart (passionate and compassionate), the mind (creative and disciplined), and the body (agile and collaborative). Specific to corporate brands, meanwhile, Aaker (1997) identifies five personality dimensions: (1) sincerity, (2) excitement, (3) competence, (4) sophistication, and (5) ruggedness.

Researchers have argued that ARs provide a gateway to corporate personality. Breton (2009), for instance, says that corporations use their ARs to articulate positive images of themselves, while Courtis (1997) says that decisions about what the organizations present in their ARs indicate what they believe will appeal to their readers. Meanwhile, Ditlevsen (2012) argues that changes within organizations redound to changes on the AR.

By treating ARs or components of them as narratives, researchers are able to surface corporate personality. They do this by treating the entire AR as a genre (Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008; White & Hanson, 2000) or by distinguishing the narrative content, such as the chair's letter and other essays from the numeric financial data (Breton, 2009; Rutherford, 2005). Rutherford (2005, p. 349), for instance, considers the accounting narratives in ARs as being

"composed and read within a dense and complex web of stakeholder communication, which includes interim reports, preliminary announcements, analyst presentations, corporate Web sites, media releases, direct contact with large investors, and, of course, the remainder of the annual report itself." David says that the distinction between the narrative content and the financial review section is important, especially for the diverse audiences of ARs. She writes:

> For readers who may find the financial review section of annual reports too technical, the narrative sections, which include the executive's letter and summaries of operations, often contain stylish graphics and artistic photographs that capture attention and designs of text that allow readers to scan the information. The content of the narrative sections provokes interpretive and emotional reactions that result in annual reports offering more to readers than data on the company's yearly progress. These sections embed cultural beliefs and values that may affect how readers envision the company, the industry, and even the business practices of the culture. (David, 2001, p. 195)

Beattie, Dhanani, and Jones (2008), meanwhile, consider accounting narratives as the sum of storytelling narratives (the chair's statement, the chief executive's review, and the operating and financial review) and descriptive narratives (the directors' report, statement of directors' responsibilities, remuneration report, and corporate governance report). Approached this way, accounting narratives arguably create a genre because "they are discourses directed to the past, future and present of corporate activity; they are addressed to recurrent problems; and they are elements in the system of corporate functions" (White & Hanson, 2000, p. 305).

The Modalities of ARs

Annual themes are a new feature of ARs, conveyed through elements such as the cover, a slogan, a feature essay or series of essays, or a visual motif (David, 2001). Pasadeos and Yeap (1991) quantify thematic content by the amount of space devoted to the Chief Executive Officer's message, personnel, operations, social responsibility, finances, and other content. This paper, however, reads annual themes and the three other modalities literally, interpretively, and reflexively, in line with the qualitative approach to textual analysis (Mason, 2002). David (2001) says that the themes in the narrative section are an advantage of AR over other strategic communication tools, because they allow organizations to connect and negotiate meaning with their stakeholders.

The written content, together with financial data, was among the original elements of ARs. However, most studies about content focus on its understandability rather than treating it as discursive material (Tewari, 2011). Readability studies of written content indicate that ARs contain too much detail and jargon (Frownfelter-Lohrke & Fulkerson, 2001), and that they have become easier to read but their language is more vivid (Pasadeos & Yeap, 1991). However, although readability approaches offer an objective method of content analysis, they cannot measure the way text is organized within a document (Breton, 2009; Subramanian, Insley, & Blackwell, 1993). Other quantitative content analyses (Tewari, 2011) also provide objective readings of text, but their reliance on frequencies can be limited where groups of text are "so similar across a large number of words as to undermine the significance of the rankings" (Rutherford, 2005, p. 360).

Framework and Methodology

Conceptualizing ARs as communication instruments (Breton, 2009), particularly as narratives or as genre, facilitates their study as discourses (Hyland, 1998). Discourses are bodies of communication; understanding the relationships among their internal elements and how they interact with other discourses clarifies their meaning. In his Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework (see Figure 1), Fairclough (1995) identifies three layers through which we can examine discourse: as text, as discursive practice, and as social practice. Following this framework, this paper explores three objectives:

1. At the micro-level, or the level of the text, to examine the AR's thematic and textual modalities;
2. At the meso-level, or the level of discursive practice, to analyze how the two modalities interact to personify the corporation behind the AR;
3. At the macro-level, or the level of social practice, to situate the corporation and its AR relative to issues of time, space, and service.

The case study for this research is ABS-CBN, the biggest media network in the Philippines. It traces its roots to the Alto Broadcasting System, which in 1953 made the first full broadcast in the country, and the Chronicle Broadcasting Network of the Lopez family, which remains its majority owner. The government sequestered ABS-CBN in 1972 following the declaration of Martial Law, and a crony of President Ferdinand Marcos took over the network. In 1986, President Corazon Aquino returned ABS-CBN to the Lopezes, who, within a year, made the network the most popular in the country. Today, ABS-CBN reaches 97% of Philippine households. In 2010, it had a share of 43% among daytime national audiences and 46% among evening primetime national audiences. Moreover, it broadcast 16 of the top 20 weekday programs and 20 of the top 23 weekend programs in the country.

ABS-CBN, the corporate motto of which is "In the service of the Filipino", became a corporation in 1992, when it was first listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange. In 1999, ABS-CBN Holdings Corporation was also listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange. This conglomerate oversees ABS-CBN's stake in UHF and VHF free TV, interactive media, cable television, AM and FM radio, cinema, recording, magazine publication, licensing, and public service. ABS-CBN International, launched in 1994, exports ABS-CBN programs and operates affiliate stations abroad.

ABS-CBN's ARs from 1996 to 2010, retrieved from the corporation's investor relations website (http://ir.abs-cbn.com/), supply the dataset for this study. The longitudinal approach to the CDA of ARs (Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008; Campbell, McPhail, & Slack, 2009) provides a temporal perspective on changes in corporate personality (Ditlevsen, 2012) and examines micro-, meso-, and macro-level meanings of the AR for each year and across years. The corpus (Hyland, 1998), together with the literature, also allows an intertextual reading of the ARs. As in other research that uses CDA, this paper does not infer stakeholder reactions to what the ARs present and surface. Fairclough (1995) clarifies that CDA focuses on interpreting text, rather than producing its use. Thus, CDA in this paper surfaces ABS-CBN's account of its story by examining the words and images in its ARs rather than the interviews with its corporate representatives or its stakeholders. When studying a media organization's corporate personality, it is important to consider the corporation's self-framing, to see whether this is congruent with how audiences perceive its character. Studies have shown that television news media, for example, can be characterized as competent, timely, and dynamic (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2008) and that news media brands can be trustworthy, dynamic, sincere, sophisticated, or tough (Kim, Baek, & Martin, 2010).

Many studies approach ARs qualitatively (Hyland, 1998; Penrose, 2008), as this paper does. Research has used this approach to study the polysemy of ARs (Breton, 2009), in order to "show the dissonance between the subject and the representation of this subject that the sign portrays" (David, 2001, p. 199) or to explore how text obfuscates (Hrasky, Mason, & Wills, 2009) or discloses (Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008) information about a company. Research has also applied semiotics, or the study of meaning, to imagery in ARs (Ditlevsen, 2012; Penrose, 2008). Through this approach, studies have shown how ARs use "idealized images that evoke the beauty and efficiency of business locations and operations, eliminating reference to the less positive realities of the business world, such as the dangers and pressures to workers and injuries to the environment that business and industry create" (David, 2001, p. 198).

Such qualitative approaches particularly apply to ARs that are complex genres, imbued with different meanings for various stakeholders. These genres are complex because they need to provide "a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs" as well as "a positive image of the company" (Ditlevsen, 2012, p. 97). This is particularly difficult in instances where organizations have to cater to stakeholders who may have incompatible demands (White & Hanson, 2000). Using CDA to analyze ARs thus contributes to the increasingly diverse ways in which ARs have been studied (Hrasky, Mason, & Wills, 2009).

To implement the CDA, this paper examines elements of ABS-CBN's ARs (see Figure 1). At the micro-level, it investigates the structure and content of the ARs to parse their modalities. At the meso-level, it constructs patterns across thematic and textual modalities to analyze the recurrent stories through which ABS-CBN presents itself. At the macro-level, it contextualizes the ARs' stories as social practice within notions of time, space, and service. Ditlevsen's (2012) work informs this qualitative, multi-pronged approach to the elements of AR.

Results and Discussion

Micro-level: The Structure and Content of ABS-CBN's ARs

ABS-CBN's ARs underwent significant changes in 15 years. From its straightforward 24-page format in 1996 with the Financial Report and the Report of the Chair and the President, the AR became a full-color and thematically designed 99-page document by 2010. ABS-CBN's expansion from a primarily broadcast company to a multi-media conglomerate necessitated a lengthier section on finances. However, the later ARs also devote additional space to new sections about the company and operational highlights (OHs) of the previous year. This trend started with a short feature entitled "Your Company" in 1997 and became fully realized in 1998, through an OH that draws parallels between the previous year and 45 years of Philippine television.

In the 15 years, ABS-CBN changed its approach to ARs. The financial section expanded and moved from the second half of the report to the middle, sandwiched between the Report to the Shareholders and the images of the board and its employees. The Report to the Shareholders also changed. Until 2008, the chair and the president signed it together. But, in 2009 and 2010, they provided separate letters.

The section on performance highlights (PHs) does not consistently appear across the ARs. It was absent in 1996 and from 2005 to 2008. In 2004, having lost its 16-year market leadership in the Metro Manila to its rival GMA Network the previous year, ABS-CBN downsized the charts and tables featured in the AR from six to three. Charts on overall channel share and top-rating programs in Metro Manila and two other metropolitan centers replaced the charts for overall comparative channel audience share in Metro Manila and nine key cities. This

report excluded overall comparative channel advertizement minutes and the listings of top-rating programs, entertainment programs, and news and current affairs programs, although it had featured them since 1998. When the PHs section was reinstated in 2009, the variables it presented were no longer consistent with those in 2004 and subsequently in 2010.

Meso-level: ABS-CBN's ARs and the Corporate Discourse

Defining the year that was: The thematic modality

The cover and the OHs serve as the key devices with which the ARs highlight the theme of a particular year. From 1996 to 1999, only the text implies the theme, particularly in the Report of the Chair and the President (RCP). However, starting in 1999—with the feature on Lopez Jr, the chairman who helped to found ABS-CBN in the 1960s and rebuild it from 1987—the themes grow more pronounced. The ARs define these themes through extended essays and design elements such as icons, colors, and typefaces.

The ARs recurrently invoke the history of ABS-CBN, on its own or in relation to the Philippines. The feature on Lopez Jr, for instance, draws parallels between his life, the rise of ABS-CBN, and national history. The RCP states, "We stood at the end of the year with mixed feelings about the year that had passed…. It was the year we paid our final respects to our Kapitan Geny Lopez, whose determination rebuilt ABS-CBN to heights that surpass its former glory. From the ashes of Martial Law to the crumbling walls of a run-down studio, the most powerful transmitter in the world has arisen." ABS-CBN resurrects Lopez Jr's legacy in the 2004 AR, where the network reflects on his words as advice about how it can and will regain market leadership in Metro Manila's ratings game.

The ARs also highlight how the story of ABS-CBN is the story of Philippine television. This theme begins in the enumerative timeline of the 1996 AR, the RCP of which states, "1996 was a milestone in ABS-CBN's colorful history as the network celebrated its 50th year of committed communications and half-century of dedicated public service." The 1998 AR features a more comprehensive, historically themed essay that includes then-and-now accounts of celebrities and employees who worked with ABS-CBN through the years. The network also used the historical frame in 2002 when celebrating its 50th anniversary, the AR for which is rendered in gold.

Although the content of most OHs focuses on divisions (1998, 2003, 2007, 2008, and 2010) and select shows and initiatives (2001 and 2006), the ARs present this content through different themes. As I stated earlier, ABS-CBN presents the 1998 divisions through the purview of people with whom it holds long-term relationships. The use of people to talk about the divisions is a framing device that the ARs apply in various ways. The 2000 AR employs it by using the stories of employees as they proceed through their days "going through the extra mile," as the feature was titled. The 2003 AR uses this style for the theme "We are ABS-CBN. We are the people working for you." In this AR, employees from different divisions write about their experiences. A brief pitch about the employees' divisions accompanies these personal essays. The device also unites individual Filipinos in a collective to highlight the relationship between ABS-CBN divisions and their audiences. The 2009 AR features stories about members of the public in relation to ABS-CBN's initiatives. The section on radio features Major Mario Topacio, a commanding officer of the Philippine army. It links ABS-CBN Radio and the major as both "reliable even in times of crisis," as the essay was sub-titled. The section describes Major Topacio "as one of the first men to respond. He endured more than 24 hours of retrieval and

rescue operations, withstanding hunger and physical exhaustion, all in the name of helping his fellow Filipino."

The themes of the latter four ARs talk about the connection between ABS-CBN and its audience. They most often render this connection as a journey that ABS-CBN shares with Filipinos in and outside the Philippines. Under the banner "A whole new world for Filipinos," the 2005 AR shows a jeepney—the country's primary mode of public transport, which has become a national icon—traveling around a globe, the equator of which is marked by the concentric circles of ABS-CBN's logo. Journey as a framing device is strongest in the 2007 AR, which uses images of flight to explicate the theme "One world. One network. One journey". This copy explains the cover of the 2010 AR: "Taking to heart our commitment to journey with Filipinos wherever they may be, we find ways to innovate and stay connected with our customers by creating relevant products and services that are made available to them at the time, place, and medium of their choice." Identification with audiences is also the theme of the 2006 AR, which proclaims "A Kapamilya Nation" where various ABS-CBN programs, products, and services are integral to the Filipino way of life. "Kapamilya", which means "a fellow member of the family", is a key branding strategy that ABS-CBN launched in 2003 as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations.

Describing ABS-CBN: The text modality of the ARs

An organization with a sense of history

In the ARs, ABS-CBN constantly invokes its pioneering role in Philippine broadcasting. In the 2002 AR, the RCP states, "This year marks the 50th anniversary of television in the Philippines, and today, as it did fifty years ago, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation (ABS-CBN) stands at the forefront of an industry distinguished for continuous innovation and creativity." The ARs of other years also highlight the link between past, present, and future, such as the 1998 AR, in which the OHs note, "Forty-five years after introducing television to the Philippines, ABS-CBN remains poised to break new ground in the field of broadcasting and to face the challenge of the new millennium." The 2007 RCP evokes this again when it says, "As your company approaches its 55th year in 2008, the fiery passion that gave birth to ABS-CBN continues to drive us."

ABS-CBN also links itself with Philippine history. In the 1997 AR, the feature "This is ABS-CBN" highlights how, "On the occasion of the company's 50th Anniversary of Committed Communications and Service to the Filipino, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines awarded ABS-CBN with the first Special Commemorative Postage Stamp Issue honoring a Filipino media network, thereby institutionalizing the significant role ABS-CBN plays in nation-building." The 2007 RCP cites this link more concretely, noting, "With our history strongly linked with that of the country, we are dedicated to nation-building."

The earlier ARs quite frequently cite ABS-CBN's role in introducing technology to the Philippines. The 1996 RCP says, "Unlike our competitors who have gone for quantity, we have concentrated on quality by establishing state-of-the-art broadcast complexes with an average of 25Kw, enabling us to transmit the best signals and excellent locally produced programs to our provincial audiences." However, the pursuit of creativity and service always tempers the focus on ABS-CBN's technological savvy. The 1997 feature on the company says, "ABS-CBN pioneered innovations in broadcast technologies…developed creative broadcast designs…and championed the broadcast media as an effective tool for social change." The following year was about "fortifying its creative and technical expertise with cutting-edge technology." A decade later, the 2007 AR echoed this description of ABS-CBN's approach. The RCP states, "And consistent with the spirit that gave life to us, we journey into the future powered by technology but driven by

heart." The next year's The Chairman's Report reiterates this: "We remain passionately committed to creat[ing] and acquir[ing] the best content and deliver[ing] it to the public we serve, through the widest network of platforms that technology allows."

The leader through its crises

In 1997, ABS-CBN also used history to frame its market leadership. The feature about the company in that year's AR says, "In less than six months after its re-launch in March 1987, ABS-CBN rewrote broadcast history by rising from the cellar and claiming its enviable niche as industry leader and pacesetter—a feat unchallenged to this very day." Positioning itself as the market leader was part of ABS-CBN's corporate rhetoric; that it maintained this position during crises in local and international markets and politics was especially important. However, in 2004, when it lost its leadership in Metro Manila, ABS-CBN became more introspective about its place in the industry.

"In 1996," according to the RCP, "ABS-CBN remained the dominant leader in the industry with a 41% audience share in Metro Manila compared to our closest competitor's 22%. In the provinces, we attracted as much as 70% audience share while our closest rival had 8.2% for both prime and non-primetime slots." The RCP uses industry benchmarks again in 1998, when it states, "This growth was achieved due to the company's commanding lead in ratings and audience share, more than double the next highest-ranking competitor, allowing it to increase both its advertising rates and minutes." The bravado becomes very strong in the 1999 AR, which reports that the previous year "was a year your company ruled all media, dominating its traditional hallmark of TV and radio broadcasting, while scaling new heights in related fields of entertainment such as music recording and movie production."

However, in 2004, a sense of hubris pervades the AR, which ponders the legacy of ABS-CBN. That year's RCP says, "the sting of breaking a sixteen-year winning streak had to hurt. … Until we took stock and reflected. And if looking back on half a century's worth of your Company's history has shown us anything, it is our ability to endure adversity." The following year, this ponderous tone continues. The 2005 RCP states, "Another year has passed. And slowly but surely, with the introduction of new shows from a revitalized programming group, we are rebuilding our strength in primetime and beginning to close the gap that our leading competitor established in Metro Manila." In 2006, when ABS-CBN regained its market leadership, the announcement was similarly reflective and subdued:

> After we lost the ratings leadership in Mega Manila 3 years ago, we vowed to regain it with vigor. The road to recovery has not been easy. … We started by examining ourselves. In the painful process, we rediscovered ABS-CBN's leadership. We rediscovered who we are—an institution with a great history and deep commitment to values and service.

Subsequent ARs, however, hold the same confidence that ABS-CBN had before 2004. The 2007 RCP says, "The year 2007 counts among ABS-CBN's banner years. Buoyed by the confirmation of national leadership, political spending, and expanding global business, the company shows outstanding financial performance." Three years later, "2010 was a great year for ABS-CBN. We benefitted from the overall growth of the Philippine economy, which grew 7.04% compared to 1.06% in 2009. … ABS-CBN remained the benchmark of Philippine TV programming, suiting the tastes and reflecting the values of our people."

An organization that survives internal and external crises is a recurrent self-framing device for ABS-CBN. The 2002 AR's essay on ABS-CBN's 50th anniversary demonstrates this:

> After 50 years, ABS-CBN TV has been through the best of times and the worst of times. It has undergone many changes, but ABS-CBN circa 2003 still has many things in common with its 1953 incarnation: the same pioneering spirit, the quest for excellence, the drive to delight audiences, and the fortitude to make it through tough times. The people behind the network firmly believe that for a long time to come, Philippine TV will remain an ABS-CBN story.

The 2007 RCP describes this succinctly: "The company's long and colorful history has been marked by triumphant victories and painful challenges."

Indeed, most ARs note some type of crisis and explain how ABS-CBN navigated through it. In 1997, when Asian markets tumbled, the RCP said, "The economic crisis and the currency turmoil had considerable effect on the movie industry…Despite this trend, your Network's integrated approach to the film business has continued to produce entertainment products that enhance the ABS-CBN library of ancillary rights." The following year's RCP reiterates this: "As you will see in the next few pages, your company performed extremely well despite the gloomy outlook and economic uncertainties that prevailed in the year just passed."

The ARs also note crises in Philippine politics and use them as contexts for the strength of ABS-CBN. In 2000 and 2001, for instance, the Philippines were in turmoil because of the impeachment process against former President Joseph Estrada. The 2000 AR, however, lauds ABS-CBN's performance in this otherwise difficult time as it states, "And as we have proven time and again, going the extra mile is not without its rewards. In a year that saw a lot of Philippine companies show their vulnerability to the uncertainties of the economic and political arena, ABS-CBN continued to buck the trend and show double-digit revenue and net income growth." The AR reiterates this the following year:

> For most of 2001, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation faced trials that threatened the very foundation upon which its success had been built. By the end of the year, however, your Company still stands as the country's premier content, media, and entertainment conglomerate. We prevailed over difficulties and came out on top—leaner, stronger, more resilient, and ready for recovery.

During the economic slowdown of recent years, ABS-CBN reused this approach to describe itself. The 2009 AR is an example:

> At the beginning of the year, the outlook for 2009 was dim amidst a weak business environment locally and globally. But even under such an environment, your company once again proved that excellent products and services founded on a passionate drive to serve deliver sound business results even during trying times.

A servant corporation

The ARs constantly frame ABS-CBN within its corporate mission of "In the service of the Filipino." Pronouncements that ABS-CBN is a market leader always link to its role as a servant of the audience. The 1997 company profile says, "After the revolution of the people in 1986, during another time of beginnings, ABS-CBN was reborn with a renewed spirit and a renewed commitment to the Filipino people." Meanwhile, according to the following year's AR, ABS-CBN undertook its activities "in order to deliver the finest in Filipino news and entertainment, create the best working environment for our employees, and generate the highest returns to our shareholders, all in the service of the Filipino."

The words of Lopez Jr on the concept of service are the centerpiece of the 1999 AR. Among his quotations is, "Public service is the only reason for our existence. Profit alone is not enough of a reason to go into business. But if we can serve people, then I think our growth and our success will follow. If we take care of our customers, then they will take care of us." The 2004 AR recalls this. Following the network's loss of market leadership, it says, "Geny Lopez said ABS-CBN's only reason for being is to serve the Filipino. And by word and deed he taught us what true service means."

The ARs do not use Philippine crises only as contexts for ABS-CBN's performance and character as a market leader. They also use them to explain ABS-CBN's sense of service. The 2000 AR's RCP says that the network's role in the impeachment proceedings

> is our commitment to the Filipino people—where our coverage of the impeachment proceeding[s], practically non-stop on our news channel and interrupting our regular programming on Channel 2, brought the issue from the halls of the senate to the parliament of the streets where it was finally resolved.

The RCPs of later years recall this sense of service:

> Indeed, the less fortunate [were] in the forefront of our consciousness this year, as 2005 started with recovery efforts to bring normal life back to disaster-stricken areas beginning with those affected by the landslides and floods that hit the province of Quezon at the end of the prior year. Funds we had raised via a telethon entitled Sagip Kapamilya (Rescue the Fellow Family Member) helped build 200 houses during the year.

The following year's AR continues this theme:

> True to our mission of service, we are with our countrymen in times of need. … In 2006, we were also in the forefront of providing relief for victims of super typhoons Milenyo and Reming through our Sagip Kapamilya program. We helped generate badly needed funds and logistical support to help our countrymen in their rebuilding efforts.

Workers for the people

Beyond its CSR practices, ABS-CBN frames its work and the labor of its employees as service to the public. The 2001 OHs say, "The ABS-CBN culture recognizes and praises entrepreneurial drive, solid work ethic, and most of all, the courage to do what needs to be done. To work for ABS-CBN is to commit to doing whatever it takes to serve fellow Filipinos." The AR invokes this idea again the following year:

> At the core of these is ABS-CBN's serious commitment to feel and to understand the needs of its audience and the market as a whole. And more important, to quickly and effectively respond to its call. As the cliché goes, "the customer is always right." What could be more basic and true.

In separate letters to the shareholders, the chair and the president capture this spirit in the 2008 AR. The chair writes, "We will journey with them to the future as we continue to capture the imagin[ation] and enrich the mind, touch the heart and lighten the spirit—bringing closer to each other beyond the borders of time and space." The president, meanwhile, writes, "We will remain strong because we are firmly dedicated to a mission of service to the Filipino people. We

perpetually touch their lives; they continuously give us their trust. We mutually bring out the best in us." The 2009 and 2010 ARs also use this approach.

In 2006, however, whether ABS-CBN indeed worked to serve its audience was put into question when 78 people were killed and around 400 people injured at a stampede during the anniversary of its flagship noontime show. The Chairman's Report uses its employees as a frame to address the issue:

> By the start of 2006, the whole organization was poised to fly. Then the ULTRA tragedy happened. … There were not a few who believed that the institution would sink in the depths of such an unimaginably tragic event. However, in this worst of times, the rediscovered roots stood the test. The organization went through fire and gold shone through. Our employees came in droves to serve and withstood the darkest days.

The President's Message of 2010 also makes this connection: "But more than knowledge and skills, the strength of our human resource comes from their genuine desire to help make life better for all Filipinos. Our ability to connect with the Filipino is achieved only through authentic empathy."

In its ARs, ABS-CBN frames itself as a company that is proud of its employees. The 2002 RCP notes the work of the people when it states, "No top-rated show, no certified box-office hit, no multi-platinum record, is made without a group of creative individuals working together, often as one team (though sometimes agreeably not), but always passionately committed to creating the best content they can produce." In 2009, this sentiment is again present in the President's Message: "We remained true to our talent and employees. We continued to invest in creative talent and employees through continuous training and development, a process we started years ago but continue to refine and expand."

A global company

With the launch of its international arm, ABS-CBN started to frame itself as a global company reaching out to Filipinos overseas. The 2000 RCP, for example, says, "It is in our presence abroad—where we were not content at being the only source of Filipino entertainment to over seven million overseas foreign workers and instead evolved into a one-stop shop for all their needs." The 2002 AR picks this up again, and the 2004 RCP says, "a similar pledge to serve the Filipino people wherever they may be in the world has made The Filipino Channel or TFC the primary source of home-grown entertainment and news to over 1.6 million of our countrymen overseas."

Starting in 2005, ABS-CBN drew parallels between its move towards overseas markets and the experiences of migrant workers from the Philippines. The 2005 RCP says, "Following our countrymen, as their desire to provide a better life for their families bring[s] them overseas, made us realize how small our planet really is." The 2006 Chairman's Report also notes this: "We continued the expansion of our business outside the Philippines. … All these we do to improve our ability to serve the Filipino abroad, our modern-day economic heroes."

<u>Diverse and unique</u>

ABS-CBN's expansion from a broadcasting to a multi-media network resulted in its framing itself as a diverse and unique organization. Referring to its progress in diversification, ABS-CBN has described itself as "a total entertainment and information company whose seeming obsession is to build, serve and propagate." The 1998 OHs reiterate this, arguing that the synergy within the company "will lead ABS-CBN, pioneer leader in Philippine television, to the fulfillment of its vision as a Total Information and Entertainment Network, into and beyond the year 2000." According to the 2007 RCP, this vision has become a reality. It says, "Over the past few years, your company has evolved into a media conglomerate far from just a dominant TV and Radio network."

In the process of its expansion, ABS-CBN started to describe itself as unique. The 2000 AR explains that going the extra mile "is what makes the Company unique in the Philippine media and entertainment landscape and what sets it apart from all its competitors, old and new alike." Similarly, citing the company's diversified holdings, the 2002 RCP says, "Today, ABS-CBN is the only Philippine multi-media conglomerate with platforms in television, radio, cable television, motion picture production, music recording, internet and magazine publishing, uniquely positioned to offer customers unparalleled opportunities in advertising and cross promotion."

Macro-level: ABS-CBN's ARs and the National Discourse

ABS-CBN's corporate discourse informs and is informed by Philippine society. Three themes emerge at the intersection between ABS-CBN's corporate discourse and Philippine national discourse. These themes pertain to the continuum of time, the expansion of space, and the constancy of service.

<u>The continuum of time</u>

The ARs, as they talk about the year just past and plans for the future, contain a temporal element. As a narrative device for ABS-CBN, however, the ARs move beyond the past year, unlike the requisite financial reports. Instead, the ARs locate ABS-CBN within a historical continuum in which the company grows and expands by itself and in relation to Philippine and global polity.

ABS-CBN's ARs regularly dwell on the network's role as a pioneer in Philippine broadcasting and its continuing leadership in the industry. With this framing, the ARs go beyond chronicling only the network. They also serve as a reference in Philippine broadcasting history as they revisit how ABS-CBN was founded as the country's first television company, sequestered during Martial Law, and succeeded with the return of democracy, private enterprise, and free press. At the same time, although not with the same intensity and regularity, they serve as a timeline for external events, such as the 1997 Asian economic crises, the 2001 impeachment trial, and the many man-made and natural disasters in the Philippines. The ARs cite successes in Philippine economy as bases for good years, and use economic slowdown and political turmoil to highlight resilience through crises.

More recent ARs depict this relationship between the corporate and national stories as a journey that ABS-CBN and Filipinos—both in and outside the country—take together as a family. However, ABS-CBN's loss of market leadership in 2004 meant a temporary break in discourse linking its corporate story to the national discourse of a growing Philippine economy.

Thus, instead of using the nation as context, the company looked at its own history, particularly through the legacy of its founder, Lopez Jr. This internal crisis marked a change in the voice of ABS-CBN; it moved from the bravado of its 16-year market leadership to the more measured pronouncements of its subsequent recapture of the Metro Manila audience. The crisis also resulted in a reconfiguration of the network's ARs. The variables presented in the PHs, which had remained constant since 1997, changed in 2004 before disappearing for four years. Even when they returned, the variables were in flux. Thus, this aspect of temporal continuity in the ARs had ceased.

The expansion and enrichment of space

The ARs define growth in terms of financial returns, the ratings and audience shares of different television programs, and the diversification of ABS-CBN's businesses. However, a closer reading of the ARs reveals parallels between these measures of growth and the expansion and enrichment of space in terms of employees, the industry, media platforms, and the national audience.

The expansion of space in the shared discourse of ABS-CBN and the nation is most clearly articulated in the ARs' increasing focus on the global Filipino. The early ARs focus on Filipinos within the Philippine state, noting the pioneering technologies that ABS-CBN introduced in the country to connect Filipinos across the archipelago. This approach paralleled the government's efforts to foster nation-building after the return of democracy in 1986. However, once ABS-CBN reached almost all Philippine households in the country, its attention shifted to the global Filipino community, composed of migrant workers, overseas residents, and former Philippine citizens.

By expanding its corporate mission to "In the service of the Filipino…worldwide," ABS-CBN, like the national government, recognized the economic contributions of the expatriate Philippine community. This attention on the global could have distracted from the focus on the local. Instead, the ARs, in line with government rhetoric, frame overseas Filipinos as part of the state by essentializing their identity through traditional Philippine values and iconography. In other words, the ARs articulate the global through the local.

Another rendition of enriched and expanded spaces pertains to the mediated networks that connect Filipinos locally and globally. This spatial construct first emerged from the national fascination over mobile telephony and other interactive media (Paragas, 2003; Pertierra, 2002), an area in which ABS-CBN, as a traditional broadcasting company, had no particular stake. However, as the ARs show, ABS-CBN positioned itself as a total information and communications organization by including new media in its regular menu of television, radio, print, and film. In the process, ABS-CBN established itself as a pioneer of emergent mediated spaces, not unlike when it started broadcasting in the Philippines five decades earlier. However, ABS-CBN's acknowledgment of foundational advances in national policy and global technology remains absent, even though these allowed it to introduce new services in the first place.

The constancy of service

The various ARs cite and construct time and space differently. Service, however, the ARs articulate consistently, as a core concept for ABS-CBN. The ARs explicate how ABS-CBN realizes its corporate mission through quality programming, expanding services, and CSR programs.

With the success of ABS-CBN's entertainment and news and current affairs programs, it would be easy to believe the network's claim that delivering quality programming is a form of

national service. However, ABS-CBN has been the subject of much scrutiny from media critics who suggest that the company only provides what its audience wants, instead of what it needs (Rimban, 1999). Noted critic Torre (1999), for instance, calls ABS-CBN's approach "Tabloid Television". Such criticisms gained considerable credence with the tragic 2006 stampede that killed and injured fans of a program criticized for supposedly exploiting its viewers' poverty for commercial profit. Such aspersions against the quality of ABS-CBN's offerings thus raised doubts about how the company defined service.

ABS-CBN, as its ARs increasingly highlight, continues to strengthen its CSR programs on child welfare, environment protection, educational media, relief operations, and community outreach. ABS-CBN has received much commendation for these programs, and no concerns about beneficiary exploitation or resource mismanagement have been lodged against it. Therefore, from the purview of discourses shared between ABS-CBN and the Philippines, our questions about these expanding programs should regard not the organization but rather the country. These programs raise questions about the country's capability to protect and promote the welfare of its people. "Sagip Kapamilya", for instance, emerged from the need to marshal volunteers and aid for victims of natural and man-made calamities. That ABS-CBN is now a key participant in such rescue missions indicates the company's responsiveness to its audience's needs and also indicts the government for failing to actively protect its people against disasters.

Summary and Conclusion

The AR is an important communication device through which a corporation not only articulates its performance of the previous year (Subramanian, Insley, & Blackwell, 1993) but also defines its character. The AR used to be a straightforward presentation of data with a brief explanation from the chair (Marino Jr, 1995; Penrose, 2008). However, today's ARs, such as ABS-CBN's, grow increasingly complex in structure and content as they strive to cater to diverse audiences (Campbell, McPhail, & Slack, 2009). Thus, inasmuch as corporations use the AR as a strategic communication device, it also offers its readers an intimate view into an organization's self-framing (Anderson & Imperia, 1992; Breton, 2009; Rutherford, 2005).

Through its ARs, ABS-CBN presents itself as a pioneer in Philippine broadcasting, one that has kept its industry leadership through crises within the company and in the national and global polity and economy. In the process, ABS-CBN has distinguished the diversity of its services as unique in the country. Moreover, it frames itself as a servant of the Filipino people, both within and outside the Philippines, through its own work and the labor of its employees. Its ARs thus imbue ABS-CBN with a character of competence, resilience, and service, attributes that evoke the heart-mind-body traits that Keller and Richey (2006) argue exist in successful businesses.

Although the public gains access to a company's character through its ARs, studying them without context presents limitations, since they are designed to present positive images of their corporations (Breton, 2009; Courtis, 1997). However, by following the principles of CDA (Fairclough, 1995) and contextualizing the AR within social practice, we can reach a more nuanced understanding of corporate character. By doing this with ABS-CBN's ARs, we can locate corporate assertions about historicity and space related to the national milieu. In other words, positioning ABS-CBN as a pioneer in broadcasting—both five decades ago and in the new realm of interactive media—requires an understanding of the policies and technologies of a particular time. The network's global expansion is not purely a product of its own initiative, but also a response to the burgeoning market created by a Philippine Diaspora that started over a century ago. Subjecting ARs to CDA helps to explicate service either as corporate rhetoric that is

subject to suspicion and criticism or as corporate activity that indicates failings in the national system.

Scope, Limitations, and Future Directions

This case study of ABS-CBN shows the narrative value of ARs. Although CDA does not seek to draw inferences about the production process behind the narrative, this study's findings can inform better ways to produce ARs. In the case of ABS-CBN, for instance, sections such as those on PHs and OHs prove to be important in framing corporate activity and character on top of the RCP. Thus, a company that seeks to delineate its performance and personality can employ these sections in its ARs. It is important to remember consistency when delivering content. For ABS-CBN, the changing content of PHs precludes longitudinal comparison of its performance and raises questions of transparency and audience manipulation. Moreover, if ARs are to be more holistic and strategic in depicting corporate character, we must plot themes as episodes in a narrative that transcends one particular year. Put into practice, this approach could allow a company to develop a five-year plotline in which individual ARs have themes that contribute to an overall story. In ABS-CBN's ARs, themes emerge not because of particular strategic storylines but because of recurrent themes in the network's self-framing.

The CDA applied in this paper explores only two modalities of ARs. These modalities are sufficient to address this study's objectives. However, subsequent research could explore other, non-textual modalities of ARs, such as those on graphs (Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008; Courtis, 1997; Penrose, 2008), visuals (Anderson & Imperia, 1992; Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008; Bujaki & McConomy, 2010; Ditlevsen, 2012; Pasadeos & Yeap, 1991), and personalities (Campbell, McPhail, & Slack, 2009; Jameson, 2000). CDA treats the narrative as imbued with its own meaning, which is this study's approach. However, subsequent research could investigate ARs from the perspective of those who produce and consume it. On the production side, it would be interesting to explore the gatekeeping of corporate information and the framing of corporate personality. Another area to investigate would be the congruence between the AR producers' intentions and the AR readers' responses.

The longitudinal approach of this study helps us to understand the narrative of corporate self-presentation through time. Since CDA argues that discursive practices such as ARs indicate social practice, subsequent research can perform cross-industry analyses of ARs from particular periods of time to determine the extent to which corporate discourses relate to their social contexts.

FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework

CDA Dimensions	Application to Annual Report as Narrative

Micro Level   **ANNUAL REPORT**
TEXT   Structure
Content

Meso Level   **CORPORATE DISCOURSE**
DISCURSIVE   Thematic Modality
PRACTICE   Text Modality

Macro Level   **CONTEXT**
SOCIAL   Time * Space * Service
PRACTICE
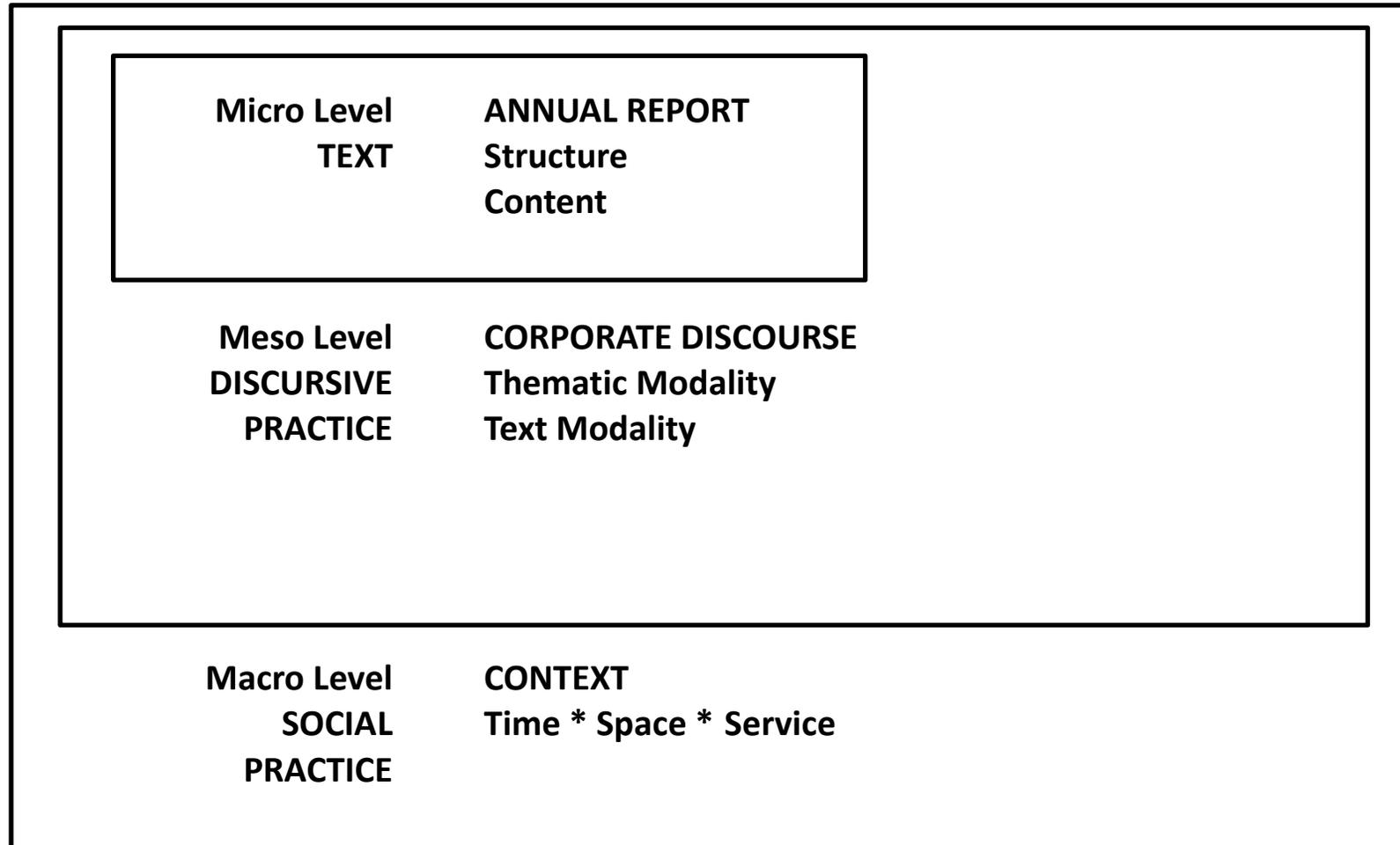
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Between Global and Glocal

An Analysis of the English Web Sites of the Top Chinese Brands

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Refuting the argument that globalization is a homogeneous process, the study attempts to contribute further to the existing literature on the issues of glocalization (i.e., the push-and-pull of globalization and localization) and to revealing the intricate processes and products of glocalization in transnational or transcultural branding. The English websites of the 50 top Chinese brands will be selected for investigating what and how these top Chinese brands employ glocal strategies to build their reputation and global presence. Quantitative content analysis will be conducted involving an examination of the Western versus the Eastern cultural orientations and of the global/common/universal versus the local/particularistic cultural characteristics/practice that these English web pages have revealed. Variations in their global corporate web presence between Hong Kong and mainland China brands will also be discussed; and implications for Chinese brands going global will be presented.

Keywords: Globalization, Glocalization, Brand management, Chinese top brands

Blogosphere

The Use of Social Media by Public Relations Agencies in Nigeria

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This paper examines the use of social media, especially blogs, by public relations firms in Nigeria on behalf of their clients. Using a sample of public relations firms in Nigeria, it investigates the use of social media platforms as public relations strategies and arenas for creatively exploring the changing boundaries of corporate communication. In an increasingly socially mediated world of Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, this paper highlights how public relations professionals, especially those working in public relations firms, negotiate the changing media of communication by using blogs to engage with the public on behalf of their clients. The findings from this study will improve our understanding of how social media impacts corporate communication and the public relations strategies of organizations.

Purpose: This paper examines the use of social media, especially blogs, by public relations firms in Nigeria on behalf of their clients.

Approach: This is an empirical paper that focuses on a sample of public relations firms to investigate the use of social media platforms as public relations strategies and arenas for creatively exploring the changing boundaries of corporate communication.

Findings: In an increasingly socially mediated world of Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, the findings from this paper highlight how public relations professionals, especially those working in public relations firms, negotiate the changing media of communication by using blogs to engage with the public on behalf of their clients.

Research implications: The findings from the case studies examined in this paper will improve our understanding of the impact of social media on corporate communication and the public relations strategies of organizations.

Practical applications: This study will be useful to those professionals working in the areas of corporate communication and public relations who want to have a better grasp of strategic options in the context of technology-driven corporate communication and public relations strategies.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Public relations, Social media, Communication management, Strategic communication

The rapid growth of social media demonstrates how central human experience is to the success of communication, especially in the area of public relations. We now live in an increasingly socially mediated world of communication platforms such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia, and WikiLeaks, as well as societal contexts such as the Arab Spring, the UK riots, the Occupy movement, and Anonymous's hacktivism (Fuchs, 2012).

The current embeddedness of social media in everyday life was anticipated by *Time* magazine in 2006 when it named "You" its Person of the Year. In the words of Holmes (2007), the story of 2006 was:

…about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before. It's about the cosmic compendium of knowledge Wikipedia and the million-channel people's network YouTube and the online metropolis MySpace…about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.

However, while the advent of social media has already had a significant impact on people's daily lives, it has thrown up both challenges and opportunities that are being harnessed by technology-savvy organizations eager to extend their traditional profit-making frontiers.

In a somewhat idealistic way, Falkow (2010) envisages a role for public relations in an increasingly technology-dependent world when she stresses that the most potent and potentially meaningful characteristic of public relations is:

> …its ability to transform organisations so that they are more aligned with their stakeholders' needs and wants. ... At the end of the day, no matter whether it is lobbying, events, community liaison, sponsorship, website content, digital and social media communication, or any of the other dimensions of public relations, transforming both organisations and their stakeholders is what PR is about.

The transformative ability of social media is also the central theme of the study Andrejevic (2012) conducted, which explores the ways in which the commercial sector is taking up social networking technologies to integrate social and work lives. He argues that companies are finding ways to exploit the social connections of their employees, customers, and clients; this is leading to start-up companies that seek to monetize social network data by linking it to consumer relations databases and other technologies for target marketing. Indeed, social media is now an interactive infrastructure that might serve as a platform for new forms of creativity, deliberation, communication, interaction, and consumption (Andrejevic, 2012).

While one can argue that the new frontiers of practice that social media has opened up for public relations firms is indeed ground-breaking, a consensus on what public relations and corporate communication actually are suggests that a marriage of the two is inevitable. The UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) defines public relations as the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (CIPR, 1999)—in essence, a profession that derives much of its lifeline from mutually reinforcing social interactions with defined publics. In a similar fashion, van Riel (1995) views corporate communication as an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication harmonize as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups on which the company is dependent. Hence, from the way the contours that make up public relations and corporate communication have been mapped, we predict that public relations practice will ride on the crest of social media influence.

Holmes (2007) reinforces this position. He stresses that, in the current climate of social media ubiquitousness, public relations firms will need to become expert in studying social networks—developing tools (as some already have) to help them map the complex relationships between traditional and non-traditional media, identify authorities who are quoted or cited most often, and understand how and why stories that first appear in relatively obscure venues can have as much influence over time as an article on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*.

This paper examines the ways that public relations firms in Nigeria use social media on behalf of their clients. The following sections explore the underlying theme of social media's

influence on these firms' practice of public relations. The first section discusses the relationship between technology and social interaction. The second section discusses the continued relevance of Grunig and Hunt's two-way symmetrical model in an increasingly socially mediated world. The third section discusses the methodology we used to collect primary data for the study. The fourth section reports our findings and analyzes them in the light of theoretical insights discussed in sections two and three. The fifth section discusses the conclusion of the paper.

Technology and Social Interaction

The growing influence of social media brings into sharp focus a technologically induced transformation of social relations across different levels of society, one with direct and indirect influence on the "fabric of society itself and challenging established patterns of conceptualizing, analysing and understanding it" (Kofman & Youngs, 2003, p. 9). The rate at which social media networks are fast becoming a major part of shaping public policies makes compelling the need for a concerted effort to enable the relevant stakeholders to properly understand and use these media within the context of existing institutions.

One of the ways scholars have captured this phenomenon is through a technological determinist theoretical framework. The basic assumption of this framework is that technology leads to social change. Technology is considered as the prime mover in history: "Particular technical developments, communications technologies or media, or, most broadly, technology in general are the sole or prime antecedent causes of changes in society, and technology is seen as the fundamental condition underlying the pattern of social organization" (Castells, 2001). Grossberg et al. (1998) also view technological determinism as the belief that technology is the principal—if not only—cause of historical change. McLuhan (1964) argues that the forms of communication technology available to people at a particular historical moment determine the ways they can perceive reality and the logics they use to understand it.

A technological determinist perspective would therefore assume that social network platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google, WikiLeaks, and Wikipedia are harbingers of transformational currents so brazenly manifested in the Occupy Wall Street movement and the Arab Spring. This perspective is also central to any effort to align the practice of public relations by public relations firms with the interests of their clients. While the pervasive influence of social media is apparent in the social tensions it has generated in society, the potential it also carries as a means of meeting core public relations functions is a huge one. As Craig (2010) puts it, no other business discipline has the capability to help transform organizations like public relations:

> Social media can help it achieve this goal and it is already—partially because it is inherently a dialogic communication mechanism. ... It is in this area of transforming organisations that PR must shine and provide business worth, or else it will become marginalised. Because of the synergy between social media and two-way symmetrical communication, public relations is the logical owner of social media from a strategic and tactical perspective, not least because dialogue and accommodation are essential to both. (Craig, 2010)

It will, however, be difficult for public relations to fully realize the potential of social media if challenges it poses are not fully unravelled. The most immediate challenge lies in identifying the more credible and influential opinion leaders, who are capable of driving effective word-of-mouth. As Holmes (2007) puts it:

> …it might be an over-simplification that anyone with a reasonably up-to-date media directory could figure out where to send a press release, but certainly anyone who took the time to read a dozen or so key media—easily identified based on circulation and content—could figure out which reporters really mattered. But identifying bloggers who drive online conversation is much more difficult. They will not necessarily be the ones with the greatest number of page hits: their actual audience might be quite small. To find them, public relations people will need to spend time with the target audience, often tracking back stories to their original, perhaps obscure, sources. And identifying offline influencers is probably even more challenging.

Hence, understanding the place of public relations in social interaction will assist public relations firms to fully tap the potential of social media in promoting their clients.

The increasing popularity of social media is not in doubt, but how public relations firms can benefit from this stream of opportunities is a challenge that organizations have yet to overcome. As a public relations professional notes in a personal account of using social media to extend the frontiers of interaction, the issue is both a challenge and an opportunity:

> On a professional and personal level I...contribute to a couple of professional blogs, public relations and managing reputation and Blueblog, the home of the public affairs and corporate communication consultancy, Bluegrass, I work with. I also use Twitter on a professional and personal basis, but keep Facebook pretty much for fun and personal uses. ... All of these tools have professional "world" potential, depending on the business objective, the target audience preferences and what you are actually communicating about. I don't think any one of them is necessarily any more important than the other. ... If you want to generalise, however, Facebook is the medium going ballistic. As content is really a very important issue in this Google-censored world (if you are not ranked by Google, then you may as well not, in many senses, exist—in fact, you don't exist**!),** I think blogs are extremely important. They are the quickest and easiest way to update content. **...** They provide a great platform on which to exhibit thought leadership, which helps with organisational POD and reputation enhancement. ... I am also a big user of LinkedIn. I used LinkedIn to engage in conversation with more people here than on my actual blog. I have started using it to try to generate new business for the public affairs and corporate communication consultancy I work for, in tandem with interpersonal contact. ... I find it interesting, if not surprising, that many of my blog posts create more extensive conversations on LinkedIn discussion groups than on my blog. I guess LinkedIn provides a huge chat room-like environment that cuts straight to, probably, the biggest global aggregation of its blog's target audience. (Craig, 2010)

Social media holds huge potential for social and business interaction. It provides a means of demonstrating that public relations, as a mutually reinforcing exchange of meaning between organizations and defined publics, is closer to being a reality than an ideal. It also brings out with new urgency the debates around the history and models of public relations that Grunig and Hunt proposed in 1984. The next section discusses this in greater detail by looking at the models of interaction between organizations and their publics, encapsulated in Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations practice.

Public Relations Model Interaction

One of the best-known models of public relations is the one Grunig and Hunt (1984) developed, in which they conceptualize the practice of public relations as consisting of four models. These are the press agentry model; the public information model; the two-way asymmetrical model; and

the two-way symmetrical model. The four models are different from one another due to two underlying assumptions about the direction and purpose of the practices they describe:

> "Direction" describes the extent to which the communications between an organisation and its publics are either one-way (a monologue) or two-way (a dialogue). In the case of the press agentry and public information models, the communications are characteristically one-way, whereas in the case of the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models they are characteristically two-way. "Purpose" describes the function which public relations performs for an organisation, defined…in terms of whether the model is essentially asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communications are imbalanced, leave the organisation unchanged and attempt to change the public(s), whereas symmetrical communications are balanced and attempt to adjust the relationship between the organisation and its publics…. [T]he two-way symmetrical model should be seen as offering a "normative" theory of excellent public relations practice. (Kitchen, 1997, pp. 8-9)

Following debate about the four models, Grunig (2001) proposed a continuum of public relations practice. This considers public relations as either "craft" or "professional". The first views communication as a means in itself. The second considers the more strategic practice of working closely with management to resolve conflict and build relationships with key publics. Grunig argues that this re-conceptualization of the original proposal develops the theory. One difficulty with this approach is that it appears to negate any strategic role for publicity or media relations and also downplays the importance of the craft skills that effective public relations practitioners require at all levels. Grunig (2001) says that excellent public relations teams use tactical one-way communication skills to support two-way communication strategies. He proposes that this ideal centers on a "dialogue" between the organization and its stakeholders (Cambridge Marketing College, 2003).

An alternative approach to considering the role of public relations is the rhetorical or persuasive view. This proposes that organizations have a right to put forward particular viewpoints in public debate, through which process a consensus will be reached. The role of the public relations practitioner is, then, to persuade publics of their organization's position and engage in dialogue to reach an agreed way forward. This approach responds to the increased complexity and diversity of a society in which many conflicting views are available. In this case, it is acceptable for public relations practitioners to represent the partisan perspective of a particular organization, while allowing others to enter the debate and put forward alternative views (Cambridge Marketing College, 2003).

The result emerging from the Grunig-led "systems theory" approach and the rhetorical paradigm is that the professional public relations communicator's role is to facilitate genuine discussion with key publics with a view to reach consensus, understanding, or an agreement to disagree. At the least, public relations can support dialogue to reduce conflict between an organization and its publics. This paper will now examine how public relations firms in Nigeria use social media platforms to promote the interests of their clients.

Methodology

For this study, we obtained a list of public relations agencies (including allied agencies such as advertising agencies) through the Nigerian business directory. A total of 73 agencies were on the list and we examined them all. We did this online, as the nature of the research demands. We began by sorting through the website addresses of the institutions that had provided theirs in the directory. Institutions without website addresses listed, we accessed through Google. On each

agency's website, we examined the client tab and other available social network links, with major emphasis on blogging. From the client tab, we sought to know the content each agency provided about its clients as well as how it monitored the clients' progress. We did this by examining all of the information the agencies' websites gave involving clients. We also examined how agencies monitored their clients' progress through social network platforms. For example, on Facebook, we compared the number of overall posts to the number of posts concerning clients. On Twitter, we did the same with tweets. We also did this with the organizations that had blogs.

However, we must state here that not all of the agencies had websites. To avoid distorting the state of affairs, our analysis first compares the specifics (i.e., the agencies that fulfil the criteria) and then the general submissions.

Findings

TABLE 1: Availbility of Websites Address

ISSUE	FIGURES	PERCENTAGE
ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE	22	30.14%
INACCESSIBLE WEBSITE	4	5.48%
NO WEBSITE	47	64.38%
TOTAL	73	100%

Table 1 shows the disparity that exists between the public relations firms that are succumbing to the pressures of social media's increasing popularity and those who are not. While 22 firms (30.14% of the total) have functioning websites, 5.48% have websites that are not functional and 64.38% (the majority) do not have any websites at all. The inaccessible websites were either upgrading or non-existent. Since our research is about the use of social networking by public relations agencies, our analysis covers only firms with websites we examined.

TABLE 2: PR Firms with accounts on either Facebook or Twitter or both

SOCIAL NETWORK	FIGURES	PERCENTAGE
FACEBOOK ONLY	5	22.73%
TWITTER ONLY	1	4.55%
BOTH	1	4.55%
NO ACCOUNT	15	68.18%
TOTAL	22	100%

Table 2 shows that, of the public relations firms that have websites, only one (4.55%) has accounts with both Facebook and Twitter. Furthermore, only one (4.55%) has an account with Twitter alone. Of the 22 firms with accessible websites, only five (22.73%) have a Facebook account alone. The table also shows that a total of 15 (68.18%) firms have no account with either Facebook or Twitter.

Neither of the two firms with Twitter accounts had posted tweets. Therefore, we have used only the content of Facebook posts and websites in the analysis below.

TABLE 3: Facebook content relating to clients

POST	FIGURES	PERCENTAGE
POSTS RELATED TO CLIENTS	12	21.05%
POSTS UNRELATED TO CLIENTS	45	78.95%
TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTS SINCE JOINING FACEBOOK	57	100%

       Table 3 shows that, of a total of 57 Facebook posts by the five public relations firms, only 12 (21.05%) are concerned with issues affecting their clients. Forty-five of these posts (78.95%) are unconnected to clients. We must state here that posts can include text, pictures, and other media.

TABLE 4: Website content relating to clients

WEBSITE CONTENT	FIGURES	PERCENTAGE
NEWS/COMMENTS RELATED TO CLIENT	29	93.5%
NEWS/COMMENTS UNRELATED TO CLIENT	2	6.5%
TOTAL NEWS/COMMENTS FOUND IN CLIENT LINK ON WEBSITE	31	100%

       We examined a total of 31 issues across the client pages of each website. Of these issues, 29 (93.5%) were related to clients. We then examined the blog for content on and relationships with clients. We found that, since one blog had been created, only four stories had been published, all between June and July 2011. Of the four stories, only one concerned a client. To avoid clumsy data, we tried not to study each firm as an isolated unit; most figures have come from a single agency, with others contributing a little.

Discussion

Holmes (2007) aptly captures the power of social media's influence in the quote below:

> Where the first Internet revolution offered public relations the opportunity to add a new weapon to its arsenal, to incrementally increase the array of tools available to build relationships with key stakeholders, the second Internet revolution—which has gathered pace from 2005 and was clearly the defining industry news of 2006—has the clear potential to revolutionize the practice of public relations and the business of the industry's leading agencies. (Holmes, 2007)

       Our findings on how public relations firms in Nigeria use social media platforms indicate that the frenetic pace at which social media has changed the landscape of social and business interactions is yet to reach the practice of firms in Nigeria. There seems to be no conscious effort to use social media platforms creatively on behalf of clients. In most cases, the firms do not even have websites, let alone use website-enabled social media platforms. From our findings, we see two potential conclusions. First, public relations as practiced by public relations firms in Nigeria,

shows the influence of two-way asymmetrical and rhetorical models. Second, the practice of public relations by these firms does not support the technological deterministic view that technological development drives changes in society. Practice is not moving with technology—rather, one could argue that practice is shaping the slow adoption of technology.

Conclusion

This paper seeks to examine the influence of social media, especially blogs, on the practice of public relations by firms in Nigeria. We have located this discussion within the technological determinism- and social interaction-embedded practice of the two-symmetrical model of public relations. This paper argues that, while a number of public relations professionals are seizing the challenges and opportunities social media platforms provide to extend the frontiers of social interaction and promote business objectives, the use of social media by public relations firms in Nigeria remains rooted in the pre-Facebook era.

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Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) to Work

Does it Result in Increased Employee Productivity?

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In early 2011, the Gartner Group predicted that, by 2014, 90 percent of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations will permit employees to use personally owned smartphones and tablet computers to perform business-related functions in the workplace. This trend, dubbed "bring your own device (or computer or technology) to work," has been promoted by technology, management, and communications specialists. According to their research, employee morale and productivity is vastly increased when workers are permitted to use personally owned communications devices to conduct business. This paper reviews current survey and case-study research to determine if adequate evidence exists to validate the claim that "bring your own device" (BYOD) results in increased employee productivity. The study concludes that existing research does not convincingly demonstrate that BYOD improves the productivity of employee communications and other computing functions. Corporate decision-makers should not adopt a BYOD program if the primary rationale is to enhance employee productivity.

At 6:00 pm on June 29, 2007, the history of business communication was irrevocably altered, when Apple launched its sale of the first iPhone. The device was not merely a cell phone; it could also browse the World Wide Web and take photographs. With its access to the Internet, the iPhone could also be supplied with applications, or "apps," that provide specialized information—such as weather reports in specific locations—not featured by other devices. Nearly one million iPhones were sold in the fourth quarter of 2007 (Statista, 2012b). Competing manufacturers, wishing to emulate Apple's success, were soon producing and selling similar devices, now known as the "smartphone" (PCMag.com, 2011).

In April 2010, Apple once again generated excitement within the consumer technology market by introducing the first iPad, a lightweight, very mobile, tablet-style computer capable of accessing the Internet via wireless technology. Approximately four million iPads were sold in the third quarter 0f 2010 (Statista, 2012a). Yet again, competitors rapidly entered the market, touting the virtues (and often the lower costs) of their own tablets.

Neither the iPhone nor the iPad nor the competing devices were intended for business purposes. Rather, these communication devices were designed for consumers who wished to make telephone calls, text family and friends, browse the Internet, play games, and take photographs. However, beginning in approximately 2008 (Bambot, 2012), employees began to bring their mobile computers into the workplace. These employees also brought a new expectation—that they would be permitted to use these communication devices for business purposes. Workers wanted, at a minimum, to access company email, take notes, read and update calendars, and communicate with colleagues and clients.

During the last four years, employers have begun to accept that mobile computing devices—including those owned by employees—have a legitimate role in corporate communications. According to a 2012 survey conducted by Strategy Analytics, a research and

consulting firm, 30 million tablet computers purchased worldwide were used in companies, organizations, and schools (Lai, 2012). Of those 30 million machines, 25 million were personally purchased by employees. A 2011 survey by Cisco, manufacturer of telecommunications equipment and software, indicated that approximately 28 percent of the global workforce is already using non-company-issued computers and smartphones (p. 2). The survey revealed that adoption of personally owned equipment is most widespread in India, where 34 percent of employees use personal devices for business purposes. According to a July 2011 report by Forrester Research Inc., 60 percent of all companies already have policies that permit at least some workers to use their own computing devices for work (Yoga, 2012). The Gartner Group, a major technology research firm, has predicted that, by 2014, 90 percent of organizations worldwide will support corporate applications on personal devices (Savitz, 2011).

The trend of permitting employee-owned communications technology for business purposes is sufficiently widespread that it is associated with an acronym: BYOD, "Bring Your Own Device." (The acronym is sometimes modified to BYOC, "Bring Your Own Computer," or BYOT, "Bring Your Own Technology.")

Technology analysts are nearly unanimous in their claims that the BYOD phenomenon benefits both employees and their employers. Workers, allowed to use technology with which they are familiar and that they also use for personal communications, become more productive (Bindra, 2011; Callahan, 2011; Fogarty, 2012; Gruman, 2012; Herrema, 2011; Holtby, 2011; Kopytoff, 2011; Kutzer-Rice, 2011; Lai, 2012a; McKendrick, 2011; Parker-Toulson, 2010; Pemmaraju, 2011; Savitz, 2011; Six Degrees Group, 2011; Steinert-Threlkeld, 2011; Telford, 2012; Yoga, 2012).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the validity of the claim that "Bring Your Own Device" increases employee productivity. All major research studies—surveys and case histories—will be examined, with particular attention to research methodologies, definitions and measures of productivity, and the credibility of supporting evidence. The study will conclude that most current research does not effectively substantiate the claim that BYOD enhances or increases worker productivity.

The Evolution of BYOD

"Bring Your Own Device" to work is not actually a new practice. For many decades, employees have used their home-based landline telephones to communicate with supervisors and other business colleagues. Since at least the late 1990s, employees have been allowed to use their personal computers and laptops to connect with company networks via the Internet. However, this function has been limited primarily to workers in the field of information technology (IT) and to senior executives.

In recent years, many corporations and other organizations have provided employees— especially managers, sales personnel, and critical IT support staff—with wireless BlackBerry phones for purposes of remote communications. However, these devices are purchased, supported, and maintained by the employer. By contrast, the iPhone, iPad, and other consumer-oriented devices are frequently owned by employees.

Ford Motor Company was one of the early adopters of BYOD. In May 2007, the Chief Information Officer of Ford requested network engineers to investigate the feasibility of permitting employees to access company information from their personally owned, portable computers (Lai, 2011). Additional advice was solicited from information technology, legal, human resources, and accounting specialists. Nearly two years later, Ford implemented its program—formally dubbed ePOD, an abbreviation of "eMail on Personally Owned Devices."

The ePOD program was, and remains, a modest effort. Only selected employees are permitted to participate—2,700 qualified as of December, 2011. These individuals are allowed to perform a narrow range of functions: checking company email, calendars, contacts, and task lists. Ford's information technology function will not support the devices; if users encounter problems, they are referred to a website where other employees may be able to assist with problem resolution. Security concerns have prevented including a broader population of employees or more extensive repositories of company information resources. Still, Ford has plans to expand the ePOD program and may offer stipends to employees as reimbursement for their personal devices (Lai, 2011).

Ford's carefully managed implementation of BYOD restricts the number of participating employees and also the access to sensitive company information. Other corporations—including Kraft Foods and Citrix (Kopytoff, 2011), Procter & Gamble (Thibodeau, 2010), Cisco (Bambot, 2012), Unisys and Hyatt Hotels and Resorts (Parker-Toulson, 2010), and IBM (Lai, 2012b)— have adopted similarly managed programs permitting the use of personally owned computing devices. It seems that no large organization has permitted all employees to communicate with company networks.

In addition, not all companies are allowing work-related computing devices to be completely "owned" by employees. In its 2011 study of worldwide adoption of BYOD programs, Citrix maintains that "there is an expectation that just over half of companies (51 percent) will mandate that their workers buy their own BYO computing devices" (p. 8). Other companies, though, are willing to provide stipends with which employees can purchase technology. However, a 2010 study sponsored by Unisys offers conflicting data (Parker-Toulson, 2010). According to this study, 69 percent of all companies that have adopted a BYOD policy fully purchase the devices for employees; only 25 percent require workers to buy their own machines, and the remaining organizations offer discounts or stipends. Current survey research does not clearly indicate the extent to which employees actually own the mobile devices used for business purposes.

However, available research—both surveys and case studies—offers no equivocal response to the issue of BYOD as a driver of productivity. All studies conclude that permitting employees to use their personally owned technology for purposes of business communication results in a significantly more productive workforce.

Survey Research Concerning Productivity

The increasing proliferation of BYOD programs has been identified by numerous technology companies that sell products intended to facilitate communications between mobile devices and corporate networks. Some of these companies also manufacture security solutions, such as encryption software, intended to protect the privacy and confidentiality of business information accessed by employees. These companies have sponsored several surveys to examine the benefits and disadvantages of permitting employees to use their own mobile computing devices for business purposes. The most frequently cited surveys are those sponsored by Citrix and iPass.

The Citrix survey

On July 26, 2011, the results of a survey focusing on the worldwide adoption of BYOD were released by Citrix, a manufacturer of telecommunications software (Citrix, 2011a). The research methodology was explained in an online press release issued by Citrix:

The research for the Citrix BYO Index was conducted independently by Vanson Bourne in May 2011, and is based on 700 IT professionals across seven markets. One hundred IT professionals were surveyed in each of seven markets including: Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Netherlands, United States and United Kingdom. In each country, half of the respondents represented companies of 500-1,000 employees and the other half work for companies of 1,000+ employees. (Citrix, 2011b)

The survey revealed that 44 percent of participating companies currently permit employees to use personally owned devices for work-related purposes. However, 94 percent of respondents indicated that they intend to implement a BYOD policy by mid-2013. Although these findings indicate a potentially dramatic increase in the frequency of BYOD adoption by mid-2013, participating organizations also indicated that the number and type of employees actually permitted to use personally owned communications devices are narrowly defined. Sixty-two percent of survey respondents stated that "mobile workers" will be allowed to "bring their own" machines; however, only nine percent indicated a willingness to allow all employees within the organization to use personally owned devices.

According to the survey, employee productivity is the major driver for adopting a BYOD program. Approximately 47 percent of respondents indicated that "ease of working outside the office" (Citrix, 2011a, p. 11) is the primary rationale for permitting the use of employee-owned smartphones and tablets for work-related purposes. Of course, this rationale is most relevant for those individuals likely to work remotely—the "mobile workers," who, according to survey participants, comprise the primary population permitted to participate in a BYOD program.

The iPass survey

Several months following the release of the Citrix survey results, iPass—a telecommunications company that specializes in providing wireless networks—conducted a survey concerning the work habits of "mobile employees" (iPass, 2011). The research methodology of the study was clearly stated:

> This quarter's iPass Mobile Workforce Report is based on information obtained from more than 2,300 responses to an iPass survey of mobile workers at over 1,100 enterprises worldwide. The survey respondents were asked a set of questions about their productivity, efficiency, work habits, and other related experiences….
>
> The survey was conducted between September 27 and October 26, 2011 and represented employees across multiple age groups and geographies. 49 percent of respondents were from North America, 32 percent from Europe, and 12 percent from the Asia/Pacific region.
>
> iPass Mobile Employee Definition: Any worker using any mobile device (including laptop, smartphone, cellphone, or tablet) who accesses networks for work purposes. (pp. 4–5)

According to the survey, 42 percent of participants owned their own communication devices and 58 percent were provided equipment from employers. Two years ago, approximately 66 percent of employers purchased machines for their workers; therefore, the number of persons "bringing their own device" is increasing.

The survey noted that mobile employees are highly productive, and productivity is measured by the average number of hours per year devoted to business-related functions. "Mobile

employees," according to the report, "are working on average 240 more hours a year, but only wasting 28 minutes a day on 'technology distractions'" (p. 4). These "distractions" consisted mainly of checking social-media sites.

Case Description Research Concerning Productivity

At present, no thorough case studies have been publicly published concerning the effects of BYOD on employee productivity. However, technology analysts and journalists have described several specific examples of BYOD implementation within specific organizations and mentioned increased worker productivity as an outcome of these efforts. Thus, currently published accounts consist of brief descriptions of the methods by which BYOD programs are established and the most relevant results of these programs. Two frequently cited cases involve Unisys and Kraft Foods.

Unisys

In 2009, Unisys—a multinational corporation that provides computing systems and services—initiated a pilot program to permit employees to use personally owned smartphones to access corporate networks. (Parker-Toulson, 2010). Workers participating in the program are required to have remote wipe software installed on their phones; this software will enable the company to erase all email contained on the device in the event it is lost or stolen. In addition, employees must agree that the phone can be confiscated by Unisys if a legal hold is placed on information residing on the device.

Unisys has developed several customized applications, or "apps," that may be installed on worker-owned smartphones and are intended to provide specialized company information. These apps are designed to increase employee productivity, especially for individuals who frequently travel to multiple company datacenters or other worksites. According to the company's Chief Information Security Officer, the purpose of adopting BYOD is to "enable the workforce to be more productive" (Greengard, 2011).

Kraft Foods

As of January, 2012, Kraft Foods permitted 800 employees to use personally owned smartphones for specific business purposes: checking email, work calendars, and contacts (Palmer, 2012; Parker-Toulson, 2010). As with Unisys, participants in the Kraft program are required to sign a user agreement, agreeing to abide by all company policies when using their devices—especially policies related to the security and privacy of information. In addition, Kraft retains the right to remotely delete any information (including the employee's personal emails or photographs) in the event that the phone is lost or stolen.

Kraft has also created software intended to enable the smartphone as an internal corporate communications conduit. The software allows employees to listen to pre-recorded "Kraft Casts," audio messages from the CEO and other executives that provide information concerning corporate strategies and branding initiatives.

According to press releases issued by Kraft, the BYOD program saves the company money by having employees assume a portion of the purchase price of the device. However, the major rationales of the initiative are to improve work–life balance, increase productivity, and enable Kraft to attract top-level talent (Palmer, 2012).

Discussion

The surveys and case descriptions described above are frequently cited by technology analysts and journalists as evidence of the increasing adoption of BYOD and its demonstrated effectiveness as a method to increase employee productivity (Benefits of BYOD, n.d.; Ferris, 2011; Fogarty, 2010; Greengard, 2011; Kutzer-Rice, 2011; Palmer, 2012; Parker-Toulson, 2010). This study examines the surveys and case descriptions, focusing on their research methodologies and on definitions and measures of productivity, to determine if the often cited research confirms the findings concerning worker productivity associated with BYOD.

Research Methodologies

Both the Citrix and the iPass surveys included respondents from North America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. However, participants were selected from subsets of the full employee population within each company. The Citrix survey included only information technology professionals, and the iPass study focused entirely on mobile employees, workers who commonly communicate with one another from remote locations. Although the Citrix study did not involve mobile employees, the technology professionals participating in this study stated that their companies had adopted BYOD programs that were primarily intended for the mobile workforce. It seems, then, that both surveys were gauging productivity increases for a narrowly defined group of employees—persons who frequently work away from a centralized worksite. Because this group is likely to benefit most from mobile communications technology, it is not surprising that both surveys reveal productivity increases by permitting the use of personally owned devices.

The Unisys and Kraft Foods case descriptions do not specify that a narrowly defined group of employees were permitted to participate in BYOD initiatives. However, both cases involve pilot programs that represent only a small percentage of the total workforce. Whether these programs include a cross-section of all employees within the organizations or whether only select workers—such as mobile employees or information technologists—were involved is not apparent from the brief case descriptions. As a result, it is difficult to assess the validity of claimed productivity gains.

Definitions and measures of productivity

The iPass survey is clear concerning both the definition and the measure of productivity: mobile employees work an average of 240 additional hours per year. Assumedly, these additional hours are compared against the number of hours clocked by non-mobile employees. However, iPass does not maintain that the adoption of a BYOD program is the cause of these increased hours. Rather, an expansion of working time is associated with the employees being "mobile."

The Citrix survey defines productivity as "ease of working outside the office." This definition would seem relevant to BYOD, because personally owned mobile computing devices would facilitate remote communications with colleagues and clients. However, the "ease of working" is associated with employees having access to mobile communications equipment, whether the technology is personally owned or provisioned entirely by the employer. In fact, 58 percent of the Citrix respondents stated that their devices were supplied by the company. Thus, the Citrix survey does not persuasively correlate increased employee productivity with programs that enable these workers to "bring your own device" to work.

Case descriptions of the adoption of BYOD at Unisys and Kraft Foods both maintain that the primary rationale for implementing programs is to increase employee productivity. However,

neither case provides evidence that the expected productivity gains have, in fact, occurred. The Unisys case description offers a promising direction for acquiring this evidence—the availability of customized applications that provide information to users of mobile devices. However, Unisys has not provided information regarding the availability of these applications: are they accessible to all mobile users, even if the communication devices are supplied by the company, or are they available only to individuals participating in the BYOD pilot? If customized applications are intended for the pilot, and if these applications have a measurable effect on employee productivity, then the case would seemingly offer credible evidence that BYOD does, in fact, have a demonstrated and positive influence on worker productivity. Unfortunately, the Unisys study does not provide this information.

Interestingly, only one of the surveys or case descriptions examines an issue that would be directly relevant to the relationship between BYOD and employee productivity: to what extent do workers use their own communication devices for personal purposes during the workday? That is, do employees check their own email, browse the Internet, interact with social media, text family and friends, and view videos and photographs during work hours? This issue is significant, because employees have assumedly purchased the devices for entertainment and social interaction. However, only the iPass survey addresses this concern, and it concludes that employees "waste" only an average of 28 minutes per day on these "technology distractions." iPass provides no details concerning the method by which it derives the "28 minutes" metric; it seems that further research is necessary to clarify the extent to which employees are using their wireless devices for personal purposes.

Thus, the frequently cited surveys and case descriptions do not offer credible evidence that BYOD enhances or increases worker productivity. Current research offers differing definitions of productivity or simply neglects to define the term. None of the surveys or cases provides measures of increased or decreased worker productivity resulting from implementation of a BYOD program. Also, current published research often blurs the distinction between personally owned and corporate-provisioned technology; as a result, readers are unable to disentangle the purported benefits of "bring your own device" from an alternate program that allows employees to use company-purchased mobile equipment. In fact, the Citrix and iPass surveys seem to offer briefs for the deployment of mobile technology in general, rather than for the use of mobile devices that are personally owned by employees.

Corporate decision-makers, seeking guidance concerning the desirability of implementing a BYOD program because of its expected effects on employee productivity, cannot rely on frequently cited research as credible evidence. Technology analysts and journalists have tended to tout BYOD as a trend that is becoming widespread throughout for-profit and not-for-profit organizations worldwide; these analysts and journalists also assert that increased employee productivity is frequently associated with BYOD. To the extent that these reports are based on currently published research, they also lack the credibility of their original sources.

However, the Citrix and iPass surveys are not entirely without value for decision-makers investigating the potential value of BYOD. Both surveys imply that adoption of BYOD is best initiated on a pilot basis and focused on those employees for whom access to mobile communications devices is most required to perform business-related functions. Mobile employees—such as sales representatives and other individuals who work remotely from a central corporate location—represent a particularly relevant population.

Conclusion: Marshall McLuhan Redivivus

In 1964, McLuhan introduced a phrase that, almost immediately following its initial publication, became a cliché among instructors and researchers in the field of communications: "The medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964). With this pithy slogan, McLuhan wanted to convey the meaning that a medium—a means by which content is communicated—affects the society in which it plays a role. This role is not limited to the content delivered over the medium; it also includes the characteristics of the medium itself.

It seems that BYOD exemplifies McLuhan's theory within the context of business and corporate communications. Smartphones, tablet computers, and electronic notebooks are examples of media. These specific devices not only deliver information to users but also permit responses and interactions with other users and systems worldwide. Yet the broader social message—or messages—conveyed by these media remains enigmatic.

Purveyors of telecommunications hardware and software have attempted to demonstrate that portable wireless media communicate many messages. These purveyors maintain that employees are willing to blur the distinctions between work and personal lives by using the same technology for both. In addition, workers (especially younger entries into the workforce) are sufficiently emotionally attached to their devices that they are willing to allow employers to remotely delete information contained on them—including personal correspondence and photographs. Further, employees will allow their employers to confiscate personally owned communications devices should legal requirements dictate. Employers, for their part, should encourage these emotional attachments, because adoption of the devices for business purposes is associated with a traditional management objective: increased worker productivity. In effect, current published research offers a consoling thought to corporate decision-makers: the new, powerful, wireless technologies to which employees, especially younger workers, are attracted are also generators of productivity. Both employees and their employers can benefit from the ubiquitous devices.

This study has examined the claim that BYOD results in significant productivity gains and concluded that this claim remains unsubstantiated. However, it is apparent that employees are bringing their devices to work and that, in many cases, these media are being used to perform business communication functions. Thus, portable and personally owned media are currently in the workplace. What we lack now are the real messages conveyed by these media.

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Building a Conceptual Framework in Image Reinvention

A Case Study of SWISS, Switzerland's National Airline

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If image repair is the strategy to use during crises, what can organizations do after the crisis is over? Organizations cannot possibly be contented with only coping with the fallout, but ultimately desire public affection and even more success than pre-crisis. To this end, reinvention takes place when management takes decisive actions to engage in innovation and risk-taking, and involve communication. Image reinvention is posited as a strategy an organization could consider after it undergoes a bruising crisis that questions its raison d'etre (Pang, 2011). The organization sheds its previous image and rebuilds a new image by reconstituting what it stands for to its stakeholders. Theoretical concept will be built from identity, brand and image literature and integrated with Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing. The concept is applied on a longitudinal case study of how SWISS, Switzerland's national airline, reinvented its image from successor Swissair in 2001 to become "Best Western European airline" in 2011 (SWISS, 2011a).

The impetus for image change is fundamentally motivated by crisis, as argued by Pearson and Clair (1998), and crisis outcome is positively correlated to organizational reputation. As organizational crises are now "no longer a matter of if, but when; no longer an exception, but the expected, even the inevitable" (Pinsdorf, 1987), maintaining a good reputation is both a strategic and prudent move. Fombrun (1996) has described reputation-building elegantly as a form of "enlightened self-interest" (p. 57). Indeed, corporations who desire the long-term benefits of a positive, enduring and resilient reputation must be diligent in image work. Although organizational reputation is considered to be an "extremely valuable intangible organisation resource" (Ho, Auyong, Dong, Lau & Pang, 2011, p. 278), and a "holistic and vivid impression held by a particular group towards a corporation, (p. 44)" according to Alvesson (as cited in van Riel & Fombrun, 2007), the returns can be tangible and rewarding. For observing a favorable reputation, organizations stand to enjoy "premium prices for products, lower costs of capital and labor, improved loyalty from employees, greater latitude in decision making, and a cushion of goodwill when crises hit" (Fombrun, 1996, p. 57), for example. A good reputation or image is important (Benoit & Pang, 2008), for it gives organizations legitimacy to continue its business, to constantly review, reinforce and endear its image (Pang, 2011). And stakeholders glean confidence from an organization's image, which would influence their decision to invest in it or buy its products (Ho, et al., 2011).

With regards to image work involved after a crisis specifically, few studies are available to advise organizations on how they could continue to survive (Wan & Schell, 2007). In fact, as a conundrum, little has been explicated on how organizations can work on their images before, during, and after a crisis (Pang, 2011). Pang's (2011) "Crisis Pre-emptive Image Management

Model" attempts to "introduce new concepts such as image transformation, image reinvention, and enduring image with the view of demonstrating how image can work for or against the organization (p. 341)." The model, anchored by Wilcox and Cameron's (2009) conflict management life cycle, maps the concept of image reinvention onto the life cycle's recovery phase. Image reinvention is posited as a viable strategy on how an organization, despite being tainted by crisis, can shed its previous image and rebuild a new one, by "reconstituting what it stands for to its stakeholders" (Pang, 2011, p. 347).

Towards an understanding of image reinvention, as a follow-up strategy after image repair, is the motivation for this study. Although work on image recovery and repair is helpful in suggesting response strategies for organizations to cope during crises (Benoit, 1995/1995b; Benoit & Pang, 2008; Coombs, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 2002), the outcomes, as a result, cannot possibly be the desired finale. Surely, organizations yearn for better days after a crisis, in winning back public affection and achieving higher image equity than pre-crisis periods. Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2007) provided a compelling case for reinvention of the image by envisioning "a new normal", or "change in an organization's… approach and belief system for organizing and living" (as cited in Pang, 2011, p.347). Like the phenomenon of "comeback kids", individuals who have not only survived an image crisis, but bounced back stronger than before through an image makeover process, have their stories *ad infinitum* littered in ancient and contemporary history. Former President of the United States of America (USA), William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton, and ex-USA Presidential interviewee Albert Arnold "Al" Gore are popular examples. The former was embroiled in, and lied on national television about a sex scandal during his term in office (James, 2010; Aldred & Goodchild, 2007); and the latter lost his Presidential campaign by a slim margin, which some would argue, due to a controversial decision by the Supreme Court. President Clinton has since "recovered" his image as an internally-recognized statesman and is now a United States Special Envoy to Haiti (James, 2010). Al Gore went on to become an environmental activist and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 (Aldred & Goodchild, 2007).

A literature gap, however, exists for a definite case of organizational image reinvention (Pang, 2011). Arguably the first study to extend and elaborate on image reinvention, this paper also aims to offer a feasible and practical post-crisis strategy for practitioners to revitalize organizational image. Theory can help organizations manage uncertainty (De Wet, 2011), and distil insights on how organizations review and reassess their own practice of crisis communication (Pang, Jin & Cameron, 2010). The study endeavors to build theoretical concept of image reinvention first, from consulting identity, brand and image literature, and integrate it with Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing. Failure framing is considered to be a key influence because leaders, as failure framers, are looked upon to promote "the most viable and morally correct response to… public concerns" (Liu, 2010, p. 235). It has been argued that transformational leaders are expected to be able to "provide and persuasively communicate a new corporate vision for an ailing organization and lead its followers through what can often be quite painful changes, including restructuring and sizable retrenchments (as cited in Liu, 2010, p. 233). Moreover, the dominant coalition is one of the predisposing factors of the Contingency Theory of Strategic Conflict Management (Pang, Jin & Cameron, 2010) and naturally assumes a decisive role in charting the strategic direction of an organization.

The paper is structured thus. The first section examines the distinctions and similarities between image, brand and identity theories and ascertains how identity and brand reinvention concepts can contribute to understanding image reinvention. The second section maps the derived image reinvention strategies against the Crisis Pre-emptive Image Management Model to see if there is harmony. The third section argues for this paper's method in using a single case study in

SWISS, Switzerland's national airline. The fourth section analyses the data collected on SWISS against the derived theoretical concepts of image reinvention for agreement or disparity and the final section deals with limitations and scope for further research.

Literature Review

On image, brand and identity

As literature on image reinvention is limited, we have to gain insights from work from other fields to inform our research. Another related domain that fits the bill is marketing, namely brand and identity concepts. There is a strong relationship between identity, brand and image. Hatch and Schultz (1997) believed that identity and image form two of three related parts of "a system of meaning and sense-making that defines an organisation to its various constituencies" (p. 357). Oswick (2002) suggested that "the fusion of identity, image, brand and reputation into coherent and organizational expression is both a legitimate and desirable goal" (p. 744). An understanding of these three concepts of image, brand and identity, and the reinvention theories of brand and identity, must take place first before synthesis of common ideas can happen.

Benoit (1997) defined image as a "perception of a person (or group, or organization) held by the audience, shaped by the words and actions of that person, as well as by the discourse and behavior of other relevant" (p. 40). This suggests subjective impressions of others that can be malleable by, and attributed to the subject. Although Fombrun (1996) referred organizational image as reputation, and Benoit and Pang (2008) acknowledged the interchangeable use of image and reputation, there have been observations of differences as well. Berstein (1992) argued that image is a construction of public impressions created to appeal to an audience and in contrast, corporate reputation is based on perceptions of an organization's track record (Wilcox & Cameron, 2009). Fombrun elaborated on the distinction, by according reputation with a more "lasting, cumulative and global assessment rendered over a longer time period" (as cited in Pang, 2011, p. 278). Understanding how to leverage on one's image can be further dissected into Bronn's (2010) idea of two facets of image, that image can be perceived by self (self-image), or by others, i.e. a public media image (Pang, 2011) an image that the organization would like its publics to have. Given that image is susceptible to multiple interpretations by various stakeholder groups (Dowling, 2001), it is noteworthy that organizations must hedge their bets with a select key few in order to focus their resources on building a good reputation or construct a favorable image with them. Dowling (2001) underpinned this further that "managers need to understand which groups of stakeholders are important to the organization, what type of relationship they have with it" (p. 32). Coombs' (2000) concept of "relational history" (p. 73) reinforces the pivotal construct of image – relationships -- to building a positive image, by "consistent delivery of valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders" (van Riel & Fombrun, 1997, p. 10).

Likening the idea of branding to that of burning an identifiable mark onto the hide of livestock animals, Christensen, Morsing and Cheney (2008) posited that branding in marketing practice has helped identify owners or producers of products. Schultz and de Chernatony (2002) suggested that organizations use branding to imbue additional meaning into their mass produced products and thus endow them with more stable identities. It is possible to dress up common products such as soap differently to sell to different types of customers. It is suggested that branding has intensified "the social significance of differentiation" (Christensen et al., 2008, p. 61), with Aaker's definition of a brand as "a promise to the consumer regarding the product's social, emotional or aesthetic qualities" (as cited in Christensen, et al., 2008, p. 61). Consumers yearn to be affiliated with these innate meanings to differentiate themselves as unique individuals

as well. As such, there are incentives for effective corporate branding. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) suggested that the process of corporate branding consisting of the set of activities undertaken by the organization to build favorable associations and positive reputation with stakeholders.The use of these activities, or brand, unites a group of products or businesses through a single name, a shared visual identity, and a common set of symbols. These symbols are used to construct one's personal identities. In a quest for individual identities, consumers become dependent on the identity of branded products (Christensen et al., 2008).

Birkigt, Stadler and Funck's (1986) model of corporate identity has defined identity as consisting of the following attributes: Symbolism (corporate logos and organization house style of an organization), Communication (all planned formes of communication, including corporate advertising, events, sponsorship, publicity and promotions) and Behavior (all behavior of employees that leaves an impression on stakeholders). Cornelissen (2011) interpreted the model to argue that the organization's symbolism, communication and behavior should emerge from an understanding of its core mission, strategic vision and the more general corporate culture of an organization, and what the organization stands for. A simpler and similar definition offered by Olins (1995) is that identity is "who you are, what you do, how you do it and where you want to go (p. 3)." Albert and Whetten (1995) offered another three criteria for identity in Centrality (features that point to the essence of the organization), Distinctiveness (features that distinguishes the organization from others) and Temporal Continuity (some form of sameness over time). Not to be confused with corporate personality, Olins (1978) said that "corporate personality… is the soul, the persona, the spirit, the culture of the organization manifested in some way. A corporate personality is not necessarily something tangible that you can see, feel or touch – although it may be. The tangible manifestation of a corporate personality is a corporate identity. It is the identity that projects and reflects the reality of the corporate personality (p. 212)." In other words, a corporate identity is the closest one gets to an image construct that differentiates an organization's position to the important stakeholder groups (Cornelissen, 2011).

The availability of theoretical concepts of image, brand and identity are non-exhaustive but the shared principles covered reveal three broad similarities: First, image, brand and identity are all self-constructed entities. The organization or individual is responsible for stakeholders' subjective perceptions of it and this demands finesse in design and construction. External image can be strengthened through measures that enhance relationships; brand can be fortified by appealing more to the emotional and social needs of different consumers; and identity can be more established through clear communication of the organizational personality. As self-constructed entities, the onus has to be on the leadership to build and maintain them, through sharing of information with rank and file within the organization. Second, image, brand and identity require a deep knowledge of stakeholder groups in order to be effective. Dempsey (2004) shared that a brand requires understanding of the community the organization serves. For image, Oliveria and Murphy (2009) pointed out that "legitimacy is a crucial aspect of reputation, and therefore of crisis communication strategy." This image projection of the organization operating a socially legitimate business in the eyes of one's publics is critical, and this creates a "halo effect" (Lyon and Cameron, 2004) in times of crisis. Identity must aim to be endearing to its publics (Cornelissen, 2011), unique (Albert & Whetten, 1995) and memorable (Cornelissen, 2011). Third, image, brand and identity demand commitment and consistency over time to succeed. Dempsey (2004) contended that a strong brand identity needs an investment of time to build; organizational image or reputation is a lasting impression that is dependent on evaluation by stakeholders based on evidence (Benoit &Pang, 2008); and identity requires "temporal continuity" or sameness over time in order to strike a chord with stakeholders (Albert & Whetten, 1995).

The three principles of "self-constructed entities", "deep knowledge of stakeholder groups" and "commitment and consistency over time" are in tandem with Liu's (2010) three failure framing subsystems of Framer, Culture and Consistency respectively. This preliminary mapping is encouraging for the study to proceed towards using Liu's (2010) network of failure framing as a relation to reinvention theories to be examined. For Framer, the assumption lies in the power of the leaders to "stage, to a large extent, what their followers see and hear, that is, the traditional concept of the 'image building process', whereby leaders actively articulate and express their self-images to 'bolster their image of competence, increasing subordinate compliance and faith in them (p. 245-246)." To this extent, the leaders play a big role in constructing the image, brand and identity of the organization. For Culture, the organization needs to "examine if they adapt or resist cultural differences with particular publics (p. 246-248)". Culture could be extended beyond organizational culture to culture of one's environment. Consistency refers to the organization that "operates congruently and transparently from their firmly held values, projecting only a genuine and accurate image… is not expected that their framings of failures would perpetually waver (p. 252-253)." This suggests that there is predictability and stability. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the relationship:

Image, Brand & Identity	Failure Framing Subsystems
Self-Constructed Entities	Framer
Deep Knowledge of Stakeholders	Culture
Commitment and Consistency over Time	Consistency

FIGURE 1: Image and how it is framed.

Identity reinvention – a prelude to image reinvention

Literature on reinvention of the "self" or identity has its roots in cultural studies. A case was made for the Japanese traditional costume, the kimono. Assmann (2008) examined the consumer culture of the kimono and how the Japanese are reinventing the identity of this important piece of culture to preserve its relevance. Dalby (2001) shared that the kimono is dying, being too anachronistic and cumbersome for modern life. Wearing a kimono in contemporary Japan now means a deliberate attempt to return to the "native dress" (Assmann, 2008, p361), and embrace a symbol of "distinctive Japaneseness" (Assmann, 2008, p. 361), which aims to contrast foreign cultures and establish continuity with a historic past. To reinvent the identity of the kimono, Assmann (2008) observed that preservation and consumption are related. First, the Japanese are positioning the kimono as a dress that is increasingly suitable for modern life, and move public perception away from it serving mainly ceremonial functions. Some ways of making this happen include fashion industries designing related kimono accessories to popularise the main garment, as well as recast the kimono in a playful style (Assmann, 2008). Second, creating a perceived value of cultural capital can encourage more to embrace wearing a kimono (Assmann, 2008). Bordieu (as cited in Assmann, 2008) suggested that acquiring tastes and appreciation in tea ceremonies, calligraphy and floral arrangements etc are indicators of social class. This makes mastering the cultural arts alluring if one is to project an upward image of social trend. Third, due to the existence of a "proper" way of wearing a kimono, the kimono is used as a communicative symbol to convey messages against the rigidity of societal rules and expectations (Assmann, 2008). This is done by small groups who have reinvented the way to wear the garment (Assmann,

2008) and reflects the attitude of these individuals towards a societal convention. These tensions help reinvent the identity and keep the kimono tradition alive.

Another examination of identity reinvention taking place, apart from national identity, is professional identity. Lieberman (2009) observed that as it is inevitable for teachers to inculcate "personal beliefs, skills, knowledge and philosophies (p. 96), rubbed off from their peers, into their practice. In his study to redevelop the professional identity of teachers, to achieve consistency in service ethics and professionalism for their wards and institutions, Lieberman (2009) argued for three core values: openness, collaboration and experimentation. The tangible execution for these values is suggested by Lieberman (2009) to be increasing the teacher learning community in order to foster innovation, research and criticality. Through constant peer discussions in a teaching learning community, the individual has plenty of opportunities to revisit her intention to teach (Lieberman, 2009), and this could translate into creative design of curriculum for students.

A third aspect of identity invention is in corporate identity. Since 1995, Lippincott & Margulies (L&M), a firm largely credited with initiating the practice of showing companies how they could benefit from systematic practices that support identity and reputation, has helped numerous Fortune 500 companies like Coca-Cola and Chrysler to create identity programs (Fombrun, 1996). L&M's three-phase process of identity invention is: "examine how a organization is perceived by its different publics; compare that perception to management's desired perception; and develop a coherent set of identity tools – name, design style, and nomenclature systems that help achieve the desired image while reinforcing the organization's corporate strategy (Fombrun, 1996, p. 270)." Fombrun (1996) provided a model to examine types of corporate identities ranging along a continuum from monolithic identity to fragmented identity. Monolithic identity refers to companies like McDonald's or Coca-Cola, where their names convey key character traits. On the other end, organizations with fragmented identities like Procter & Gamble and Kraft do not immediately cause associations with much of anything. Three main factors account for this: product characteristics, corporate strategy and administrative structure. Fombrun (1996) posited that long-lived products are more likely to build reputational capital for the organization; companies diversifying their businesses can benefit from fragmented identities, where a top-down strong identity lends reputational capital to smaller businesses; and companies with monolithic identities tend to develop more centralized structures for better corporate-level control.

From the three areas examined, a consistent motivation of identity reinvention is its need to preserve relevance and significance. It is a basic and fundamental internal review of a organization's *raison d'être*. This is concurred by Cornelissen (2011) who reiterated the importance for organizations to "continuously monitor the alignment between their vision, culture and image (p.71)." As such, Hatch and Schultz's (2001) toolkit of three elements in "Vision" (senior management's aspirations for the organization), "Culture" (organization's values shared by employees of the organization) and "Image" (impression that external stakeholders have of the organization) to align identity, image and reputation is helpful in moving the discussion towards image reinvention. As cultural identity reinvention seems to be too herculean a task for any single player to successfully implement within a predictable timeframe, and places too much onus in the hands of other stakeholders, it may not be as particularly related to this paper's aim. But Lieberman's (2009) case study of Lincoln Middle School's Mathematics department and Frombrun's (1996) citing of L&M's three-phase process can be aligned for informing image reinvention. "Collaboration" would be subjected to whether the organization is embarking on self-image reinvention or external image reinvention.

Identity reinvention is an internal exercise, and a *prelude* to image reinvention, if deemed necessary. Berstein's (1992) definition of image as a construction of public impressions revealed that image reinvention may well be an external exercise involving stakeholders. It is reasonable that image reinvention must surely stem from a source, a base in identity that the organization is clear of and operating from a position of strength.

Brand reinvention – an aftermath of image reinvention

As observed by Cornelissen (2011), many large organizations that were previously known as branded products are changing into monolithic corporate brands. One impetus for brand reinvention is to increase its versatility beyond a single product or a name for trading of stocks. In the example of Kingfisher, a leading home improvement organization in Europe and Asia, it has rebranded itself to endear to stakeholders around the world. One strategy has been "to sponsor Ellen MacArthur and her successful attempts to sail around the world in record-breaking times (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 67)." Christensen, et al (2008) offered that an essential dimension of corporate branding is the "pursuit of legitimacy through socially accepted behavior", which suggests that Corporate Social Responsibility might be an important factor. This could, perhaps, be validated in stakeholders' negative reaction to Nike's brand association as a representation of sweatshops, low salaries and child labor (Zuman, 1996). Severe attacks on its legitimacy over the years have led to Nike's robust campaign for business ethics, which has since garnered awards in 'Top 100 Corporate Citizens' List', 'Human Rights Campaign' and for climate impact (Nike). It is noteworthy that Bill Perez replaced Phil Knight in November 2005 as CEO. Perez has a strong track record in corporate responsibility (Cornelissen, 2011). Such "political situations" constitute as drivers for brand reinvention to take place. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) defined rebranding as "enabling by-passing the touchy political problems created from win-lose perceptions generated in merger situations (p. 125)." Consider Diefenbach's (2007) study on British Airways, which was created in 1973 from a merger of two organizations. Employees failed to identify with the brand and even displayed flags of old companies on their desks after a decade of merger. A new management team started to change this in the 1980s, with a new strategy proposed to give good customer service, and a new logo to draw attention to the changes. Visual images, like photographs, logos are powerful symbols for implementing a corporate brand (van Riel and Folbrun, 2007), and for the matter, reinvent it.

Organizations in "mid-life crisis" are constantly looking to reinvent themselves and their products. McDonalds' Global Chief Marketing Officer Larry Light made a speech to keep the organization "forever young", which was analyzed by an executive that there is a need for the McDonalds' brand to strike a "stronger emotional connection" than before (MacArthur, 2003). Bedbury (2006) argued that brand reinvention is an on-going commitment, and suggested four strategies "to avoid at all costs": study your competition above all else; test your way into it; think in terms of current distribution; and avoid mistakes. At the crux of Bedbury's (2006) messages were first, when one knows his customers really well, there is "no need to bother about how well competitors are doing." Second, the organization or individual must be bold enough to do something original and not rely too heavily on the well-trodden path of testing and research. Bedbury (2006) reinforced this strategy by citing the success of Starbucks, which became a global phenomenon without a single focus group used in its advertising initiatives. Third, it is important to think out of one's industry in order to reinvent the brand. Starbucks did not just sell coffee, but offers an entire coffee experience. Last but not least, risk-taking is a stepping stone for reinvention, as mistakes learned become assets for the organization or individual considering image reinvention (Bedbury, 2006).

One of the more elaborated brand reinvention framework was found in Robert Liodice's (2006/2007) Continuous Marketing Reinvention, which was expounded on four pillars of brand reinvention. The four pillars are first, reinvention of brand building (culture of innovation within the organization); second, there is a need for reinvention of integrated marketing communications (to capitalise on the current technology-influenced landscape and provide opportunities for a one-to-one connection between marketers and consumers); third, there must be reinvention of measurement and accountability (a culture of accountability); and the final pillar is reinvention of the marketing organization (rethinking of what we require of a marketing professional).

As discussed, the drivers for brand reinvention stems from lacks that were conveyed by stakeholders. First, social responsibility (Nike example) and transparency (Liodice's pillar of accountability) is seen as increasingly important for brand association; second, corporate cohesiveness among staff is pivotal in maintaining integrity with the projected brand (British Airways example); third, disparate marketing communications due to obsolete technology (Liodice's pillar of integrated marketing communications); and lastly, being reluctant to expand beyond domestic markets (Starbucks example). The means for successful brand reinvention lie in the clever use of visual images, and the synergy between an effective tagline and eye-catching logo can work together "as a script in eliciting organizational associations in people's minds with everything that the organization is trying to communicate van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 128)."

Stakeholders' opinions, thus, play a key role in brand reinvention. Before there can be opinions, perceptions are formed to shape them. As image is a perception held by an audience or stakeholders (Benoit, 1997), brand reinvention requires a certain level of buy-in from the stakeholders before it can take place. There is little maneuver for brand reinvention when the image is not a formidable one in the first instance. Brand reinvention can only be a *aftermath* to image reinvention.

System network of failure framing

Liu's (2010) System of Failure Framing is a study fundamentally motivated by the concerns over ethical and authentic leadership, and these qualities are contemporary (p. 232) in an era characterized by the widespread availability and accessibility of information. The adoption of a framing approach using Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing as a filtering tool, stems from de Vreese's (2012) observation that "the notion of framing is a process that has most of its analytical power when studied as an interaction between several actors, typically in a codependent relationship… (p. 365-366)." The approach also has merits in the field of communication, as Entman's (1993) argued that to frame is to "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context (p. 52)."

There are four reasons why this tool is being used for the purposes of this study. First, it has been argued in this paper that leadership plays a direct role in an organization's management of identity, image and brand: it has power to construct identity, image and brand; to know stakeholders well; and to accord commitment and consistency over time. The overarching frame of organizational leadership is thus a common start point. Second, Liu's (2010) System of Network Framing aims to "illustrate the prevalence and pertinence of failure framing in leadership and impression management… (p. 256)." This sheds light on Liu's (2010) attempt to pin down a leadership phenomenon that is dominant and consistent over time. Cornelissen (2011) has noted that organizations need to "continuously monitor the alignment between their vision, culture and image (p.71)." Pang's (2011) Crisis Pre-emptive Image Management Model has argued that strategies reviewing these entities have pertinence and method. Third, any form of reinvention is a causal result of failure, or lacking in the current situation. The presence and

effects of such drivers have initiated "change in an organization's… approach and belief system for organizing and living (Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger, 2007, p.182)." Crisis can also be the impetus for image change (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Liu's (2010) attempt to frame leadership failure has, in fact, contributed to "leadership image construction (p. 256)." Four, Liu's (2010) System of Network Framing offers multiple framings, distilled by a discourse of media texts, for selective mapping of consistent traits with image, brand and identity reinvention. It is understandable that not all framings are relevant to the purpose of this study, and three subsystems in Framer, Culture and Consistency have been argued for and applied.

Towards a conceptual framework in image reinvention

Inspired by Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger's (2007) argument of image reinvention to be a "new normal" and "a change in an organization's… approach and belief system for organizing or living", the authors considered the relevant drivers and factors of image reinvention from the distillation of brand reinvention and identity reinvention theories. The second basis is from Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing, with respect to subsystems in Framer, Culture and Consistency, derived from observing similarities in the relationship between image, brand and identity.

     As argued, image reinvention would appear to be a state of flux between identity and brand reinvention. An esteemed image is a desired outcome of identity reinvention and a strong position to conduct brand reinvention from. Although it is not necessarily a prerequisite or a requisite for the success of the latter, image reinvention reconciles the internal work afforded by identity reinvention with the external work involved in branding reinvention.

     Against this backdrop of identity and brand reinvention drivers and factors, Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing could accommodate the following drivers for image reinvention, keeping in mind image, identity and brand definitions: ambition to expand (Framer); merger politics, transparency, and/or social responsibility (Culture); and relevance and significance (Consistency), as elaborated earlier. Integrated marketing communications is not deemed a good fit as it is largely based on technical aspects in infrastructure and technology, and may not be as relevant to shaping external perceptions of stakeholders. These aspects are not image-enhancing vehicles because they are unlikely to be visible. Factors of image reinvention are posited as aspirations of Senior Management (Framer); shared values among staff, openness to critique, change in communication infrastructure and technology, effective corporate social responsibility campaigns, and experimentation (Culture); and use of visual images and taglines (Consistency). Figure 2 illustrates the conceptualization of image reinvention as a conceptual framework.

Research questions

With the identification of basic image reinvention concepts, the next steps would be to test them against a single case study in SWISS. The following research questions are posited:

RQ1: What causes image reinvention?
RQ2: What happens during image reinvention?
RQ3: What are the outcomes of image reinvention?

**Organizational
Leadership**

Identity Reinvention *(Internal)*	Image Reinvention **(distilled through Liu's System Network of Failure Framing)**	Brand Reinvention *(External)*
Driver/s		
Relevance and significance	Ambition to expand; (Framer)	Social responsibility
	Merger politics; Transparency; and/or Social Responsibility (Culture)	Transparency
	Relevance and significance; (Consistency)	Merger Politics
		Integrated marketing communications *(not relevant in Image Reinvention)*
		Ambition to expand
Factors		
Aspirations of Senior Management	Aspirations of Senior Management (Framer)	Use of visual images and taglines
Shared values among staff	Shared values among staff; Openness to critique; Effective corporate social responsibility campaigns; and experimentation (Culture)	Change in communication infrastructure and technology
External image change	Use of visual images and taglines (Consistency)	Effective corporate social responsibility campaigns
Openness to critique		
Collaboration with external partners outside of industry		
Experimentation		

Image, Brand & Identity	Failure Framing Subsystems
Self-Constructed Entities	Framer
Deep Knowledge of Stakeholders	Culture
Commitment and Consistency over Time	Consistency

FIGURE 2: Proposed drivers of image reinvention.

Method

A single case study approach has been adopted for this study for several compelling reasons. First, Gummesson (2000) stated that case studies capture the essential processes of decision-making, implementation and change. To Merriam (1998), when inductive reasoning is used during a case study, there is an attempt to discover new relationships than verify existing hypothesis. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) asserted that case studies were time-tested means of evaluating business practices while Stake (1995) supported the argument that case study allows authors to understand the embeddings and interactions these processes had with their larger contexts. This is comprehensive in a study aimed at understanding the workings of image reinvention. Second, Yin (1994) wrote that the purpose of case studies is to empirically investigate "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and address a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 59)." Yin (1994) also argued that research based on a single case study occurs when there are no other cases to draw parallels. The case itself is revelatory and a discovery in itself – it is a real-life situation and the phenomenon itself adds on to theory building and development. Third, case study data analysis generally involves an iterative, spiraling, or cyclical process that proceeds from more general to more specific observations (Silverman, 2000). The analysis involves the coding of data and the identification of salient points or structures. The model's explanation building is based on narrative data. The explanations should reflect theoretically significant propositions (Yin, 2009).

The authors understand, however, that generalization to populations is not appropriate or desirable in most case studies (Schmidt & Frota, 1986).

Background of SWISS

Swiss International Air Lines AG, or SWISS, is the national airline of Switzerland. It operates scheduled flights over all the continents - Africa, North and South America, Antarctica, Asia Australia and Europe. Its headquarters is located at EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg near Basel, Switzerland and its main hub, at Zurich Airport. SWISS is a subsidiary of German airline Lufthansa. It was formed after the bankruptcy of its predecessor, Swissair AG (SWISS, 2012).

1990s: Hunter Strategy - By January 1 1991, commercial aviation in Europe was completely liberalized and more national airlines affiliated themselves with airline alliances in order to maintain a worldwide market presence. However, for Swissair, its huge financial assets were deemed too precious to be merged with other airlines. As a result, Swissair launched the Hunter Strategy, which aimed to grow its market share through the acquisition of small airlines rather than entering into alliance agreements. Included in the sales of many airlines was the 49.5 per cent share in the unprofitable Belgian flag carrier Sabena.

2001: Bankruptcy - The buying spree created a major cash flow crisis for parent organization SAirGroup, which was exacerbated by the 911 attacks. Unable to make payments to creditors on its large debt, and with the refusal of UBS to extend its line of credit, the entire Swissair fleet was abruptly grounded on 2 October 2001. The organization subsequently declared bankruptcy (Kühni, 2011a).

2002: SWISS was born - At that time, Crossair was also under the SAirGroup. The Swiss federal government bailed Swissair out and created the amalgamation Swiss International Air Lines out of the Swissair subsidiary Crossair. Operations were inaugurated on 1 April 2002 (Kühni, 2011b).

2005: Acquisition by Lufthansa - On 22 March 2005, after much speculation and denial, the owners of SWISS sold the airline to Lufthansa, a move that received much public criticism. Both airline operations were gradually integrated from the end of the same year till 1 July 2007 (Kühni, 2011b).

2006-2008: Productivity and profits - SWISS reduced its labor force and renegotiated all of its supplier contracts for higher cost-saving operations. Efficiency was established: SWISS brought in bigger aircraft; and grew route network based on the same overhead from 2006 to 2008. The only increased costs are from hiring more cabin and flight employees (Donohue, 2008). By 2006, SWISS has reported its first black-ink results – net profits of CHF 263 million, from a loss of CHF 178 million for 2005 (SWISS, 2007a). Marcel Biedermann, managing director intercontinental markets for SWISS, said: "… this was the beginning of getting the house back in order (Donohue, 2008).

2009: Marketing to the public - "SWISS made", an integrated marketing communications campaign, was launched in 2006. In 2009, SWISS updated the campaign with the endorsement of Swiss director, Marc Forster, through a short film, "LX Forty" (SWISS, 2009a). New uniforms for the ground and flying crew were spotted from December 2009. It incorporated the Switzerland national flag as part of its identity, thereby aligning itself with the renowned SWISS standards globally. This campaign was a collaboration with renowned Swiss designer, Ruth Grüninger (SWISS, 2009b).

2011: New corporate logo and the continued success - On August 18 2011, SWISS announced that its intention to sharpen its brand positioning and profile as the airline of Switzerland. It introduced a new logo, which featured a SWISS tail fin with its Swiss-cross design, enabling SWISS to be instantly recognized as "the airline of Switzerland". In 2011, the organization announced an operating profit of CHF 368 million (Kühni, 2011b). Despite the acquisition, SWISS has remained largely independent, retaining its own decision-making and financial autonomy. Today, SWISS is not only financially successful but has also gained accolades, voted first in the 2011 Skytrax World Airline Awards in the category, "Best Western European airline", among other awards in the past years (SWISS, 2011a).

Data Collection

Documentary evidence

For this analysis, the authors have used various data in news articles in both the English and German language; annual reports and press releases of SWISS; and an interview with a key personnel from SWISS. Kaid (1996) stated that the analyses of crisis events through media coverage are well-trodden paths taken by the authors. Newspaper articles, often referred to as public records of history in the making (Warrington, 1997), are argued to provide a more detailed, comprehensive and chronological account of the management of the crisis. The articles were retrieved from Factiva by using relevant search terms regarding Swissair, SWISS and image re-invention. This search resulted in a total of 21 news articles in English and 54 news articles in

German, of which some were also obtained from a search on www.persoenlich.com – one of the most important Swiss online portal featuring weekly articles of the Swiss communication economy. The search period was set from the Lufthansa takeover in March 2005 to February 2012. Articles were selected when the content mentions the bankruptcy and discusses the post-Lufthansa-takeover management decisions, across branding, operations and personnel.

Fifteen official press releases and six annual reports were also included in the sample. The annual reports were from the financial years of 2006 to 2011, i.e. from the first financial year after the Lufthansa takeover, to the latest available annual report. Drivers and factors identified from the annual reports were mapped with the corresponding press releases. The files were organized in chronological order of the date of reporting. Overall, the sample size is 81.

Interview

A single author conducted the interview in Switzerland with SWISS spokesperson Susanne Mühlenmann (henceforth referred to as the interviewee). The primary data collection device used in this study was an interview guide. This guide was used to ensure continuity during the long interview conducted by a single author. The guide was a set of general questions and probes relevant to the study's research objective. The guide helped maintain some organization and control during the interview. At the same time, the guide allowed room for spontaneity and unstructured responses,

The interview was conducted via the phone in view of the vast distances between the interviewee and the authors. The interview was conducted on 24 February 2012. The interview was recorded, with the permission of the interviewee, allowing the author to pay careful attention to her verbal responses and silences while taking minimum notes.

Following the interview guide, the session moved from general to specific questions, affording the subject ample time to offer her insight on SWISS' image reinvention efforts.

Data Analysis

Documentary evidence: Using Berg's (2009) approach, the qualitative approach was used. Five steps of analysis were conducted on the sample to develop inductive categories of the drivers and factors:

1. All the stories in the sample was read and analyzed according to the research questions. After the authors obtained a holistic understanding of the crisis cause, image repair and image reinvention efforts, a timeline was created. It is based on the chronological order of the related events and activities at SWISS from the time of bankruptcy to the Lufthansa takeover and the following image reinvention efforts.
2. The authors re-read the sample to develop categories of the drivers and factors. A selection criterion was created and applied as a standardized manner for all authors to categorize the news stories.
3. The sample was read for the third time and categorized according to the selection criteria. Word documents were created based on the categories and the relevant data on SWISS' image reinvention efforts were captured on the Word documents.
4. In-depth analysis of relevant categories was done through a fourth reading of the sample, which was the critical analysis to attain latent information in the news stories and to detect implication, relation, strategies and values of latent information (Ye & Pang, 2011).

5. Based on step 4, an analysis of the findings was developed in relation to each of the research question.

Interview: An interview guide was used to ensure the critical issues were extensively addressed. Before formal data analysis began, the author listened to and transcribed the interview recording to become more familiar with the data and to create verbatim interview transcript. All the authors worked together to identify observations from the transcript. The authors then categorized the observations under the various drivers and factors of image reinvention. Finally, the authors scrutinized the remaining uncategorized observations to form new patterns and new categories. The interview data was then constantly compared to literature review to map patterns of consistency and contradictions from the conceptual framework in image reinvention.

Findings

The findings are presented in descriptive and narrative form, or what Stake (1998) referred to as storytelling. To maintain the narrative flow of the analysis, the issues are examined and concepts relating to proposed drivers of image reinvention are highlighted in bold.

Boarding time

On the back of a bankruptcy disaster on 2 October 2001, SWISS was looking for quick answers to a dire situation. The organization, pressured by a nation's outrage to embarrassment, was eager to "board any plane" for a flight up. Swiss International Air Lines, a stopgap, courtesy of the Swiss federal government's bailout to keep operations going, lasted only three years from April Fools' Day of 2002. There were no signs of image reinvention happening in this collaboration with Crossair. Another attempt to reinvent the airline through participation in the Oneworld Alliance (Reuters News, 2005, March 22) was unsuccessful, as fundamental disagreements in "frequent flyer program and loss of taking off and landing slots in Britain, have resulted in a split. The image of SWISS by loyal patrons and British flyers might have been a key consideration in this regard.

The interviewee raised points that are in agreement with documentary evidence and literature review. The organization's post-bankruptcy priority was aimed at leaving behind the shadow of the grounding and driven by the wish to rise as a phoenix from the ashes. Actions taken included renaming the airline; investing heavily in the look, design and presentation of the product; and various image campaigns to carry the new look and feel of being a premium carrier out to the public. The bar was set high and management was ambitious in quick returns. However, it was a scrambled case of inconsistency, where expansion was limited in impact given the dire financial circumstances. The kneejerk response to promote its image was disastrous, as the promoted image of "civilized aviation" and reality were not fully congruent. It is clear that SWISS were focusing on the wrong priority, i.e. image was not the problem here, but organizational management.

Taking off

On 22 March 2005, a breakthrough for the airlines happened with Lufthansa's acquisition of SWISS. The move resulted in strong reactions (Kühni, 2011b), setting the stage for public expectations and image persuasion. When the airline was taken over by Lufthansa in 2006, there were nationalistic emotions displayed as Lufthansa was a German carrier. To mitigate public

reaction, Lufthansa ensured that "SWISS will still be SWISS", and explicitly distance SWISS from the parent organization to send a message that Swiss qualities and values remain important. Muehlemann believes this move has been consistently realized until today.

Image reinvention is observed to have taken off from the point of acquisition, as the following actions unfold: First, SWISS' organizational leaders exhibited ambition to not only do better, but expand the business. SWISS' CEO Christoph Franz pledged that "it will break even in 2006 and achieve its first-ever profit next year (Flottau, 2006, April 10). This was a bullish forecast, considering that Lufthansa's ownership only came to past in 2005. Second, with a merger of corporate practices between two completely different massive organizations, sweeping changes are bound to happen. And central to the commencement of image reinvention would be the urgent impetus to reduce operational cost and start becoming an economically viable business. Significant labor cost cuts of cabin crew and regional pilots were addressed (Flottau, 2006, April 10); the push to be self-sufficient in supply arrangements (Jet Fuel Intelligence, 2005, December 19); and heavy investment in business-class seats, premium passenger lounges, and short-haul aircraft fleet (Constable, 2011, February 1). Third, SWISS was urgent in making a case for its relevance and significance in light of a battered image. Through its controversial bankruptcy trial (Onna, 2007, January 16), SWISS' credibility has symbolically damaged the reliability of the global Swiss brand generally. There is an emphasis on reviewing SWISS' "knowhow, visual identity, staff infrastructure, flight slots and airliners" after the takeover by Lufthansa (Agence France Presse, 2005, March 27). In fact, Swissair was referred to as the past by organizational leaders, and SWISS is a term coined "for the future" (Persoenlich.ch, 2007, June 22). Fourth, given the financial scandal of bankruptcy, the lack of transparency is a calling card for image reinvention. Most news articles have revealed financial insights offered by spokespersons of the organization on the volume of business, revenue and costs of the operations.

Autopilot mode

After a successful take-off, "pilots" of the organization, or leaders, have to steer an organization on the right track to image reinvention. To get it on "autopilot mode", several components were observed to be in play. Organizational leadership certainly showed aspirations to do better. Otherwise known as political will, this is necessary for painful and drastic austerity measures in restructuring labor policies to happen. A message of prudence and financial discipline was conveyed to the public, and that included an ultimatum to 314 pilots to basically either accept a pay cut or be dismissed (Bloomberg, 2005, December 26). Naturally, staff morale was low and rallying efforts hastened to communicate shared values among staff, which SWISS recognize to be critical to building up self-image. On the fifth birthday of SWISS, a gala dinner was thrown to celebrate a good partnership with Lufthansa, and to thank the team for their hard work (Middle East Organization News, 2007, April 7). During the dinner, success was attributed to the "tremendous work and commitment of staff" (Targeted News Service, 2008, January 22). For an external image reinvention, there has been a pivotal shift towards the promotion of "Swiss hospitality" to customers, made tangible by delivering "personal care, quality in every detail and tremendous work and commitment" (Targeted News Service, 2008, January 22). This change in communication infrastructure, one of consistency between the internal and external image of SWISS, has helped endear the organization to the public, through sponsorships (Persoenlich.ch, 2006, November 22) and advertising campaigns (Persoenlich.ch, 2006, October 31).

A concerted effort to improve external perception were in corporate social responsibility campaigns, conducted specifically in philanthropy and environmental conservation. To strike a stronger emotional connection with the public, SWISS participated in the collective effort

organized in 2005 by Swiss Solidarity for the victims of the Asian tsunami crisis. As an official partner airline of Swiss Solidarity, SWISS donated more than CHF 250,000 to Swiss Solidarity from its online ticket sales and duty-free revenue and through the reduced rates it has been charging for its air travel and transport services. SWISS also made cargo space free of charge in the short term for organisations such as the Red Cross and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SWISS, 2005a). For environmental conservation, both SWISS and its parent organization, Lufthansa, teamed up with Swiss-based non-profit organisation "myclimate" to offer voluntary carbon offset option to SWISS customers who could choose to offset the carbon dioxide emissions caused by their air travel and paying a corresponding amount to "myclimate" (SWISS, 2007b).

As the public grew more receptive of SWISS' recovery, the organization exhibited an air of spirit of innovation and adventurism by making decisions to expand market share. to increase competitiveness in view of emerging Asian airlines. There was also investment in future markets for its first-class and business-class travelers (Constable, 2011, February 1); and venture into niche service areas of cargo transportation between Pakistan and Switzerland, in particular flying textiles, leather goods, fruit and vegetables (International Freighting Weekly, 2005, July 1). Through its individual efforts of investing in a young and efficient aircraft fleet, SWISS announced in 2011 that its specific fuel consumption has reduced by more than 17 per cent since the organization was established in 2002 (SWISS, 2011b). To best complement such bold initiatives in the clearest way to stakeholders, images and taglines have been used to support SWISS' ongoing image reinvention efforts. This is centered on five elements of brand positioning, messages, logos and advertising. A new logo was fashioned in the SWISS cross suggesting an aircraft tail fin. It has a new logo in "Our sign is a promise" (Persoenlich.ch, 2011, August 18). There have been numerous advertising campaigns since the takeover, as well as sponsorship agreements with Roger Federer (Persoenlich.ch, 2007, July 11). Since 2009, SWISS has been pushing online marketing efforts on YouTube, Facebook, Google and Wikipedia (Persoenlich.ch, 2009, February 16).

Last but not least, there has been evidence of openness to public scrutiny. This is prevalent from press reports of business and financial matters post-Lufthansa.

"Turbulence" during flight of image reinvention

Turbulence experienced during a flight is most common and not to be alarmed. Likewise, for this study, there is a driver and some factors that are derived solely from data in the case study of SWISS. Competition was observed to be a driver, as the progress of other industry players has also expedited the urgency of image reinvention. Lufthansa's Chief Executive Wolfgang Mayrhuber said: "… Europe's airlines needed to confront a forthcoming stronger challenge from revived US carriers and young Asian airlines (Agence France Presse, 2005, March 27)." Staying still without change is detrimental to survival in a competitive global airline industry.

Data has also revealed other factors that could have contributed to the success of image reinvention. Most notably, financial health of an organization is important in the eyes of the public. Much material on SWISS' turnaround is due to its intense focus on getting the business costs manageable and sustaining sizable profits. There is also some evidence of diversification of core products and services, through its venturing into niche markets (International Freighting Weekly, 2005, July 1). Another factor could be an astute selection of partners who could add value to the image. In the case of SWISS WorldCargo and Lufthansa Cargo's integration plans, they were scrapped because of incompatibility in providing solutions and approaches to the

market (Waters, 2006, February 13). This validates the initial claim that image reinvention does not mean just "boarding any flight".

Landing

The interviewee believed that a reason for SWISS being now perceived as a premium carrier has also to do with the openness of the management towards changes; and the constant strive for the next leap of progress. In fact, SWISS has just rebranded itself in 2011. This, the Head of Media Relations said, meant that SWISS would continue to not just maintain its image but keep taking it further, by improving product quality and narrowing customer proximity. An example how this would help would be through more thoughtful corporate social responsibility programs.

Discussion

The single case study in SWISS has substantially advised on what causes image reinvention; what happens during image reinvention; and what the outcomes of image reinvention are. As reinvention does not take place without an impetus beforehand, a primary initiation of image reinvention is found in the acquisition of SWISS by Lufthansa. This is observed from a longitudinal examination of SWISS history following its bankruptcy crisis. In the acquisition, several drivers of image reinvention are in place; and successful factors of image reinvention have ensued. The conceptual framework from literature was applied to two different types of data: documentary evidence and interview with a key SWISS employee, and the findings are largely complementary. The drivers causing image reinvention to take place are found to be ambition, merger politics, transparency, social responsibility, and relevance and significance to its stakeholders. During image reinvention, the patterns that kept SWISS in the right direction are aspirations of senior management, shared values among staff, openness to critique, change in communication infrastructure and technology, effective corporate social responsibility campaigns, experimentation, and use of visual images and taglines.

The outcomes of image reinvention, as put forth by RQ3, are gleaned from data. As offered by the interviewee, openness of the management towards change, and the constant strive for the next leap of progress reflects a renewed attitude in SWISS that is confident from the result of success. Tangible outcomes are definitely pertinent in the numerous industry awards won by SWISS (Persoenlich.ch, 2008, January 17; Tages Anzeiger, 2011, January 24; & SWISS, 2011c); corporate social responsibility programs; and the rising profits of an organization that have been accepted by its stakeholders (SWISS, 2007c; Kühni, 2011b). These tangible outcomes will continue to improve public image.

Conclusion

Arguably the first study that extends and elaborates on image reinvention, image reinvention as a theoretical concept has been advanced with an applied framework. Practically, the study offers a feasible post-crisis strategy for practitioners to revitalize organizational image. Literature review from identity and brand studies, in particular reinvention research from both concepts have been consulted. Even though there is a strong relationship between identity, image and brand, there is a need to sieve out what image reinvention is, as a standalone. Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing is thus used as a tool for this purpose due to the overarching emphasis on the tremendous influence of leadership in both failure and image work; acknowledgement of the importance of consistency; origins in causal effects, i.e. failure is caused by a driver, and in this

regard, reinvention is also an effect; and flexibility in its multiple framings, which has led to the selection of three subsystems in Framer, Culture and Consistency. The qualitative application of literature on data, based on a single case study approach towards documentary evidence and interview, is comprehensive and findings have been significantly coherent.

In the course of data analysis, material on RQ3 or outcome of image reinvention was notably leaner than that of RQ 1 and RQ2, or drivers and factors. This is due to two reasons. First, there is much lesser content present with regards to commentary on SWISS happenings of its successful turnaround. Most sources point towards a post-bankruptcy era. Second, the verdict is still out on how the success of image reinvention should be fairly measured, as the question of 'whether image reinvention could ever be completed' looms large. While this study has attempted to argue for both tangible and intangible outcomes of image reinvention, the authors acknowledge that RQ3 has not been comprehensively addressed.

Further research could be done in finding out if competition as a driver, and factors such as financial health; diversification of core products and services; and astute selection of merging partners that are gleaned from data, would find consistency through the application of the image reinvention conceptual framework in another case study. Other framing tools could also be applied to test the rigor of Liu's (2010) System Network of Failure Framing in image work framing. Lastly, a quantitative approach could be conducted through content analysis of data collected in this study, in order to specifically measure frequencies of drivers and factors, as well as provide more insights into their relationships with each other.

Acknowledgements

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A Case for Corporate Inoculation

Exploring the Potential for Inoculation Theory in Corporate Communication

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This essay seeks to bridge persuasion theory and corporate communication. Specifically, a detailed review of the Inoculation theory (McGuire, 1961) is provided and the theories utility to corporate communication researchers and practitioners is discussed. Inoculation theory posits that, much like vaccinations, the controlled exposure to a weak attack message, followed by counterarguments, builds resistance to a real persuasive attack and strengthens existing attitudes. Moreover, the theory is discussed in relation to various corporate communication crisis situations.

Keywords: Inoculation Theory, Crisis communication, Persuasion, Corporate communication.

Corporations in crisis contexts often face severe reputational threats. The damage caused by these crisis contexts can be minimized by the correct communication strategy, namely saying the right words at the right moment (Coombs, 2004). Yet, one critical question for corporate communicators is when is it that correct moment. Some corporate endeavors like the airline industry, natural recourses companies, politics and the pharmaceuticals industry are wrought with potential crisis contexts. In some cases, practitioners are reactionary and in others they are able to "steal the thunder" by breaking the news of its crisis before the news agencies do (Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005). Findings have shown that "stealing thunder" can have significant impacts on protecting the reputation of the corporation (Arpan & Pompper, 2003; Mauet, 2007 & Williams, Bourgeois, & Croyle, 1993). Yet, can corporate communicators eliminate the thunder entirely?

This essay seeks to explore the potential utility of inoculation theory (McGuire, 1961) for corporate communicators. Specifically, this essay offers a definition of inoculation theory and reviews the literature that shapes the limitations a scope of the theory. Finally, this essay briefly discusses the applications of this theory for practitioners.

Literature Review

Inoculation theory (McGuire, 1961) posits that, much like vaccinations, the controlled exposure to a weak attack message, followed by counterarguments, builds resistance to a real persuasive attack and strengthens existing attitudes. For example, the corporate reputation of stakeholders is often the attitude of concern for corporate communicators. In this case, corporate communicators would make a weak threat towards its own organization and provide counterarguments for the weak threat. Ideally, when a real threat occurred in the future the stakeholders attitude would be inoculated against the real attack.

When a person is warned of a possible threat to his/her current attitude towards an issue, the inoculation provokes the person to prepare a response. S/He is then exposed to an attack message that, like a vaccine, administers arguments that oppose his/her line of thought. When those arguments are refuted by the appropriate counterarguments, the person is in a better

position to withstand future attacks and defend his stand through reason. The strength of inoculation lies in the understanding that one is more vulnerable to attack from something that he hasn't been exposed to earlier, and therefore isn't prepared for. Apart from threat, the degree of involvement also made a big difference to the final result. When the receiver had a moderate to high involvement in the issue, enough threat was generated and he became resistant, developing arguments to support his attitude. If the level of involvement was low, however, there wasn't enough threat generated. There was also the danger that since he didn't have strong views on the subject, a strong attack message could lead him to change his mind, making inoculation counterproductive. The kind of inoculation messages used also produced resistance differently, with central, cognitive messages producing more resistance by providing logical counterarguments for defense than peripheral emotional appeals (Szabo & Pfau, 2002).

Applications of Inoculation

This theory has been tested through applications in areas such as political and advertising campaigns. It was shown to be effective in developing viewers' resistance to parody videos that attempt to manipulate them. Post inoculation, participants in the study were better able to recognize and protect their attitudes against covert attack messages (Lim & Ki, 2007). The theory was also studied and proven effective in the international context. A study done on political attitudes in Taiwan proved that participants who were inoculated were better equipped to resist attacks on their political ideology, irrespective of their views (Lin, 2005). The effectiveness of inoculation in building resistance also augurs well for areas such as crisis communication. Traditionally, corporate crisis communication has been highly reactive in nature, with efforts to mitigate the backlash stepped up when disaster strikes. In contrast, inoculation serves as a healthy means of preparing for crisis, for it creates a more realistic image of the company in the mind of the public, addresses potential problem areas and demonstrates confidence by answering these questions. While the study on the subject by Wan and Pfau (2004) did not show inoculation was more effective than supportive messaging pre-crisis, it did show that it could be useful when incorporated as one of the methods employed by crisis communication experts in formulating its strategy.

The Role of Affect

A majority of the research done on inoculation focuses on the cognitive aspect of both the inoculation message and the post-attack response while measuring the resistance ultimately created. A study of affective inoculation treatments was conducted in context of a crisis to understand how it could lead to affective counterarguments (Wigley & Pfau, 2010). Wigley and Pfau measured the impact of affect on producing resistance in terms of the counterarguments produced. They found that cognitive treatments produced cognitive counterarguments, and affective ones produced affective counter arguing abilities among subjects. In deviation from previous research findings, participants rated affective counterarguments as stronger than the cognitive ones, although the study was limited by the fact that the proportion of positive and negative affective messages was not balanced, and a check-list method of identifying possible counterarguments made it easier for participants to recognize statements they might not have come up with themselves. Another study observed the level of resistance produced by cognitive, affective-positive and affective-negative treatments. It found that affective-negative inoculation treatments produced the greatest threat and involvement, as well the highest number of cognitive counterarguments. This was linked to the fact that anger, as an emotion, produces resistance as

compared to happiness, which undermines it. Results proved that cognitive counter-arguments and affective-negative messages used together during refutational preemption produced the most resistance (Pfau et al., 2009).

Attitude and its Role in Inoculation

Furthermore, it was found that the developed resistance was strongest when the type of inoculation message matched the attitude base of the participant. In other words, an affective inoculation message used on a participant with an affective attitude created resistance to combined cognitive and affective potential attacks. Similarly, cognitive inoculation treatments worked well on those with a more rational approach to things. Overall, it was found that for participants of both attitude bases, a combined cognitive and affective treatment worked better than a mismatched one. The limitation of this study was in the determination of the attitude base itself, i.e. participants were placed in either category based on relative feedback, and this just meant that a person characterized as having an affective attitude just displayed a relatively lower (not necessarily low) cognitive score (Ivanov, Pfau & Parker, 2009).

Apart from participants' nature, the effect of a neutral, positive or negative initial attitude on conferring resistance was also studied using agricultural technology as a subject. Results indicated that initially opposed, supportive or neutral subjects displayed more positive attitudes post attack message. Threat levels for opposed and neutral subjects increased, and counter arguing increased for supportive and neutral subjects (Wood, 2007). Inoculation was also posited to create attitude accessibility, thereby generating greater attitude strength and even producing counterargument. Described as the capacity to recall arguments from memory to defend one's attitude, attitude accessibility was thus proposed to be an alternate explanation for the resistance created by inoculation (Pfau et al., 2003). Increased attitude accessibility is also considered one of the reasons the power of inoculation goes beyond the one inoculated person alone. Studies have shown that the strengthened attitude that is created because of the inoculation process makes participants more confident, increases attitude accessibility and encourages them to share their views with their social circle (Compton & Pfau, 2009). This can have many potential uses, as demonstrated by a study conducted by Compton and Pfau, 2004, which researched the effects of inoculation to foster resistance to credit card marketing among college students. It not only demonstrated the effectiveness of inoculation in protecting students against credit card advertisements, and consequently, usage and debt, but also showed that those inoculated also displayed a tendency to share their newly strengthened attitudes with peers through Word of Mouth, thereby spreading the effects to a much wider pool of people. The attitudinal strength imparted by inoculation also worked against the spiral of silence, as demonstrated by an experiment researching political attitudes in Taiwan. Inoculated participants displayed more confidence in their views, and were more likely to speak out and overtly resist political attacks (Lin & Pfau, 2007).

Timing as a Factor in Inoculation

In examining the effects of inoculation-generated resistance over time, it was discovered that participants' ability to come up with arguments remained stable for a much longer period of time than earlier inoculation research had predicted. The arguments that came up during refutational preemption were added to participants' memory to create a bigger pool of statements they could then use to refute attacks; inoculation different messages created counterargument output that was

sustained over a long period of time. It was also found that the effects of inoculation and counterarguing abilities could be further extended by reinforcement sessions (Pfau et al., 2006).

Exploring Modality

Inoculation and the development of resistance has always been treated as a cognitive process. As a result, print as a medium was traditionally assumed to have a higher capacity to confer resistance; however, further research on modality has shown that both print and video can create resistance to attack through inoculation, the big difference being the manner in which they work. Print messages created threat through content and helped the viewer formulate cognitive arguments through refutational preemption. Video inoculation messages, on the other hand, created positive perceptions about the source, and subsequently created resistance to the source of attack, and later, the attack message itself (Pfau, Holbert, Zubric, Pasha & Lin, 2000). This study, while proving the effectiveness of video messages for inoculation, relied only on one source and followed a very simple presentation format. Experimenting with multiple sources should give further clarity on the usefulness of video as an inoculation medium.

In a study of another aspect of modality, the effect of emotionally strong visuals, used along with messages, was observed in terms of the resistance created. Emotional visuals, when used equally for the arguments and counterarguments in the pretreatment, increased participants' resistance. However, they reduced resistance if the strength of both visuals wasn't equal. This research took the concept of video inoculation messages beyond source perceptions, by introducing emotional visuals to create higher affect. It also introduced a different presentation style, which was missing in the study mentioned earlier, by combining source messages with visuals, and further proving the effectiveness of video messages in fostering resistance (Nabi, 2003). However, a few limitations highlight areas that are worthy of further research. This study mainly used affective-negative visuals along with cognitive arguments made by the source in the video. It would be interesting to see the impact of affective positive images used in video inoculation during the refutational preemption phase. According to other studies, affective negative messages produce the highest amount of threat, increase involvement levels and counterargument output; overall, they increase resistance to attacks (Pfau et al., 2009). Even though this study was done using print messages, the basic principle would still remain the same when using visuals. It has already been proven that both print and visuals are effective in inoculating attitudes, with the process of inoculation being the primary difference.

Discussion

A number of areas in corporate communication may benefit from this theory. Companies can use inocualtion for better corporate advocacy and to create a platform for more responsible consumption of products and services. Crises can be prepared for, and handled in a better manner by using messages that visualize the problem and solution. Corporate advertisements that use this theory can also increase their impact and the profit margin for the organization. Nonprofit organizations such as WWF, PETA and Amnesty International often deal with highly emotional issues where visuals could have considerable impact. Therefore, they can also use this to create awareness for their causes and protect consumers from messages that attack their existing attitudes. This is especially useful in case of emotionally charged ethical debates such as those involving drug legalization, gun control and abortion. Earlier studies have already looked at the impact of different levels of attack and refutation messages used in the inoculation process (Nabi, 2003).

In-depth research into inoculation theory began with a heavy emphasis on cognitive messages delivered through print media (Szabo & Pfau, 2002). Later research has built on this by proving that both print and video messages are effective in creating resistance; the only difference being that while print messages create resistance through their content, video messages create an impact through source factors (Pfau et al., 2000). Studying modality and the impact of visuals will deepen our understanding of inoculation as well as its practical applications to solve communication problems. With attention spans of audiences becoming shorter, there is a need to craft communication that has maximum impact in the minimum amount of time. Advertisers and marketers are reaching their audiences through many new media and adapting their messages accordingly. Inoculation theory can be used for creating resistance to these marketing messages, developing a customer base or reinforcing political ideologies (Compton & Pfau, 2004; Wei-Kuo & Pfau, 2005). It would serve communicators well to see how emotions and logic can best be combined to create resistance to attacks on existing attitudes, thereby increasing brand loyalty and building a support base on a variety of important advocacy issues.

Like Coombs (2004) notes, the right moment, for the right words might be well before the crisis even happens. In the case of Deep Water Horizon or others like it, the companies may have benefited from prior inoculation efforts. Significant discussion and research needs to be conducted on how effective this theory might be for practitioners.

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A Case Study of Corporate Public Relations in China

Will China Follow the Same Path As Other Industrialized Nations?

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In the United States, public relations has evolved into a sophisticated profession far beyond its roots in propaganda. Public relations has become an indispensable means for achieving dialogue and consensus building, as well as encouraging ethical practices and corporate social responsibility. In its many facets public relations serves as an integral part of management decision-making in all types of corporations.

Until recent years, public relations activities in China were just another arm of the central government. Today, China is going through its own transformation, aided by improvements in education and literacy, more aggressive media, a burgeoning middle class, expanding communication technologies, and global pressures.

The authors explored public relations activities in China through a series of qualitative interviews with corporate public relations professionals with first-hand knowledge of China. Following these interviews, the authors developed a model of public relations to forecast China's path as an emerging public relations presence.

Development of United States Public Relations

Public relations as a discipline is often maligned and more often confused for its role in modern management. The term public relations itself often carries a negative connotation that sometimes adversely impacts the profession. But, a closer look at the historical evolution of public relations shows that the profession's growth rises in importance organizationally as we compare it with the three distinct economic periods in the development of the United States—Agricultural Economy, Industrial Economy, and today's Information Economy. Public relations' dynamic growth as a profession coincides with the sophistication of economic models and the need for structured communication.

The need for sophisticated public relations efforts in business were at a minimum during the early years of our agricultural economy. Since the majority of workers relied on the farm to sustain their basic needs, the need for information was minimized. However, as America's Industrial Era began to pick up speed, people began to rely, with increasing regularity, on the need for information. The migration from farm to factory was underscored by the importance of the dissemination of information and the social value placed on those people who were adept at formulating and distributing information.

The technological advances of the Industrial Era, such as the steam engine and the invention of the linotype, reshaped the economic culture of the United States and further pushed it toward a truly democratic society. Technological advancements brought with them a demand for greater communication tools and understanding. However, this demand for information also brought with it an expansion of social stratification. The gap between the social classes widened because of the limitations found among various groups for encoding and decoding information

via the mass media. Although industrialization enabled people to develop what Bourdieu referred to as economic capital--essentially a person's personal wealth--it also produced a greater disproportion in cultural capital--the intellectual capital that people use in learning things.

The era of the Robber Baron, led by railroad tycoon William Vanderbilt, banker J. P. Morgan, oil magnet J. D. Rockefeller and steel impresario Henry Clay Frick, ushered in a time of sweatshop labor and low pay. Workers trolled the factories and work sites with limited flexibility. During the industrialization of the country, business owners managed to set the standard for the changing work environment. Unfortunately, it also set the standard for corporate abuses. Fortunately, the powers set forth in the United States Constitution, specifically as they relate to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, empowered the masses and propelled industrious workers to carve out their own economic path. At the heart of these Constitutional powers rests the First Amendment, which affords Freedom of Speech.

The modern consumer movement, therefore, owes a great debt to the journalistic integrity of a group of individuals dubbed the *Muckrakers*. Truth merchants were saddled with this term because industrial leaders believed that these hard-hitting exposes supposedly raked from the bottom of society abuses and corruption levied against consumers.

In the early 1900s, McClure's magazine published a series of articles that woke a sleeping public and alerted political leaders to the abuses of industry. One such expose was Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* which exposed abuses in Chicago's meatpacking industry. In fact, Sinclair's novel provided the foundation for establishing today's high standards for certifying food and drugs. Other prominent muckrakers of the time were Ray Stannard Baker who wrote about child labor conditions and Ida Tarbell who exposed the unfair labor practices of Standard Oil.

"Perhaps the first of the muckrakers was Joseph Pulitzer whose editorials supported labor in the Homestead strike of 1892," (Newson, Turk, Kruckeberg, 2000). Pulitzer's slogan for an early campaign, *The Public be Informed*, presented a striking contrast to railroad magnet William H. Vanderbilt who is credited with coining the phrase *The Public Be Dammed* when speaking about the significance of his railroads to the increasingly mobile country.

Muckraking journalists fueled the fires of discontent by taking on big business during the industrial era with their hard-hitting exposes. Other prominent muckrakers of the time included Frank Norris whose novels *The Octopus* (1901) and *The Pit* (1903) shook-up the railroads and the wheat traders respectively.

At this time President Theodore Roosevelt recognized that government needed to enact legislation to uphold the public interest in the battles between management, labor and consumers. President Roosevelt used the leverage gained from the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 to challenge business to appease consumer concerns.

In 1899, the first national consumer group was formed. With the founding of the National Consumers League (NCL), public concerns were addressed with a strong voice. In fact, the NCL provided leverage for cultivating the idea of Harvey W. Wiley, a Department of Agriculture chemist, who for twenty years pushed for passage of federal food and drug laws (Newson, Turk, Kruckeberg, 2000). By 1906, Wiley realized his dream of governmental intervention to protect consumers against the abuses of industry with the passage of the first Pure Food and Drug Act.

As the Industrial Era moved forward, technological advancements contributed to a drastic change in narrowing the intellectual gap in society. Widespread acceptance of the mass media as a source for information bridged the information gap that existed. This resulted in more informed consumers who could now gather significant information about products, services and ideas in order to protect themselves against corporate abuses.

Muckraking journalism had a revival in the 1960s. In 1962, author Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* is often credited with starting the environmental movement. Shortly after, in 1965, consumer activist Nader released his book, *Unsafe at Any Speed*, a hard-hitting expose against the automobile industry (Newsom, Wollert, 1988). Nader's target in this book, General Motor Corporation's Corvair, was deemed a road hazard. His well-documented prose resulted in a tremendous victory for the consumer movement. Although General Motors attempted to discredit Nader and put the brakes on his claim that the company's popular Corvair was unsafe, its efforts merely stepped on the accelerator of consumer activism.

Consumer's Impact on Marketing Strategy

Business responded to the outcry of consumer activism and the push for accountability by redirecting marketing focus and placing significant emphasis on the philosophy known as relationship marketing. Simply, business owners learned that consumer discontent manifested in the form of unified activist groups could signal the death of market share. Most business owners learned that building lasting relationships between socially conscious organizations that deliver good products and services and an informed consumer market builds lifetime relationships.

Michael Solomon writes, "marketers who believe in this philosophy, relationship marketing, are making an effort to interact with customers on a regular basis and giving them reasons to maintain a bond with the company over time," (Solomon, 1996). One of the classic ways that companies build ties with consumers is to tap into the desire of consumers to patronize businesses that offer both personal rewards and rewards for society as a whole. For example, children's clothing manufacturer Hanna Andersson developed a program called Hannadowns. Consumers trade in used Hanna Andersson clothing and receive a 20 percent discount toward the purchase of new clothing. The company, in turn, donates the returned clothing to various charities. In addition, the company donates 5 percent of its pretax profits to charities and shelters that benefit women and children (Solomon, 1996).

Of course, social activism on the part of business serves only to reinforce public perception and provide an organization with much needed brand equity--the added value derived from companies that combine stellar community reputations with good products and services. Business became aware of the need for ethical behavior in addressing the demands of consumers. The American Marketing Association, responding to the demand of consumers to regulate and guide business, developed its code of ethics. The code attempts to provide guidelines for conduct in dealing with consumers and includes these key elements:

- Disclosure of all substantial risks associated with a product or service
- Identification of added features that will increase the cost
- Avoidance of false or misleading advertising
- Rejection of high-pressure or misleading sales tactics
- Prohibition of selling or fund raising under the guise of conducting market research

Ethical business practice, however, requires business to gauge itself and the quality of organization based on its response to consumer demands. Consumer's negative perception of a company is forged more often on the company's response to problems with its products or advertising rather than the problem itself. Procter & Gamble's voluntary withdrawal of its Rely tampons provides a shinning example of concern toward consumer safety.

P&G responded to claims that Rely tampons resulted in the death of women caused by the onset of toxic shock syndrome (TSS) by pulling the product from the market. Although

scientists failed to draw a causal link between Rely tampons and TSS, P&G acted on the advice of the Food and Drug Administration and undertook an extensive advertising campaign. P&G's advertising agency designed the campaign to educate women concerning the symptoms of TSS and asking them to return boxes of Rely for full refunds. The company took a $75 million loss and withdrew a product from the market that had already garnered 25 percent of the billion-dollar sanitary product market (Edwards, 1987). However, it did so with the best interest of consumers in mind.

Concern for the welfare of consumers has been an issue since at least the beginning of this century. Partly as a result of consumers' efforts, many federal agencies in the United States have been established to oversee consumer-related activities. These include the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Trade Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency (Edwards, 1987). However, government intervention into regulating business practices is only one outcome of a sustained consumer movement. The push from consumer activists to fight fraudulent and deceptive advertising resulted in greater self-governance by the industry as a whole.

A traditional education in public relations attempts to ground professionals in four essential skills: research; writing; planning; and problem solving. However, as the workforce dynamics change and organizational roles and responsibilities shift toward a global emphasis, the need exists for public relations professionals to expand on this skill development. In fact, the role of technology alone in opening up new channels and methods of communication has redefined the profession. Goldhaber (1993) writes that research findings documenting the value of organizational communication show the correlation between an effective communication system and high overall organizational performance.

China, however, had government controlled public relations to start with. Carole Gorney, APR, Fellow PRSA, Professor Emeritus at Lehigh University was selected for two Fulbright Scholarships in China. She has worked extensively in China, living there for months at a time.

> The first year I lived in China as a Fulbright Senior Scholar (1991-92) I tried to research the status of public relations in Shanghai. I prepared a questionnaire that asked practitioners what education and training they had, what their duties were, who they reported to, and so on. I visited the local public relations association in hopes that I could distribute my survey to its members. Was I ever naïve? The would-be association was controlled by the government, as were all such organizations and businesses in China, and the woman I had contacted that day reported my efforts to my university. I was told by my Dean that doing surveys and questionnaires was not allowed.
>
> When I was invited to lecture at a number of universities throughout China that year, I also learned that there was a great interest in the profession of public relations, but it was not an accepted curriculum by the Ministry of Education. It was taught some places, but "under the table," using translations from American textbooks. There were also a lot of misunderstandings about the functions of public relations. Young girls standing outside restaurants trying to lure customers inside were blatantly called public relations girls.

China's Transformation

China has more than 300,000 state enterprises employing 100 million workers. The bulk of these enterprises are mismanaged, unprofitable and burdened with redundant workers and huge pension and health care commitments to an increasingly aging population. They are being kept afloat by loans from the state-controlled banking system, which is staggering under the weight of their bad

debts (Spiro, 1997). It's an all-too-familiar scenario that already has humbled the once highly touted economic "tigers" of Thailand and South Korea.

The reforms may instill needed confidence in China's economy at home and abroad, and help the country avoid some of the financial difficulties that are plaguing its Asian neighbors. Nonetheless, the opportunities also are fraught with danger. Short term there will be massive unemployment and potential civil unrest. Longer term, there will be undeniable, unstoppable social, economic and political challenges to the *status quo*.

Throughout, examples will be given to demonstrate that China's reforms and the challenges they create make China ripe for broader, sophisticated applications of public relations, such as consumer, employee, community and shareholder relations; strategic planning, environmental monitoring, issues management and crisis communication. Additionally, it will be argued that China ultimately will need to move toward a professional continuum of public relations involving conflict management, alliance building and public participation in order to maintain the social and political stability so critical to its continued progress.

According to Gorney,

China has no choice but to embrace modern public relations. When Beijing began smashing the so-called "Iron Rice Bowl" in the early 1990s as part of its economic reforms, I don't think the government fully realized the extent of the social and political changes that would occur. Personal economic independence and prosperity predictably brought with them more than just higher wages and a better standard of living. They created an educated middle class that no longer was complacent about poor living conditions, environmental hazards and governmental corruption. By 1998, during my second Fulbright in Shanghai, Premier Jiang Zemin officially acknowledged in a speech to the People's Congress what any good PR professional already knew: "We must pay more attention to public opinion."

That statement was more than just a political platitude or an off-the-cuff remark. Every word spoken by high officials is chosen for a purpose, and key statements become subtle codes singling a change in party policy or direction.

Gorney adds,

Once China began opening up and allowing foreign companies first to engage in joint ventures with Chinese enterprises, and later operate as wholly owned companies, domestic organizations became exposed to modern applications of public relations. Many of the foreign firms brought their own professionals with them, or trained local employees. As globalization exploded, many of the American and British public relations firms opened offices in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, to serve the needs of both foreign and domestic companies. At the same time the public became more demanding, and Chinese companies had to compete for sales and worry about their reputations for the first time in decades.

Regarding China's business practices and their development, Gorney notes the following.

Unfortunately, even as the status and understanding of public relations improves in China, there are still serious issues regarding the quality and safety of many Chinese products. The rush to prosperity and affluence in the past 20 years has been too much of a temptation for some individuals seeking to get rich quick, or to stay that way. There also are entrepreneurs who see nothing wrong with making exaggerated claims that are more wishful thinking than reality. In other words, don't believe everything you see or read on

Websites. Complicating matters is the fact that in China ethical standards are different than ours. It is common practice to pay reporters for news stories. In fact, in many instances, it is the only way you can get coverage.

Chinese Public Relations Past and Present

Western-style public relations was first introduced to China in 1981, by way of a foreign joint venture partner doing business in Shenzhen, one of China's earliest Special Economic Zones. According to the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, public relations is among the top five professions in China, and it is said to be the easiest, or at least very easy, profession in which to get a job. According to a poll released in September 2004 by the China International Public Relations Association, there were more than 15,000 practitioners in China in 2003 —an increase of 10 percent over the previous year. The survey looked at 14 foreign-funded agencies and 31 domestic ones. An interesting statistic was that foreign-based firms experienced an average 15 percent growth rate, while domestic firms doubled that amount. Associations for public relations professionals include the China International Public Relations Association (CPRA) and the Shanghai Public Relations Association (SPRA). (prssa.org/prsic/china)

The same year that public relations was introduced in Shenzhen, the local university began offering a full-time public relations degree (Strenski , 1988). The subject quickly caught on at many other universities, but it would be many years before public relations finally would receive official approval as a curriculum by the State Commission on Education. Today, public relations is being taught at a number of colleges and universities either in departments of journalism/communication, advertising or business. Instructional television programs and correspondence courses also are available to distance learners. "No other field of study or profession appears to have spread as quickly as public relations in China" (Ni, 1992). About 20 years ago public relations activities in China primarily focused on gaining media publicity for a product or company. With the changing and growing economy in China public relations has evolved into practices such as crisis management, investment relations, employee relations and corporate citizenship.

On the down side, however, is the fact that competence has lagged far behind interest. Of the tens of thousands of persons employed in public relations, only 5,000-6,000 are professionals (Strenski , 1992). On the academic side, most public relations professors have no academic training or practical experience in the subject, so they teach from textbooks, according to Zhou Rong, research fellow and director of the Foreign Liaison Department, China International Public Relations Association (Zhou, 1998).

A hopeful sign that this situation might change is the existence of four graduate degree programs in public relations. The first of the three-year curricula to be approved is taught at Southwest China Normal University in Chongqing.

Graduates of departments offering public relations often find jobs in overseas agencies that are well established in the major centers such as Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing. However, these agencies almost exclusively serve foreign clients, and although there are some exceptions, their services are fairly limited to marketing support, according to Jean Michel Dumont, general manager of the Shanghai office of Edelman Public Relations (Dumont). Finding experienced public relations staff is tough, according to Dumont. "It's a new industry. There aren't many people with experience in public relations. We need to begin with fresh graduates or bring in experienced people from areas like government or media," (Dumont, 1998).

China's government-controlled Public Relations Associations are found in most cities and nearly every province. Professor Qin Qiwen, dean of the Economic Trade and Management

Department at Southwest China Normal University, explains, however, that the PRAs don't have a good reputation. "When founded most of the sponsors knew very little about public relations. The associations do a lot of propaganda or publicity campaigns for the government or for enterprises, but the results are not very good," (Qin, 1998).

After the world's negative reaction to the 1989 crackdown against student protesters in Tiananmen Square, the Chinese government convened a special conference "on the work of overseas publicity." The word "propaganda," though a commonly used and accepted term in China, apparently was avoided in consideration of Western readers (Kristof, 1990).

One result of the conference was that in 1991 the International Public Relations Association of China was given responsibility for better presenting China to the rest of the world (Kristof, 1990). The association has, among more recent strategies, helped to develop more mutually beneficial country-to-country and business-to-business relationships. Ni and Culbertson describe earlier strategies "guided by the association," such as postponing trials of the student protesters until the Persian Gulf War when no one was paying attention, and sponsoring the eleventh Asian Games—the largest international conference ever held in China. They also credit Roger Ailes and company with encouraging Chinese leaders to dress in Western-style business suits in public, and take advantage of photo opportunities and interviews to project a more liberal image to the outside world (Ni, 1992).

These strategies, and others like them, follow the press agentry and public information models that Grunig and Grunig say form a continuum of craft public relations. Such strategies fall far short of the two-way symmetric and asymmetric models of the Grunigs' professional public relations continuum (Grunig , 1998).

Improvements in Education and Literacy

China recognizes that global competition demands an increasingly skilled workforce able to read and write, as well as a critical mass of well-educated teachers, scientists, technicians and other professionals. To that end, China is emphasizing education at all levels by a variety of means, including adult and distance learning programs.

The State Commission on Education is pursuing a number of reforms to improve education for all citizens, and, according to its own studies, the results are encouraging.

As one indicator, the illiteracy rate among adults aged 15 and over had dropped from 22.21 percent of the population in 1990 to 16.5 percent in 1995. Total population illiteracy went from 15.88 percent to 12.01 percent during the same five-year period (State Education Commission 2). According to the CIA World Fact Book, China currently has a total literacy rate of 90.9%. Literacy is defined as the percentage of the population over 15 yrs that can read and write. Literacy among males is 95.1%, and among females it is 86.5%. In addition, China has more than 618,000 adult education programs awarding formal school equivalency training. There currently are 700 educational television stations throughout China, and 46 radio and television universities.

> Shanghai is reported to be the area with the most educated population. Eighty-seven percent of Shanghainese have received at least a primary school education, compared with the national average of 76 percent. The city ranks second only to Beijing in the number of college- educated citizens, with 10 percent of the educated populace receiving higher education (Lu, 1998). The ramifications of having a literate, better educated populace go beyond the economic competitiveness advantages China is seeking in the short run. It is education that paves the way for better jobs, a higher standard of living, and a growing middle class. More education also means citizens become more informed,

more critical and, ultimately, more demanding—the very conditions that long term will stimulate an ever-growing need for public relations.

Aggressive Media and Communication Technologies

Communication technology is fast taking hold in China. While most technologies like computers were not accessible to most of the population until recently, the Chinese seem bent on making up for lost time.

Individuals account for 40 percent of all personal computer purchases in China in 2000 (O'Neill, 1997).   The *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong predicted that "the mainland will become the world's biggest market for information technology goods and services" (Lai, 1997).

In another *Morning Post* article, an official of China's top government ministry overseeing the domestic technology industry, reported that she expected the mainland market for personal computers to triple by the year 2000. Zhang Qi said PC sales would reach 10 million by the end of the century—10 percent of global demand (O'Neill, 1997).

With more than a quarter-million subscribers, and at least 30 Internet service providers each in Beijing and Shanghai, "Beijing appears to have relaxed controls of the Internet in favour of faster growth," according to Helen Johnstone of the *South China Morning Post*.   "The techno-smart approach of the government is a far cry from its initial response, when it followed other Asian nations in seeking to control the Internet (Johnstone, 1997). According to Johnstone, Beijing at first tried to regulate access by passing regulations in February 1997 that required subscribers to register with the Public Security Bureau. Further, all international connections were to be routed through gateways controlled by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications. Most media services, including Reuters and CNN, were blocked, and technology was installed to scan Internet traffic for certain words.

By the end of the year, however, the news services were back on-line, including one by dissidents in exile and another sponsored by the Tibet Information Network in London. Porn also is easy to find. Internet cafes that do not have to register have sprung up, and individuals can purchase Internet access cards also without registering (Johnstone , 1997).   Johnstone observed, "The new relaxed attitude appears to be a recognition that China will not feel the economic benefits of the system if it seeks to restrict it (Johnstone, 1997).

Such a relaxed attitude still has not surfaced officially in regard to criticism of the government in the country's newspapers, radio and television news programs.   However, competition within the mass media has given rise to what the Chinese term more "colorful" news. A study conducted by the author a few years ago with a Chinese media professor substantiated what had already had been suspected—that Chinese newspapers were developing more Western characteristics. Reporting of crimes and more sensational news was on the rise, as were reports of citizen dissatisfaction with products and service.

China always has had a multitude of newspapers specializing in a variety of topics or targeted to specific audiences. Until reforms, the government supported most by providing free subscriptions to work units. That is no longer the case, but so far, the number of newspapers actually has increased with marketplace reforms. According to the State Press and Publication Administration, there are now approximately 2,200 newspapers in China (OpEd China Daily), compared with 186 in 1978 when economic reforms and opening to the outside world were initiated (Guo, 1997).   One reason for the healthy growth of newspapers is the growth of newspaper advertising revenue, which has risen from $8.8 million in 1983 to $1.15 billion in 1997 (Guo, 1997).

Television channels, also benefiting from advertising dollars, have proliferated in the past five years, often with competing local stations in the same market. There are more than 900 TV stations in China, and nearly 300 million households own televisions.

Jhu Rongji's internationally televised news conference after his election as premier by the NPC in March 1998 definitely set a precedent for other political leaders. The news conference was unique in that Zhu answered all questions from both Western and Chinese media live on camera, and a transcript of the questions and answers was printed in major Chinese newspapers ("Zhu"). In the past, media access to information or official statements generally has been restricted to official reports written by the Xinhua News Agency, the government's official information service. Another encouraging development is the now-extensive use of Western news reports on Chinese channels, including the official China Central Television (CCTV) network. Chinese viewers prefer these reports, and fully half of the news programs are dedicated to them. Such reports come from Reuters, CNN, CNBC and BBC, and are dubbed over in Chinese.

A final point: while the media may be restricted on certain areas of coverage, they do have considerable credibility and influence within certain parameters, including reporting of consumer complaints and community reactions to issues like the environment—all posing additional public relations challenges for a vast array of public and private organizations.

Burgeoning Middle Class

The rise of a substantial middle class is the obvious ramification of economic reforms. Analysts from the State Information Center (SIC) predict that by 2010 urban residents will make up nearly half the total population of China. This is significant because the income differential between urban and rural residents is expected to triple during the same time period (Wang, 1997).

While everyone's income is expected to rise at an average annual rate of about 13 percent, economically developed regions and well-paid occupations will do far better. The SIC says that the wealthiest will enjoy incomes five times that of the poorest. Presently the gap is four times (Wang, 1997).

The bright spots, according to the experts, are expected rises in non-work earnings, such as interest on investments, and an increase in the number of people employed in trades and service industries where the earnings are higher. The service industry employed nearly one-third of all workers in 2010--more than manufacturing (Wang, 1997).

If China wants to successfully stimulate its domestic consumer market in order to lessen its dependency on income from exports, it will have to move development efforts further inland beyond the coastal regions to improve the incomes of a greater proportion of the population. This will broaden the middle class base, and promote the spread of consumerism. *Business Week* further notes, "As Chinese entities rush to tap global and stock markets to finance everything from superhighways to steel mills, the country could absorb an even greater portion of the world's capital. As in Russia, this will help give rise to a large shareholder class that will likely be more demanding in the future," (Spiro, 1997).

Increased Power of Public Opinion

Some citizens already are making demands about matters that affect their lives. In fact, there are indications everywhere of the growing power of public opinion in China. One example, widely reported in the media, involved China's third largest steel maker and some local residents in

Beijing. Capital Steel Corp. announced that it would not raise its production output in response to local residents' growing complaints about air pollution.

Xinhua News Agency noted as part of its story, "Due to rapid growth in Beijing's economy and population, the city's environment has deteriorated sharply in recent years. Local residents are most upset by the city's worsening air pollution.

In a classic example of litigation journalism, Shanghai Television interviewed a couple suing a local travel agency for injuries they said they and their young son received in a van accident while on a trip to Hainan Island (IBS News, 1998).

On a less serious note, but as an example of issues to which businesses must be sensitive, a major shopping complex put a tiger cub on display on a crowded, noisy street in Shanghai. The management claimed it was trying to increase public awareness of the need to protect tigers, but some residents were upset about the cub's treatment and what they interpreted as the use of a wild animal to promote sales.

An indicator of growing citizen participation in society is the formation of a number of non-government public interest groups and foundations to deal with a variety of issues and social problems. As an example, the Beijing Environmental Protection Fund, founded in August 1996, is the only non-government fundraising group for the environment in the Chinese capital (Liu, 1997). A number of charities also are being organized to help provide needed social services that used to be provided by the government, or to address problems exacerbated by new economic pressures. One such effort is a suicide hot line run by a sociology professor in Shenzhen.

The government is encouraging private citizens and non-government resources to address social problems, but according to David M. Lampton of John Hopkins University, "The danger is when citizens organize to solve one set of problems, they might turn their attention to more political issues, and that the government is afraid of " (Lampton, 1998).

Afraid or not, even the government is publicly acknowledging the need to pay attention to public opinion. In its coverage of the opening of the NPC, the official Chinese news agency Xinhua wrote of the major concerns of legislators will centre on public opinion related to anti-corruption efforts and building a clean government, the reform of State-owned enterprises and the reemployment of laid-off workers, financial problems, public security and efforts to train and upgrade law enforcement officers.

Conclusions

Contrasting China today, with public relations in its infancy in the United States, Gorney notes,

> There were six conditions generally accepted as having dictated the need for and having led to the development of systematic, modern public relations in the United States. In my research, I have found almost the same parallel conditions and challenges affecting the development of public relations in China.
>
> Those conditions are: 1) growth in the size and complexity of business, 2) organization of the labor force, 3) improvements in education and literacy, 4) development of both communication technology and an influential and critical mass media 5)creation of a middle class, and 6) an increase in the power of public opinion.

Gorney adds that China has ignored public opinion in the past and that in turn has adversely impacted the competency of today's practitioners.

The answer to this question depends on which aspects of public relations practice are being discussed. Certainly many Chinese enterprises have embraced integrated marketing and public relations as publicity and promotion, but too often the subtleties of relationship building and two-way symmetric communication are ignored. Ethics is another more serious matter that gets short shrift, both in terms of operations and communication.

One can't answer any question about competence without considering the quality of public relations education. Twenty years ago, the few college professors who taught the subject did so with little more than textbook credentials—and copied U.S. textbooks at that. The situation has been changing, as more and more instructors receive degrees or at least training in public relations and communication from Western universities both in and out of China. Educational partnerships, such as the arrangement between Fudan University in Shanghai and the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Mass Communications, are becoming more common. Foreign textbooks, such as "This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations" by Dr. Douglas Ann Newsom and Dr. Judy VanSlyke Turk, also are now published in Chinese and sold legitimately on the Chinese mainland.

China's leaders are moving their country forward on a wider path of economic reforms. There can be no doubt that public relations will play a major role in supporting and causing these changes, just as it has in other countries, such as Taiwan (Grunig, 1998).

In their 1992 published research on two contrasting approaches of government public relations in mainland China, Ni and Culbertson view the potential for development of professional public relations in China from the perspective of the government's suppression of the pro-democracy movement. They assert that "clearly much will have to change before the central government and other institutions can or will embrace two-way symmetric public relations fully," (Ni, 1992).

A more optimistic view of the potential for developing professional public relations in authoritarian countries, such as China, is presented in Sharpe's evaluation of public relations in Turkey. While the study shows that the practice primarily has improved external relations, similar to the situation in China, the study also notes that in improving the profession to respond to external competitive pressures, public relations professionals also are "clearly calling for internal change" as well. "The influence of democracy and a free press…are benefiting the development of public relations in countries where freedom of the press is controlled and where democracy has not yet developed or matured (Sharpe,1992).

While ostensibly economic in nature, China's planned reforms nonetheless will stimulate growth of a better-educated, more informed middle class with exposure to the outside world. Citizens will become increasing more demanding, outspoken and empowered. Organizations will need to be more responsive to community sensitivities, to consumerism and to employee needs.

Aspirations at all levels will be raised as opportunities for improved standards of living become reality, but frustrations also will develop among those not able to succeed. Some people will look to crime or drugs or suicide as a remedy; others to organized protest.

Attitudes will have to change about employees' roles in the workplace, and government's role in society. Funds will have to be raised for vital services, and public support will have to be mobilized for good causes. Conflicts will need to be resolved. Citizens will require information about important issues. China will need opinion research, strategic planning, issues management, and crisis planning. Top-down communication will work sometimes, but increasingly dialogue and participation will be required. Public Relations will need to be equal to the task.

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Characteristics of the Economically-Successful Yet Often Ignored Middle Market

Implications for Corporate Communication

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Purpose: *The paper seeks to describe the middle market that, by sales volume, lies between the small business and large company sectors and to identify the implications for corporate communication in that sector.*

Approach: *A review of related literature in the fields of corporate communication and related business and management topics formed the basis of the paper.*

Findings: *The middle market is a collection of businesses vastly ranging in size and structure and spanning numerous industries. Regardless of their size, firms need to behave as if they were large corporations, engage and manage stakeholders, and implement a corporate communication strategic plan.*

Research implications: *The literature review and findings can be used in a more comprehensive study.*

Practical implications: *Suggestions for addressing unique corporate communication issues in the middle market are offered.*

Key words: *Corporate communication, Middle market, Multinational corporation, Small business*

Paper type: *General review*

Between the nation's smallest and largest businesses according to annual sales lies the middle market (MM), what one writer described as ". . . to the U.S. economy what North America was to Christopher Columbus: a giant, incredibly important, heretofore 'undiscovered' but now unavoidable and centrally important part of the world's landscape" (Maney, 2011). Everyone knows it exists but most are fuzzy on the details. Middle market businesses (MMBs) are easy to ignore because they lack the visibility of large-cap publicly traded companies at one end and the popularized-image of struggling small business owners at the other. In the past, this 'everything else in between' status and lack of clarity led researchers, reporters, and policy makes to throw up their hands when asked about the seemingly invisible MM. Recently, however, the sector has been gaining visibility through its role in creating jobs, developing products and markets, and innovating business models. Due to its new-found status, experts are calling for research focused on a better understanding of the MM and the firms it encompasses. The purpose of this paper is to describe characteristics of the MM that impact corporate communication needs. The constantly changing environment is a central part of this discussion.

Middle Market Characteristics

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, slightly more than 6 million firms with a payroll were in operation in the United States in 2007. Of these, more than 5.8 million firms recorded annual revenue of less than $10 million and are regarded as small firms in the present study. At the top end, the large firms category consists of 2,631 companies each with a sales volume of $1 billion or more. Between these two is the MM category, defined in this paper as consisting of firms with annual revenues between $10 million up to $1 billion. Defining business segments has never been an easy, straightforward task as inferred in the words of John Kenneth Galbraith (1955) more than fifty years ago:

No agreed level of assets or sales divides the millions of small firms, which are half of the private economy, from the handful of giant corporations which are the other half. There is a sharp conceptual difference between the enterprise that is fully under the command of an individual and owes its success to this circumstance and the firm which, without entirely excluding the influence of individuals, could not exist without organization.

In attempting to define the MM, it is apparent a common definition is not found there either. Researchers and practitioners use their own parameters to characterize an MM company. Nevertheless, it is clear they are not sole proprietorships or businesses with six or seven employees nor are they high-profile public companies with well-known CEOs. They are more likely to be found in an industrial park than on either Main Street or Wall Street, and they are located in every state and city in the country. Some studies base the definition on number of employees; however, sales volume is more typically used in placing a company in a particular category (IBM, 2011). Sales volumes to determine MM boundaries vary widely. The lower boundary has been stated to be anywhere from $5 million in annual revenues up to $100 million, while the upper boundary is said to be $100 million in some cases all the way up to $2 billion in others. In this paper, companies with annual revenues of at least $10 million and not greater than $1billion are considered in the MM. These specifications were used in The Ohio State University and General Electric Capital study of the MM (2011). With just over 3 percent of the number of business firms, the MM employs nearly a third of the nation's workforce.

The MM is not a single, homogeneous market. Operations, management style, efficiency, expectations and motivation all differ from one segment of the MM to another. Some companies expect rapid growth while others see more modest revenue increases ahead. Because they are not concentrated in one geographic region, one industry, or one ownership structure, they are thought to exhibit some resilience against market changes and economic downturns It helps to think of the MM as the middle part of a pyramid with small firms as the base and large firms occupying the top portion. The three segments within the MM themselves also approximate a pyramid. By number of firms, the MM is highly skewed toward the lower end as shown in the following descriptions of the three segments comprising the sector. The MM can be described as consisting of three segments with each exhibiting distinctively different characteristics as shown in Table 1.

Segment 1

Segment 1 has the largest number of firms and also the smallest average number of employees per firm. As the only segment where proprietorships are dominant in the ownership structure, it is the most diverse of the segments. A wide variety of service, retail firms, and small fabricating firms are found in the segment. Experts believe that only a small fraction of small businesses ever grow into successful large firms (Armstrong and Drnevich, 2009). Of particular significance

is that the segment houses two different types of businesses which both play important roles for overall economic growth and job creation. These are entrepreneurial ventures and non-growth businesses. Entrepreneurial ventures are small growth-oriented, strategically-innovative firms. There was a day when Apple, Microsoft, and Dell were small but pursued profitability and growth through innovative strategic practices. On the other hand, non-growth businesses often have several employees but are not strategically innovative and intend to stay small. Finally, Segment 1 firms are managed primarily by owner/managers (generalists), with a smaller set of firms being under the guidance of functional managers (specialists). Owner/managers are in control and responsible for making all key planning and strategic decisions for the enterprise. Their experience and skills tend to relate to making and providing the product or service specifically and to management skills only generally. They decide everything: who to hire and fire, whether to import or export, and when and if they should expand the business. The money at risk is their own, or includes their own. They continually face problems of survival of their enterprises and protection of their investments.

TABLE 1. The Middle Market

Middle Market	Revenue	Number of Firms*	Employees/Firm*	Ownership Structure**	Primary Management Style**
Segment 1: Entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses	$10Million to $50Million	155,986	96	Proprietorship, partnership, family-owned, privately-held	Mostly owner/manager to functional manager
Segment 2: Well-established, solid growth, consistent business practices	$50Million to $100Million	20,865	289	Partnership, family-owned, privately-held	Owner/manager to mostly functional manager
Segment 3: Global firms or starting to resemble them	$100Million to $1Billion	17,974	1,035	Partnership, family-owned, privately-held, publicly-traded	Functional manager

*U.S. Census Bureau (2007); **GE Capital-Ohio State University (2011)

Segment 2

Segment 2 is home to companies known for their track-record of solid growth and their prospects for continuing growth. Compared to Segment 1, this segment has fewer firms and averages more employees per firm. Proprietorships are in a minority. Instead, partnerships as well as family-owned and privately-held business are predominate here. Compared to their Segment 1 counterparts, these firms are characterized as using appropriate business practices and being consistent in their application. This is most likely a result of the use of functional managers rather than the presence of owner/managers as found in Segment 1. Functional managers do not control all of the key planning and strategic decisions in which they are involved. Their experience and skills tend to relate specifically to managing a particular business function, such as manufacturing or human resources, rather than to overseeing the entire enterprise or even to providing the product or service. They are only participants in the major strategic decisions affecting their firms and seldom take any major financial risk of ownership. Depending on their responsibilities, functional managers may or may not have strong ties to the community, especially if they see the job as a stepping stone to opportunities in another city or state.

Segment 3

MMBs in Segment 3 are large businesses, but just shy of the $1 billion threshold to be included in the multinational, big business category. Additionally, the ownership structure resembles that of Segment 2 with the addition of publicly-traded status. Otherwise, Segment 3 firms resemble the multinationals. They have locations outside the United States and they use global suppliers extensively. Their scale and successful track records provide access to capital not available to the first two segments. And with vast experience competing in their industries, they have a well-developed customer focus and respected reputations. As MMBs grow and move upward in scope and scale, stakeholder relations become far more complex. As Allio (2006) observed, "The firm's leaders cannot possible keep in personal contact with all the stakeholders, and new ones emerge to further distract them – lenders, outside directors, additional investor groups, an array of larger customers and suppliers, regulators, employee groups from different divisions or locations.

The Changing Environment

The concept of the corporation has been transformed (Goodman and Hirsch, 2012). A combination of forces, especially technology, is breaking down walls and boundaries all over the business landscape. Business size was once associated with certain benefits, favoring large firms in some cases, and smaller ones in others. Yet size is losing significance as the public is increasingly unable to distinguish among firms, especially mid-sized and large. Globalization and the new business models it has spawned are breaking down traditional enterprise boundaries while borderless enterprises are required to compete and scale globally (Cisco, 2008-09). Web 2.0, referring to how the World Wide Web is used, has shown its impact. Companies below the large business threshold find themselves competing with those above the threshold. As Hanscott reported, ". . . digital marketing has torn down the traditional barriers to promotion, allowing small businesses to compete with larger players like never before" (as cited in Yell, 2012). Perceptions of company size and scale are unimportant for consumers. Zappos.com is a case in point. The company grew from start-up status in 1999 with "almost nothing" in sales to more than $1 billion in sales in 2008 before it was purchased by Amazon.com in 2009 (Zappos.com, 2012). Customers in the early years would not have known Zappos.com was a small company. It might not have made a difference to them anyway. After all, they could choose from a wide variety of shoe styles in their size and preferred color and could expect to receive them in a day or two without paying shipping charges. "How quick can you meet my needs" was edging out "how big is your company" as a top criterion for online shoppers. Another recent example is PetFlow.com Inc. a New York City start-up selling pet food online. With sales of $13 million in 2011 and an expected $30 million in sales in 2012 the company competes with the considerably-larger Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and PetSmart Inc. (Woo, 2012).

The lines dividing business size categories are becoming more difficult to draw, creating confusion in business news and public policy reports (GE-Ohio State University, 2011). MMBs are mentioned infrequently as small and large seem to be the default size categories used. MM firms are unique until themselves. They are neither small versions of large firms nor large versions of small firms. "The characteristics of MM companies," says Trottier, "are vastly different from either large or small businesses. There are different business theories, different financing sources, different approaches to operations, different owners, managers, investors" (cited in Miller, 2011). Because of the size and speed of these changes, existing business models, methods, and assumptions must be reexamined. Goodman and Hirsch (2012) described three ways to think about this changing business environment as follows:

1. Change causes communication to be even more important than it has ever been.
2. The size and scale of global corporations, institutions, and the interconnected business environment present new challenges and opportunities.
3. The hyper-connected communication environment has created relationships, challenges, and opportunities that never existed before.

Implications for Corporate Communication

MMBs are particularly vulnerable in the changing environment not only because they are undercapitalization and thinly staffed in their management ranks, but also because they are not as visible as their smaller and larger counterparts. In view of these vulnerabilities as they face the new competitive environment, MMBs need to: (1) think and behave as a corporation even if they are not, (2) engage and manage stakeholders, and (3) implement a strategic approach for corporate communication.

Think and behave as a corporation

A business can no longer expect a free pass for being local or a smaller player struggling against the multinationals. Business enterprises are becoming 'commodified' where the company, regardless of size, becomes a commodity of sorts and is expected to function the same way as its competitors. Whether they are legally defined as a corporation or not, MMBs must think corporately and behave corporately. They must be prepared to meet the expectations stakeholders have for the way a corporation should function. Zappos.com is a good example. Expectations, which vary from consumer to consumer, may include the breadth and depth of the product line as well as efficiency in delivery, billing, and overall customer service. Much of this can be accomplished by implementing more formal methods, processes, and procedures than currently exist. Thinking once again of Galbraith's words from the last century: he said that large corporations could not exist without organization and small businesses could not exist without the command of a key person (1955). Given the tumultuous economic climate, it would be appropriate to add that smaller firms and MMBs also need organization, for without it their existence may be threatened. The lack of functional specialists and possibilities of rapid growth are challenges MMBs will have to overcome. In MMBs ". . . management ranks tend to be thinner, their access to capital vastly narrower, and their reliance on key customers greater, making their results more volatile and their economic footing generally less certain that larger companies" (Maney, 2011).

Engage and manage stakeholders

The need for managers to attend to stakeholders and to develop long-term mutual relationships as a strategic management initiative is well documented (Fassin, 2009; Freeman et al., 2007; and Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010). These are other academic studies, however, dealt primarily with large companies. It was widely thought that MMBs were well-connected to their stakeholders and that adopting further and formal engagement processes were unnecessary. This may be true up to a point. However, MMBs must master the skill of engaging and managing stakeholders. In Segment 1, bankers, shareholders or partners, key customers and employees are friends or acquaintances of the top manager (Allio, 2006). The same applies where family, friends, and

close associates comprise the majority of the board of directors. A pressing need for most MMBs is well-developed relationships with the community of lenders and investors. The ability to obtain funding is critical to the growth of these firms yet it is difficult to acquire. Younger companies are at a disadvantage due to their shorter and inconsistent histories and the lack of well-established and tested lending relationships (Maney, 2011). It is rare to encounter too much divergence between the stakeholders' respective interests (Allio, 2006). In the face of fast growth, however, managers can and do encounter difficulties in keeping up with the relationship-building efforts required to support the growth. Growth breeds complexity. More and new customers, employees, suppliers, and investors together call for a corporate communication strategy for communicating to the expanding array of stakeholders (Argenti, et al., 2005).

Boundaries between stakeholders are blurring as the business relationships with them have become more complex (Goodman, 2006; McVea and Freeman, 2005). Depending on the roles they play, people and groups may occupy more than one stakeholder classification. Employees, for example, might also be shareholders or suppliers may be residents of the community where the company manufactures its products. The popularity of social media has caught many organizations by surprise. Many are not prepared to use twenty-first century technology to communicate with stakeholders. In fact, eighty percent of the respondents in the GE-Ohio State Study agreed that most MMBs lacked a strategy to engage stakeholders through social media (2011).

Implement a strategic approach for corporate communication

The term 'corporate' in corporate communication must be extended to MMBs even though they are not large or technically of the corporate form of ownership. Corporate in this sense equates to how businesses are expected to communicate with stakeholders. Expectations of consumers, the public and other stakeholders are dictating this. A 'good enough for now' approach to communicating, with little reference to strategies and the way forward, is at best a short-term solution that can brand the company as a less-than-serious competitor in the marketplace. Some MM CEOs have said they see few advantages to the public disclosure of their activities and do not engage in those practices (Maney, 2011). However, in a survey of online shoppers, seventy-one percent indicated they wanted to get a sense of the people behind the business and judge its authenticity for themselves (Yell, 2011).

An integrated, strategic approach to communications is critical to business success (Argenti, et al., 2005). Large companies establish corporate communication strategies to effectively communicate with internal and external stakeholders. MMBs must follow suit if they are to remain competitive. Reviewing the definition of corporate communication is the starting point in understanding the strategy development process. The definition of corporate communication according to Goodman and Hirsch is:

> Corporate communication is the term used to describe a variety of strategic management functions. Depending on the organization, corporate communication includes: public relations; crisis and emergency communication; corporate citizenship; reputation management; community relations; media relations; investor relations; employee relations; government relations; marketing communication; management communication; corporate branding and image building; and advertising (2012).

Implementing a corporate communication strategy positively influences the organization's efficiency and effectiveness. Most obvious is the streamlining of communication initiatives among business functions, helping management, human resources and marketing

maintain a unified voice and consistent messages. Businesses thrive by preventing the costly mistakes from miscommunication, a likely outcome when strategic corporate communication is not in place. Poor communication skills contribute to the invisibility of MM companies. Maney (2011) observed, "It always seems to me that it takes a middle market company CEO two or three times as long to tell you what his or her business does than it would for a pizza parlor owner or a big-company executive to tell you about theirs." This is particularly true when the company's product or service is not known to most people because it is a component of another company's product, which is often the case for MMBs.

Reaching specific stakeholders with specific channels to address particular objectives is increasingly more difficult to accomplish. Overlapping stakeholder groups are one cause of the difficulty. The widespread use of social media linked to cell phone and smart phone service is another. A television advertisement running in December 2011 is an illustration. Customers of a company touting the speed of its cell phone service were smiling and congratulating a colleague who had just received a job promotion. Customers of a competing and slower provider, and working in the same office, did not learn of their colleagues' good fortune until several minutes later. They were frowning, presumably unhappy with the speed of their service. It was an entertaining commercial and it also raised some questions about real life, especially the impact of new communication channels. Was the message posted in social media by the human relations department? If yes, it worked because the message was communicated quickly, a few minutes one way or the other is not a real issue. If no, does this mean that new channels (i.e., social media) have bypassed a newsletter, daily email postings, or any other ways to stay in touch with employees? If the company is a social media user, is it slow in communicating and not taking advantage of the opportunity to be get out front with accurate information? Regardless of who posted the original message, what other stakeholder groups would eventually receive it? People and groups occupy more than one stakeholder category, so multiple groups will be informed at almost the same time. Is that what the company intended?

A multi-stakeholder approach has been found to be effective in meeting the communication challenges wrought by overlapping stakeholder groups (Freeman et al., 2007). This involves identifying the commonalities in behaviors and interests among a complete set of stakeholders and then communicating to them as one audience. Customers, suppliers, employees, communities, and financiers are typically included, but others could be added as well. The task is to consider the interests of all members of the complete set in all corporate communication planning. For MMBs, communicating with each stakeholder group as an individual audience is becoming increasingly more difficult.

The way management communicates with employees as well as the way the company communicates with external parties, like customers and vendors, to improve overall business operations are a part of a corporate communication strategy. Using a more traditional view of how corporate communicate strategy should be implemented, Argenti et al. (2005) said, "to achieve full strategic impact, all communications to all constituencies through all channels must be customized to a given objective, yet consistent both with one another and the corporate strategy." Updating this view of corporate communication, Goodman and Hirsch (2012) focused on the importance of the organization to align its identity with a message platform consisting of current and future strengths. This view, in particular, recognizes the recent and profound transformation experienced by corporations and organizations worldwide and requires that, "At the very least, the communication team will audit relations with all of the company's stakeholders --- employees, customers, investors, regulators, and communities --- to determine what needs to be changed" (Goodman and Hirsch, 2012). MMBs are known for their ability to respond to opportunities with new products and entry into new markets. Maintaining and continuing to build

relationships with stakeholders will be critical as the firm continually adapts to its ever changing environment. The firm's corporate communication strategy will prove to be an enduring asset.

Summary and Conclusions

The MM consists of firms with annual revenues between $10 million and $1 billion. Lacking the visibility of its smaller and larger counterparts, the MM is frequently ignored by academics, public policy makers, and the business press. Firms in the small business sector (under $10 million in sales) have an ally in the form of the U.S. Small Business Administration and are often the subject of news stories depicting the struggles faced by independent business owners. At the other extreme, large firms (the $1 billion plus sales category) are well known from the in-depth coverage of their affairs by the business press as well as by their many products and services which have become household names. A combination of circumstances is now causing a closer look at the middle market. MMBs have been creating new jobs, developing new products and services, and innovating through the introduction of new business models. Enough attention has been drawn to the MM, in fact, that observers are calling for research to better understand the sector and the companies it comprises.

Businesses are being subjected to forces that are redefining the environment so many have been accustomed to operating within. Globalization and communication technology have caused a re-evaluation of business models. Lines that were once thought to divide business sizes, business sectors, and stakeholders are breaking down and creating opportunities for MMBs. Increasingly, consumers are unable to determine the size of a business nor do they seem to care. Firms adopting new ways of doing business are encountering competitors of a size they would not have faced as recently as ten years ago. Start-ups and other MBBs are taking on well-entrenched large firms in some markets. Technology (e.g., social media) making it easy to communicate with many people has made it awkward to communicate with a few. The message designated for the few is easily broadcast to the many through re-sending and posting.

Three implications for corporate communication were identified for MMBs in the new competitive environment. First, they should think and behave as corporations even if they are not. Stakeholders expect this. Consumers, for example, want the companies they deal with to offer breadth and depth in product lines as well as efficiency in delivery, billing, and customer service. If a company can do this, it does not make a difference whether it is large or small. Second, MMBs must also engage and manage their stakeholders. For many of them this will require ramping up their efforts to keep pace with company growth. Stakeholders were friends and acquaintances when the business was smaller. With growth and expansion, however, more and different stakeholders need to be added. Third, MMBs should implement a strategic approach to corporate communication. Of prime importance is the need to align the company's identity and brand with a message platform drawing on current and future strengths. The three recommendations complement each other, yet the first two are meaningless without the third fully in place with regular audits to determine when and if changes need to be made.

A review of related literature from corporate communication and related business and management topics formed the basis of this paper. Suggestions for addressing corporate communication issues for MMBs were identified and summarized. Managers can include these findings, as appropriate, with their observations as they review their own strategies for implementing corporate communication. With respect to research implications, the literature review, summary, and recommendations may be used in a more comprehensive study of the topic.

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Communicating Change in Public Organizations

The Discursive Construction of Managerial Legitimization

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Purpose: *The purpose of this paper is to contribute to a further understanding of how explanations given to employees in the case of strategic change involving extensive re-structuring, workforce reduction, new routines, etc. are discursively produced at various inter-related management meetings. In particular, the paper examines the legitimacy on which the explanations are based and discusses how this legitimacy may challenge corporate communication.*

Approach: *With the help of a single case study and using observation notes together with video-recordings of four management meetings, the paper empirically investigates management communication of strategic goals and actions through the prism of legitimization and corporate communication theory.*

Findings: *The analysis shows that various legitimization strategies are used, the dominant one being to disclaim all responsibility and/or invoke political responsibility.*

Research implications: *The analysis queries the role of corporate communication in public organizations.*

Practical implications: Managers in public organizations need to navigate between the heterogeneous discourses expressed within the organization and the discourses expressed at the political level.

Key words: *Corporate change communication, Management communication, Managerial legitimization, Discursive practices, Public organizations.*

Paper type: *Research.*

Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility within the Organisation

Perceptions of Internal Stakeholders

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Purpose: *The purpose of this study was to identify whether the CSR messages that managers believe they are communicating to internal stakeholders enhance levels of identification with concomitant corporate values.*

Methodology: *Interviews were held with CSR/sustainability managers in 20 NZ organisations in the NZ Business Council for Sustainable Development. An online questionnaire was developed from interview data and distributed to all staff to explore identification with their organization's espoused CSR strategies. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed from 100 respondents in one large corporate.*

Findings: *The findings from this ongoing research demonstrate that perceptions of internal stakeholders are often ignored in the communication process. As a result, some CSR messages are identified as neither valid nor accurate. Information is necessary but not sufficient to assure identification with CSR activities.*

Research and practical implications: *The role of internal corporate communication as integral to ultimately communicating the external legitimacy that organisations seek, appears to be overlooked.*

Keywords: *CSR, Communication management, New Zealand.*

Stream: *Corporate responsibility*

Paper type: *Research*

Communication Is Not a Two Way Street

Flattening the Mental Speed Bumps on the Road to Effective Communication

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Corporate Communication managers are being asked to take on broader roles with the merging of corporate departments and the burgeoning of social and new media. A key communication management strategy is coaching for executives and key employees who carry forward the corporate message and brand. An equally substantive ROI is earned by enabling a culture of insightful communication, where every employee can present information and ideas with maximum intended impact and audience retention.

This article integrates findings from empirical and quantitative communication, medical, and psychological research. It reviews current practices and accepted ideologies in corporate, organizational and personal message delivery. It addresses several basic communication failures by bridging research to usable strategies, exercises, and an outline that employees at every level can implement to enhance intended message acceptance, which strengthens corporate identity internally and externally.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Brand enhancement, Communication strategies, Presentation training, Public speaking

Paper Type: General Review Article (presented in lecture or workshop format)

> The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.
> *~George Bernard Shaw*

Interpersonal communication in the new electronic communication and information era

Expectations for interpersonal or face-to-face communication have made a gradual shift due to the availability, acceptance and reliance on continuously emerging electronic communication and information pathways. Major faults in the bedrock of communication training have become stressed as adjustments in the practice have lagged behind trends toward comfort and reliance on electronic communication, as well as, a growing audience segment with a preference for it.

The period of resisting then accepting and adjusting to new technologies has quickly faded into relying heavily on them. The exposure to and dependence on increasing amounts of stimuli have created physiological changes in the way our brains our wired and the rate at which we process information. (Small, 2008) The necessity to adjust our speaking skills and mindset toward interpersonal communication has become paramount.

Intended message reception

Much of the emphasis of communication training is focused on delivery first, then content. These are the two factors most attributed to perceived charisma. (Bass, 1990) (Conger, 1991). The ability to deliver a visionary message with convincing style is considered a must for leaders at all levels. Charismatic traits for delivery are often measured by the principle, "it's not what you say; it's how you say it". This idea is an over simplification of message delivery technique. The point

of communication after all is always to sell something. Whether it's selling the authenticity in the sincerity of the greeting "have a good day" or selling the Taj Mahal, the speaker is selling an intention, an idea, a feeling, a product, a manner of thought, or a call to action. (Ziglar, 2007) In daily interpersonal communication whether or not the speaker made the sale can be measured in terms of if the message was understood as intended. A crucial step must now be taken in crafting the delivery of a message. It's not what you say; it's what they think you meant.

How the speaker manages to have "them" arrive at the intended point of the message via person-to-person communication has shifted dramatically in the age of continuously evolving information and communication technologies because the very function of the brain has changed. Some of what the brain has gained in the ability to process and respond to multiple digital stimuli it has lost in the development of social skills, such as reading and responding to facial gestures and body language. (Wright, 2008) More complex interpersonal techniques must be mastered to communicate effectively.   It is now necessary for core interpersonal communication techniques to be taught to not only to managers but also to employees at all levels to help strengthen corporate culture and empower the brand.

You Can't Get There From Here

> I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant. ~ attributed to Robert McCloskey (Caroselli 2000)

The brain is part of the central nervous system enclosed in the cranium of humans and other vertebrates, consisting of a soft, convoluted mass of gray and white matter and serving to control and coordinate the mental and physical actions. Each brain is wired to process stimuli differently through the firing of synapses formed by responding and adapting at different developmental stages. (Medina, 2009) Daily exposure to new technologies stimulates brain cell alteration, strengthening new neural pathways in our brains while weakening old ones. Because of the current technological revolution, our brains are evolving faster than ever before. (Small, 2008) The mind is the element, part or process that reasons, thinks, feels, wills, perceives, judges, etcetera. The mind also controls the capacity for social emotion.

Brain and mind are similar in most aspects, but not exactly the same. Foregoing the few nuanced differences between the brain and the mind and the processes each of them control independently and co-dependently has caused gaps in communication practices for those who desire ongoing, seamless, effective communication. Common communication training practices often cater to the mind but not the brain. We plan and develop messaging under the precepts of a calm, logical mind, completely avoiding the tendencies for lizard brain takeover (Godin, 2010) in both the speaker and listener.

The mind is an amazing machine. It can fill in life like details from components stored in memory and imagination (Gilbert, 2007). One can render a detailed description of a scene on the beach, complete with the feeling of sand underfoot and the sound of the waves crashing on shore from a just a few well-chosen words. Almost immediately after, the same subject can be made to imagine the cold of snow and feel the spray of tiny ice particles while skiing to a hard stop on the slopes. As the mind fills in details from first-hand memories, second-hand images from media, pictures or even descriptions, the brain can actually fire synapses to cause physical changes from a rise in temperature to a shiver to chattering teeth. (Gilbert 2007), (Medina 2009).

The mind fills in details constantly and automatically. It does this unnoticed by the individual. This constant, automatic, undetectable and unstoppable function can lead to an individual being absolutely positive of witnessing events that never actually took place. (Gilbert

2007) It can also be an underlying cause of errors in message crafting, message delivery and miscommunication in general.

A predictable interpersonal communication error due to mental filling-in can be observed in the mind's management of the communication paradigm, "communication is a two-way street." On March 10, 2012, a Google search returned 7,670,000 hits to an exact phrase match of "communication is a two way street". A search on the same day returned 512 hits to the exact phrase match "communication is not a two way street". An analysis of these 512 hits revealed that 509 of them referred to instances where communication not being a two way street was an impetus to a problem. The phrase is intended to make use of the idiomatic phrase "two-way street" meaning that something goes equally both ways. Therefore, as one speaks one must also listen is the universally understood and accepted meaning. Although the meaning is just implicit in nature, it is accepted as bedrock of communication practice.

One only need to witness an unproductive meeting or discussion to understand that on the road to intended message reception, the two-way street with communication going equally both ways is a set of directions that leads to "you can't get there from here". The problem arises because of the mind's familiarity with road travel and its automatic and constant ability to fill-in in its best self -interest. One well knows the experience of traveling on a two-way street. The traffic flows in both directions. However, the only point of connection would be a collision. Initially, this seems like an over simplification or irrational twist of the term. However, in practice, communication trainers see the conscious and subconscious abuse of the term. This abuse is similar to speed limit laws, which often mean the legal limit plus 10 miles (kilometers) per hour, or twenty miles faster if the driver is really in a rush. A review of responses given during interviews after contentious corporate and organizational meetings over the past twelve years, repeatedly revealed comments similar to the ones below.

Question: "Do you think he was able to express his opinion?"
Answer: "I did not dominate the meeting. I let him talk."
Question: "What did he say? – What was his point?"
Response: "I don't know, but I let him talk!"

In a culture where speaking is a common occurrence, listening is premium and understanding is often rare. The constant auto-fill function and the mind's tendency to adjust to one's own self-interest regularly overrides the basic "communication is a two-way street" presumption. The temptation to drive forward in one's intended direction and simply acknowledge that there is traffic on the other side of the street leaves little or no opportunity to deliver or receive communication from others on that road.

Applying the concept of Communication as a Road Trip

The new pavement

To make adjustments to communication training as simple as possible, we embrace references that are already familiar in theory and adjust or extend them for success on the new communication and information super highways. We expect that everyone is familiar with road travel. Using the mind's ability of unconsciously "thin slicing" to find patterns in behavior from many pieces of information from very narrow slices of experience, (Gladwell, 2005) and its ability to fill-in, we give ourselves much more pavement with which to work. Effective communication then, becomes much more than a two-way street. It becomes a road trip.

The Cars – Understanding Frames of Reference

Frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world. (Lakoff, 2004). As observers, we often make and sometimes act on assumptions about individuals' behavior based on the cars they drive. If the driver of a 1998 Ford Escort doesn't immediately go at a green light we might form a different opinion and have a different response than if the delayed departure is the fault of a late model Lexus driver. Both responses might be aggravated but in our mind's eye the driver of the Ford is probably some kid, not paying attention and the Lexus' driver is probably some executive who thinks no one else's time matters. We assign personages to unknown drivers of vehicles regularly. We look at the frame (car) and assign values to the driver. Reversing this mental exercise can help us build a frame with many options for an audience.

The first rule of speaking to an audience (whether of one or one-thousand) is to know your audience. (Brody, 1997) (Sprague, 2002) Current training tells us to research a few basic facts about our audience and to adjust our message; to "personalize" it from the few facts we know. This practice has become less effective in both one to one and audience scenarios because it is expected, and any error in the reference makes the speaker seem insincere, fake or impersonal. To exit the two-way street and merge onto the new super highway we must go beyond just knowing basic information about our audience to understanding how that information affects their frame of reference. Just as importantly we must understand how their car generally sees and reacts to our car.

License to speak – the old charisma and new ethos

Aristotle's use of ethos as a point of persuasion (Aristotle, 1992) is given a new license in the new electronic world. Generally thought to be a point controlled by the position of the speaker, in an age of instant information access, much of formerly accepted ethos is up for debate in the mind of the listener. Credentials that were formerly respected without question can now be under scrutiny instantly, with an Internet search performed on a smart phone. Therefore, more of the credit and benefit of ethos is no longer automatic, but assigned by the listener, much as charisma is assigned. (Weber, 1997).

Credibility is now in the hands of the masses. Anyone who considers anonymity of social actions a possibility in a world with Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and other social sites complete with instant upload capabilities is putting themselves at risk for lost of personal and professional credibility. (Goman, 2008)

The driver – know yourself

It is not possible to look inside of the brain and understand the workings of each individual's mind. At best one can endeavor to self-define and understand their own personal frame of reference with its relation to the reference points of the listener, to achieve greater success of intended message reception. Just as we "read" our audience, our audience "reads" us. If we have the habit of rolling our eyes at Cadillac drivers, taking the time to understand why they drive Cadillacs would lessen the possibility that we will roll our eyes or make subtle expressions at the wrong time.

Reconciling any of our own incongruence about our message or our audience removes barricades to making a connection with our audience.

Carpooling (Pathos I)

In an ideal communication setting we are able to achieve a carpool. When we can ride together in the same frame of reference the resistance of being "opposing traffic" is minimal. One of the goals of the speaker is to have the audience reach a level of comfort where they emotionally invite you into their cars.

Construction ahead, merge left or right (logos)

Understanding the construction of a logical argument is just as important as understanding how to deconstruct an illogical one without getting kicked out of the car. (Cathart, 2007)

A major shortcoming in message preparation is forgoing logic. If you lose a listener because of illogical message construction, they will be lost forever. There is no point in going back to try and find them. Yes, there is a roadmap for basic logical construction. It consists of two rules and a formula, and all three MUST be applied.

1. Must be based in fact, not personal truths, but real facts.
2. The conclusion must necessarily follow from the premises. (Baggini, 2007).

The formula:
If A=B and C=A then C=B.
The formula in words:
Terriers are Dogs. Toto is a Terrier. Therefore, Toto is a Dog.
All factors are true. All factors necessarily follow.

If the example had started with all Dalmatians are flowers. You would have been confused, amused perhaps, but certainly not willing to follow me too much further down the road.

The traffic – expectations and assumptions

Another area where communication training has lagged is in the use of subtle expression and micro expression training. The emotions happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, contempt and disgust can be detected by reading facial reflexes. (Ekman, 2003) Our minds are processing electronic and fast moving stimuli at an increasing rate. At the same time we are losing, or possibly never developing the ability to read facial expression and body language. However, we are still hardwired to make reflexive facial expressions and exhibit reactive body language. You are at a clear advantage if you have mastered the ability to decipher the code written across the human face and hidden in body language. (Navarro, 2010)

Five star highway

Building your own five star highway is an ongoing process of integrating all of your communication practices into one road trip. This extension from the two-way street seems extensive. Fortunately, we can fill in the details as we build new super highways to more effective communication and intend message reception. The titles below give some insight for a blueprint to new insights for communication practices.

Caution Slippery When Wet – Crisis Communication

Fasten Your Seatbelts – Preparations to deliver bad news.
Insurance Is Mandatory In This State – Making back-up presentation plans
Passengers – Easy Flowing Group Presentations
Rest Stop (Pathos II) – Communicating from a mutual mental space.
Road Rage – How to defuse the problem members of the car pool.
Setting The GPS – Preparing a road map from all information available.
Shortcuts – Words that work.
Speed Traps, Roadblock & Barricades – Pivot to return to your intended point.
The Road – Making the connection
This Light Photo Enforced – Working With Graphics
You Can't Get There From Hear – Adventures In Speed Listening

Conclusion

Are we there yet?

The growing reliance on electronic communication media has caused a need for a shift in emphasis within communication training. As the brain adapts to accept and micro-process the increasing onslaught of stimuli and the mind fine-tunes itself to thin slice and analyze bits of information at increasing rates, we must adjust our finesse and agility in interpersonal communication. The advantages for individuals and businesses that seize the moment and stay fine tuned into these new demands within the art and science of person to person communication will grow exponentially as the ability to understand and manage interpersonal communication diminishes across the board. Simply traveling down a two-way street, oblivious to all of the other factors that propel us to mutual understanding during interpersonal communication will leave us still unfolding a paper map while new routes are discovered at a rate only accessible to self updating GPS.

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Corporate Communication and PR Practice in South East Asia

Seeing the World through Local Eyes – Selected Research Findings and Conclusions

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As the countries of South East Asia move toward substantial economic integration by 2015, and gradually strengthen political cooperation, the question arises as to how much these nations actually have in common - socially, cultural, politically and in business terms. For corporate communication and public relations practitioners based in these countries, how different or similar are the operating environments, and how do they compare to typical 'Western' environments? How does the world of the communication professional look through the eyes of practitioners in each location, and what implications might any different local and regional perspectives have for those who seek to achieve communication objectives in these rapidly developing, highly populous nations? The author presents some of the results of 13 in-depth interviews conducted during 2011-2012 across six member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), following on from an online survey of more than 30 communication professionals across six countries of South East Asia, reported upon at the 2011 CCI Conference in New York. The interviews suggest a wide spectrum of views amongst practitioners, but with some strong common themes emerging in regard to a perceived need for greater understanding of local and regional nuances.

Background

The background to this paper, and to the much larger research study upon which it is based, might well be subtitled: ***The long road to an insider's understanding of corporate communication practice – and where this sits in the Asian context***. It is a road that is indeed long and hard to navigate in parts, but each brick in that road has its place on the way to the present study.

At the outset, it should be noted that an immense amount has been written in recent decades on matters of communication theory and practice, broader contextual studies of critical and cultural theory, and most recently on matters concerning globalisation and regional and local identities as seen from economic, political, sociological and anthropological perspectives.

In regard to mass communication, a rich array of theories has been propounded ranging from the highly mechanistic Shannon and Weaver communication model of the 1940s (Shannon and Weaver, 1949) - which concerned itself with purely the 'sender' and 'receiver' of any communication, and with any 'interference' (cultural differences, perhaps?) which may arise between the two - through to much more complex social psychological theories about media, media power, agenda setting, influence and selective audience reception propounded by writers including Lippmann (1922), Lazarsfeld (1944), Lasswell (1949) and Schramm (1961); and generally cautionary theories of social conditioning propounded by writers including Gerbner (1976), Comstock (1991) and the enormously influential McLuhan (1976).

This evolving study and discourse on large scale communication in industrial societies – especially from the few to the many – has happened alongside and been influenced by a broader process of critical and cultural inquiry that has its roots as far back as the nineteenth century and to Karl Marx - who foresaw much of what in the 21st century has come to be described as 'globalization' (Marx and Engels 1977) - and modern heirs to that line of critical analysis including Adorno and Horkheimer (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972) whose attentions have continued to focus primarily on issues of transnational economic power and social control. Most recently, Zygmunt Bauman continues in this

vein, to a large degree, with his talk of 'liquid modernity" – life within an internationalized, corporatized society that is, in that author's view, coming to be totally fluid, ever-changing and rootless. (Bauman 2000)

Also shaped by a rejection of earlier positivist concepts of limitless economic and social 'progress' and 'scientific improvement' have been the complex post-modernist conceptions of French writers including Ellul (1964) and Foucault (Nola 1998) who in the second half of the 20th century focused attention on the capacity of technique and technology to shape perceptions and popular discourses (prompting the interesting question of what these writers might today make of the internet and latest 21st century social online media) , as well Lyotard (1993) and Derrida (Caputo and Derrida 1997) who helped steer a new generation of scholars toward acceptance of the notion that all meaning is 'socially constructed' rather than having any independent existence of its own.

All of the above theorists have enjoyed a share of influence in the academic analysis of how communication happens on a large scale, and what actually lies behind it. In parallel with this have been pioneering psychological insights developed from the late 19th and early 20th century onwards by Sigmund Freud (1953) and then evolved in various directions by many successors; and pioneering insights by de Saussure, Pierce and others into the powerful world of symbols, codes of meaning, myths and multiple meanings that has come to be known as semiotics (Fiske 1982).

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, this complex web of interrelated theorizing about mass communication, social psychology and the underlying forces that shape *individual and shared understandings* have manifested themselves in the writings of popular critics of contemporary society such as Chomsky, who bemoans what he views as rampant neo-colonial imperialism by American cultural forces (Chomsky 1991) and Postman who laments what he sees as growing trivialisation of media content and mass communication as its base spreads ever wider across the globe (Postman 1996).

From an anthropological perspective, writers including Hall have observed the shaping and reshaping of local, regional and global cultural identities in the era that he describes as late modernity (Hall 1992); from a political and historical perspective Huntington (1996) has popularised the speculative notion of an emerging 'clash of cultures' between the most significant ethnic/religious/language/culture groupings that remain in the world following the dissolution of earlier dominant power divisions between the 'capitalist' and 'communist' worlds (and arguably at least in part as a reaction against the 'western imperialism' phenomenon argued by Chomsky); and more specifically a range of writers have speculated on the extent to which specific 'local' identities and values may now be attracting renewed interest and affection at a time of – and perhaps even because of - growing awareness of globalization and standardization of many aspects of culture (for example, see Loomba 1998; and Lee 2011).

At a more mundane yet highly practical 'managerial' level, a number of researchers have begun to inquire into the ways in which communication is received and interpreted differently in different locations, for cultural reasons, and the ways in which communication might therefore be framed and executed differently if it is to successfully achieve defined objectives in different locations. Most notable amongst these have been Hofstede (Hofstede 2001), and House et al (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta 2004), who have sought to categorize and produce matrices of key cultural variables.

In seeking to refine and relate all of this work down to the relevance it may have to the specific fields of public relations and corporate communication, it is noteworthy that amongst all the analysis and commentary about mass communication, there has been, perhaps surprisingly, little said about communication and culture *from the perspective of those people who themselves work as professional communicators*, in fields like public relations and corporate communication (PRCC). Advertising has attracted a level of academic scrutiny, perhaps because of its more conspicuous nature (often with a

focus on the role of semiotics), as has journalism (often with an emphasis on its role in agenda-setting), but PRCC remains somewhat lightly analyzed and researched in a general sense and even less so in a comparative cross-national, cross-cultural sense.

Considerations about communication, culture, power, self identity, symbolic meanings, and personal and group orientation can all be seen to be as relevant to South East Asia as any other part of the world, and to PRCC practitioners in these countries, and are perhaps especially worthy of study at present given that nations within this region are part of what is widely regarded to be the most rapidly developing economic region in the world, one of its most diverse and populous, and one which has self-declared intentions to parallel the historic development of the 'Euro-zone' (The Economist, 6 February 2010).

It can reasonably be speculated that a convergence of the forces of globalization, competing value systems, rapid economic and technological developments, renewed (perhaps reactionary) attachment to concepts of local identity, and emerging aspirations for parallel senses of regional identity, taken together, may offer some intriguingly complex ingredients for a study of how such factors interact in practice through the medium of public relations work – viewed through the eyes of 'communication professionals' uniquely placed to view these forces in action whilst in pursuit of their communication objectives.

Such practitioners might be seen, in some respects, to be people who stand both inside and outside their 'own' cultures, with particularly strong reasons to observe and reflect upon differences and similarities and what meanings to attach to them. To be blunt, they have strong reasons to know what does and does not *work* in local and regional communication, because such knowledge might, at times, mean the difference between career success and failure.

While it might be said that most PRCC practitioners researched for this and other studies indicate little evidence of an attachment to communication theories, or social scientific theory of any kind (more on this later), some small beginnings *have* been made in examining the relationship between the actual practice of public relations and intercultural communication, by Grunig et al (1995), and the specific relationships in Asian cultural settings (Sriramesh 2004), and the beginnings of an attempt made to develop improved 'global navigation' of international corporate communications practice by Sievert and Porter, drawing on the work of several other researchers in the first years of the twenty-first century (Sievert and Porter 2009).

The opportunity exists to take this work further in the South East Asian context, at a time of intense activity by industry practitioners in the region, extremely rapid change in communication technologies and practices, and intense social and political flux – and particularly to seek to discover what insights PRCC practitioners themselves can offer about this from their own worldviews. The research study upon which this paper is based seeks to do that.

The Study

Following on from an initial quantitative survey distributed to around 100 practitioners across six countries of South East Asia (some initial findings of which were reported by this author in June 2011 at the CCI conference in New York), the researcher conducted a total of 13 semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews, across six ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) nations selected for inclusion in this study. These interviews were conducted in the respective locations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) between February and December 2011.

Interviewees were purposively identified (as explained more fully in the study) to provide a diverse mixture of: nationals and expatriates, younger practitioners and highly experienced practitioners, consultancy based and in-house, and female and male. Interviewees were asked a series of

32 questions in total, and in most cases all were answered, with varying degrees of detail and interpretation.

Given that the findings of all these interviews run to around 40,000 words, for the purposes of this paper the responses to only <u>three</u> of these questions are given. These three have been selected on the basis that they provide some of the broadest general overview perspectives, and may be of particular current interest to CCI 2012 conference attendees, in the view of the author. In this paper the questions are paraphrased, for easier reference, into brief topic headings. (Answers to all other questions will be made available when the final report is published, by end of 2012.)

(Note: Interviewee names have been changed in this paper. Real names may be given for some or all at the final report stage, but until approval for this is given from each respondent the author is protecting individual identities.)

The 'Reality' of Cultural Difference as Applied to PR

All interviewees were asked about their views on the matter of cultural and other social differences and how much of "a reality" these are as factors to consider in the conduct of public relations and corporate communication (PRCC) programs in South East Asia. (This question was the second asked in each interview, following on from an initial question in which interviewees were asked to give their 'first impression' comments about culture and cultural comparison issues in relation to PRCC practice.)

For the bulk of interviewees, the answers to questions one and two tended to merge somewhat, with much of the second question already answered by the time it was asked. Broadly speaking, there was consensus that local cultural considerations ARE a factor of relevance to PR practice, albeit along a spectrum of relevance.

At the high end of the spectrum was the view that "from one to 10, I would rank it at about eight... especially in a country like Indonesia but a little less so in somewhere like Singapore which is very cosmopolitan". (Waluyo, Singapore/Jakarta [Note 1]) In the words of another: "It's so intangible but it's important – hard to measure but important."(Wee, Singapore)

The more modest end of this spectrum might best be expressed by the comment: "You have to take note of cultural or nationalistic or other sensitivities… but the fundamentals are the same everywhere." (Pryambodo, Jakarta). The same respondent, in response to question one, notes that "I think cultural difference is a bit overrated". In similar terms, another interviewee makes the broad observation that "good ideas travel well – good ideas work anywhere". (Hawke, Bangkok/HCMC)

Most interviewees cluster around the notion that culture and cultural difference have a moderate to high level of importance, but with variations according to the nature of the product, service or company – and therefore the target market (and publics) - being addressed. In the words of Ling, it "depends on what market you operate in… in some (places) where the role of PR is nascent, cultural difference is more significant… But, even in a more mature market like Singapore, which is fairly 'Western', you scratch the surface and you can (still) start to find some differences". (Ling, Singapore)

One of the views out of Vietnam – one of these more 'nascent' markets – supports Ling's contention: "It's real and it's really important. Some PR campaigns and themes work well in Western countries but not here". (Nguyen, HCMC). As an example, Nguyen cites a CSR campaign developed at Samsung regional head office (four years earlier) which allowed only online response by participants invited to take part, and had worked well in places outside Vietnam – but in which there was not sufficient capacity to respond amongst all of the relevant target market within Vietnam. Nguyen also notes that she has needed to modify materials to make heavier use of visual content in Vietnam over words.

Wee supports the contention that cultural difference is a big consideration across markets, but adds that it can be extremely hard to quantify or measure: "It's very important in the sense of (how it impacts) hard-line KPIs. It's so intangible but it's important – hard to measure but important. The way you make improvements to (multinational) campaigns is by taking it in and allowing for it." (Wee, Singapore)

Ling emphasises differences based on practice speciality. (Ling, Singapore) She argues that business-to-business markets have become more 'nuanced' and readily able to deal with cultural difference without losing audience impact, but that in other specialist fields of practice – especially public affairs, with its strong government component – local cultural factors, including nationalistic attitudes, hold great sway. "About 90 per cent of my clients are in public affairs, so it is particularly true for me."

In Malaysia, Mohamed sees the imperatives of local organizational leaders as a reflection of local leadership culture, and significant, permeating almost all campaign and program activities – but often to the detriment of their effectiveness: "We like events here in Malaysia, we like festivity. Clients want to impress with a big event, but they are often not so interested in knowing what people think... Government should (also) be concerned about KPIs – there are many fallacies. We get so wrapped up in process and show, but not (enough) on the outcome." (Mohamed, Kuala Lumpur) Mohamed describes leaders of Malaysian business and government as often being out of touch with the communities they are seeking to influence: "We have a lot of angry people who feel they are not heard."

Rajeet, also in Malaysia, supports this critical perspective, describing local outlooks as "almost feudal", with often much greater sensitivity given to protocol and use of correct titles than on the effectiveness or results of communication: "You (as a practitioner) have to learn a lot about protocol." (Rajeet, Kuala Lumpur)

While interviewees report the emphasis of Malaysian PRCC being on spectacle and protocol, interviewees in the Philippines, in contrast, speak of a stronger local emphasis on building interpersonal relationships. "It's significant that culturally the Filipino people are highly relationship driven. This will transcend many of the normal practices in other markets. Relationships are a very big factor in doing business of any kind – we are highly relationship driven. As applied to PR, this changes how it is done." (J. Fernandez, Manila) Jose Fernandez says while relationships are important for practitioners in any location, the particular significance given in the Philippines to the strength of personal relationships can lead to more people attending and supporting an 'insignificant' event than one in which there is truly a 'big, new' announcement being made. Raul Fernandez concurs: "The Philippines are a very personalistic society. Families and personal relationships are very important at all levels. It encompasses corporate relationships and all areas of society, the community, shareholders, customers and other stakeholders." (R. Fernandez, Manila)

Both Raul and Jose Fernandez say the emphasis on relationships has influenced the extent to which PRCC has been used in the Philippines to support advocacy of causes and to link this to product marketing. Building positive corporate relationships with particular communities has in some respects been more important than direct promotion of product benefits. (The 'Case studies' chapter of the full research study provides examples of this.)

Interviewees highlight a range of other factors linked to local culture and circumstance which they feel have a particular impact on the conduct of PRCC in their countries. These include:

- A tendency of PRCC practitioners to come from government backgrounds and heritage in the Malaysian environment ("many have come from the Ministry of Information so they have cut their teeth on propaganda"), and some division of approach between locally trained practitioners who deeply understand the Malaysian cultural environment and those from multinational corporations

who at times apply 'international' PRCC approaches which do not always reflect an adequate understanding of local nuance (Mohamed, Kuala Lumpur)

- Also from Malaysia, a more positive observation that Malaysia has been well served by its British colonial heritage and "substantial English speaking middle class". (Rajeet, Kuala Lumpur) Rajeet particularly notes the fact that PRCC materials and approaches, internationally, have been built largely around the English language, and assume an inclination toward the written word – and this makes international PRCC approaches easier to adapt and apply to a market where English is an almost universal second language.

- A contrasting and perhaps significant observation from Indonesia - which shares a near identical national language with Malaysia, but with lower overall literacy levels and lower rates of adoption of English as a second language - that PRCC can underestimate the importance of whether local language is primarily oral or 'literary'. (Waluyo, Singapore/Jakarta) "Bahasa Indonesian often does not have the words for translation into English… and much less is put in writing. It relies more on the spoken word – but PR relies on written materials being circulated, and this can be a problem in Indonesia… Also, Indonesians are not typically direct in what they say. Someone who is Javanese can take more time to convey their message than, say, someone from Medan… In PR you are expected to give presentations, and provide lots of notes for reading. But you don't grow up in our culture doing that very much. For things like annual reports and briefings this can present problems." Waluyo reports that relatively low education and literacy levels in Indonesia, while rapidly improving, also present problems for the sophistication of PRCC practice: "Jakarta is a city of 14 million people – less than 10 per cent are university graduates."

- Also from Indonesia, a different issue: that of re-emergent nationalism: "In Indonesia you have to take account of the nationalistic element. We've had years of dictatorship, followed by 10 to 15 years of transition from that to become a (democratic) country on the move. It is in the midst of gaining renewed confidence – there is a nationalistic pride to that." (Pryambodo, Jakarta) Yet Pryambodo says this very modern nationalism is still mixed with traditional norms of deference and politeness, and it is important for practitioners to get the balance and tone of the communication right.

- Blunt highlights the importance of 'cultural filtering' that he contends is prevalent amongst Vietnamese: "The way Vietnam sees itself is not the way the outside world sees it. There is a cultural filtering-out of anything that is ugly or unpleasant. As an outsider (living in Vietnam) I have to be very conscious of that." (Blunt, HCMC) Blunt talks of "the Vietnamese Way – capital V, capital W" which he characterises as including, amongst other things, a tendency for individuals to work at a level much less than their full work potential and to be tardy with timekeeping. This, he says, can make it difficult to conduct programs and campaigns effectively, particularly when attendance at events is involved. (He develops this theme further in his discussion of male-female differences in Vietnam, reported in the full study.)

- Blunt, Nguyen and Hawke all echo a concern about the extent of what those in Western countries would tend to categorise as bribery and corruption, as an integral part of Vietnamese culture. "I don't go down the road of kickbacks, but it is built into the business culture here." (Hawke, HCMC) Nguyen talks of her "very first concern" being "paid-for articles" which are commonly presented as editorial content in print and online. (Nguyen, HCMC). Hawke also talks of the "money and coffee" syndrome at media events in Vietnam, which, aside from its purely ethical dimensions,

"encourages laziness" by practitioners and journalists, and ineffective communication not well tailored to the real interests of media consumers. (Hawke, HCMC/Bangkok) The same concern is echoed more colorfully in The Philippines, with Raul and Jose Fernandez both speaking of the sometimes-pervasive practice of what is described locally, with some humor, as "envelopmental journalism" – media coverage directly resulting from envelopes of cash given to journalists. (The subject of professional ethics in the context of local cultures and locations is taken up in more detail in the full study.

- All three interviewees discussing Thailand note a Thai tendency to be circumspect about issues which may cause distress or embarrassment to anyone – thus constraining the ability to share information fully and freely on occasion. In some cases this works for practitioners and in some cases against. Chairat gives the example of when a bad accident happened at an event for which his client was a major sponsor. Although he knew the accident would be reported by a journalist, he asked the journalist not to mention his client by name. The journalist complied. (Chairat, Bangkok/HCMC) Chairat also talks of journalists and PRCC practitioners in Thailand being more like "brothers and sisters" than people having different interests. Hawke talks of an article in the Bangkok Post (on the day of his interview for this report) which reported four people had died in a hotel in Chiang Mai, in mysterious circumstances – with the name of the hotel not provided. "But this is what people would most want to know!" Hawke says ruefully. He suggests it is perhaps another example of media being circumspect to protect someone's feelings or interests. He speculates that such an omission may be partly for legal reasons – but at least as much for cultural. "In some cases involving the press there is a deference to corporate owners. There is not the urge to ask the really hard questions sometimes… not always, but often." (Hawke, Bangkok/HCMC) Somporn agrees that cultural proclivities, especially Buddhist norms of behavior in Thailand, can keep information exchanges at a very polite and tentative level, making some topics harder to broach. (Somporn, Bangkok)

- Some respondents note the importance of recognizing cultural variations *within* countries, not just between them. In this respect, the line between what is cultural, what is developmental, and what is technological can be hard to delineate. In Thailand, for example, Somporn says: "Thailand still has a technology divide. Remote provinces are very different to the city areas. You have to target audiences carefully – if your target is in a remote area you can't use the same channels." She talks of her difficulty finding a copy of her favorite daily newspaper when visiting her home province. Hawke similarly talks of a divide between the Thai middle class and others in Thai society. "Thailand has a very small middle class." He sees one of the great challenges for the development of the PRCC profession in Thailand and Vietnam being to develop a much stronger middle class, which in turn can be a catalyst for other beneficial changes, including more sophisticated professional practice. In Chairat's view, the Thai divide is as much about differing local subcultures as it is about income and education. "Each part of Thailand has its own subculture." (Chairat, Bangkok/HCMC). While there may be a single message involved in a nationwide PRCC activity, he says, the targeting and delivery may need to be modified substantially at the local level. He gives the example of promotions for toothpaste and for a budget airline which have been produced in local dialects and with different local media targeting to suit the lifestyle and habits at local levels. The Thailand practitioner consensus, in short, is that what works for Bangkok may not always work for the rest of Thailand.

- Going further, Rajeet, in Kuala Lumpur, contends that cultural variations can even impact PRCC work at the micro level, within a particular city, depending on the subculture from which the client

comes. He gives the example of ethnic Chinese clients in Malaysia, who he says can be very precise and narrow in specifying the service they want and how they want it provided: "They don't want media training, preparation of talking points and all that kind of thing. They just want you to make a big splash – you can get rid of all the subtleties." (Rajeet, Kuala Lumpur) He talks of a more transactional 'hard nosed' attitude, stripped of the nuances of long-term relationship building. In contrast, he says many non-Chinese Malaysian clients, especially Malays, will often be highly interested in the finer points of campaign planning, and want to sit in on all planning meetings. "Culturally, you have to make adjustments."

- In Singapore, Chin notes that the sheer pace of workplace change both in Singapore and elsewhere in Asia can present challenges in itself for professional practice. (Chin, Singapore) Practitioners can change jobs quickly in pursuit of better career opportunities in fast growing markets, as can media people and others involved in the professional relationship building process. This can produce a lack of continuity, which is a significant shift from the traditional Asian emphasis given to reliance on strong, stable relationships – and presents challenges for practitioners and those who hire them, she says.

Notwithstanding all of the above factors, some see the importance of national and local differences as more often a tactical issue than a strategic one. As Chairat notes: "I have done some global campaigns like Gold Visa and Motorola Mash-Up. In terms of key messages it is the same, but in terms of selection of media and visuals it can be quite different." (Chairat, Bangkok) A Vietnam interviewee concurs, saying that overall strategy may remain largely consistent, "but there are problems in applying tactics in Vietnam that have worked elsewhere." (Blunt, HCMC) Blunt cites the example of a humorous photo competition to find 'America's Worst Toilet' which was appropriate for the client in the US and had worked well there but simply would not work in Vietnam or many other parts of Asia due to differing development standards. The photo competition would have not quite the 'fun' outcome intended.

As noted above, it can be somewhat arbitrary to make determinations of what constitutes a 'cultural' factor as opposed to a factor relating to stages of economic or technological development, or a linguistic consideration, or even simply a matter of local geography or other circumstance. Some will define what is 'cultural' much more widely than others. It is perhaps sufficient to note here that the foregoing provides a summary of some key points *that were made by interviewees themselves* in response to a direct question about culture and its impact on PRCC practice.

It is worth noting that in the full research study, responses to specific questions about many other issues including ethics, politics, gender, media environments and a range of other topics are also given – and it could be argued that many of these are, of course, no less relevant to 'culture' than the question above which explicitly flags culture and cultural comparisons.

Globalization and How it Affects the World of Practitioners

When asked specifically about the relevance of globalization to their working life, practitioners, understandably, respond in a variety of ways, perhaps depending on what aspect most directly impacts upon them – and the extent to which they think about it on any broader level.

In Kuala Lumpur, Mohamed says that in her experience there is widespread misunderstanding of globalization and what it means in Malaysia. "People need to understand what globalization is all about. There's a huge misperception; people think the big multinationals will just come to our country, sap our natural resources and make a lot of money from you. To me, globalization is good – as long as it's not a form of modern colonialism." She gives the example of Starbucks, a company which she says

has helped raise standards of service and quality, and which appears to have a positive corporate ethic. Also in Kuala Lumpur, Rajeet also tends to see globalization in positive terms, saying it is important "to have a global view of your client" and to know what is going on in other countries. "With a click of a button you can now get a lot of information." He says this helps expand people's outlooks, and understanding of trends and relationships.

From Bangkok (and with any eye also on Ho Chi Minh City), Hawke observes that the "entire industry is becoming globalised", with two major holding companies – WPP and Publicis – dividing up the bulk of the international PR marketplace between them: "Everyone is now falling under one or two umbrellas." Within this context, he predicts the Vietnamese PR marketplace will be changed beyond recognition within five to 10 years. But he adds that he believes boutique agencies, offering specialist services and with special knowledge, will continue to survive. (In the months following this interview, a fourth multinational agency entrant arrived on the Vietnam PR scene by acquisition – Edelman – following on from Ogilvy PR, Vero, and Burson-Marsteller, known to the author to be in talks with a local agency.) Also from Bangkok, Chairat says globalization has a powerful impact on the client base of his own agency, with most wanting corporate PR services and many in heavy industries such as the chemical industry. "These are industries related very much to global industry."

Nearby, Somporn offers a different take on this topic. She emphasizes the impact that globalised social online media is having on professional practice – an impact which she sees to be good. She says the broadening of the community's information base beyond traditional media is potentially good for her profession, locally and internationally, but creates pressure to keep up and ensure appropriate advice can be offered. "It makes clients more accountable. We have to step into that arena as well. This is an opportunity for PR to expand into new channels – but if we can't keep up we are in trouble." (There is more detailed discussion of interactive social media in the full research study.)

Blunt says globalization is "absolutely" an important factor in his agency's work in Vietnam. "It is a market that is opening and all my clients are multinational. So it's all about a market that's opening up." Blunt talks of global companies wanting both to "put in" and "take out" of the Vietnam market: "But we're not a hub market. Clients are generally coming in." Again he talks of international clients seeing Vietnam as a "frontier" needing to be better understood. Nguyen, however, does not see much evidence of 'global thinking' in Vietnamese PR practice yet: "I think globalization is still really far away. We're trying to build our own industry here and exchange more with regional parts of the profession. Exchange is always good to broaden horizons and help people become aware of their own cultural limitations. As a practitioner (recently departed to academia) I was always too busy to think about all this."

Interestingly, Ling in Singapore says that globalization "has an impact on the work we do **_not_** do here". Explaining this, she says an important part of the way Singapore has evolved is for multinationals to favor putting some parts of their business operations into Singapore but not others. This has meant that some services needed at a local level have needed to be outsourced, often including communications and PR. "We try to leverage the inequality of skill sets and build up what can be offered here." For example, she says that while many marketing support functions are not carried out extensively in Singapore, there is important planning work which must still be fed into the global process – and her agency can help with that planning.

Also in Singapore, Wee, whose role with an international bank is decidedly multinational, describes globalization as "a reality, but it doesn't always impact you from day to day". She describes the term as a catchphrase, but really not a new phenomenon. In her own role, she says there is a risk of "sitting in an ivory tower" trying to manage India, Dubai, China and many other places all at the same time and struggling to "get buy-in" from all locations - and of how easy it is to "take your eye off the ball" when dealing with such diverse markets and locations. Chin, in Singapore with a similarly multinational corporate outlook, says globalization is at the heart of the approach being taken by her

employer, an insurance company. "We aim to globalize the brand, starting from Asia. That's our strategic goal." But in seeking to do this, she says the greatest challenges can be internal more than external. She gives the example of individual national branches which are fixed in their thinking, or change their minds about what they want after campaign work has begun. It can be less of a challenge, in itself, to meet the needs of diverse marketplaces than it is to change the inner workings of a big organization, at all levels and in all locations, to the extent necessary to take on the external challenge.

Pryambodo observes that his competition increasingly is not just other Indonesian firms but firms from other countries, though he adds that this does not trouble him. "There is no excuse for an Asian company not to be as good as a company from New York or Silicon Valley or one of the other western centers." Waluyo says globalization has become a very important factor to PR activities in Indonesia and relating to Indonesia. "Whatever takes place in Indonesia (now), people around the world know about it. It presents challenges to us – the speed that information travels is amazing. And we see the audiences our clients are trying to achieve need to be global."

Jose Fernandez offers a note of optimism in regard to the potential for globalised thinking to improve PR practice. "It's important to see what other companies are doing, and see how you can localize it here." But also, more fundamentally, he talks of the potential offered by globalization to spread good ideas worldwide and improve levels of global cooperation. He speaks admiringly of a New York water promotional campaign he has encountered which encourages consumers to drink tap water rather than bottled water, and to give the two dollars saved each time to a campaign to help provide potable water in Africa. "These are global awareness issues."

Changes in Society and Communication Behaviors

Following lengthy discussion of communication technologies and how these are being applied to the PRCC scene in South East Asia (summarized in the full research study), interviewees were then asked about any general changes in society and communication behavior they had witnessed in recent years – if any.

Chin does not hesitate in responding. "The pace is definitely faster. Expectations are higher – if people send you a message they expect a response much faster." She says she now imposes a faster response time on herself as well, with the help of her Blackberry. She believes the type of content being created for PRCC materials is changing too, noting that it is more important than ever to keep it as simple as possible and to find interesting ways to capture people's attention. Reflecting on this, she adds: "Everyone is communicating a lot faster, but if you take the trouble to pick up the phone and be a bit more personal, sometimes that helps too." In regard to internal communication, Chin says it is a major challenge to manage information upwards as well as downwards, and refers to a level of "paranoia" in the finance sector at times. Another behavioral shift she notices is a growing tendency to be protective about sharing information, particularly in surveys. "We get a lot of push-back now from clients when we try to survey them. They are more protective about their time and their customer data." Finally, Chin notes that regulation now intrudes more as well, with countries like Malaysia having heavier regulation of customer data. In all, the environment has become faster and more complicated, she says. Wee, as noted earlier, sees people becoming more communicative overall: "I would agree that people are becoming much more communicative with each other. And not just with their own networks."

Raul Fernandez says many attitudes have changed in the Philippines in recent years in the direction of greater sensitivity and responsiveness to public concerns, and this has benefited the PR profession. "Change has come and people at many levels have recognized the importance of PR. There's a much greater awareness of being judged in public. The media in the Philippines is vigorous and free, and companies have come to recognize that they can't ignore it. Even the biggest corporations

and the smallest companies have to act in a way that will avoid crisis and closure of their business. Public support is now essential." In Indonesia, Pryambodo also sings the praises of a society and media sector that are freer than in days gone by. "In Indonesia I think there has been a bit of that liberation that comes with free expression and free media. Free media has made information more transparent, which then forces government and authorities to be more accountable." Sometimes, he says, the new-found freedom of expression comes in the form of being able to laugh openly. "A funny story was when Michelle Obama (wife of the US President) came here. The Information Minister (an avowedly orthodox Muslim) makes a point of never touching women – but who should be lined up first to shake her hand but our Information Minister?" Pryambodo says the sight of the Minister pushing himself forward to be the first to shake her hand caused much hilarity in Indonesia, and went all over cyberspace.

(This kind of 'credibility gap' humor has been increasingly evidenced elsewhere in Asian cyberspace, with a recent example being political upheaval in the Chinese city of Chongqing, which led to the mayor being sacked by the Party and his police chief seeking sanctuary in the US embassy for several days. Responding to a proliferation of online gossip about the consulate refuge incident on Twitter-style microblogs, known as weibo in China, a Chongqing government weibo statement claimed that the police chief was simply on medical leave, receiving "vacation style treatment" – a statement which was, as noted by *The Economist* magazine, a "comically implausible euphemism that immediately went viral". (Economist, 17 March 2012)

Waluyo, from both an Indonesian and Singapore-based perspective, endorses the view that there is a growing Asian appetite for comment, debate and reliable, credible information. "Increasingly people need to see concrete evidence and examples – they don't just want to see theory." He says in Indonesia in particular, since media control was relaxed in 1999, "the audience has become very critical – people are very vigorous and passionate in debate". But Waluyo adds that huge ongoing disparities in education levels make for complications: "The level of education is very uneven, so debate happens at different levels." Waluyo observes that one consequence of the changing environment for practitioners and others is a growing business and government demand for research to guide the way. He has noticed that with recent elections in particular, there has been much more incidence of, and interest in, opinion polling. Business and government want to understand more about community opinion and how to work with it, he says.

In Thailand, Chairat says he has seen gradual change in the PR environment over recent years, but with the pace of change increasing more rapidly of late, especially in regard to use of technology. He gives the example of email, which only a few years ago most Thai media did not want to accept for distribution of PR materials. "Now 90 per cent want it done by email. Only some still want it by hand." He says business media is now most adamant about receiving its information by email. Chairat says a lot of thought now needs to go into what target audiences are doing in the social media realm, and to include this within all PR planning.

In Vietnam, Blunt talks of a "night and day" difference between PR of a few years ago and now. Factors include not just the growing use of the internet and social online media, in itself, but for Vietnam a rapid improvement in reliability and speed of connections. Only a few years ago it could be very difficult trying to rely on any online service to work properly, but now they do – and online connections can increasingly be made well with wireless devices. It has led people coming to expect much more instant communication, and faster consumption of information provided. "I've watched people (journalists) filing as story on a bus, traveling back from an event, using 3G." Despite relatively low (albeit rising) income levels, Blunt says about a third of the Vietnamese population is now on mobile phone, and Vietnamese blogs are booming in cyberspace. Nguyen observes that she see Vietnamese people becoming "much more open to communicate and express their ideas and opinions". This includes consumers being more willing to go to the media if they have complaints, and a

consequent need for PR practitioners to work well with all departments in their organizations – and especially with customer service – to get issues resolved effectively.

In Singapore, Ling says her agency now pitches story ideas to journalists via IM (instant messaging), but adds that in some other ways there is less contact. In terms similar to Chin, she adds: "I don't think people pick up the phone enough anymore. And there's definitely fewer face-to-face meetings with media." On the other hand, she notes that on Facebook and LinkedIn she has a lot of friends, "and I have a sense that I have more contact with them now… I know that person a bit more." From Malaysia Mohamed reports that she finds customers "tend to be more value-driven now". Access to the internet makes people more aware of their choices and more sensitive to what else they can expect from organizations. "People are more sensitive now, especially in urban areas. I see changing behavior and attitudes in many ways – there is movement out there." In regard to journalism, she sees more journalists concerned about the news value of a story than in the past. (In contrast, Rajeet in the same city says he has observed little change of any note in behavior at any level.)

Hawke in Bangkok notes that the decline in newspapers has definitely been important, but adds that even though this decline is real, "clients still put a premium on seeing it in print". In a sea of change for society, for communication patterns and for the work of PRCC practitioners, this interviewee reports that there does seem to be at least one constant: getting a story into a serious newspaper "remains the hardest thing to do".

Conclusions

Much more commentary is provided about the dimensions of cultural and locational difference (and similarity) through the eyes of practitioners, in the full research report from which this paper is drawn. The words of PRCC practitioners provide an unvarnished account of some of the key communication issues of our time as seen by people whose professional survival depends on some understanding – on at least an instinctual level – about what communication will *work* in a particular location and what will not work, and why that may be the case.

It is readily apparent from this study that practitioners in South East Asia attach little if any weight to matters of theory, for the most part, being people mostly preoccupied (understandably) with what will deliver immediate practical benefit and *results* to them at the local or regional level. To the extent that theory is mentioned, it tends to be done so dismissively – as with Blunt's comment that "a lot of the theory is useless, with or without cultural differences" and Ling's that "I find the best books done in the communications area are from fields like economics and management theory (not PR). What many people don't understand from communications schools is that you are not doing communications for its own sake – it is for business objectives." Even amongst those few, like Mohamed, who evidence some interest in PR theory or broader communication theory, there is a corresponding frustration that they do not see much evidence of it being well applied in practice in their own countries. As she notes in response to another question not reported upon in this paper: "What I have seen of some local curriculum is that it is very out of date… (and) there is so much emphasis on events here . A monkey with a checklist can run an event – but it's a strategic thinker who has to do the checklist." (Mohamed, Kuala Lumpur)

On the other hand, while practitioners may not necessarily be aware of all theory and academic analysis that is relevant to the work that they do, in some cases, if they did, they might be rather more approving of it. For example, a number of interviewees including Somporn and Chin speak admiringly of trends in social media development that are opening new horizons to society for interactive dialogue and to their profession as a potential guide to making best use of it – but might not be aware that a theorist like Jurgen Habermas since the 1970s has noted the desirability of creating more ideal dialogue conditions in which all parties to communication processes have some equality of access to information

and power to respond. (Habermas, 1970). At least some of the vision of Habermas may be coming to pass, but without any cheer squad of PRCC practitioners to acknowledge it as such.

Similarly, most PRCC practitioners interviewed for this study, and others elsewhere, would almost certainly apply aspects of audience reception theories as propounded by Lazarsfeld, Schramm and others, but without necessarily doing so with a conscious awareness of it nor any acknowledgment of the fact. (Lazarsfeld, 1944; Schramm, 1961)

But it would be going too far to suggest that all practitioners evince either ignorance or hostility toward academic modeling and analysis: they simply have little time for anything that appears needlessly convoluted or arcane, or which, in Blunt's view, restate the obvious in fancy language. As he puts it: "Even if you are focused on western cultures a lot of the theory is useless, with or without cultural differences. I don't know I hold the theories up as very useful… I discount it when people are just using big words to describe simple things." (Blunt, Ho Chi Minh City)

After looking into the worldviews of PRCC practitioners and their local, regional and global perspectives, it seems clear that many worthwhile insights can be gleaned – even if, all too often, those insights must be extracted by "reading between the lines" or by further work to interpret what may motivate the words of each speaker, rather than any of them offering much in the way of explicitly analytical comment themselves.

What can be learned from practitioners of South East Asia – and it is much - comes more often in the form of impressions, reactions and practically driven but telling immediate observations than in the form of any well rounded, fully formed analytical or conceptual commentary. But these insights - partial, sometimes cryptic and often incomplete as they are – still offer perspectives that, in this author's view, deserve to be heard in the context of these practitioners being people of considerable influence in their spheres of operation.

As to the limitations of what can be gleaned in the way of deep analysis directly from practitioners themselves, perhaps Pryambodo's unapologetically matter-of-fact comment says it best: "I think we process it all subconsciously rather than analyzing it consciously. A fish doesn't analyze the water."

And as to the question of whether the diverse publics served by South East Asian PRCC practitioners might be described as any less or more 'local' in outlook than in earlier times, any more or less 'regional', or any more 'globalised', Somporn's simple words offer succinct insight. Yes, she agrees, there *is* much greater regional and global awareness these days, but… "even in the age of globalization, people still have their origins".

NOTES

Note 1: For Waluyo, as with all interviewees quoted from the doctoral report from which this paper is drawn, it should be noted that the report is as yet unfinished and unpublished, and therefore cannot be fully referenced as yet. But all interviewee comments are drawn from the same source – Domm 2012, as listed in the References below. For the purposes of this paper, the convention of simply listing the respondent's name and location has been adopted.

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Corporate Communication and the Development of IBM's CSR

A Case Study

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Stanley Litow, IBM's Vice President, Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs, and President, IBM Foundation, recently addressed an audience at Baruch College, CUNY, on the occasion of IBM's 100th birthday. He discussed the role of citizenship in 21st century business, emphasizing repeatedly that corporations cannot divide their corporate responsibility from their business programs. CSR, he maintained, is not separate from the way you conduct your business. His talk centered on how IBM was both a global technology leader and a global model for corporate citizenship. Its innovative technology and talent had succeeded in building its business, he said, and at the same time also addressed social issues in the communities where IBM operates.

This strategy was consistent with IBM founder Tom Watson's view that the organization needed to change in terms of its innovation but not in terms of its core values. IBM, technology created Social Security, one of the most important social welfare programs ever, and has developed voice recognition programs that have had multiple pro-social uses. To what extent is doing so a genuine gesture for mankind or blatant self promotion?? To what extent had IBM crafted corporate responsibility and fused corporate relations with community relations?

Litow discussed how IBM's corporate citizenship had been linked to Watson, for whom social and community concerns were expressed as private philanthropy. One did good deeds privately, anonymously, for their own sake, without publicizing them. Watson, said Litow, had to be convinced of the value of publicizing his philanthropy. IBM has shifted to public, Web-based pronouncements of its CSR activities that describe the depth and breadth of its commitments to communities. The entire operation of CSR activities is now an entity unto itself, with a foundation that manages programs designed to bring talent and technology to global communities, according to each one's needs.

This paper will trace the historical shifts that marked IBM's move from a corporation whose CSR was a discretionary gesture of its CEO to its current, variegated status within the larger structure and functions, within IBM the mega-corporation. It will explore if and how these changes have affected the corporation itself, in terms of corporate communication's involvement in the programs themselves, as necessary to sustain the CSR arm, and through generating publicity about them. In addition, how are decisions about CSR programs made and what, if any roles, do corporate leadership and employees play in that process? What kinds of communication has been necessary, given the company's shift in emphasis from "private" philanthropy to corporate citizenship as a company imperative and as a mandated but largely self-directed area of employee engagement? Finally, the paper will explore the extent to which IBM, as a global technologies innovator, has influenced CSR programs in its own industry and in others.

Despite the fact that there appears to be at least one point in time during which the company's business choices may have been, in retrospect, questionable, Mr. Watson's overarching legacy of concern for others has been operationalized into a highly-targeted set of community-and-educationally-centered CSR programs. These initiatives warrant closer examination, as the technology and talent involved in them may serve as models for the non-profit sector and other corporations. Non-profit executives present at Litow's lecture intimated that IBM's programs were both significant sources of potential corporate funding for them and also models in terms of researching, planning, and implementing community-based programs.

This modeling may also involve sharing knowledge about the programs themselves, including the role that effective corporate communication plays in planning and implementing CSR initiatives. For these reasons, if not for the others mentioned here, IBM represents an important case study.

Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in Hong Kong 2011-12

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In connection with Corporate Communication International's (CCI) benchmark study on the same topic in the Chinese mainland, the European Union, South Africa and the United States (US), this study, conducted under the auspices of the CCI Hong Kong Chapter (CCI-HKC), initiates a similar longitudinal study in Hong Kong to inform respectively local practitioners of the status and trends of corporate communication vis-à-vis the findings of the other CCI studies; and practitioners and academics world-wide for comparative purposes. The data of the study are to be collected between November 2011 and March, 2012. In addition, two more rounds of data collection are planned for 2012-13 and 2013-14. Thereafter, beginning with fall of 2015, the study will be done on a bi-annual basis.

As a replication of the CCI studies, the design of the questionnaire of the Hong Kong study is done with close reference to that used in the US study of 2011. However, in order to take into account the Hong Kong situation, and the fact that it is the HKC's first study, some adaptations have been made. For example, the number of items is reduced from 27 to 24, with 19 of these items overlapping in varying degrees with their counterparts in the US study. The remaining five items are "new" and are included for a corporate commuication-related academic program at our university.

The study's population is corporations of medium-size or above that are registered in HK. By Hong Kong norms, medium-sized corporations are those having 100 or more employees on their full-time payroll. Our sample includes respectively the 48 corporations included in the Hang Seng Index (they are the largest and most liquid stocks listed in Hong Kong Stock Exchange) and the 45 corporations which are on the mailing list of the HKC, i.e. 93 corporations are sampled.

Instrumentation and trial-runs were conducted between June and October of 2011. Data collection started in November following the launch of the HKC. The 93 target corporations are contacted by letter, written on HKC stationery with the questionnaire enclosed, which was followed up by phone-calls. The respondent may respond by returning the questionnaire to us using the enclosed stamped and self-addressed envelope, or responding to our survey by phone, or on-line.

As of February 23, 39 corporations participated in the survey; 11 indicated that they would fill out the questionnaire shortly. In March a final reminder in both hard-copy and on-line mode will be sent to the rest of the sampled corporations to seek their participation in the survey. Data collation and analysis will commence in April.

The findings of the study will provide information which will (1) enhance our understanding of the corporate communication profession in Hong Kong with reference to its niche in the corporate structure; the stakeholders corporate communication practitioners serve; the major functions that they perform; the types of corporate communication functions contracted out to agencies/vendors; the size of the corporate communication budget and related changes; staffing in corporate communication departments and related changes; and qualities/traits deemed to be desirable attributes of corporate communication practitioners. (2) Serve as a foundation for the construction of benchmarks of the aforementioned corporate communication topics in Hong Kong. (3) Provide one more set of data for cross-polity comparison among the CCI world-wide benchmark studies.

Corporate Image Vacuum

Nature, Characteristics and Implications for the Organization

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A good corporate image is important to organizations (Benoit & Pang, 2008). Even then, some organizations do not have one (Bernstein, 1984/1989; Walker, 2010). Arguably the first study to explicate the notion of corporate image vacuum through the development of the Corporate Image Grid Framework, this study examines how an image vacuum is generated and what organizations can do to fill it. The framework offers a systematic way of assessing an organization's image to heighten practitioners' awareness of image management of their organizations. Four organizations drawn from Fortune 2011 list of 50 most admired organizations are studied: Singapore Airlines, Google, Nike and Toyota. Findings suggest that corporate image formation constitutes the interplay of organization-constructed and audience-interpreted image. These determine the locus of image control and image valence. When the image valence is weak and the locus of control is external, an image vacuum is generated.

The notion of corporate image had existed long before the various disciplines from which it is believed to have originated from, such as marketing, public relations (PR), organizational behavior and social psychology as we know them today, took root (Balmer & Greyser, 2004). Furman (2010) suggested that the concept of corporate image was applied as early as 19th Century in England during which an architect's firm was recognized by people for its distinct interior design and decorating style. This quality, which set the firm apart from its competitors, is what Furman (2010) maintained is an antecedent for corporate image.

Today, a strong corporate image is widely-accepted by both the academic and business communities as an important corporate asset. There is extensive literature on the effects of corporate image on business sustainability and competitive advantage (Cheverton, 2006; Cornelissen, 2011; Dowling, 1994; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Kahuni et al, 2009; Lemmink et al, 2003; Vella & Melewar, 2008) business legitimacy (Cornelissen, 2011; Massey, 2004) and consumer buying behaviour (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Barich & Kotler, 1991; Zeithaml et al, 1996). This is also matched by popular literature on how millions of dollars are spent by organizations large and small on the research, creation, dissemination, protection and repair of an organization's corporate image (Dowling, 2002; Melewar, 2008; Miller & Muir, 2004).

Given the long-standing history and well-established status of corporate image, it is therefore intriguing that some organizations may exist without one. Bernstein (1984 & 1989) alluded to the notion of a corporate void; a situation in which the organization image is neither good nor bad, but that it has no image whatsoever. Walker (2010) too suggested the possibility of an organization not having a corporate image. The question therefore arises – can an organization really not have a corporate image i.e. can they exist in a corporate image vacuum? Anchored on selected key frameworks on image creation and image management, this paper aims to do the following:

1. Propose a Corporate Image Grid Framework to analyse corporate image dimensions and hence introduce the notion of corporate image vacuum; and

2. Explicate the notion of corporate image vacuum, its nature, its characteristics and how it is formed.

Significance of Study

As mentioned in the preceding section, while there is extensive material on the concept of corporate image and the importance and benefits of having a strong or positive corporate image, the same cannot be said about corporate image vacuum. Save for Bernstein's (1984 & 1989) and Walker's (2010) allusions to the possibility of organizations not having a corporate image, not much else has been proffered about the notion of corporate image void or vacuum. Neither have details of such a corporate phenomenon been extensively discussed.

This paper is therefore significant as it is arguably the first to attempt to flesh out the notion of corporate image vacuum as alluded to by Bernstein (1984 & 1989) and Walker (2010). The paper will first attempt to define the concept and offer an explanation of the nature, characteristics, occurrence and implications of a corporate image vacuum. Second, beyond exploring existing frameworks of image creation and image management, this paper aims to introduce a systematic way of assessing if and when an organization exists in a corporate image vacuum. Third, beyond established theories of repairing images during or after a crisis as posited by Benoit & Pang's (2008) image repair theory, this paper suggests that the corporate image framework can be used as a check to determine if a corporate image vacuum exists.

On a theoretical level, this paper hopes to make inroads into a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the notion of corporate image vacuum. On a practical level, this paper offers insights to practitioners on what a corporate image vacuum is and how it can impact an organization's credibility and ultimate success. An understanding of the notion, it is hoped, may afford better management of the phenomenon.

Literature Review

Literature abounds with various corporate concepts such as corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate image and corporate reputation. Each individual concept has been collectively borne out of scholarly thought, empirical research and principles derived from practice. Unfortunately, according to Balmer & Greyser (2004), this has also brought about fragmentation, dilution and even confusion due to countless causes such as the divide between practitioners and scholars, the existence of disciplinary silos and monomania a period during which one concept is considered more popular than others.

Defining the key corporate constructs

While there are various definitions, corporate identity can be defined as the embodiment of the organization, its distinct attributes which differentiate it from other organizations and which can be communicated via a collection of symbols and the organizational behaviour (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Balmer, 1998; Balmer & Gray, 2003; Barnet et al, 2006; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Corporate identity, in part, contributes to the formation of the corporate image.

Corporate branding on the other hand can be defined as a covenant, promise, or contract between a firm and its stakeholders (Balmer, 2001; Balmer & Gray, 2003; Balmer & Greyser, 2003; Interbrand, 2007) and is in part, projected via the organization's corporate identity (Balmer & Gray, 2003).

Corporate reputation is generally defined as the perceptions held by an organization's stakeholders which are established over time and can inherently be positive or negative (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Cornelissen, 2011; Walker, 2010). Where corporate image is formulated from a single point in time, corporate reputation is aggregated through the various corporate images held over a period of time.

What then of corporate image? Notwithstanding its long and established history, its wide acceptance as a concept and the various corporate constructs which influence it, one would remain hard-pressed to find a definitive definition for the concept of corporate image.

The concept of corporate image

Generally, literature suggests that corporate image is a subjective and values-based belief, impression, interpretation or perception of an organization (Aaker & Myers, 1975; Barich & Kotler, 1991; Barnett et al., 2006; Bayton, 1959; Chun, 2005; Davies et al, 2001; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Fombrun, 1990; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Kahuni, et al., 2009; Margulies, 1977; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Moffitt, 1994; Scott & Lane, 2000),

Beyond this however, different perspectives exist on its genesis and the responsibility of creating and interpreting corporate image. Some scholars believe it to be the sole responsibility of the organization (Bromley, 2000; Brown et al, 2006; Lewellyn, 2002; Whetten & Mackey, 2002), while others feel it to be the sole responsibility of the organization's external stakeholders (Barnett et al, 2006; Davies et al, 2001; Gray & Balmer, 1998). Still others feel that corporate image is a shared or collaborative construct involving both the organization and its external stakeholders (Benoit & Pang, 2008; Christensen & Askegaard, 2001; Ginzel et al, 1993; Massey, 2005; Moffit, 1994; Scott & Lane, 2000).

A working definition of the concept therefore, would need to minimally include two things; firstly the notion of corporate image as a subjective perception and secondly the party or parties involved in and responsible for its formation and interpretation.

Dimensions of corporate image

Various postulations prevail about the dimensions of corporate image. Some image theorists scrutinize the formation and management of corporate image from the dimension of locus of control. This dimension focuses on whether the corporate image is cultivated internally and communicated mostly by the organization i.e. organization-constructed and communicated (Bernstein, 1984; Kennedy, 1977) or ascribed mostly and externally by the various publics of the organization i.e. audience-interpreted (Barich & Kotler, 1991; Barnett et al, 2006; Boulding, 1977; Cornelissen, 2011; Gray & Balmer, 1998; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Margulies, 1977; Schuler, 2004). Implicit in the internal-cultivated versus external-ascribed dichotomy is not only the zero-sum nature of corporate image formation, but also whether the corporate image represents the image desired or projected by the organization versus the perceived or interpreted image by the organization's publics (Walker, 2010).

Another dimension proffered by image theorists has to do with the valence of corporate image i.e. positive vs. negative vs. neutral corporate images or strong vs. weak. Haedrich (1993) suggested that people's valence of opinion or image of an object (or what he termed 'object opinion') is formed based on both their emotional and objective assessments of it.

Formation of corporate image

Frameworks on the interplay of corporate constructs are useful to gain insights into how corporate image is formed. For instance, Kennedy (1977), Abratt (1989) and Dowling (1994) all suggested that the organization image, in part, stems from the organization itself. For instance, Abratt (1989) suggested that an organization's corporate philosophy, constituting its core values, organization culture, organization policies, corporate mission and vision and business objectives all contribute to the formation of its corporate image. In other words, one half of the corporate image formation equation stems from the corporate DNA and involves the internal construction of an image by the organization itself i.e. the organization-constructed image.

In all three frameworks too, there exists another element in the image formation process i.e. the interpretation of the organization-constructed image by its publics. Kennedy (1977) suggested that the corporate image is derived from the direct and indirect experiences the organization's external publics have with the organization. Abratt (1989) referred to an image interface which exists between the organization and its publics alluding to the processing which needs to occur before a corporate image is derived. Dowling (1994) suggested that a corporate image is formed through both interpersonal communication as well as the organization's marketing efforts targeted at its external publics. From these, we gather that, while the organization might construct its corporate image, this image still needs to be received, negotiated and interpreted by its external stakeholders or publics. This is the other half of the corporate image formation equation- the audience-interpreted image.

Defining corporate image

Based on the preceding sections and the literature studied, a working definition of corporate image could therefore be proposed as follows:

> Corporate image is one of many corporate constructs a company has to manage. A corporate image is a subjective and value-laden construct in a given context and is therefore mutable. The formation of corporate image involves both an audience-interpreted image (conceived image) and a company constructed and projected image (communicated image) the interplay of which will determine the locus of image control and the strength or valence of the corporate image.

Corporate image vacuum

Walker (2010) suggested that corporate image can be described as an internal picture projected to an external audience. The assumption here is that organizations actively try to project an image. Those that do not do so would still have a corporate identity and reputation, but not a corporate image. This allusion to an organization not having a corporate image, even if it did have a corporate identity and corporate reputation, is fascinating. Thus far, we have been told that it is impossible for an organization not to have an image given that corporate image is either cultivated by the organization itself, ascribed by the organization's audiences or co-constructed by both the organization and its audiences. Is it really therefore possible for an organization to exist in a corporate image vacuum?

Bernstein (1984 & 1989) suggested that an organization exists in a corporate void when it neglects its responsibility to engage in effective and on-going corporate communication. While Bernstein did not believe that an organization can exist without an image whatsoever, he

maintained that the responsibility of creating, cultivating and communicating a corporate image to its audiences lies squarely on the organization (p.1):

> "…the impressions we create are important. If they get it wrong, it is not their fault but ours. Communication is the responsibility of the communicator. Misconceptions are the fault of the transmitter, not the receiver."

Based on the postulations above, two key ideas present themselves vis-a-vis the lack of corporate image. Firstly that the organization is responsible for its corporate image, without which a void occurs that will most likely be filled by the public. Secondly, that corporate image cannot exist without the organization's effort in projecting or communicating it to its publics. It is therefore posited that a corporate image vacuum can arise under two circumstances. The first circumstance is brought about by a lack of conscious effort in creating, cultivating and communicating the corporate image (corporate image formation process). The second circumstance presents itself when an organization either refuses or is unable to fill the corporate void (corporate image management process). These two notions will be further explicated in the remaining sections of this paper.

The Corporate Image Grid: A Proposed Framework

In order to introduce and expound the concept of a corporate image vacuum, a framework is thus presented. This framework, termed the corporate image grid, is represented in Figure 1 below and will also be the basis to discover the typologies of corporate images an organization might have before, during and after a crisis. The grid focuses on two key dimensions of corporate image, namely where the locus of corporate image formation is located (locus of corporate image control) and the nature of the corporate image formed (valence of corporate image).

	STRONG (On-target)	WEAK (Off-target)
INTERNAL (Cultivated)	Quadrant 1 • Image is extensively cultivated • Internal locus of image control • Strong image [On-target]	Quadrant 2 • Image is cultivated • Internal locus of image control • Medium-strength image [Off-target]
EXTERNAL (Ascribed)	Quadrant 3 • Image is ascribed • External locus of control • Medium-strength image [Incidental]	Quadrant 4 • Image is mostly ascribed • External locus of control] • Weak image [Image vacuum]

FIGURE 1: Corporate Image Grid

The first dimension proposed, locus of corporate image control, is built on one of the most widely studied personality concepts (Matsumoto, 2008 in Lam and Mizerski, 2005) first advanced by Rotter (1954, 1966 in Lam and Mizerski, 2005) and subsequently adopted by many studies including the area of crisis communication (Coombs, 2004). Rotter's original construct proposed that generally, people differed in terms of the amount of control they believed they have over their behavior and environment (Lefcourt, 1966; Rotter, 1966; Levenson, 1974 in Lam and Mizerski, 2005). Those with a high internal locus of control believe they have control over their own behaviour and environment and can therefore considerably influence the outcomes in their

lives. Conversely, those with a high external locus of control believe they are dominated by external forces such as fate, luck or powerful others factors that are beyond their control (Lam and Mizerski, 2005).

Adapting this notion, it is posited that when the locus of image control of an organization is located internally, the organization proactively and consciously cultivates and projects a desired corporate image to its various audiences. An internal locus of image control is achieved when an organization consciously engineers and influences the way its audiences view it. Such organizations would be placed in quadrants 1 and 2 of the corporate image grid. Conversely, organizations with an external locus of image control allow, either consciously or sub-consciously, their various audiences to ascribe or assign a corporate image to the organization. Organizations with high external locus of image control either do little or nothing or do so in an ineffective manner to manage the ascribed corporate image. These organizations would be located in quadrants 3 and 4 of the corporate image grid.

The second dimension proposed for the corporate image grid is that of Image Valence. The notion of valence of corporate image is derived from the AC^2ID Test™ framework (Balmer & Greyser, 2002). In this framework, the authors posited that an organization has multiple identities i.e. actual, communicated, conceived, ideal and desired and that these are derived from multidisciplinary perspectives. Actual identity, the authors argued, constitutes the current organizational attributes and is made up of what earlier scholars (as discussed in the preceding sections) term the corporate philosophy. Communicated identity, as its name suggests, is the identity which is manifested through corporate communication and includes things such as advertisements, PR and even word of mouth. Conceived identity refers to the perceived impressions formed by the organization's stakeholders. Ideal identity is the optimum positioning of the organization in any given context. Lastly, desired identity is what the authors deemed as the vision of the organization's corporate leaders.

As discussed in the earlier sections, corporate identity gives rise to corporate image. We can therefore extrapolate that the concepts of actual, conceived, communicated, ideal and desired corporate identities should also inform corporate image. Actual image is thus taken to mean the image arising from the organization's corporate philosophy i.e. its mission, vision and organizational structure. This may or may not be communicated to the organization's stakeholders. Only corporate images (be they desired, ideal, or actual) which are consciously communicated and transmitted via corporate communication should be deemed as communicated images which in turn gives rise to the organization-constructed image. Conceived image, which are impressions or perceptions formed by an organization's external stakeholders gives rise to the notion of ascribed corporate image.

The valence of corporate image dimension in the corporate image grid therefore describes the nature of the corporate image formed: whether the corporate image is strong because it is on-target or weak as it is off-target. Implicit in this dimension of corporate image is whether the image projected by the organization (communicated image) is matched by the image accepted or ascribed by the organization's publics (conceived image). Organizations with strong and on-target valence would be placed in quadrant 1. The corporate image formed by such organizations is considered on-target. Organizations with strong and on-target valence but had little to do with the corporate image formed (external locus of control) would be placed in quadrant 3. It is proposed that such corporate images are incidental in nature given that there was no conscious effort by the organization to create or manage it.

Organizations whose efforts in cultivating its corporate image are not matched by the weak and off-target image attributed by their publics would find themselves in quadrant 2. It is proposed that such images are off-target given that the desired or ideal image is not matched by

the conceived public image. Lastly, organizations which make no conscious effort to cultivate, manage or defend their corporate image effectively exist in a corporate image vacuum. In doing so, they allow their publics to fill the corporate image void with negative images of itself. Such organizations would be placed in quadrant 4. According to Bernstein (1984), the consequence of such organizations existing in a corporate image vacuum is that:

> If an organization chooses to transmit few messages of its own, the public will choose to construct messages for it, utilising any generalisation, hearsay, fragment of 'information' to complete a pattern, no matter how distorted (p. 1).

Based on the corporate image grid, this study posits the following questions:

RQ1: What is corporate image vacuum; its definition, nature, key characteristics and occurrence?
RQ2: What types of corporate image can an organization have before, during and after a crisis?
RQ3: How can practitioners assess if an organization is in a corporate image vacuum and what can they do about it?

Method

The case study approach

The use of case studies is the primary research method proposed for this study. Berg (2009, p. 317) defines case study as "a method involving systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions". The case study approach allows for and enables discoveries to be made (Shaughnessy et al 2008 in Berg, 2009). And while the case study approach is sometimes criticized as being less rigorous and systematic among the social sciences methods, Berg, (2009) contended that case studies in fact offer objectivity and generalizability to the research undertaken – two valuable qualities most researchers strive for.

Using Yin's (2009) case study protocol, a comparative case study approach was used. A set of multiple case studies were identified for the purpose of cross unit comparison. The units to be compared across the four selected case studies are the dimensions proposed in the preceding section i.e. valence of corporate image and locus of corporate image control.

Selecting the cases

In selecting the cases for this study, three primary criteria were set, the first of which is for the organization featured to be a multi-national corporation (MNC). An MNC, also known as multinational enterprise, multinational organization, transnational corporation or international corporation, is defined as an organization that has direct investments in more than one (usually many) different countries. Such organizations are typically large in terms of market value, sales, profits and return on equity (Campbell & Craig, 2005; Cherunilam, 2008; Paul, 2010). MNCs were selected as they have globally familiar images which will aid the reader in understanding the cases better.

The second criterion is for the MNC to have been involved in a crisis which put the organization's corporate image to a test. Pang (2011) argued that organizations that experience crises would have to undertake image work to recover from them. Wan and Schell (2007) argued that few studies have examined how corporate image can help an organization survive after the

crisis is over. Specifically, these crises should allow for the corporate image dimensions of corporate image valence and locus of corporate image control to be identified and assessed.

The third criterion is for the organization and their corresponding crises to have received wide news media coverage either due to the nature of the crisis and its impact to a large number of people and/or the stature of the MNC in question. Such extensive news media coverage would aid in the process of discovering the organization's image cultivation and management efforts during the crisis and provide a stronger basis for the resultant corporate image proposed.

Based on the three criteria identified, a useful platform from which the organizations for the case studies could be selected was Fortune Magazine's 2011 annual list of 50 Most Admired global organizations. Fortune Magazine surveys thousands of high-ranking business executives annually to get a sense of the corporate reputations of the most admired global organizations (Brown & Turner, 2008). Organizations are assessed on criteria such as innovation, people management, use of corporate assets, social responsibility, global competitiveness, quality of management, financial soundness, long-term investment and product / services quality ("World's Most Admired", 2012). Given that corporate image is how people perceive an organization and that this perception informs and shapes an organization's corporate reputation, this list therefore forms a strong basis to analyse the corporate images of the organizations shortlisted for the case studies.

Apart from Fortune's 2011 World's 50 Most Admired List, other artifacts analysed for the case studies include organization profile reports, corporate websites, media articles, journal articles and books pertaining to the identified organizations. Specifically, the types of content sourced from these include the organization's history or background, its corporate image creation or cultivation efforts, the resultant corporate image from these efforts and a crisis event which put the organization's corporate image to the test.

From the list of World's 50 Most Admired organizations in 2011, four organizations were then identified as matching the primary criteria. The four organizations are Singapore Airlines (SIA), Nike, Google and Toyota. Apart from matching the primary criteria, the corporate images of these organizations were also assessable on the dimensions set out in the corporate image grid i.e. locus of corporate image control and corporate image valence. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Case Study Analysis

Case study 1: Singapore Airlines (SIA) SQ006 crash

On 31 October 2000, SIA's 2-year old Boeing 747-400 arrived in Taipei from Singapore en route to Los Angeles. Despite the bad weather conditions, the plane was given clearance to take off from Chiang Kai-Shek Airport. Soon after clearance was given however, the plane crashed and killed 82 people. Given that this was SIA's first major accident which threatened its stellar image, the organization ranked 18th on Fortune's 2011 list of most admired organizations ("World's Most Admired", 2012), is therefore a suitable case study for analysis.

Case study 2: Nike's use of sweatshops and child labour in manufacturing

Nike's foothold as the world's leading brand of athletic footwear, apparel, equipment and accessories is entrenched, in part, in its ability to achieve low-cost manufacturing (Frisch, 2009; "Nike", 2012). As early as the 1970s, Nike had set up manufacturing factories in third-world countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam and China (Frisch, 2009; Jenkins, 2003). In November 1996

however, CBS' documentary '48 Hours' detailed the dire working conditions of workers and even children hired by Nike's third-party contractors in these factories (Frisch, 200 9; Jenkins, 2003). Given Nike's positive image built prior to the crisis, the organization's corporate image was now incongruous with the image it had thus far cultivated. This discordance therefore makes Nike, ranked 24th on Fortune's 2011 list of most admired organizations ("World's Most Admired", 2012), a suitable candidate for study.

Case study 3: Google's print library project

In 2002, Google unveiled its grand plan of making all the books in the world's greatest libraries available to anyone, anywhere with an Internet connection (Stromberg et al, 2011). While some people viewed this as Google's liberating vision to unlock the knowledge of humankind for the benefit of all, others saw it as copyright infringement on a world wide web scale. Critics deemed Google's project as ethically unsound and publishers labelled them unfair and opportunistic. Hence in 2005, a group of publishers sued Google for copyright infringement in New York (Stromberg et al, 2011). Although the organization is ranked 2nd on Fortune's list ("World's Most Admired", 2012), it is comparatively un-noteworthy in terms of its image cultivation efforts. This therefore makes them an interesting study.

Case study 4: Toyota's massive global recall of faulty car parts

January 2010 marked the beginning of Toyota's recall woes which in the end saw a staggering 2.3 million cars taken off the global market (Thomaselli & Greimel, 2010), untold numbers of negative media coverage worldwide and consumer confidence at an all-time low. The organization was admittedly in its worst crisis ever. The brand which had hitherto been synonymous with reliability now had its very core value questioned, scrutinised and rendered no longer credible with claims of its cars' faulty parts being responsible for road deaths in the US. Toyota's previously impeccable image of reliability and quality was now discordant with the cacophony of criticisms and complaints levelled at it. This mismatch in pre-crisis and crisis images makes Toyota a suitable case study.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1: Defining corporate image vacuum

The fourth type of corporate image found in Q4 of the corporate image grid, provides a starting point for introducing the concept of corporate image vacuum. From the case studies, we understand that a corporate image void or vacuum arises when an organization places its locus of image control externally and/or when its image valence is weak.

Some possibilities for why the locus is located externally include the organization's refusal or inability to fill the void which we saw in the cases of Toyota and Nike respectively. The locus is also deemed to be located externally if there is an imbalance in control in which the external control of image is greater than the internal control of image. This can occur if the organization's efforts to fill the corporate image vacuum are considered either ineffective (like Nike's insistence that it is a responsible corporate citizen during the crisis) or belated (as was Nike's official response and Toyota's apology).

Weak image valence on the other hand occurs when the organization's communicated image does not match the image held by the publics i.e. conceived image. This situation can

present itself if the image is deemed incongruent i.e. when the organization's actions are not matched by its rhetoric, past or present (as was the case for Nike and Toyota) or when the organization's image cultivation efforts are considered off-target. Off-target image cultivation efforts arise when an organization's efforts are deemed not credible, ineffective or as not addressing the crux of the issue at hand.

In other words, a corporate image vacuum presents itself when an organization's image formation effort is either weak or non-existent and/or when its image management efforts are weak or non-existent. Based on the above discussion, the following is posited as a definition of corporate image vacuum:

> *A corporate image vacuum is a void which organizations, inadvertently or otherwise, allow its external publics to fill due to a lack of or poor image formation and/or cultivation and/or management processes before, during or after a crisis.*

RQ2: Types of corporate image before, during and after a crisis

Based on the corporate image grid framework proposed and the case studies analyzed, it is apparent that an organization can have different images before, during and after a crisis i.e. within different contexts and in different situations. The typology of corporate image vis-à-vis the different stages of a crisis is based on the dimensions of corporate image valence and locus of corporate image control. The findings summarized in Table 1 here denote where each organization was located in the Corporate Image Grid before, during and after their respective crises.

Organization	Pre-Crisis	Crisis	Post-Crisis
SIA	Q1	Q1	Q1
Nike	Q1	Q2 + Q4	Q1
Google	Q3	Q4	Q3
Toyota	Q1	Q4	Q1

TABLE 1: Case study analysis of organizations' corporate images before, during and after crisis.

Quadrant 1: Strong-Internal

The type of corporate image found in Quadrant 1 of the corporate image grid (Q1) is considered both on-target (communicated image = conceived image) and cultivated. Organizations which display the strong-internal corporate image make a conscious and deliberate effort to create, shape, manage and even defend their corporate image. Such a corporate image is also deemed effective and on target as the organization's aimed-for image is received and accepted by the publics it is intended for.

Of the four organizations studied, only SIA was located in Q1 before, during and after the crisis. This is primarily due to SIA's commitment to and heavy investment in image cultivation before the crisis (Heracleous et al, 2006), its well-managed and compassionate handling of the affected passengers' next-of-kin during the crisis (Henderson, 2003; "SIA's handling", 2000), and its continued strong reputation eleven years after the crisis ("World's Most Admired", 2012; "Singapore Airlines", 2012).

Nike and Toyota too were located in Q1 before and after the crisis. Nike's extensive and aggressive image cultivation efforts saw it become the most popular sports shoe in the US (Frisch, 2009) before its sweatshop crisis. Nike's extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR)

efforts since the crisis has seen it regain its popularity today ("Nike", 2012; "Corporate Responsibility"; 2012).

Quadrant 2: Weak-Internal

The type of corporate image found in Quadrant 2 of the corporate image grid (Q2) is considered off-target. Even though there is some effort made by the organization to cultivate and project a corporate image, it is discordant with the image held by the organization's publics.

Nike, in the early stages of the crisis displayed this type of corporate image. Before sweatshop claims against Nike became widespread and systematically indisputable, Nike had initially clung on to its cultivated corporate image of being a supporter of societal well-being (Christensen et al, 2008). This was obviously a mismatch with the ascribed image held by the public, thereby rendering Nike's image off-target and affecting the organization's credibility.

Quadrant 3: Strong-External

Organizations located in Quadrant 3 of the corporate image grid (Q3) will find that even though their corporate image is considered favourable, it is incidental. This is because the organization engaged in no apparent image cultivation efforts. Its locus of image control is located primarily outside the organization i.e. ascribed image.

Based on the case studies analysed, only Google displayed this type of corporate image before and after its crisis. Prior to Google's print library crisis, it was already enjoying a strong and positive corporate image, commanding 48% of all internet searches in 2006 compared to its closest rival Yahoo which only drew 22% (Vise, 2006). All this even though Google is not known to engage in extensive image cultivation efforts as did SIA and Nike. Post-crisis, the Google name continues to hold significant brand equity ("Google Inc", 2011). Its corporate image cultivation efforts however, remain unseen and its locus of image control remains located externally because of this. While its image valence post-crisis is positive and strong, its image is mostly ascribed.

Quadrant 4: Weak-External

The fourth type of corporate image describes organizations in Quadrant 4 of the corporate image grid (Q4). Such organizations do not have a habit of cultivating and managing its corporate image thereby placing its locus of image control externally. In so doing, the organization creates a corporate image void or vacuum which can and is usually filled by the organization's external publics.

We saw this with Nike in the latter part of its crisis when it took nearly two years to officially respond to charges of running sweatshops (Bullert, 2000; Jenkins, 2003) and in Toyota's crisis when it similarly seemed to shy away from providing an official response at the height of the massive global recalls (Rechtin, 2011). Google too, during the crisis was not apparently engaged in any image repair efforts. Perhaps because of this, the media, the publishing industry and the general public filled the corporate image void themselves and labelled Google as monopolistic and ethically unsound (Stromberg et al, 2011).

RQ3: Assessing and managing the corporate image vacuum

From the case studies, key learning points were gleaned from which the following checklist is proposed. Given that corporate image formation is dialogic (Cornelissen, 2011; Dowling, 1994; Massey, 2004) and that generally managing an organization's own corporate image efforts affords it more control than compared to managing how the public perceives it, the following checklist is intended more as a prompt for practitioners to reflect on their company's corporate image efforts and preparedness for a crisis as opposed to a comprehensive to-do list.

Informed by Kennedy's (1977) and Dowling's (1994) proposed corporate image formation processes, Abratt's (1989) corporate image management process and Hatch and Schultz's toolkit (in Cornelissen, 2011), answering the questions in the list below will offer insights into how the corporate image vacuum can be managed.

- *Image Cultivation:* Is there currently proactive corporate image cultivation efforts being undertaken?

- *Image Management:* In a crisis, is the corporate image vacuum effectively & proactively filled or managed?

- *Image Matching:* In a crisis, does the communicated image match the public's perceived image of the company?

- *Locus of Image Control:* Was the locus of image control during crisis located within the company?

Conclusion

This study has attempted to crystallise existing varied strands of understandings pertaining to corporate image. It is concluded that corporate image, as one of a few corporate constructs managed by an organization, is important given the impact and implications it has on an organization's credibility, legitimacy and success as demonstrated in the case studies.

Because it is a mutable concept, corporate image can be managed by managing the two dimensions which affect it i.e. image valence and locus of image control. Given that it is easier to control what is within our means, the study places slightly more emphasis on the organization's role in creating, managing and protecting its corporate image (organization-constructed image) in order to affect the other part of the corporate image equation (audience-ascribed image).

Failure to place the locus the image control within the organization and/or ensuring a strong image valence might lead the organization to enter a corporate image vacuum. Such a vacuum is typically and usually filled by external publics disadvantageously.

While the dimensions of image valence and locus of image control are proposed here as key dimensions in the formation and management of corporate image, the fact that corporate image is contextual also suggests that there can be other dimensions which may have a bearing on corporate image. While this study does not take into account these other factors, a possible future study could look into how other dimensions such as culture, might affect how corporate image is formed and managed. Some scholars have suggested for instance, that the way Toyota handled the crisis is fundamentally founded on the Japanese culture of not admitting mistakes publicly. How does culture shape a company's corporate image? And how is this image managed vis-à-vis a crisis?

Also, in discussing the dimension of locus of image control, the company's external public is assumed to be a monolithic entity which it usually and realistically is not. This is

admittedly another limitation of this study which at the same time presents the opportunity for future studies in this area i.e. stakeholder management in relation to corporate image formation and management. Just as some scholars suggest that a company can have multiple corporate personalities, can a company have multiple corporate images for its various stakeholders? Does it need such multiplicity? What are the challenges and how can these be managed?

Some other possible areas for future studies also include new media and how it hampers or aids in corporate image management and the interplay between the concepts of corporate image vacuum and information vacuum (Pang, 2010) and how the two notions can be dovetailed for better crisis communication management.

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Crisis Communication and Terrorism

The Norway Attacks on 22 July 2011

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The purpose of the paper is to present a review on terrorism and strategic communication, and to describe and analyze how the Norway attacks on 22 July 2011 – the bombing of the government center in Oslo (killing eight persons) and the mass shooting on the island of Utöya (killing 69 persons) – were managed from a crisis communications perspective. The paper is based on a qualitative interview study with national governmental actors in Norway and Sweden. The analysis uses late modern social theory, viewing crises as "transboundary" (Boin & Rhinard, 2008). The paper integrates earlier research on terrorism and strategic communication. The findings and implications are, among others, that: (1) training and improvisation are crucial; (2) the concept of "transboundary" crisis is valid as an analytical framework, (3) co-ordination is the main problem. The case study is part of a three-year research project funded by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

On the 22nd of July 2011 a car bomb explodes at 15:25 within *Regeringskvartalet*, the centre of the Norwegian executive national government in Oslo. The bomb exploded next to the Prime Minister's office and other government buildings, and killed eight persons and wounded several others. Two hours later another attack was launched on the island of Utöya, where Workers Youth League (Labor Party) had an annual camp. A man disguised as a policeman fired at the participants and killed 69, mainly very young persons. Anders Behring Breivik (from now on mentioned as "the terrorist") was arrested by the police at Utöya and is now charged for the mass killing and the attack at *Regeringskvartalet*. The terrorist had political motifs, is a right-wing extremist, and has communicated his beliefs and plans through different channels. He posted a 1518 page long manifesto, *2083 – a European Declaration of Independence,* right before he committed the attacks. This manifesto is filled with extremist political critique as well as terrorism instructions. In the introduction the terrorist writes that he sends the manifesto to one of my former 7000 patriotic Facebook friends or you are the friend of one of my FB friends". He attacks persons with different political opinions as well as the mass media for "not telling us the full truth about the scale and consequences of Muslimimmigration" (Manifesto, p. 698). In another section the terrorist meticulously describes the most efficient tools for communicating to achieve one´s targets. As an example, the terrorist recommends his companions to appear moderate, dress normally and sound and act like well-educated European senior conservatives. Using Lacoste shirts is preferred (Manifesto, p. 842)

Right after the attacks, rumors about who was responsible were made in several news media, a crucial issue after terror attacks (Canel, 2012). Some news media concluded that an Islamic terrorist group was probably responsible. In *Washington Post* a reporter first quoted another news media, *Weekly Standard:* "We don't know if al Qaeda was directly responsible for today's events, but in all likelihood the attack was launched by part of the jihadist hydra. Prominent jihadists have already claimed online that the attack is payback for Norway's involvement in the war in Afghanistan". The journalist then continued speculating about why the attacks had been done by an Islamist terrorist group. A security expert promoted this rumor in a

live interview at the Norwegian public service television. The Norwegian Journalist Union web reported that there were also other non-evident rumors which were spread in Norwegian and international mass media, e.g. that the Prime Minister was hurt and that the terrorist had no ammunition left when he was arrested.

The tragic events in Norway are typical examples of the synthesis between terrorism and strategic communication, given the fact that the terrorist's acts before, during and after the attacks seems to follow a communication strategy, especially focusing media exposure. In this paper this synthesis will initially be examined based on earlier research about terrorism and strategic communication. But the main focus of this paper is crisis communication from a national governmental perspective. A case study is presented. First, this case study describes and analyses the Norwegian national government crisis preparedness, organization and communication acts during the attacks. Second, the case study describes and analyses how the Swedish Prime Minister's Office, especially the foreign ministry and the crisis management office, reacted to the attacks, and how they are prepared for similar terror events.

The review on terrorism and strategic communication is based on earlier research. The description and analysis of the crisis communication preparedness, organization and communication acts are based on documents and interviews with five high-rank officials in the Norwegian and Swedish national government, specializing in crisis communication.

There are several reasons for investigating this crisis. The main reason is that the attacks may be interpreted as a possible example of a transboundary crisis, linked to other nations, leading to crisis preparedness in the acute phase and with consequences for other nations post-crisis. This is so since the attacks were prepared through contacts, influences and gathering of material internationally. Social media was used by the terrorist to communicate his ideas and together with traditional media they reported in different ways upon what happened. During the acute crisis phase the event obviously also led to actions in the Swedish and other national governments, not knowing if the attacks were isolated to Norway or part of an international conspiracy. Post-crisis the attacks also led to debate and discussions in the public as well as in the national government regarding preparedness and political policy. Terrorism, left- or rightwing, are typical examples of transboundary crises since they are connected to the global arena and international discourse. From a Nordic perspective, the terrorism threat has increased in the last years. The attacks in Norway is one reason but two other events have also led to increasing awareness: a suicide bomber killed only himself by mistake in Stockholm the 11th of December 2011, and the arrest of a group of islamist terrorists (three of them Swedish citizens) in December 2010, who were planning an attack on the newspaper company, *Jyllandsposten*, in Denmark. A national Swedish terrorism strategy, presented in February 2012, concludes that the terrorism threat has increased in the last years. Internet "(…) has increased its importance for violence-oriented groups and networks, partly as mean for their own communication, but mainly as a platform for distributing messages and propaganda" (Skr 2011, 5-6). The strategy also highlights the importance of efficient crisis communication for withholding legitimacy in society, reacting towards disinformation and helping concerned citizens.

Theoretical Framework: Transboundary Crises in Late Modernity

According to Beck (2002:41) the "world risk society" is facing three fundamental conflicts or predicaments: global financial crises, global terror networks and ecological conflicts. The world risk society has altered basic principles developed in modernity for example related to political decision making and accountability (Beck and Lau, 2005). Crisis communication in our age, named liquid modernity by the sociologist Bauman (2007), must be planned and executed in a

way that challenges some of the established principles of crisis communication. The traditional theories on crisis communication are based on a notion of crisis as the consequence of a single cause, confined to one organization, characterized by a clear beginning and end (Seeger et al, 2003:86-87). This makes traditional theories less suitable for explaining the dynamics behind transboundary crises characterized by multiple causes, cascading dynamics and involvement of different actors at various arenas. According to Boin (2010), transboundary crises can be characterized by their crossing of geographical, functional and time boundaries. These dimensions have effects on core aspects of crisis communication strategies which have mostly focused on corporate actors image repair efforts (Benoit, 1997) or rhetorical responsibility strategies of their political counterparts (Brändström and Kuipers, 2003). Crisis communication scholars have acknowledged the role of political communication and meaning making in acute crises (Boin et al, 2005; Boin et al, 2008), but research has only began to address communication challenges posed by new types of transboundary crises such as terrorism (Norris et al, 2003; Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira, 2008).

The traditional crisis communication approach has been focused on: (i) *single issues*, such as product hampering or big accidents. Transboundary crises open up for recurrent crises linked to a certain systematic predicament such as global climate change, terrorism and financial problems. The complexity inherent in these kinds of issues results in the expansion of the crisis into various policy sectors with different interests and dynamics, which create tensions related to coordination and consistency when communicating. (ii) *crisis as a linear process* with a clear beginning and end contributing to a rational view of organizations that can be controlled during crises through communication strategies by establishing different regulations and standard plans (Ashcroft, 1997; Falkheimer and Heide 2010). In contrast, one could argue that transboundary crises are characterized by more dynamic and diffuse processes, which increase the need for fast improvisation. According to Porfiriev (2000), one of the characteristics of transboundary crises is the erosion between risk and crises which override the traditional dichotomy between slow burning and fast burning crises (which has been the main focus in crisis management studies). (iii) *directly operational and technical issues,* ignoring strategic and theoretical issues concerning organizational and crisis management (see for example Tyler 2005). This applies to both practice and theory. Crisis communication has mainly been viewed as tactical transmission of information. "Much of the extant writings consist of what 'to do' or what 'not to do' drawn from case studies", according to Coombs (2007:135). Due to the complexity inherent in transboundary crisis, strategic aspects become naturally an integrated part of actors' communication. (iv) *communication with stakeholders that are anticipated*, defined and known; in short, a classical view of society, as homogenous with solely national differences (Falkheimer and Heide, 2006; Falkheimer, 2008). This has resulted in a transmission view of communication - the tasks of disseminating information and the differences in the interpretation of the information have largely been disregarded (Fearn-Banks, 2001). Due to the crossing of geographical and functional borders, transboundary crises open up for a higher variety among stakeholders as well as fast formations of new stakeholders (e.g. through social media).

Terrorism, Media and Crisis Communication

We do not yet know if the arrested terrorist planned and committed his acts with the help of other actors, even if there is no evidence so far which supports this. The question is if the attacks had been planned and set in action by one lone individual, may it be defined as terrorism? This leads one into a complex discussion on how to define terrorism. In a classical book, *The Age of Terrorism*, Laqueur (1987, p. 143) defined terrorism as "(…) the use or the threat of the use of

violence, a method of combat, or a strategy to achieve certain targets". He also concludes that publicity is an essential part in terrorism strategy. Tuman (2010) presents several possible definitions from different perspectives and refers to three types: state terrorism (when authoritarian states use political violence), national (or domestic) and international terrorism (global). Ranstorp and Wilkinson (2005, p. 3-4) explains terrorism as a broad concept: "Terrorism is the systematic use of coercive intimidation usually, though not exclusively, to service political ends. It is used to create and exploit a climate of fear among a wider group than the immediate victims of the violence, often to publicize a cause, as well as to coerce a target into acceding to terrorist aims".

There is no reason to get deeper into this definition discussion here. From a broad stand-point the Norwegian attacks may be defined as terrorism, since they are politically motivated and planned violence.

Publicity is, as mentioned by Laqueur (1987), an important dimension and target for contemporary terrorism. It is a fact that terrorist attacks are newsworthy. They fit perfectly into the media logic and "news values, such as drama, visuals, sound bites, relevance, and general newsworthiness" (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008, p. 53). After 9/11, the discussion about terrorism as strategic communication has intensified (Richards, 2004, p. 169). This discussion is a consequence of the mediatization of society which highlights the importance of the media images of all institutions and social, political and economic phenomena. Canel & Sanders (2010) analyzed the governmental response after the Madrid (2004) and London (2005), and concludes that terror attacks may be regarded as crisis communication from three perspectives. First, terror attacks are obviously crises. Second, terrorist attacks have a strong communicative dimension and "(…) aims to strike at the very heart of democratic politics, undermining public confidence, attempting to change governmental policy and influence electoral outcomes" (Canel & Sanders 2010, p. 450). Third, terrorist attacks also involve and may hurt the reputation of organizations.

Rothenberger (2011, p. 2) concludes that when it comes to terrorism this development started in the 1970s. As an example she mentions German RAF, Rote Armee Fraktion, which evaluated the press coverage of their attacks. The 9/11 attacks were in many ways media logic and an example of news management. The disaster itself was also symbolic, destroying a world known symbol of Western liberal society, and "the timing of the two attacks in New York was such that following the first plane there would be plenty of cameras out when the second one arrived" (Richards, 2004, p. 171). On the other hand, the view of terrorism as strategic communication is in sharp contrast to the development of the field both from the research and practice perspectives. Modern public relations, corporate communication or strategic communication focus on communication as participation and enforce the value of symmetry and negotiation, not media events and power spectacles (Richards, 2004, p. 175). From a distance one may interpret terrorism as a simple example of the so called publicity model, defined by Grunig & Hunt (1984) as the oldest and simplest model of public relations (one-directional, without any necessary relation to truth, and with only one aim – exposure in the mass media).

Tuman (2009) means that terrorism should be viewed as persuasive communication with multiple target audiences. Rothenberger (2011, p. 9) shows that terrorism strategic communication is a lot more complex and that the, above mentioned, publicity model may be way too simple for analysis. Terrorism may have several active communication targets besides evoking fear, e.g.: Polarizing public opinion, making converts, attracting new members, demanding publication of manifesto, misleading enemies, announcing further actions and gaining certain images. News media are also used for communication between terrorists, obtaining information about hostages and counterterrorism plans and more. Contemporary terrorism use new and social media pro-actively and may reach audiences without communicating with

journalists. Weiman (2008) presents an empirical study analyzing 6714 international terrorist incidents between the late 1960s to the early 1990s, which reveals that terrorist acts increasingly apply to the logics of the media. Before the Internet the terrorists, such as RAF, were dependent on traditional mass media. According to Weiman (2008, p. 74) the change happened in the late 1990s. In 1998, not even half of the international terrorism organizations identified by the U.S. State Department had web sites. In 1999, almost all of these organizations were active on the Internet. The same researcher (Weiman, 2008) concludes that the terrorist web sites have many characteristics in common: they present violence as the only means to deal with the opponent; they blame the opponent, dehumanize the opponent and define themselves as freedom fighters representing marginalized minorities or people. These characteristics fit very well with the Manifesto communicated by the Norwegian terrorist.

The relationship between strategic communication and terrorism is getting more and more relevant, as a consequence of late modernity and the mediatization of society. The following section gives an insight into the governmental crisis communication structures in Sweden and Norway, before going into how the attacks were handled.

Organizational National Crisis Management Structures in Norway and Sweden

The Swedish crisis management system is organized according to three basic principles. First, the responsibility principle, which means that actors responsible for an issue during normal circumstances, also have this responsibility in a crisis. Second, the equality principle, which means that during an emergency operations are supposed to work, as far as possible, in similar way as under normal conditions (in the same location). Third, the proximity principle, which means that those responsible for a condition under normal circumstances, also have responsibility in a crisis situation. In other words, the crisis system is de-centralized following the same structure as in normality.

From a national level, there are several important actors working at an operative level with terrorist threats and attacks. During the acute crisis phase, the Swedish Police (supervised by the central administrative authority, National Police Board), the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO), SOS Alarm AB (responsible for handling 112 emergency calls and coordinating rescue work) and other authorities are operative actors. The National Task Force, a special group in the Swedish Police, is on permanent duty for handling terrorist attacks, negotiations and similar situations. This force also has access to six police helicopters. But no authority has the right to decide over another. After the Tsunami Disaster in 2004 some changes in the system took place. Several governmental authorities now have officers on duty around-the-clock, who are in connection with each other. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has a co-coordinating function. A web portal (www.krisinformation.se) is co-coordinating crisis communication from the different authorities. At the Prime Minister´s Office, the Crisis Management Coordination Secretariat was founded in 2005. This secretariat works with policy intelligence, situation reporting, threat analysis, crisis communication training and consultancy, and coordination between the Government Offices. The main task is to support and alarm the Government Offices.

In Norway the crisis management system is based on a parliamentary resolution from 2005 which is rather similar to the Swedish system. In Norway, as in Sweden, the department responsible for a given sector during normal circumstances also has this responsibility during a crisis. The Department of Justice has responsibility for coordination and systematic issues through different authorities (among them, DSB, the Directorate for Civil and Emergency Planning). At a strategic level, where the crisis management coordination secretariat is placed, the government makes policy decisions on overall goals and forms. The Government crisis council

board (with political leaders and others) offers strategic coordination between departments. The ministry responsible for the sector that is in the center of the crisis) reports to the Government crisis council.

The crisis management coordination secretariat in Norway was founded in 2006 and has similar assignments as the Swedish counterpart. But the secretariat in Norway is not placed in the Prime Minister´s Office but in the Department of Justice, and is a lot smaller (in Sweden the secretariat has approx. 40 employees; in Norway there are only approx. 10 permanent employees). The secretariat supports the government crisis council department and departments that are involved in managing a crisis.

The Management of Crisis Communication during the Attacks in Norway

Sweden and Norway have had few experiences with terrorist attacks but have, as most nations, several experiences of societal crises (e.g. the ship-wreck of Estonia in 1992; the Tsunami disaster in 2004). Norway, as a member of NATO, has had more experience with war interventions than Sweden. In any case, both nations have well-functioning governmental systems and a high degree of public transparency and trust. In the following section four main issues concerning the management of crisis communication during the Norway attacks are discussed, based on five interviews with high-ranking officials.

First signal and reaction

From a Norwegian perspective the attacks were launched at a time when most of the crisis communication staff was on vacation. Only three out of eight of the personnel at the national crisis secretariat were in office. But despite this fact, the secretariat managed to quickly arrange a crisis staff very. The attacks happened at 15:25 and the staff was organized by 16:45. The manager received their first information by telephone from a colleague at the secretariat, six or seven minutes after the first attack.

> I was at home and was going back to work on Monday. // I told my wife to call a taxi. I was dressed in shorts and a t-shirt so the first thing I did was to change clothes. Then I sat down by the computer. Since we have a mobile phone dedicated to the media, I used the Telenor-portal (phone company) to terminate all further connections from the mobile phone to the office phones.

The secretariat received the first information about the attack on the island of Utöya through the mass media. The first newscast about the attack was broadcasted at 18:07 at NRK (public service television).

In Sweden the national secretariat got the news from the media, which they monitor 24 hours. At the Foreign Ministry a contact was established immediately with the Swedish Embassy in Oslo, and a meeting at the national secretariat was arranged, with the director, the Prime Minister's press secretary, parliamentary under-secretary in duty and the press director from the Foreign Ministry.

> It was a very complicated event. We (the Foreign Ministry) were immediately drawn into the process. As many other people, prejudice or not, I connected the bombing in Oslo with the involvement in Afghanistan. My own reaction was actually to call the security service at the Prime Minister´s Office asking them if they had heard about what had happened.

Mass media was the prime source of information not only for the national and international public, but also for the national crisis communication coordinators. The communication between the governmental actors was mediated mainly through SMS and e-mail, besides interpersonal meetings and phone calls. In fact, SMS is highlighted as the fastest and most efficient media.

Immediate action: trained improvisation and communication management

The Norwegian crisis secretariat had plans and strategies. But they did not have any access to them, since they had to move to another place (the real secretariat was evacuated). The computer access did not work because of security systems and the printed plans were left in the office. The staff had problems publishing material at their own web portal and could not use their intranet.

> We had to improvise since all crisis plans were locked in at the other office or in the intranet system which we could not access./ Everything we did had to be done 'from our memory.

Despite the lack of access to formal plans and computer intranet, the actors mean that they managed to create a well-functioning communication system. The main communication platform was an e-mail loop between the involved parties, e.g. the secretariat, Ministry of Justice, the Police and other ministries and organizations. Through the e-mail loop "speaking points" were coordinated and continually up-dated depending on the information situation. The "speaking points" were distributed to the Prime Minister´s Office, temporarily situated in the private home of the Prime Minister. A speech, based on these speaking points, was written by the Prime Minister´s staff. At 22:30 a press conference was held by the Prime Minister.

His undersecretary, in charge of communications, was in the North of Norway when the attacks took place. He wrote the speech on his flight back to Oslo. In the aftermath, one can see that Jens Stoltenberg's speech was rather similar to the one held by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, after the terrorist attacks in London the 8th of July 2005.

In Sweden the national actors followed the crisis in Norway and, obviously, the Police were trying to find out whether the attacks could be followed by attacks in Sweden. The Foreign Minister was a fast communicator. At his blog he wrote, on the 22nd of July, "I immediately had contact with my Norwegian colleague Jonas Störe, and expressed our deep sympathy for everyone that was affected and offered our help" (my translation). The Swedish Prime Minister also made a statement during the night the 22nd of July, stating his sympathy. His staff arranged a press conference the day after the attacks, at 11:00 on the 23rd of July. His speech mainly focused on sympathy for the ones affected.

Rumors and bad coordination between emergency actors and national crisis strategic actors

The main problem according to the Norwegian crisis coordinators was the lack of information flow from emergency organizations, especially the police, and the national government. The crisis secretariat also had problems communicating with the Prime Minister´s Office. An official from this office was posted at the secretariat, but the information did not flow anyway. The e-mail loop was the best channel. The fact that the secretariat lacked access to plans was not regarded as a big problem but other technical problems were, especially the fact that the intranet system did not work and that the government did not have a common external crisis communication web portal.

We lacked facts. But it was actually remarkably calm where we worked. People knew what to do. We have practiced several times. The most important channel for us was the e-mail loop. / Another problem, which is now worked with, is to have alternative publishing channels through the different ministries web portals.

The Swedish system was tested, but the crisis did not spread. It is hard to say what would have happened if attacks, had been followed by similar ones in Sweden. The interviewed officers found that the national system seemed to work well. The crisis secretariat worked fine and communication between politicians and civil servants was not problematic. The national web portal worked well as a common external channel.

Conclusions

Earlier research on terrorism and strategic communication is rather limited, but shows the definite links between the two fields. One may even conclude that communication is a "constitutive of terror organizations" (Schoeneborn & Scherer, 2010). There is a need for more research to respond to potential terrorism with a strategic communication strategies for building preparedness. The contemporary societal development and the terrorism threat has increased the importance of crisis communication knowledge when it comes to analyzing terror plans and acts, as well as crisis communication strategies from governmental institutions. This minor empirical study, based on interviews and focusing the national governmental levels in Norway and Sweden during the Oslo attacks in 2011, leads to three preliminary conclusions.

First, that plans and policies may have had importance as a learning tool (during the process of developing them), but did not have a direct operative use during the crisis. This conclusion strengthens theoretical assumptions based on ideas of improvisation and sense making in crisis (e.g. Weick, 1998) as well as late modernity or transboundary approaches to crisis communications (Falkheimer & Heide, 2010).

Second, that co-ordination of information flows between different organizational levels is a severe problem during crisis. In the case that is examined the lack of factual information from the emergency actors at the national crisis secretariat in Norway was experienced as a main problem. The co-ordination problem is both an organizational and a communication problem.

Third, the national crisis communication system in Norway is in need of some changes, but that the system seemed to have worked rather well. The creation of national coordination centers (both in Norway and in Sweden) has increased the possibilities to manage crisis communication.

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Crisis Entrepreneurs and Hidden Crises

Illustrative Examples of Interactional Problems in Raising a Crisis

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We examine the ways in which a hidden crisis can be exposed from a communication point of view. In which way can organisations create general awareness of a crisis and try to understand the dynamic nature of interactions? With the help of discourse analysis, we have examined the interactional achievements of two crisis entrepreneurs in the domain of education in the Netherlands: a rector of a secondary school and the founders of BON, a social movement aimed at improving the quality of education. In this way, we will illustrate the discursive practices that play an active role when certain players signal a crisis.

In this article we examine the communication processes which play a part before a crisis becomes manifest. Often before a crisis breaks through (such as the financial crisis), special players try to generate attention to a potential danger. They also want to warn and convince others of this danger. Actors who signal a crisis are called 'crisis entrepreneurs' (Boin & Otten, 2000, p.18). Crisis entrepreneurs are people who are capable of 'sensing' a crisis and who wish to convey this image to others (Boin & Otten, 2000). All kinds of different crisis entrepreneurs communicate their message to the public. The effectiveness of their actions may, however, vary strongly. Wikileaks for example, has increased transparency by exposing hidden issues and can therefore be admired. However, they could also be accused of acting in an irresponsible manner. The question is *how* Wikileaks can use their communication to make the public accept their exposure of hidden crises. To raise a latent crisis these entrepreneurs have to undertake adequate communication activities. What they do and how they act has barely been explored. To examine which interactional problems crisis entrepreneurs encounter in these communication activities when they try to generate attention to a crisis, this article looks at how a crisis signal by entrepreneurs is foregrounded. Crisis entrepreneurs make choices in the interaction with their environment to effectively draw attention to a crisis that is not yet acute. The following research question is at the core of this article:

What are the interactional problems experienced by crisis entrepreneurs who intend to put forward a crisis and how do they solve these problems?

Apart from risk experts, groups and individuals can also expose a crisis, because they take part in everyday life and have specific knowledge of and experience with risks. Crisis entrepreneurs typically raise their concerns about a potential crisis situation on their own initiative and assume accountability for the risks they perceive - and they want to express their concerns and share them with others. They give signals to the authorities in charge and try to recruit supporters for their views. They seek publicity, by giving interviews or writing letters to newspaper editors. However, because they are often ahead of the game, their signals are often not recognized or they are misunderstood. The concept of the real estate crisis is here viewed from a

communication perspective rather than from an administrative perspective, for example, and therefore this approach is also relevant for communications professionals.

Addressing a crisis

The idea that crisis entrepreneurs consciously or unconsciously construct certain sensitive interactional devices in their utterances is partly derived from a study conducted by the British discursive psychologist Derek Edwards. In this study, he analysed how speakers display and manage their subjective investment in a complaint (Edwards, 2006). Edwards points to the often subtle rhetorical activities undertaken by complainants to avoid the label 'nag' or 'grumbler'. For example, someone might use objective, neutral rhetorical descriptions of an interaction in order to distract attention from himself to the deplorable situation of which he speaks.

It is interesting to see whether activities are implemented via the rhetorical expressions of crisis entrepreneurs. In other words, do crisis entrepreneurs use rhetorical strategies to anticipate the reactions of the recipients to their expressions? Does the language of crisis entrepreneurs show their dissatisfaction with the problem, for example? Is it a certain identity created by crisis entrepreneurs or do they strengthen their credibility in some other way? In answering these questions, we have found discourse analysis to be a promising perspective. Firstly, it increases our understanding of the interactional problems that crisis entrepreneurs face. Secondly, it could lead to a more profound understanding of the kind of interactional activities that either lead to a breakthrough or to a situation that is doomed to oblivion.

The Discursive Perspective

The discursive perspective creates an interesting opportunity to look at the social context of risks from everyday reality. It is characteristic of the discursive perspective that a) the focus is aimed at everyday interactions that are formed not by the research and b) the effects of the interactions - consciously or not - be accomplished. The discursive perspective provides communication professionals with instruments to acquire insight into how the environment expresses its ideas in relation to others. This is important because the professional has to understand what specific interactional problems crisis entrepreneurs face during their struggle. Crisis entrepreneurs may be confronted with different interactional challenges and problems in their endeavour to expose a hidden crisis; a crisis entrepreneur may sometimes be successful or may sometimes fail in 'breaking through' those challenges. For example, someone who addresses a crisis can be mistaken for a pessimist, a tattletale, or a hothead. Crisis entrepreneurs must make clear that their words are worth listening to; that it is true what they bring forward; that they do feel responsible for the environment. Something may be lost as well as won in any interactional problem. Therefore, there is a constant battle to provide dynamism to the interaction. Someone who raises a crisis can for example be dismissed as a complainer. Or as someone who is merely driven by his or her emotions. By presenting something in a certain way, a writer or speaker can be held accountable for what is emphasized or even implied. It is possible to avoid certain interactional pitfalls through the conscious or unconscious use of these communication strategies. It is not necessarily the size or impact of a crisis that determines whether something is perceived as a problem. But in the interaction a decision will be taken about the seriousness of a crisis or of a solution to avert this crisis. Even so, it is important to learn more of the interactional problems of crisis entrepreneurs. We want to acquire an understanding of their interactional challenges and solutions and hence a deeper understanding of the potential of crisis entrepreneurs.

Case Domain, Data Selection, and Method

We examine how people express their concerns about certain developments in the domain of education in the Netherlands. We wanted to follow up on and learn to understand the discursive practices that play an active role when certain players signal a crisis in the public debate on education in the Netherlands. An important source in this respect is the contribution of Mathé Sjamaar, former rector of the Niels Stensen College Utrecht, to a specialist journal on education in 1998. After thirty years of experience in his job, Sjamaar drew national attention with his claim that his school should close. In the interview in this journal, he announced that this would be better for his students. By way of explanation, he referred to the high concentration of ethnic minorities in his school (Moroccan students constituted 70% of the first classes at secondary school).

We have also examined a specific form of expression by a social movement: a public statement from the Association for Better Education in the Netherlands (*de Vereniging Beter Onderwijs Nederland*) hereafter referred to as 'BON'. In this manifesto, titled 'Education is a sinking ship', Ad and Marijke Verbrugge claim that education innovations have caused a crisis in Dutch education as a whole. BON was established at the beginning of 2006 with the purpose "to enhance and stimulate as effectively as possible the development and opportunities of pupils and students by means of profound subject-matter and general education" (BON, 2006). In their manifesto, the authors criticize the implementation of innovations in education since the Dutch Education Act of 1968.

A criterion underlying our selection of these situations is to look at the individual contributions of a whistleblower and a social movement. Another criterion for the selection is whether the crisis entrepreneur affects the public debate. In both cases, local and national media reacted to the manifestations of the crisis entrepreneurs.

The analysis was carried out in the following manner: following the initial classification of the research material, which consists of the manifesto as well as newspaper articles about the manifesto, we first started re-reading the manifest in a profound manner. For this purpose, prominent text passages were selected in the first reading session, after which they were marked as potentially interesting. Subsequent reading sessions allowed us to continuously adjust these themes. Working in such a circular way has enabled us to examine whether certain choices are indeed justifiable. Does the research material in fact support what we had found? In this way, we have assessed and specified the themes in the manifesto with the help of text fragments that either confirm or contradict the themes in question. As a consequence, the selected text fragments of the manifesto, which have been quoted in this article, are not isolated pieces of information. They are examples of patterns that could be found in the entire manifesto. Next, we have repeatedly read the text of the newspaper articles. We examined which larger phenomena emerged from the responses. For instance, could we see any specific recurring statements or themes throughout all the responses? If this was the case, then those fragments would be selected. Once more, these themes, which have also been derived from this research material, were subsequently assessed and specified with the help of text fragments that either confirm or contradict the themes in question. Gradually, a pattern has emerged that continues to remain valid.

Interactional Problems in Raising a Crisis: Illustrative Examples

In this article we will illustrate the value of the discursive perspective on the basis of a discussion of four fragments. We will look at the strategies that crisis entrepreneurs use to tackle interactional problems.

We will firstly examine the contribution by rector Sjamaar.

In fragment 1 outlines Sjamaar the reason why white parents do not chose his school:

Fragment 1

73. Even if we score tens in the research for the best school, the
74. white parents will not come. The parents that avoid the school
75. are doing so for completely normal reasons that are generally not related to
76. prejudice and racism. Dutch parents who consciously choose the Niels
77. Stensen College will always be in a minority. These are highly
78. qualified, very principled people who think you should prepare your children for the
79. multicultural future of the Netherlands. Idealism against all
80. odds because the minorities themselves are anything but a
81. multicultural set.
            ... 45 lines omitted until the end...

        The fragment above contains much extreme language (extreme case formulations; Pomerantz, 1986). The rector uses extreme statements for instance 'even if we score tens in the research …(line 73); 'for completely normal reasons' (line 75), 'are generally not… (line 75), 'will always be in a minority' (line 77) and: 'against all odds ... anything but a multicultural set' (line 79-81). Extreme case formulations (ECFs) are descriptions or assessments that deploy extreme expressions such as 'even', 'everything', 'nothing', 'absolute', 'complete', etc… ECFs are used by speakers of a particular assertion to justify or defend and highlight that there is something at stake. A dress shrunk by the cleaners can be described as 'brand new' instead of 'new' by the owner of the dress to emphasize this point. Extreme terms reinforce the value to the extreme. Edwards (2000), in following Pomerantz (1986), has investigated the function of ECFs and demonstrated in a study how the use of extreme language determines the degree of the involvement of the speaker with regard to what he says. ECFs offers people the opportunity to show that it is not about the actual accuracy of what they say, so they will not be held accountable for what they are claiming: "it is not meant in any literal way" (Edwards, 2000, p. 348). 'Rather, it is a demonstrable speaker's orientation to a description as, for example, not accountably accurate, not serious, ironic, exaggerated, joking, teasing, or as metaphoric'. It is as if it were so'' kind of proposal (Edwards, ibid)]. Also, in the fragment above Sjamaar undermines accountability in this way. Due to the extreme formulations, the rector is able to avoid that he is held responsible for the full extent of his statements. Extreme statements are also ways to present something as urgent. The speaker can thus show that he was excited about it, but at the same time he avoids being held accountable for the literal content of his words. The ECFs allow the rector to outline the situation with irony and this suggests distance in relation to the problem. He awakens the important suggestion that it is not emotions that bring him to these statements, but the absurdity of the situation itself, which he outlines here. "Apparently something is very wrong" is the implication.

In fragment 2 the rector describes the home situation of a student:

Fragment 2

108. If you go on home visits you realize very well how important the

109. role of the parents is. They get nothing from home. Mother does not speak
110. Dutch; she pours tea and serves sweet cakes. Father is unemployed and
111. sits on the couch watching television. Once I removed once a student from a
112. brothel. You would think such a father wonders about what he has done
113. wrong. But this man was ashamed because of all the gossip. As long as the
114. girl brings money into his pocket, he keeps mum.
                     ... 11 lines omitted until the end...

In his statements the rector uses many contrasts. For instance between *pours tea* and *serves fresh pastries* (line 110) and *Father is unemployed and sits on the couch watching television* (line 110-111). It is possible to detect in this statement a contradiction between the *sweet cakes* (110) and *father is unemployed*, which illustrates an opportunistic situation at home. Smith (1990) calls this type of construction a 'contrast structure'. This is a discursive organization, which both describes the activity and provides cues to understand it as abnormal or bizarre (Potter, 1996, p.194). A contrast structure foregrounds the tension between two extremes. We see here two conflicting realities and therefore the tension between them must be very quickly resolved. These formulations also create, like the ECF's in fragment 1, the image of an urgent situation. Mother and father are both idle; *they get nothing from home* (line 109). And what the father does is even worse: a) he is doing nothing: *father is unemployed and sits on the couch watching television* (line 110 - 111), b) he exploits his daughter: *As long as that girl brings money in his pocket* (line 114) and c) he consciously looks away: *he keeps mum* (line 115). Moreover, he was ashamed for the wrong reason: *this man was ashamed because of all the gossip* (line 113-114).

The rector's observation is also reflexive. Descriptions of people in relationships or interactions are reflexive because the description might backfire. Reflexivity is a discursive phenomenon where speakers also implicitly show something about their own actions (Locke and Edwards, 2003). In this fragment Sjamaar realizes that the situation is alarming, but the way in which he portrays it shows that he is not driven by his emotions. The rector presents the facts in a flexible manner: *no Dutch*, *pours tea*, *serves sweet cakes*, *unemployed* and *watching television* (lines 109 to 110). This loose style suggests that he has no trouble at all inreflecting on the situation and that he is quite familiar with it. His presentation displays that he handles the matter in a relaxed and considered way: he shows that he has his emotions under control. He did not despair about these conditions, but instead he stays calm, and keeps his distance. The latter is also generated because the contrast subtly creates an ironic effect, "it is bizarre what happens there, but true."

Interactional problem 1: a fire is raging, but I keep my wits around me

The analysis above shows how the rector struggles with interactional problems in his interview: a fire rages but I keep my wits around me. The rector tries to avoid being accused of having an interest in addressing this crisis. So there is a risk that he is seen as somebody who exposes something that is really only important to him; 'everyone has to deal with this kind of thing sometimes' could be a reaction to his alarm.

The interactional problems in the case of BON are decidedly different. We examine how crisis entrepreneurs deploy strategies to raise a crisis as the following excerpt from the Bon manifesto shows:

Fragment 3
1. Public education fails to motivate, its effectiveness is too low and
2. a lot of money is spent in all the wrong places. That is why the education
3. innovations in the past years should be reversed: students
4. must study again; teachers must go back to teaching. A manifest
5. from the chairman of the Association for Better Education in the Netherlands.
6. Because a well-functioning society requires proper education.
             ...437 lines omitted until the end...

       The elucidation opens with a list of disqualifications: *Public education fails to motivate, its effectiveness is too low and a lot of money is spent in all the wrong places* (1st and 2nd line). This formulation consists of three parts that jointly compose the statement. This type of formulation is known as 'Three-part lists', a term defined by Gail Jefferson (*three-part lists:* Jefferson, 1990). Such three-part lists are often used to present matters as generally occurring events. It is an example of something that is generally true. The authors therefore do not confine themselves to a single problem definition; instead they describe the entire abominable state of public education. It already starts in the first line of the story, in which they describe the world as it is: a dramatic state of affairs – as a result, they present a complete and actual picture of the crisis in public education.
       The authors use the formulation *a manifesto from the chairman of the Association for Better Education in the Netherlands* (5th line). The role of chairman suggests that the matter has been intensively contemplated and discussed in a formal setting. It implies that these are the words of a chairman representing the range of thoughts from an association active in this field. It conveys the image of a chairman explaining matters on which consensus has been reached within the association and his willingness to work for better education on everyone's behalf, including the reader's.

In the next fragment, we can see the authors managing accountability for their utterances.

Fragment 4

13.   Unfortunately, social interest in these radical changes has remained very
14.   modest for a long period of time, as a result of which initiatives
15.   to this purpose mainly originated from a relatively small administrative
16.   caste in the realm of education.
             ... 113 lines omitted until the end

       In fragment 4, the authors declare that the state of affairs in public education has gone unnoticed by society (*social interest (...) has remained very modest* – 13th line). The authors hold society accountable for the problems defined in the first paragraph. They also regret the limited interest in this issue, as shown by the term *unfortunately* (13th line). The authors therefore do not blame society, for example, for not having paid attention, nor is society actually held accountable for causing the problem. They do, however, hold another group accountable, which is accomplished through managing accountability. This principle is defined as 'footing' (Goffman, 1979). It refers to the range of relationships that speakers and writers have to the descriptions they report. 'For example, people may make their own claims, or they may report claims of others; and when they report claims they can display various degrees of distance from what they are reporting (Potter, 1996, p. 122)'. At this stage, BON have categorized the other group as 'them', the

government officials who constitute a *relatively small (*15th line) group that has quietly implemented *radical changes* (13th line). In other words, it is a small club with enormous power – the 'bad' elite – which also underlines the unfairness of these *radical changes* (13th line).

Interactional problem 2: We signal this matter, but it is a collective problem

The strategies of the authors indicate that they are struggling how to position themselves as a group with a message, about a collective problem. To be motivated as a participant, one ought to be able to identify with the movement (Stekelenburg, 2006). It is therefore crucial that the writers do not place themselves above the situation. They imply that the collective is responsible for "teaching us" and gives voice to the silent majority. The authors construct a marginal group that still has managed to implement educational reforms without broad public support.

Because the writers pose the problem as clear and relevant to everyone, they create their own legitimacy. Anyone can see that motivation, efficiency, and money are needed for education. The manifesto, the association, and the president represent the opposite collective action that is necessary. BON is the solution to turn the tide. These structures differ from those in the fragment of rector Sjamaar. In those fragments, everyone was made complicit in the segregation in education. In the BON fragment the authors construct the authorities as a small administrative caste and turn it into a 'side group'; this caste is not a majority. The Verbrugges are simultaneously creating a 'we-group': it is a problem we all suffer from. This creates the effect of commitment: 'we' act from sincere intentions against the administrative caste.

Relevance to the Communication Professional

A communication professional can contribute to the recognition of crises by acknowledging that a crisis entrepreneur is someone who can have a strong hand in the public agenda, i.e., public affairs that are important to the authorities. In fact, we could consider the recognition of the crisis entrepreneur to be part of the 'early warning system': something is possibly going to happen in the dynamics of public opinion. It would enable the authorities to anticipate events and possibly also to establish contact with crisis entrepreneurs in order to gain a better understanding of their interactional problems, which would make their responses more effective.

Conclusion

A discursive approach is valuable in this respect because it shows how communication can deal with policy development. This approach can lead to a better hold on communication in practice and can provide another perspective on the possible failure of the interaction between government and citizens. The government is often unable to understand what citizens mean, because their interactional problems are not recognized. Knowledge of their doubts about an issue can help the organization to acquire a better understanding of objections - from inside and out - against a particular policy. A discourse analysis of the interactional contributions of crisis entrepreneurs may provide us with a rich and structural insight into hidden crises, including the strategies, interactional problems, and reactions of the actors involved and how they are able to recognize a potential crisis.

The analysis has shown that people show responsibility and want to prevent impending doom. They must make the necessary interactional efforts in order to be recognized and understood. Based on our research, we wish to conclude that an interactional approach to the dynamics in the environment of the organization enables us to analyze crises. That is how organizations can adequately respond to turbulence in their environment. The interactional approach enables us to better explain the communication processes and dynamics within an

organization's environment. Because of this approach, we are able to gain a better understanding of what is going on: we are in touch with the environment from an early stage.

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Crisis Responsibility and Perceived Organization Reputation

Examining the Mediating Effect of Charismatic Leadership Communication Using Situation Crisis Communication Theory

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This study proposes charismatic leadership communication as mediating variable that directly and indirectly affects the relationship between organizational crisis responsibility and organizational reputation. Based on situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), a mediating model was developed for charismatic leadership communication. Attribution of crisis responsibility, as posited in the SCCT, has a direct impact on an organization's reputation. The mediation model posits that the dynamic mechanism of charismatic leadership communication will mitigate the reputational threats faced by organization. The model proposed in this study will serve as a practical guideline for organizations to consider the role of charismatic leadership communication as variable influencing outcomes of a crisis. Limitations and implications of the proposed model are discussed and elaborated in this study.

CSR Initiatives of Private Sector Companies in Turkey

Main Approaches, Issues and Motivations

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become one of the most important agenda for private enterprises in Turkey in the last decades. The aim of this paper is to examine CSR initiatives (programs, activities, and projects) of public sector companies in Turkey by focusing on main approaches, themes, motivations, stakeholder dialogue, and engagement. With this purpose, I analyzed.the corporate web sites of 22 companies to seek information on CSR and identified 43 CSR projects still in place at the time this research was conducted. Findings of the study revealed that private sector companies have some shortcomings to sustain multidimensionality in CSR conceptualizations and a comprehensive approach to CSR initiatives.

Introduction

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has attracted vast attention among academics and business professionals especially during the last few decades. The main reason behind this interest has been the development of globalization and international trade, which have produced more business complexity and new demands from the business side, such as transparency and corporate citizenship (Jamali & Mirshak, 2007,p. 243). In today's competitive business environment, private enterprises widely accept the importance of CSR as a vital component of business philosophy and practices.

CSR can be defined as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, p.6). European Commission puts forward a new definition of CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society". According to this conceptualization, enterprises should integrate "social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close cooperation with their stakeholders" (European Commission, 2011, p.6).

There are some obvious benefits for companies who engage in CSR. First of all, companies can build and develop more positive relationships with various stakeholders through CSR initiatives. They can enhance their legitimacy, ensure loyalty, and differentiate themselves from their competitors, encourage employee loyalty and goodwill, attract investors and promote community goodwill (Portney, 2008, p. 263-265). Developing a positive social responsibility image can contribute to the profitability of the company and help to achieve future goals.

Although the concept of CSR has been extensively discussed in the literature, implementation issues and perspectives differ from country to country (see Ararat, 2006; Matten and Moon, 2007). According to Jones (1999), the national socio-cultural environment and the level of national economic development are important variables influencing the perception of CSR. Besides which, stakeholders' expectations may also vary in different country contexts. Borrowing concepts from Whitley (1999), Matten and Moon (2007: 407-408) argue that political system, financial system, education and labour system and cultural system frameworks that structure business systems can explain the differences between countries' CSR systems. Thus, it

is important to conceptualize CSR in the frame of the contextual background. For instance, Ararat pointed out that there were significant differences between American, European, and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) contexts in CSR issues. Matten and Moon (2007) also illustrate differences between CSR in the USA and Europe.

This paper attempts to uncover the understanding of CSR and the practices of private sector companies in Turkey. Thus, CSR conceptualization in the Turkey business context and private enterprises perceptions of CSR will be discussed.

About the Research

Corporate web sites constitute the research unit of the analysis. Web sites are an important medium for companies to communicate to various stakeholders about their CSR initiatives and thus convey valuable information concerning their CSR acts. The private sector companies involved in this study were selected from "Turkey's Corporate Social Responsibility Leaders", index which has appeared annually in *CAPITAL Business and Economy Journal* since 2005. CAPITAL Business and Economy Journal prepared the latest 2012 public survey in cooperation with GFK Turkey and a total 1.455 people over the age of 15 participated in the face to face interviews.

From the latest 2012 rankings, I selected 19 Turkish private enterprises and from the previous six years' index I selected the three most listed Turkish private sector companies to add to my research sample. A total of 22 companies' CSR initiatives are covered in the study and corporate web sites are thoroughly investigated to seek information about CSR (see Table 1). In the frame of this study, CSR initiatives consist of projects, programs, and activities of the companies.

Corporate web sites are examined in order to investigate the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: To what extend do companies give place to CSR initiatives in their web sites?
RQ 2: How many specific CSR projects does each company still have in place?
RQ 3: What are the main themes of the CSR projects?
RQ 4: Which stakeholders are the target of the CSR projects?
RQ 5: Which motivating principles are employed by companies in their selection of the CSR project issues?
RQ 6: Has any research been conducted to learn stakeholder expectations about CSR initiatives?
RQ 7: Is there any information about CSR initiatives apart from CSR projects?
RQ 8: To what extent does the conceptualization of CSR initiatives of companies align with CSR definitions in the literature?

Findings and Discussion

Inclusion of CSR in Corporate Web Sites

A total 20 companies included "social responsibility" on their corporate web sites. Only one of these companies covered CSR under a different heading— "social activities". These finding indicate that CSR is considered as a sufficiently important initiative to be worth mentioning on the corporate main web page and an important component of corporate communication practices for developing relationships with stakeholders and self-representation as a socially responsible company to the public.

On the other hand, only eight company web sites convey comprehensive information about CSR through including CSR principles and reports. The remaining companies only cover basic CSR concerns, approaches, projects, and activities. This finding indicates that most of the private enterprise companies still do not consider CSR as a part of their public accountability process. Thus, it can be inferred that CSR is more aligned with corporate communication than being a part of business philosophy in the Turkish business context.

CSR projects

From 22 private sector companies, a total of 43 CSR projects were identified which were still in place at the time that this research was conducted (see Table 2). Detailed explanations about the CSR projects were available on corporate web sites in terms of project aims, focus, partners, and scope. Some companies also included their past CSR projects on their corporate web pages and mentioned the solid results and outcomes.

Themes of CSR projects

Of the 43 CSR projects, only two CSR projects are relevant to internal stakeholders and aim to value innovative and entrepreneurial ideas of employees, subsidiaries, and suppliers.

41 of the CSR projects target external stakeholders, who are mostly community and customers. CSR external projects' theme distribution is: 19 education, 6 environment, 4 culture-art, 4 employment, 2 technology-innovation, 1 entrepreneurship, 1 sports, 1 domestic violence, 1 child development, 1 telephone library (see Table 3).

Education is the prominent subject in examined CSR projects. Most of the education projects are connected with disadvantaged social groups, like employment themed projects. Culture-art projects have also strong connections with educational processes. Half of the environmental projects belong to one specific company. Most of the companies mention on their corporate web site that education, culture-art, and environment are their main interest in CSR initiatives. The reason behind these preferences is related to companies' CSR motivations. However, it is noteworthy that, according to Turkish legislation, companies may have some tax advantages in their donations to education. State's tax encouragement of private enterprises can be interpreted as a significant drive to develop and/or contribute to CSR projects about education (UNDP, 2008:8).

Issues such as employee rights, investment in human resources, safety and health at work, product safety, human rights, social justice, and democracy were not included in CSR project themes. This finding should be highlighted as one of the most striking shortcoming of CSR projects in the Turkish business context.

Motivations for CSR initiatives

As mentioned in corporate web sites, the main motivations for the CSR initiatives of private enterprises are contributing to Turkey's development, creating public value, raising standards of living, resolving public difficulties, seeking solutions to the main development problems and contributing to the public welfare. These motivations are meaningful if one considers the context of Turkey. As a developing country, Turkey has some basic needs and urgencies. Public expectations from business's CSR initiatives also support these interests. It seems that companies, as a part of their social responsiveness, try to meet these expectations by developing and

supporting CSR projects. From the examined CSR projects, it can be argued that companies are trying to act as a good corporate citizen and trying to contribute development of the country.

Companies mentioned that the most important criterion to develop and support CSR activities was the CSR targets' relevance to companies' established mission. These expectations were explicitly stated on most of the corporate web sites and well defined relationships were linked between mission statements and the aim of the CSR projects.

Stakeholder dialogue and engagement

Cooperation between NGOs (non-government organizations) and public bodies isquite common in CSR projects. Private enterprises were giving financial and/or technical support to governmental institutions' projects, supporting NGOs' practices and collaborating with NGOs in their CSR projects. Cooperation with universities and research institutions is also common practice in companies' CSR projects. In some macro CSR projects, mostly led by NGOs and government institutions, companies develop partnerships and contribute together to these projects.

From 22 private companies, only five of them have voluntary groups that consist of internal stakeholders. This finding indicates that including internal publics in the CSR initiatives was limited among private companies. On the other hand, cooperation with opinion leaders is common practice in CSR projects. Opinion leaders communicate to wider publics about CSR projects' aims and processes so that CSR messages can produce greater impacts.

In most cases, CSR projects' leaderships were executed by CEOs or owners of the private enterprises. Private and personal leadership drives CSR initiatives in Turkey. According to *CAPITAL Business and Economy Journal's* 2012 listing, CEOs and leaders supporting CSR projects about education, health, culture-art, and societal problems are regarded as the most socially responsible leaders.

Expectations of stakeholders

According to the CSR information on corporate web sites, only one company stated that they are monitoring media, utilizing internal correspondence, conducting perceptional surveys, and collecting employee views besides sector research reports and customer satisfaction survey data to identify the issues to focus on CSR initiatives. Other companies mostly took for granted the expectations of stakeholders. CSR projects grounded on basic urgencies of society assume that they were meeting the main needs of stakeholders.

CAPITAL Business and Economy Journal is an important source for the companies to uncover the main expectations of the external stakeholders. According to the results of the latest research of the journal (CAPITAL, 2012), public demands from private companies to invest in and support CSR projects primarily about education (27,9%) and then health (20,9%); environment protection (11,9%); domestic violence, women's and children's rights (9,9%), and philanthropic issues (8,5%).

Since most of the CSR initiatives focus on external stakeholders, there were no data available to explore internal stakeholders' expectations from companies. This was another notable shortcoming in CSR initiatives.

Other CSR initiatives

Apart from CSR projects, companies define philanthropic issues and sponsorships as a part of their CSR initiatives on their corporate web sites. Most favored CSR activities of the companies can be listed as follows:

- Profit share contributions, donations, bursaries and scholarships, aids;
- Establishing sports institutions and financial supports given to sports clubs;
- School, health center, library, and student accommodation building constructions;
- Complimentary product distribution for meeting public need;
- Donations to museums, educational and research institutions, cultural activities (biennales, festivals, displays etc);
- Supporting culture producers;
- Organizing seminars, conferences, training.

When CSR activities are considered, it is apparent that companies mostly focus on philanthropic issues in their practices. This result indicates that initiatives, excluding CSR projects, were out of the general frame of CSR definitions (Birkmen, 2004 cited in Özturan, 2011: 5).

Conclusion

From the CSR initiatives that I examined, it can be argued that most of the companies still consider CSR as a public relations practice and will need to address some important shortcomings to develop a comprehensive view. It is possible to assert that most of these initiatives are instruments of corporate reputation management and brand building practices. Particularly including philanthropic activities and sponsorships in the frame of CSR; concentrating only on specific issues and stakeholders and neglecting some important ones, it is clear that conceptualization of CSR is far from grasping the multidimensional nature of CSR. According to principles and guidelines presented by the European Commission (2011, p 7):

> CSR at least covers human rights, labour and employment practices (such as training, diversity, gender equality and employee health and well-being), environmental issues (such as biodiversity, climate change, resource efficiency, lifecycle assessment and pollution prevention), and combating bribery and corruption. Community involvement and development, the integration of disabled persons, and consumer interests, including privacy, are also part of the CSR agenda. The promotion of social and environmental responsibility through supply-chain, and the disclosure of non-financial information, are recognised as important cross-cutting issues.

When we consider the improvement in CSR, the developments are very promising in Turkey. During the 1950s, CSR was first initiated in the form of philanthropy. Later, companies started establishing foundations (*CAPITAL*, 2012, p.80). There were seven foundations belong to these companies included in the sample. Today, CSR initiatives have been transformed into larger programs and projects in which leaders or CEOs actively participate; NGO cooperation has become more prevalent and companies are getting more inclined to express their CSR concerns in terms of sustainability focused company strategies rather than CSR projects (*CAPITAL*, 2012, pp. 80-82).

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Appendix

TABLE 1: Private Sector Companies

	Sabanci Holding
	Turkcell
	Koç Holding
	Yıldız Holding
	Arçelik A.Ş.
	Sanko Holding
	Teknosa
	Eti
	Enka
	İşbank
	Eczacıbaşı Group
	Boydak Holding
	Avea
	Vestel
	Doğan Holding
	Akbank
	Efes Pilsen
	Garanti Bank
	Turk Telekom
	Beko
	Doğuş Group
	Zorlu Group

TABLE 2: CSR projects

	CSR Project	Company
	Snowdrops	Turkcell
	Turkey Money-Box for Van	Turkcell
	Bridge of Hearts	Turkcell
	Support to the Young Brains	Turkcell
	Turkcell Power to Entrepreneur	Turkcell
	Employment	Turkcell
	The Vocational Education: a Crucial Matter for the Nation	Koç Holiding
	For My Country	Koç Holding
	Ülker Children's Cinema Festivals	Yıldız Holding
	Standing United for Education with Arçelik A.Ş	Arçelik A.Ş.
	Literacy Education	Sanko Holding
	Technology for History/ Library of Rare Works	Teknosa

	Technology for Women	Teknosa
	Eti Children's Theater	Eti
	Adaptation to Climate for Turkey's Future" Campaign	Eti
	Turkey's Tomorrow Project	Eti
	Konya Basin Modern Irrigation Project	Eti
	ETİ Children's Ferry Boat	Eti
	ETİ ÇEKÜL Cultural Ambassadors	Eti
	81 Forest in 81 City Project	İşbank
	Chess	İşbank
	"Show Your Report Card, Get Your Book" Campaign	İşbank
	Firefly Mobile Education Unit	İşbank
	Kaynak Tekniği Supoorts Vocational Schools	Eczacıbaşı Group
	Children of Turkey, Stars of the World	Avea
	My Homeland is Anatolia, My Profession is Technology	Avea
	Earthquake Emergency Response Project	Avea
	Idea of My Life-Entrepreneurship for the Youth Project	Avea
	Avea Erzincan Call Center	Avea
	Avea Information Technology Classes Project	Avea
	We Produce With Our Disabilities Project	Avea
	Dad Send me to School Campaign	Doğan Holding
	End Domestic Violence	Doğan Holding
	Ideas Paving The Way to Business	Akbank
	Regional Environmental Center "Before They Disappear"	Akbank
	Sea Stars Project	Garanti Bank
	Teacher Academy Foundation	Garanti Bank
	Books on the Phone Project	Turk Telekom
	Billing Forests	Turk Telekom
	Internet Houses	Turk Telekom
	Doğuş Kid	Doğuş Group
	Stationary Sport Campaign	Doğuş Group
	Para Durumu	Doğuş Group

TABLE 3: CSR themes

Education	Sea Stars Project
Education	Teacher's Academy Foundation
Education	Chess
Education	"Show Your Report Card, Get Your Book" Campaign
Education	Firefly Mobile Education Unit
Education	Literacy Education
Education	ETİ Children's Ferry Boat

Education	Kaynak Tekniği Supoorts Vocational Schools
Education	Internet Houses
Education	Technology for Women
Education	Dad Send me to School Campaign
Education	Avea Information Technology Classes Project
Education	Stationary Sport Campaign
Education	Snowdrops
Education	Turkey Money-Box for Van
Education	Bridge of Hearts
Education	Support to the Young Brains
Education	The Vocational Education: a Crucial Matter for the Nation
Education	Standing United for Education with Arçelik A.Ş
Culture-art	Ülker Children's Cinema Festivals
Culture-art	Technology for History/ Library of Rare Works
Culture-art	Eti Children's Theater
Culture-art	ETİ ÇEKÜL Cultural Ambassadors
Environment	Adaptation to Climate for Turkey's Future" Campaign
Environment	Turkey's Tomorrow Project
Environment	Konya Basin Modern Irrigation Project
Environment	81 Forest in 81 City Project
Environment	Regional Environmental Center "Before They Disappear"
Environment	Billing Forests
Technology-Innovation	My Homeland is Anatolia, My Profession is Technology
Technology-Innovation	Earthquake Emergency Response Project
Employment	Employment
Employment	Idea of My Life-Entrepreneurship for the Youth Project
Employment	Avea Erzincan Call Center
Employment	We Produce With Our Disabilities Project
Domestic violence	End Domestic Violence
Telephone Library	Books on the Phone Project
Child Development	Doğuş Kid
Financial Literacy	Para Durumu
Sports	Children of Turkey, Stars of the World
Entrepreneurship	Turkcell Power to Entrepreneur
Entrepreneurship (internal stakeholders)	Ideas Paving The Way to Business
General (for internal stakeholders)	For My Country

CSR and Marketing Communication

From Consumer Cynicism to Community Commitment

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR), marketing communication and cause related-marketing (CRM) are placed under pressure by new market characteristics. Markets are characterized by cynicism and skepticism as consumers question organizational motivation for and commitment to CRM and CSR initiatives. Consequently, organizations are challenged to rethink how their social responsibility engages their markets. Based on an analysis of the Pepsi Refresh Project, the purpose of this paper is to address and discuses an emerging CRM practice which re-conceptualizes the interrelations between company, consumer and cause. The new practice, moreover, re-defines the notion of CRM from brand-driven to community-driven, and from an overt to a covert marketing strategy. In a marketing communication perspective, CSR becomes a joint value- and identity constructing practice that transforms consumer skepticism and cynicism into brand involvement and community commitment. Our paper thus contributes with insight into new developments within CRM practice.

Keywords: Cause-related marketing, Corporate social responsibility, Marketing communication, Consumer cynicism and skepticism, Community

Companies are increasingly expected to take on responsibility for and engage in social agendas. Cause-related marketing (CRM) is one way of explicitly communicating responsibility and engagement (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011). Studies identify several benefits of CRM, including increased sales, brand building, enhanced reputation, customer relationship building and willingness among consumers to pay premium prices (e.g. Bergling and Nakata, 2005; Papasolomou and Kitchen, 2011). Consequently, CRM is one of the most growing and popular corporate forms of social engagement (Papasolomou and Kitchen, 2011). However, even though consumers expect – even demand – that corporations act responsibly, they often respond to responsibility initiatives with skepticism and cynicism. Consumers question organizational motivations for and commitment to responsibility (Morsing and Schultz, 2006) and CRM (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001), challenging the coupling of altruism with strategic business intentions (Polosky and Wood, 2001). An example of consumer skepticism is the critique of the CRM brand (RED) (*www.joinred.org*). The brand is criticized for spending more money on advertising the initiative than it raises for the cause in question, and, consequently, for exploiting human suffering for marketing purposes (Perrone, 2006; Joshi, 2009; Andersen and Stage, 2010). As the example illustrates, consumers demand transparency, dialogue and involvement (Handelman, 2006), urging corporations to rethink how their social responsibility engages their markets.

In this paper, we explore an emerging CRM practice illustrated by The Pepsi Refresh Project (*www.refresheverything.com*). The project was originally a 2010 initiative launched by PepsiCo designed to allocate $20 million in grants to individuals, business and non-profit organizations with ideas, which positively impact their community (be it local, state or nation) (Preston, 2011). The $20 million came out of the corporation's marketing budget and

corresponded to the amount usually allocated to Super Bowl advertising – representing app. one-third of the marketing budget (Zmulda, 2010). Grants were awarded each month. The rules stated that the first 1,000 ideas proposed online each month were to be considered. Consumers subsequently decided which projects were to be funded by voting for the ideas online. The project represents a new CRM hybrid that not only draws on elements from traditional CRM initiatives, e.g. linking brand and cause through marketing, but also on other responsibility initiatives such as community involvement. The funds allocated for the project stem from the marketing budget and indirectly increased sales are the goal (Norton and Avery, 2011). However, despite its overt marketing focus, the project addresses the tensions within existing CRM practice associated with consumer cynicism and skepticism in alternative ways. Based on an analysis of the project from within a classic CRM 1.0 perspective, our purpose is to address and discusses this emerging CRM practice or CRM 2.0. We argue, that it re-defines the concept of CRM from brand-driven to community-driven, and from an overt to a covert marketing strategy. Thus, CRM 2.0 re-conceptualizes the relations between and roles of company, consumer and cause.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we review CRM 1.0 literature and develop a model of the relations between the central constituents: company, cause and consumer. Second, we sketch out the societal context for CRM highlighting consumer skepticism and cynicism. The consumer sentiment is subsequently linked to existing challenges and dilemmas within CRM in section three. The introductory sections frame the analysis and discussion of the Pepsi Refresh Project in section four. Here, we revisit the relations between company, consumer and cause, and argue for their re-conceptualization in light of the new CRM practice. The result of the re-conceptualization is a model for CRM 2.0. Finally, we conclude by tentatively arguing that the new practice presents different challenges for marketers.

Cause-related Marketing

The present review explicates the current state of affairs within CRM scholarship, i.e. it fleshes out mainstream understandings of CRM 1.0. The two main questions are: what is CRM? And what are its central purpose, scope and focus? As CRM is associated with a set of wider-reaching activities that companies undertake to demonstrate social responsibility (e.g. Brønn and Vrioni, 2001; Kotler and Lee, 2005; Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011), the first question not only looks into definitions of CRM, but also addresses its affinity to corporate social responsibility (CSR). The second question addresses multiple components of CRM. *Purpose* refers to the goals of CRM, e.g. to increase sales and/or build brand. *Scope* refers to the timing of CRM, e.g. whether initiatives are they short-term (sales-oriented) or long-term (brand-oriented). *Focus* refers to CRM connections and constituents, e.g. which relations are addressed? And what is the ontology of the central constituents: consumer, cause and company? The section constructs a model of the constituents and their interrelations with the triple purpose of 1) highlighting central tenants of CRM 1.0 2) guiding our analysis of the Refresh Project, and 3) serving as a point of departure for discussing the campaign as a new version of CRM.

Defining cause-related marketing

CRM is a marketing initiative linking product purchase and consumption with charitable giving. It can be defined in either broad or narrow terms. Broad definitions refer to CRM as a communication tool explicitly conveying the connection between company and cause, e.g. a concept that "entails firms communicating through their advertising, packaging, promotions and so on their corporate social responsibility, namely their affiliation or work with non-profit

organisations or support for causes" (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001, pp. 207-8). In contrast, narrow definitions view CRM as strictly associated with product purchasing. The most used narrow definition stems from Varadarajan and Menon's (1988, p. 60) seminal article where CRM is defined as the "process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives." Here, CRM involves a company's promise to donate a fixed amount of money to a given cause when consumers buy a specific product (Nan and Heo, 2007). The broad and narrow definitions can be linked to two strands of CRM literature: One strand addresses "CRM as a marketing tool without reference to CSR… while another treats CRM as quasi-synonymous with CSR" (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2001, p. 28). A third option is to view CRM as CSR activities used in marketing communication (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001). CRM is thus one particular form of corporate social initiatives, e.g. "major activities undertaken by a corporation to support social causes and to fulfil commitments to corporate social responsibility" (Kotler and Lee, 2005, p. 3). Besides CRM, initiatives include cause promotion, corporate philanthropy, and community volunteering (Kotler and Lee, 2005).

What the initiatives share is their aim to improve societal well-being. Consequently, CSR is more extensive than supporting a cause through product sales and consumption. However, as the multiplicity of CSR lies beyond the research interest of the present investigation, we limited ourselves to defining CSR as "a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contribution of corporate resources" (Kotler and Lee, 2005, p. 3). In sum, CSR promotes "a "good" company that is supportive of its shareholders as well as society as a whole. CSR covers a broad spectrum of a company's activities, ranging from human resource management to environmental protection, and including every aspect of a firm's impact on society" (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011, p. 27). CSR is said to hold a number of benefits for a company, e.g. a stronger image, better stakeholder relations and heightened legitimacy. Hildebrand *et al.* (2011, p. 1354), thus, suggest that a CSR perspective allows an organization "to build a more congruent, coherent corporate identity and, consequently, more enduring and significant relationships with its stakeholders." While CSR is said to play a key role in establishing and maintaining stakeholder external relations, it still frames stakeholders as passively engaged by CSR. Consumers are "not the enactors per se of CSR" (Hildebrand *et al*., 2001, p. 1357). Instead, they react to company initiatives by approval or disproval. Disproval is a sign of consumer skepticism towards CSR caused by the sentiment that a company is only in it for the money (e.g. van de Ven, 2008, p. 342). Consequently, it is important that an organization communicates its CSR with sincerity, truthfulness and accuracy (van de Ven, 2008). For CSR activities to be perceived as legitimate, it is moreover important that the CSR strategy is integrated in to the corporate strategy (McElhaney, 2009). CSR should reflect a company's core values and be linked to its mission, vision and values (Morsing *et al*., 2008; van de Ven, 2008; McElhaney, 2009). Morsing and Schultz (2006) suggest, that stakeholder involvement may reduce critical stakeholder attentions towards CSR and that "stakeholders need to be involved in order to develop and promote positive support" (p. 328). Moreover, such stakeholder dialogue may help the company to develop its CSR initiatives. Mitigating the exposure of companies' strategic use of responsible behavior (e.g. CSR communication in non-financial reports, implying a decoupling of good deeds and profit) is not the only means to accommodate stakeholder critique. Rather, companies are encouraged to actively enter into stakeholder dialogue in order to explore beneficial actions and engage stakeholders in actual CSR communication (Morsing and Schultz, 2006).

From a marketing perspective, CSR is linked to profit and value generation (e.g. van de Ven, 2008). Vaaland *et al.* (2008) suggest that CSR is management of stakeholder concerns for responsible and irresponsible acts related to environmental, ethical and social phenomena in a way that creates corporate benefit. To marketers, CSR also relates to advertising, i.e. informing about a company's commitment to environmental concerns, community relations or the future of mankind, without any overt attempt to promote a specific product" (Schroder, 1997, p. 277, quoted in Farache and Perks, 2010, p. 235). The marriage between marketing communication and CSR can be problematic. Cases of 'green-washing' and unsubstantiated ethical claims have intensified mistrust and consumer cynicism and further complicated the communication of CSR credentials (Jahdi and Acikdilli, 2009). Consequently, "corporate CSR engagement today requires more sophisticated and ongoing stakeholder awareness and calls for more sophisticated CSR communication strategies than previous" (Morsing and Schultz, 2006, p. 323).

There are multiple links between CRM, CSR and marketing. Some scholars view CRM as the marketing-oriented aspect of CSR (e.g. Brønn and Vrioni, 2001), others address CSR as a general marketing concern (e.g. Hildebrand *et al*., 2011; Vaaland, 2008), and yet others argue that CRM is a pure marketing activity without affinity to CSR (e.g. Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). However, CRM 1.0 is often seen marketing- and cause-driven CSR (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2001, p. 27). As such, CSR entails both marketing and non-marketing practices, and, therefore, has relevance to consumers beyond the exchange relationship contained in CRM. Below we explicate CRM 1.0 with reference to its purpose, scope and focus.

The purpose, scope and focus of CRM 1.0

The purpose of CRM often falls within one of two categories: sales or branding. When the purpose is sales, the brand or product is only tied-in with the cause for a limited time (Till and Nowak, 2000). As a branding tool, CRM is associated with customer loyalty, employee identification and image building (e.g. Brønn and Vrioni, 2001, p. 207). The two purposes are not mutually exclusive. CRM, thus, "sells products, enhances image and motivates employees" (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001, p. 215). CRM also has reputational value as it may generate goodwill and corporate legitimacy (Berglind and Nakata, 2005), suggesting CRM to generate value beyond marketing purposes. The purpose of CRM is closely associated with its scope. To some scholars, CRM is a tactical, short-term marketing tool intended to increase sales of a particular product. To others, it is a question of communicating the company's responsibility in order to reap the strategic, long-term benefits of building a strong brand (Till and Nowak, 2000) or corporate reputation (Berglind and Nakata, 2005). Thus, CRM may be seen as strategic, quasi-strategic and tactical (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988).

The main focus of CRM is three central constituents – company, cause and consumer – as well as their interrelations. Companies engage in CRM to boost sales and improve image and legitimacy, the cause benefits financially (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006), and consumers experience added value by making a difference through their purchasing and consumption behavior (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). However, consumers are cast as passive observers. As the charitable donation is "absorbed within a pre-existing consumption activity", consumers "do not actually have to act at all" (Smith and Higgins, 2000, p. 314).

Three relations exist between the constituents: Company-cause, consumer-cause and consumer-company (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2001). The relation between company and cause is called *fit*. The company-cause fit is discussed extensively at the levels of product, brand and company (e.g. Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2001, Till and Nowak, 2000; Bigné-Alcaniz *et al*., 2011; Nan and Heo, 2007; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006; Barone *et al*., 2007). A good fit is generally said to

occur when there is congruence between brand (either company or product) values and cause values (e.g. Gupta and Pirsch, 2006; Bigné-Alcaniz *et al.,* 2011). A second relation is that of consumer-cause. Referred to as cause *affinity*, it is defined according to how consumers feel about a given cause: Companies are encouraged to look for causes that not only match their own values, but also the values of their customers (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2001). The third relationship of consumer-company is often viewed as one of *identification*, i.e. the extent to which there is congruence between the identity of the company and the identity of the consumer (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Here the cause is said to support consumer-company identification. As the company supports a specific cause, it builds an association between itself and the cause (fit), thereby leading consumers who favor the cause (affinity) to view the company favorably as well (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011; Till and Nowak, 2000). The more consumers like and support a given cause, the more they will favor the company, brand or product associated with the cause. Cause affinity is thus the means to securing strong consumer-company identification. The constituents and their relationships are shown in figure 1.
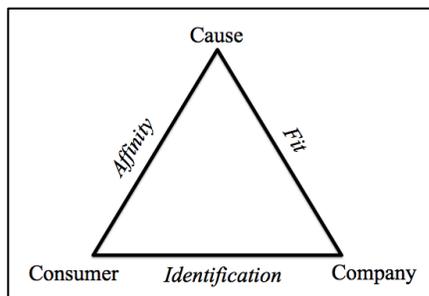
FIGURE 1: Constituents and interrelations in CRM 1.0

The interrelations sketched out in figure 1 do not exist in a vacuum. Rather they are emerged in complex societal and market tendencies. One of the more evident tendencies is that of consumer skepticism and cynicism addressed in the next section.

Consumer Skepticism and Cynicism

CRM, and other CSR activities, are potentially a double-edged sword. While consumers demand that organizations take responsibility for societal problems and their solutions (e.g. Brønn and Vrioni, 2001), they are quick to accuse organizations of having their financial self-interests at heart rather than social well-being. Consumers are "looking closely at companies who make claims regarding their involvement in social issues. There is a level of consumers scepticism that often make consumers doubt what a firm is saying" (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001, p. 208). Consumer skepticism and cynicism can be defined as follows: *skepticism* refers to any questioning attitude towards knowledge, facts or beliefs stated as facts, while *cynicism* can be defined as "an individual consumer's stable, learned attitude toward the marketplace characterized by the perception that pervasive opportunism among firms exists and that this opportunism creates a harmful consumer marketplace" (Helm, 2006, p. 4). Cynicism is often said to be enduring whereas skepticism is fleeting and situational (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001).

Skepticism and cynicism manifest themselves at three levels: 1) CRM may lead to critique due to the overt merging of consumption and charity, 2) CSR is open to the questioning of corporate motives and 3) the overcommercialization of corporate giving (Polonsky and Wood, 2001) along with the marketization of society leads to cynicism towards capitalism and consumption in general. A recognized strength of CRM activities is the direct bond created

between company, cause and consumer as consumer actions (the buying of a product) leads to company action (donation) benefitting the cause. However, if consumers feel mislead by companies, who e.g. exaggerate their generosity, they potentially react emotionally through skepticism and cynicism (Polonsky and Wood, 2001) and behaviorally through boycotts (Handelman, 2006). CRM skepticism often results from perceptions amongst consumers that the initiative exploits, rather than benefits, the cause (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). Unlike CRM, CSR initiatives create less obvious consumption links between company and cause. However, consumers may still respond with suspicion towards companies' responsibility claims questioning their sincerity and level of commitment (Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011). Cynicism is a favored response when companies fail to 'walk the talk', e.g. when Apple claims commitment to "the highest standards of social responsibility across our worldwide supply chain" (*www.apple.com/supplierresponsibility*) while facing serious allegations in the media concerning work conditions at some of its iPhone suppliers (e.g. New York Times and Los Angeles Times) followed by activist calls for consumer boycotts (e.g. The Daily Best). The marketization of society is, moreover, said to imply that citizens are transformed into consumers (Smith and Higgins, 2000). Brought on by general disillusionment and disappointment, societal consumers react with cynicism towards the consumerist ideology participating in a "global anti-consumerist project" (Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011, p. 1800). As a societal tendency, anti-consumption manifests itself in bestselling books (*No Logo*) and magazines (*Adbusters*), as documentaries (*SuperSize Me*) and as numerous online forums and sites for posting and sharing anti-market and anti-corporate sentiments (Handelman, 2006). Recently, in September 2011, the *Occupy Wall Street* movement has taken the anti-market movement into the streets – perhaps as an extension of previous events such as *Buy Nothing Day* or the *Burning Man Festival* (cf. Handelman, 2006). These activities are not aimed at any company in particular, but address the wider societal implications of marketization.

Cynicism and skepticism are consumer tools of critique and control at all three levels. In relation to CRM 1.0, they help "to unveil the "hidden facet of marketing" (Cherrier and Murray, 2004, quoted by Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011, p. 1800). In relation to CSR, they help "to see that manipulation behind the persuasion attempt" (Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011, p. 1800). And finally, they allow consumers "to decipher the consumption code imposed by the consumerist society" (Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011, p. 1800). For causes, cynicism and skepticism potentially draw into question the proclaimed benefits gained from corporate partnerships (Polonsky and Wood, 2001). And for corporations, skepticism and cynicism challenge strategic giving in multiple ways and suggest that marketers must accommodate different levels of mistrust. Below we address CRM managerial challenges and dilemmas.

CRM 1.0 Challenges and Dilemmas

Skepticism and cynicism may seem as unavoidable side effects when corporation, consumption and compassion merge. As a consequence, the strategic advice offered to marketers is defensive: Their task is to avoid offending consumers. To that end, they are encouraged to focus on the basics, i.e. to "build a general positive feeling toward their brand, pick a cause that makes sense to the consumer to be a partner in the alliance, and make sure that the consumer does not think that your company is exploiting the alliance through too much promotion" (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006, p. 232). The suggestions point toward the importance of corporate control. Marketers make strategic choices on what and how to do: They decide on what cause to support, what link to create between cause and company/product/brand and what value to create. Skepticism and cynicism present marketers with different challenges and dilemmas when making CRM

decisions. *Challenges* refer to the difficulties mentioned in connection with CRM managerial practices – e.g. the most important questions managers must address when planning and executing CRM initiatives – and to societal resistance towards such initiatives. And *dilemmas* refer to CRM problems with different solutions, neither of which is entirely suitable or acceptable. The many-sided challenges and dilemmas articulate CRM as a contested space and raise strategic questions.

In CRM literature, two sets of challenges are acknowledged: 1) the societal challenges rooted in consumer critique, and 2) managerial challenges associated with planning and implementing CRM. The societal challenges have to do with consumer cynicism and skepticism towards the fusion of consumption and charity (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001). It is often suggested, that cynicism and skepticism can be overcome if CRM is done properly. Skepticism is a question of whether the CRM activity is seen as benefitting or exploiting the cause, i.e. whether the company's motives are altruistic or profit-driven (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). The managerial challenges thus have to do with doing CSR "properly" by "tying the cause to the organisation's mission, making it long term, not using it as a short-term tactic to increase sales, and understanding that the effects are not always easy to measure and whatever effects there are, normally through enhanced reputation, are very long term" (Brønn and Vrioni, 2001, p. 215). The major managerial concern is choosing the right cause to support (Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011). Choosing the right cause is a question of the *fit* between company (or product and brand) and the nature of the cause. The right cause is also said to be a question of whether or not the cause is appealing to the customers. As suggested by Sheikh and Beise-Zee (2011, p. 35), when selecting a cause "it is especially important to look for the prevalence of cause affinity in the market, and the fit between the cause and the company." If the consumers do not understand the fit, the company easily faces accusations of superficial sugarcoating. However, if consumers recognize the link, the fit is potentially perceived as strained. The dilemma is thus how to choose a cause that is neither too distant, nor too close in the minds of consumers. The fit also presents marketers with a second dilemma. On the one hand, they have to make the link between company and cause visibility if they wish to benefit from the desired differentiation offer by CRM. And on the other hand, they have to downplay the overt marketing and sales orientation, if they wish to gain support from consumers. Overstating the link may result in questions on the company's motivations and sincerity. Moreover, marketers are challenged in terms of how to communicate CRM initiatives. If they communicate explicitly, their brand benefits from cause association, but they risk accusations of overcommercialization. Alternatively, by not communicating, their efforts might go unnoticed.

The challenges and dilemmas associated with merging marketing and responsibility suggest CRM to be a contested space: Organizations struggle to do what is right and good while making money in the face of contradicting consumer demands and expectations. However, CRM 1.0 scholars primarily address the company-cause fit and customer-company identification (Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). They thus fail to a capture the "complex utilitarian economic exchange between the customer, the firm and the cause" (Ross *et al.*, 1992, quoted in Gupta and Pirsch, 2006, p. 315). Consequently, the role of the consumer as an engaged, value-creating participant is not prioritized. CRM thereby fails to create meaningful consumer dialogue not only to accommodate market critique but also to create valuable customer relations and mutual beneficial ethical actions (Morsing and Schultz, 2006). The question is what happens to the challenges and dilemmas when the nature of relations and constituents change? Are CRM 2.0 faced with different challenges and dilemmas as 1.0? What happens to consumer-company identification when consumers become active, involved and creative partners? What happens to consumer-

cause affinity? And what is the role of company-cause fit? These overall questions guide our interest in the Pepsi Refresh Project as representative of CRM 2.0.

The Pepsi Refresh Project

The Pepsi Refresh Project was initially launched in 2010 as a single, yearlong marketing initiative (Zmulda, 2010). The project invites consumers to apply for grants ranging between $5,000 and $250,000 within one of the following six areas: health, arts and culture, food and shelter, the planet, neighborhoods, and education. Refresh is described by *Advertising Age* as "a first-of-its-kind experiment in social media that invests the brand in in community-building projects…" (Zmulda, 2010). The online magazine goes on to suggest that it is "a pivotal test case for other brands trying to navigate an ad-cluttered, cynic-rich marketing landscape." The initiative proved successful as consumer response was phenomenal. Many consumers visited the *refresheverything.com* website to submit, review and vote for ideas. Norton and Avery (2011, p. 1) thus report: "more consumers submitted ideas to the Pepsi Refresh Project than auditioned for American Idol; more votes were cast for Pepsi Refresh than in the previous presidential election." When the first grant application period opened in January, the site reached its monthly 1,000 idea submission limit in 72 hours – and over 141,000 votes were cast in three days (Norton and Avery, 2011). Moreover, by the end of November, 182,931 ideas had been submitted and more than 57 million people had voted (Norton and Avery, 2011). While the project was successful in generating consumer response and publicity, PepsiCo suffered declining sales and decreasing market share (Norton and Avery, 2010). It was suggested that they cared more about promoting themselves as a social responsible company, than about sales and profits (Bauerline, 2011). Nevertheless, the initiative continued through 2011 (and into 2012). However, certain modifications were made (Bauerline, 2011). First, the largest grant category ($250,000) was removed and the amount of smaller grants ($50,000 or less) was increased. Second, the number of causes an individual could vote for a day was reduced from 10 to 5. Third, the categories of health and environment were removed. Fourth, a lottery system was established so that it no longer was the first 1,000 ideas submissions that automatically were put to the vote. And finally, voting was tied in with product purchase through bottle cap promotions offering up to 100 extra votes. Even though the latter – the notion of "voting power" – more explicitly tap into CRM 1.0, the Pepsi Refresh Project challenges the classic notion of CRM. The purpose of this section is to outline the nature and meanings of this new emerging CRM practice. Initially, we present the campaign material and analytical framework.

Campaign material and analytical framework

The analysis of the Refresh Project Campaign takes its point of departure in the 2010 campaign with a focus on key campaign elements, primarily "The application commercial 2010" aimed at consumers to define projects and apply for grants[i] and secondarily, "The vote commercial 2010" aimed at consumers to actively participate in voting on favorite ideas to get the Pepsi grants[ii] Finally, we compare to 2011 campaign materials[iii].

The analysis follows a qualitative content analysis method with a focus on actual (verbal and visual) discourses. Heish and Shannon (2005) distinguish between three approaches to qualitative content analysis: a conventional, directed and summative approach. In this paper, we apply a directed approach to analyzing the campaign material using existing theory to guide the analysis. We build the analysis on theoretical concepts derived from reviewing CRM 1.0 literature, summarized in figure 1. The analysis focuses on the articulation of the three

constituents: company, cause and consumer, as well as the discursive construction of their interrelations. Thus, the analytic process is more focused and structured compared to a conventional, inductive approach (Heish and Shannon, 2005). Because of a continuous comparison of the campaign material with prior research, we are able to identify how Refresh challenges existing conceptualizations and subsequently refine, enrich and extend CRM theories. In order to understand the campaign's unique setting, we begin with summarizing its context.

Contextualizing the campaign: Advertising without advertising

The Refresh campaign was initially announced as an alternative to Super Bowl advertising, breaking with a 23 year long tradition of Pepsi Super Bowl ads. The Super Bowl is a symbol of an increased acceptance and prevalence of advertising in society; a commercial feast and celebration of consumer society (McAllister, 1999, p. 403). Advertising during the Super Bowl is imbued with cultural values, beyond conventional marketing effectiveness (increased sales, high recall etc.), high exposure and PR value: "

> Advertising during the Super Bowl has taken on a life on its own, in many ways overshadowing the overhyped game to which the ads are attached. It is a commercial phenomenon that has contributed to the elevation of advertising from a low-credibility form of commercial discourse to a sanctioned form of entertainment" (McAllister, 1999, p. 409).

This so-called "celebration of prestige commercialism" (McAllister, 1999, p. 411) is not only related to the event, but demonstrates long term cultural values through mediated discourses about the ads after the event, including media coverage, reviews of the Super Bowl ads etc. Consequently, it is of great economic, symbolic and cultural value to advertise during the Super Bowl. Therefore, it was quite a statement, when Pepsi announced that they would not advertise during the 2010 sport event, but rather use the Super Bowl advertising budget on charity. Consequently, the Super Bowl as icon of commercial celebration and consumerism was put into perspective when juxtaposed with the less well-off and indigent people and causes. In other words, it caused a clash between two diverging discourses: A discourse of abundance versus a discourse of scarcity. Consequently, Pepsi's statement could potentially be perceived as a critique of an American cultural institution and its excessive commerciality and become a hazardous brand-damaging move; or it could create increased awareness of both brand and causes by virtue of its absence at the Super Bowl. The mediated discourses circulating before and after the Super Bowl highly featured the Pepsi brand, adding a new level to the cultural and economic values of Super Bowl advertisements; a level of social responsibility.

As exemplified earlier with (RED), one of the most persistent critiques of CRM is the priority of expenditures on advertising versus the amount of money donated to charities. By allocating advertising budgets to charity, and thus deselecting participation in one of the largest and most hyped advertising events, Pepsi strengthen brand ethos. The renunciation of global exposure and brand feast in favor of local charity created public goodwill towards the Pepsi brand (Preston, 2011) – and a potential public critique was turned into brand equity. Refresh rearticulates the values of a strong brand – and what is considered valuable for a brand. Thus, the very absence of advertising during the Super Bowl became a token of a responsible brand, forecasting new frontiers of CSR and marketing communication. Reflecting on Pepsi decision, The New York Times asks: "What's better than reaching more than 100 million viewers during last year's Super Bowl? For Pepsi, it could be 6,000 football fans during a high school game on Friday night in central Texas. Or a group of parents who wanted a new playground in their Las

Vegas Neighborhood." (Preston, 2011) The quote touches on central aspects of this new CRM practice, which in comparison with CRM 1.0 can be summarized as juxtapositions of:

- Traditional mass communication versus social and networked communication
- Global brand attention versus local brand presence
- From quantitative brand exposure to qualitative social impact

But how does this new practice manifest in the campaign material? How does Pepsi articulate the brand as socially responsible – and how does this differ from conventional CRM? The next section analyzes the verbal and visual discourses in the campaign commercials 2010.

Refresh CRM

The application commercial 2010 is an invitation to participate as it introduces the project and provides guidelines on how to join. The film has four parts, summarized below (the parenthesized numbers refer to the timestamp in the commercial):

1. Opening question: "Can a soda really make the world a better place?" (0:00-0:07)
2. "Introducing the Pepsi Refresh Project": presentation of the project (0:08-0:31)
3. "Here's how it works": guidelines for joining the project (0:32-1:04)
4. Conclusion/answer: "So, could a soda really make the world a better place? With your help, we think so" (1:05-1:32)

Structurally, the opening question (part one) and its repetition in past tense (part four) serves as an overall guiding principle, where part two and three serve as evidence and substantiation for qualifying the answer provided at the end of the film. Thus, the film visually and verbally demonstrates *how* a soda actually can make the world a better place.

The opening question is visually accompanied by portraits of smiling, happy people (0:05-0:07), suggesting *joy* as equaling "a better world". The discourse of *joy* continues in part two, picturing people collaborating on different projects (gardening, dancing, building, cleaning, etc.) (0:12-0:18) – visually connecting Refresh to the notion of "a better world". The project is introduced: "In 2010, we're giving millions of dollars to fund ideas that will refresh the world. Your ideas." (0:18-0:24). Verbally, the two sentences marks a separation between Pepsi ("we") and the viewer ("your") which is enhanced as the two sentences appear in different frame shots. However, visually the two constituents are linked together by means of insertion of the Pepsi logo in "your" (cf. picture 1)

PICTURE 1: Visual linkage of Pepsi and the viewer (you) (0:23)

The third constituent (the cause) is only vaguely represented verbally as "the world" and pinned down as the six areas; "Health & Fitness", "Arts & Culture", "Food & Shelter", "The Planet", "Neighborhoods", and "Education" (0:24-0:28). In visualizing the six areas, the round shape of the Pepsi logo, intertwined in "your ideas" (cf. picture 1), is copied, implicitly suggesting a connection between Pepsi and the causes by means of "you". Thus, the relation between cause and company is solely defined by the third constituent; i.e. the consumer.

The consumer-cause relation is defined in a visual fusion. It is not possible to visually separate the two: The pictured people are all working together on shared projects, creating a discourse of human collaboration and sharing. In discursively articulating the cause, we detect an absence of victimization: We see no humans in need, world catastrophe or epic disasters. The absence of such discourse of victimization prevents the cause-consumer relation from becoming one of pity and guilty conscience. Rather, it is defined in terms of closeness and equality: The traditional notion of 'the distant other' in CRM is transformed into a neighbor, a friend or a local community member. This is underlined by the background music, as the song goes: "One people, one people, we are one people [iv]"

The film indirectly states that making the world a better place starts with "you". "You", thus, has a prominent position in the campaign: "your ideas", "Your community", "your vote" etc. This is underlined by the fact that Pepsi is not funding causes, but ideas. The project is the citizen's project. Consequently, the consumer is not defined by means of her/his purchasing or buying power, but through her/his community engagement, transforming the relation between consumer and cause into a personal relation; an ontological re-conceptualization of the constituent from 'consumer' to 'citizen'. Refresh is not discursively framed as consumption paid by the consumer, but as social change, powered by active citizens and facilitated by Pepsi.[v] The project thus introduces a new discourse of CRM. Here an empowered consumer-citizen (and his/her community) replaces the company as the active agent, suggesting CRM to be a covert, community-driven activity rather than an overt, brand-driven activity.

Refresh redefines both the subject and object of charity in CRM: From companies supporting (and promoting) a cause towards companies facilitating consumer-citizens in mobilizing local social change. Thus, we detect a dislocation or displacement of the constituent's roles in classic CRM. The company does not choose the cause, the consumer-citizen does; and the company does not promote the cause, the consumer-citizen does. The role of the company is displaced to facilitation and enabling. Consequently, Refresh wards off potential critiques related to the coupling of altruism and strategic purposes by interposing the consumer-citizens as decision-makers and active subjects. This is evident in part three of the commercial as Pepsi accounts for the grant application process, summarizing the very essence of the project. Part three has five steps (0:35-1:04) that state how the citizen is empowered: 1) "Think of an idea"; 2) "Download the toolkit"; 3) "Submit the idea"; 4) "Promote your idea"; and 5) "Start voting". Pepsi has defined the overall guidelines for the project (including the six areas to which the ideas must relate as well as a general policy for applicants to follow), but other than that, the role of the company is reduced to technical assistance (i.e. providing of a technical toolkit, step 2) and economic support (the grants). While the role of the company is sidelined, the consumer-citizen enters center stage. This is explicated at the end of the commercial (part four), where Pepsi ask and answer: "So, could a soda really make the world a better place? With your help, we think so" (1:05-1:13), stressing the inclusion of active consumer-citizens to partake in refreshing the world. Thus, the consumer-citizen takes on an active role as s(he) both defines, promotes and votes. Here, the promotional aspect guides CRM in new directions.

A new CRM constituent – new interrelations and challenges

Whereas the promotional dimension of CRM 1.0 stems from the cause-company relation (e.g. brand positioning through company-cause fit), the promotional aspects of Refresh begin with the relation between consumer-citizen and cause. In addition, a fourth constituent is introduced: the consumer-citizen network, i.e. the social network of each applicant. CRM traditionally emphasizes consumer-company identification (cf. figure 1), drawing on the theoretical framework

of relationship marketing as opposed to consumer-consumer relations which are elevated by community or tribal approaches to marketing (Cova and Cova, 2002). By introducing the fourth constituent, the social networks of the applicants, Refresh emphasizes the latter building on the idea of networked communication and word-of-mouth (cf. Muniz and O'Guinn, 2005). In the commercial, this is expressed as social media interaction, specifically the promotion of ideas through Facebook networks (see picture 2). Here, Pepsi discreetly places the brand in social conversation (bottom of picture 2):
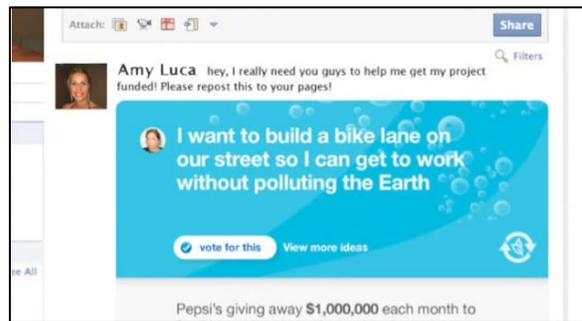
PICTURE 2: Cause promotions by consumer-citizens through online social networks (0:48)

The promotional role shifts from company to consumer-citizen; and the object of promotion shifts from brand (company) to idea (cause). Consequently, CRM seems de-commercialized. Pepsi provides linking value in the consumer-consumer relation, simultaneously tapping into, supporting and exploiting communities along with the individual consumer's *commitment* to them and *convergence* with their causes. The brand is no longer the center of attention and locus of value creation (cf. Cova and Cova, 2002). Rather Pepsi has created a universe to which the brand can be naturally linked by providing a platform for consumers to socialize and locally change the world through direct and indirect community-cause *collaboration*. It is through and by its social power that the brand is promoted – as a value-creating marketing activity. Pepsi now represents the context within which the relations between consumer, cause and community are enacted (cf. figure 2). The company represents a different commercialization of compassion by supporting bonds between the other constituents. In so doing, the company displaces itself from the primary interrelations, yet manages to diffuse itself into the new interrelations.
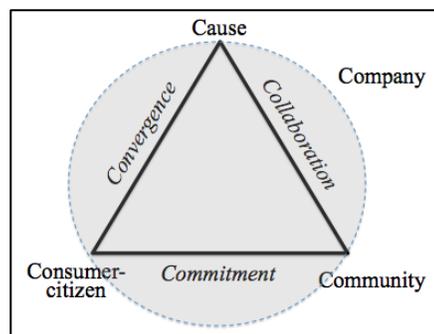
FIGURE 2: Constituents and interrelations in CRM 2.0

With the introduction of a fourth constituent (community) along with the displacement of the company, CRM 2.0 seems to forefront new challenges. The critique of merging corporation, consumption and compassion may be beaten back through insertion of the consumer-citizen as the active agent in promoting causes and the pacification of the company. The company, cause and consumer interrelations may appear de-commercialized, but what about the relation between the consumer-citizen and the new constituent? The question arises if CRM 2.0 is consistent with the ethical premises of a corporate responsibility strategy? As consumers react with cynicism and skepticism towards market activity, companies frequently employ alternative marketing practices including stealth marketing strategies (Martin and Smith, 2008), i.e. surreptitious practices that fail to disclose their commercial nature and corporate agenda. Arguably, Refresh is blatantly commercial. However, being framed as a marketing initiative – financed by marketing budgets and since 2011 linked to a buying incentive – while having the social interactions among consumer-citizens and their social networks (community) as a strategic asset, the commercial agenda is to some degree blurred. The challenge, thus, does not lie in the overt relation between company and cause, but in the covert relation between company and consumer-citizen (and their social networks). Such commercialization of social interactions may have more far-reaching consequences (Martin and Smith, 2008). It may not only increase consumer cynicism and skepticism, but also create more general societal suspicion and mistrust towards social interactions rooted in corporate exploitation of social networks and friendships. What may seem to create a more social responsible strategy promising to de-commercialize CRM relations, may potentially foster new exploitative relations.

Conclusion

Our initial research interest was born out of the Pepsi Refresh Project, which we saw as a potential shift in CRM practice. The interest let us to examine classic CRM scholarship, CRM 1.0, in order to understand the central constituents (company, cause and consumer) and their interrelations (fit, affinity and identification). Subsequently, we discussed the challenges and dilemmas that marketers face in light of consumer cynicism and skepticism before using the constituents and interrelations as an analytic lens for exploring Refresh. Our explorations let us to suggest that both constituents and interrelations are altered in the emerging CRM 2.0 practice. A displacement occurs as the company is replaced by a fourth constituent, i.e. community. The company's position is shifted from the active, compassionate subject supporting the cause to a passive, covert facilitator. The active role is, instead, rewarded to the consumer as his/her ontology changes from a passive supporter (whose compassion is automatically absorbed in consumption) to an active consumer-citizen. With the displacement of the company, its replacement by community and the altered ontology of the consumer, different relations are introduced, i.e. commitment, convergence and collaboration. We conclude by arguing that CRM 2.0 means new challenges. As they have only been addressed tentatively, a key path for future research lies in identifying and naming these new challenges – and to discuss the dilemmas they raise for marketers.

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Notes:

[i] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srY7Wkl2IbI&feature=player_embedded

[ii] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7vMz_bF37g&feature=relmfu

[iii] Including a general introduction to the project and a summary of the 2010-campaign (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isjyr0pYvYs) as well as the application commercial: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82mOYDHQLIU)

[iv] The American band *Black Eyed Peas* performs the song "One". We argue, that it is not the applied endorsement strategy that transforms the relation between the CRM constituents and redefines the concept of CRM, which is the reason for not analyzing the song or further discuss the value of celebrity endorsement in the campaign.

[v] It should be noted that the 2011 campaign seems to reinstall the notion of the consumer with the introduction of voting power through bottle cap promotions. In order to appreciate this change, we use the idea of "consumer-citizen" in characterizing this constituent.

Developing Internal Crisis Communication

New Practices of Communication Professionals[i]

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The primary purpose of this empirical paper is to discuss and clarify the role of communication professionals in relation to internal aspects of crisis communication. Crisis management is often considered as an area where communication professionals have influence and can prove their value for the organization. Even so, we have found that the role of communication professionals is still strongly associated with media relations and text production in the acute crisis phase. In this paper, we try to develop what it means to take a managerial role and how to work more strategically with internal crisis communication. The paper is based on 20 interviews with communication professionals, managers, and employees within Skåne University Hospital in Sweden.

Keywords: Communication professionals, Communication roles, Internal communication, Crisis management.

In the research literature there has been an extensive focus on crisis managers and their ambitions to handle and solve crises (see Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, & Johansen, 2010). Our ambition with this paper is to direct attention to communication professionals that certainly can contribute with vital expertise to organizations' crisis management. Several researchers (e.g., Falkheimer & Heide, 2006, 2010; Larsson, 2011; Reber & Berger, 2006) have emphasized that crisis communication is a field where the communication profession can show its main value and influence critical processes. Mitroff and Anagnos (2001) argue that "many organizations still think of CM [crisis management] as an exercise in public relations" (p. 7). At the same time, public relations or communication management seems to be equivalent with media management after a crisis has occurred (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993), which reduces the communication profession to something rather reactive and tactical. Thus, even if communication professionals are seen as an indispensable resource in crisis management it is still an open question whether they have influence on important strategic issues.

In this paper we will pay attention to a special field of crisis communication, namely, internal crisis communication. Traditionally, crisis communication scholars have almost exclusively emphasized external dimensions such as response strategies, stakeholder relations, and media choice. That can to a certain extent be explained by the fact that most crisis communication scholars have their origins in public relations. However, we find it somewhat astonishing that internal dimensions of crisis communication has more or less been neglected, since the result of crisis management is directly related to perceptions, sensemaking, and acts of coworkers. Nevertheless, we can now observe a trend shift, since an increasing number of scholars in crisis communication (e.g., Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Gilpin & Murphy, 2008; Sellnow, Veil, & Streifel, 2010; Taylor, 2010) have begun to argue that there is a need to pay more attention to internal communication, if the research field of crisis communication is to be developed further.

The primary purpose of this paper is to discuss and clarify the role and practice of communication professionals in relation to internal aspects of crisis communication. We will also

suggest some ways to develop new practices for communication professionals in order to work strategically with internal crisis communication.

Our Case Study

The empirical material used in this paper comes primarily from 20 interviews with communication professionals and other key actors within the formal crisis organization (e.g., catastrophe coordinators, head physicians, and head of the emergency department) within Skåne University Hospital (SUS) in Sweden. We have also examined various documents (policies, crisis plans, etc.) and made observations at a large crisis exercise at SUS. This empirical study is part of a three-year research project on internal crisis communication within SUS. The hospital is rather new, founded in January 2010 after a merger between Lund and Malmö University Hospital. SUS has 12,500 employees and is a complex, multi-professional organization with at least 100 different competences. The merger was sudden, quite controversial, and heavily debated in the mass media.

Crises and Hospitals – Where the Unexpected is Expected

After having consulted research literature, one can easily conclude that there is no consensus on a crisis definition. In a broad sense, there are two comprehensive understandings of crisis: a narrow and a broad (see Johansen & Frandsen, 2007). We join the broader understanding of a crisis, which sees crises not as distinct, punctuated events, but rather as complex, integrated, processual phenomena (Falkheimer & Heide, 2010; Johansen & Frandsen, 2007). Whereas the narrow perspective focuses on the acute phase, the emergent perspective places attention on the whole process and its dynamics. It should also be noted that the two perspectives imply different communication views. The narrow perspective is linked to a transmission-view where communication is reduced to a tool for mitigating the effects of a crisis and communication professionals are seen as messengers and media specialists. The broad crisis perspective is associated with a sensemaking view, where communication is considered to have a constituting role (cf. Putnam & Nicotera, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). A transmission view of communication follows often tactical tasks such as message production for communication professionals, while a sensemaking perspective also embraces more strategic communication tasks (Varey, 2000).

Hospitals, such as SUS, are rather unique, not least from a crisis perspective. The medical staff at SUS is daily confronted with human crisis in form of traffic victims, gunshot injuries, stabbed people, heart attacks, and so on. SUS could seem to be in a never-ending state of small and large crises; the unexpected is in that way expected. According to our interviewees, crisis is an *elixir of life* for the (med.) staff –they "go at it" and frequently solve "crisis" situations. After checking internal documents and interviewing different persons, we concluded that the over-all crisis management system is completely *focused on medical crises* and catastrophes. The exclusive focus on medical crises is also reflected in the coworkers' understanding of "crisis". When we asked key persons in the crisis organization to explain what "crisis" means to them, we received fairly equal answers: "when continuous health care can't be achieved and when work efforts exceed the resources".

The Role of Communication Professionals

Communicator or PR-roles is one of the most researched areas within PR-research (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Larsson, 2011). The primary focus of this research area has been the tasks, activities, and functions of communication professionals – often described in terms of different role typologies. One example is Broom and Smith's (1979) seminal distinction between expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solver, and communication technician. Later research has shown that the first three roles are closely related and, consequently, a two-fold distinction between managers and technicians has been suggested (Dozier & Broom, 1995).

Technician roles and response strategies

Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) strongly argue that "the availability of knowledge to perform a managerial role distinguishes excellent [communication] departments from less excellent ones". It is also often argued that excellent communication is dependent upon access to the top management group/the dominant coalition (e.g., Fearn-Banks, 2001; Grunig, et al., 2002). The communication manager of SUS was previously a member of the top management group, but she lost her membership in the beginning of the merger process. Not very surprisingly, both the communication manager and her employees think that this has reduced their influence and their possibilities to work strategically, i.e., to practice a managerial role. However, when some kind of crisis occurs, the communication manager is still invited to the top management group. These "special" invitations indicate that the value of communication expertise is recognized in times of crises, but, since the membership only applies to the acute crisis phase, the communication professionals tend to be locked into an operational/tactical role focused on response/reaction.

Several interviewees (both communication professionals, line managers, and other key persons) mention turbulent situations – e.g., a nurse strike and mass vaccination for the swine flu – when communication professionals have had a key role and contributed to a successful outcome. These examples are directly related to health care and can be seen as illustrating the narrow focus on medical crises and the acute phase, rather than the pre- and post-crisis phases. As a consequence, even if the communicators in these successful examples have worked together with the top management team and to a certain extent practiced a strategic, managerial role, it is still quite limited and the operational role seems to dominate. Furthermore, the interviews demonstrate that the role of communication professionals in crisis situations is primarily associated with media relations, the web, and text production. One of the communication officers expresses it as follows:

> When you participate in different groups you are expected to give advice on what to publish on the web site and what to send to media. […] We haven't had the time but we need to clarify what we [the communication department] can do. At present, we aren't even member of the top management group and managers rather close to us have the idea that we are very operative. Media and web – that's what we are.

Johansson and von Ottestig (2011) have found that communication executives perceive their external legitimacy to be much higher than their internal. The same pattern seems to apply for communication professionals within SUS. Having greater external legitimacy might also mean that managers and other groups have greater trust for communication professionals' ability to manage external communication than internal communication.

Internal crisis communication

As mentioned above, communication professionals within SUS are mainly associated with media when it comes to crises situations. Consequently, they do not seem to have any clear or crucial role in internal crisis communication. One of the interviewed communicators belonging to a division tells us that she is not at all involved in crisis communication: "Crisis communication is something that is more or less solely handled by line managers". Overall, there seems to be a strong reliance on communication through managers in times of crises. At the same time, many interviewees argue that rapid information dissemination is the major communication challenge in crisis situations. The strong focus on fast, reliable channels is not particularly strange since there is no well-functioning infrastructure for internal crisis communications within SUS at present. For instance, it is not possible to reach great numbers of managers and employees through SMS and there are great difficulties in keeping phone lists up-to-date. The intranet is today the most important channel in crisis situations, and it is also intranet publishing that seems to be the most important task for communication professionals in relation to internal crisis communication. Following Quirke's (2008) distinction between different internal communication roles, it seems that managers and other employees expect communication professionals to act as a *post office* (including the roles of distributor and craftsman) and *travel agency* (technical advisor on which channels to use) rather than internal *consultants*.

Sturges (1994) has made a distinction between three kinds of crisis communication content objectives, which can be used to clarify the characteristics of internal crisis communication at SUS (cf. Coombs, 2012; Johansen & Frandsen, 2007):

- *Instructional information* tells people affected by the crisis what to do to protect themselves physically.
- *Adjusting information* helps people to handle psychological aspects of the crisis (uncertainty, stress, trauma etc.).
- *Internalizing information,* which people draw on to form an image of the organization. Applying this category to internal communication it can also be seen as constructing the organizational identity.

Sturges (1994) argues that different content objectives must be addressed at each phase of the crisis. It is most important to focus on instructional and adjusting information during the acute phase, whereas internalizing information should be emphasized before and after the crisis.

Our impression is that it is the internalizing information that is most neglected today. As Johansen and Frandsen (2007) argue, there are no clear-cut differences between the three categories and if the first two mentioned categories are handled well it will also have a positive influence on the image/identity. Even so, it can be argued that internalizing communication is most strongly connected to a strategic, managerial role and this is also the kind of communication that the communication department is the principal "owner" of. In this context, it should be noted that several interviewees perceive external media to be much faster than internal channels. As a huge public organization in change, SUS is subject to extremely strong media exposure. The hospital is almost daily in the regional newspaper, quite often in negative articles focused on cost-savings, problematic effects of the merger etc. This external media exposure has strong implications for SUS's internal communication processes and the construction of organizational identity. Communication professionals of SUS cannot prevent media's interest, but in times of crisis there is a need for commenting on and discussing the external media picture internally (i.e., a typical example of internalizing communication).

Strategies rather than plans needed

Something rather striking is the fact that SUS has no special communication plans or communication strategy for crisis situations. When interviewing the communication professionals it also evident that they do not have any profound knowledge of the existing crisis plans for Lund and Malmö. The communications manager comments:

> The preparedness of the communication department is based on our previous experiences. We cannot rely on the documents [the crisis plans] – that would drive us crazy!

The two crisis plans have different terminology and the merger between the two hospitals has made parts of them irrelevant. As the quote of the communications manager indicates, this has caused great frustration, and there is now an ongoing program of work to integrate the two crisis plans into one coherent plan. It is here interesting to note that both in previous and current work with crisis plans, there is a strong focus on the plan as a *product* rather than the implementation *process* of it. As a matter of fact, the interviewees – communications professionals, catastrophe coordinators, line managers alike – do not have any clear picture of how the crisis plan is communicated and implemented. Again, there seems to be a great trust in line managers taking care of the process, but they are not given any clear directions. The focus on the product rather than the process, can also be seen as a reflection of a traditional transmission view of communication (Varey, 2000) – as long as the plan is disseminated on the intranet, it is taken for granted that it will also understood and used.

At the same time as we have found deficiencies in the work with crisis plans, it is clear that SUS has been through some crises situations which seem to have been handled quite well. Does this mean that crisis plans are overrated? Marra (1998) argues so, and underlines that "crisis communication plans are only *part* of what determines excellent crisis public relations practice" (p. 463). Marra argues that the communication culture of the organization and the level of autonomy and power of the public relations department are equally important predictors of how well an organization manages a crisis. Several of the interviewees argue that the hospital works at its best in times of crisis and turbulence. Thus, in line with Marra's reasoning, it can be stated that the organizational culture involves an ability to solve crises without excellent crisis plans. But, according to the interviewees, the organization is also dominated by a "here-and-now-focus", and they are not good at learning from previous experiences, planning for the future or making strategies. Consequently, it appears to be as equally important – if not more – to develop a crisis communication strategy, as it is to develop a plan focused on tactical aspects during the acute phase. According to the interviewed communication professionals, they have not really discussed their role in times of crisis and some of them think that they have different ideas of what it should be. It is also obvious that some of the communication professionals find it difficult to communicate what competence and abilities they can add in crisis situations – except from traditional tasks such as media contacts and text production. Thus, there is a need to discuss and clarify what it means for communicators to work strategically and practice a managerial role. Likewise, the interviewees do not have any clear idea of the purpose of internal crisis communication. The implicit assumption seems to be that internal crisis communication is about getting the right people at the right place to do the right things (instructional communication) rather than to frame the understanding of the crisis (internalizing communication).

Discussions and Conclusions

It is often argued that crises are situations when the influence and value of communication professionals become evident. But does this necessarily mean that crises are situations when communication professionals practice managerial roles and work strategically? Our study does not indicate that this is necessarily the case – especially not in relation to internal communication.

In trying to understand the role of communication professionals it is necessary to understand the organizational context they work within. SUS can certainly be seen as a good example of a high reliability organization (HRO) when it comes to the medical aspects. HROs operate in a risky environment but still have few incidents since they are committed to safety aspects and work (Sutcliffe, 2011). Doctors and nurses at SUS are frequently trained in handling tricky, hazardous situations, which involve a large portion of uncertainty and equivocality. Their ability to solve these incidents, and occasionally crisis, is impressive, and other organizations have a lot to learn from HRO's working methods. However, while the medical part of SUS can be characterized as HRO, it is more of an open question for the rest of the organization. Hopkins (2007) states that HRO is an ideal model and few organizations fulfill all the characteristics (see Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). It can also be argued that the strong urge and ability to solve acute medical crises is a double-edged sword: it is a vital and necessary skill, but it keeps the organization locked into a rather narrow view of crises and reduces the incentive to develop a broader view of crises (cf. above about different crisis perspectives).

We believe that a chief problem of crisis management at SUS is the absence of *strategic crisis management thinking and discourse*. This is, for example, reflected in the two crisis and catastrophe plans, both of which are fairly operational/tactical and exclusively focused on medicine and health care issues. It also reflected in the lack of a centrally located crisis management function. Much of the crisis management is decentralized to the emergency department and functions such as risk-and vulnerability analysis, but there is no clear integration and coordination between various functions and positions. We have also seen that there is a lack of strategic *crisis communication* – not least in relation to the ideas of the purpose of internal communication. Strategic crisis management can be described as a "*teflon question*" that does not stick in the organization since it is perceived as too complex to manage. With such a context it also becomes natural for the communication professionals to cling to "safe" areas such as text production and media relations in both crisis and normal circumstances.

We would finally like to suggest some ideas of developing practices for communication professionals in order to work strategically with internal crisis communication:

Membership of the board: The first step the communication department needs to take is to capture a seat at the board, which gives improved opportunities for the communication manager to build relations with managers and to propagate a communication perspective on organizational processes and actions. However, membership of the board is not a guarantee for communication professionals' influence in decision-making (Reber & Berger, 2006). Thus this first step is best described as necessary, but not sufficient in order to work strategically.

Diversified communication roles: Reber and Berger (2006, p. 246) emphasize that, if communication professionals are to be seen as influential, they: "[…] must exhibit their strategic and decision-making prowess and their political will." A step inthis direction is to diversify the communication department's service offer; it must be able to deliver both managerial and technical expertise. The role as a media expert and messenger is certainly essential (not least in the light of a changing media landscape), but there is a need of an extended casting including roles such as director, consultants, trainers, and communication developers.

A developed managerial role: We believe that it is essential to reflect on what it really means to be a communication manager. Traditional managerialism is imbued with a strong belief in rationalism, and there are several reasons to question the rationale behind managerialism (cf. Heide & Simonsson, 2011). Instead of having an ambition to be an all-knowing super-hero, managers, and especially communication managers, must take the role of facilitation and development of others' communication seriously. Nothhaft (2010) discerns between a first- and second-order management function. First-order management means influencing subordinates' work by "managing", i.e., a function which coordinates organizational performance by planning, organizing, and controlling. Second-order management occurs when a communication manager guides the management process of coworkers over which she or he does not have functional authority. It means influencing the managing of others through institutionalizing certain concerns in the organization. Thus, it is an indirect rather than a direct management role, which means that communication professionals must think much more in terms of being a missionary, coach, and trainer.

Close to core operations: If communication professionals are to work more strategically with crisis communication, a precondition is that they work together with the persons responsible for crisis management, and focus both on the acute crisis and proactive activities that stimulates anticipation and resilience. One communication professional told us that each crisis in which she had been involved, she had met managers and coordinators whom she had never met before. In order to gain legitimacy and work strategically in a crisis situation, communications professionals must build relationships and be part of important networks in the organization. One way of doing this could be to decentralize the communication function to departments in the organization, and offer consultation in communication to both managers and coworkers.

Legitimacy: A general problem for communication professionals is that internal communication has a rather low legitimacy in organizations. That is somewhat striking, since communication professionals tend to appreciate internal communication as one of the most important specialist fields that will have even greater importance in the future (e.g. Zerfaß, Verhoeven, Tench, Moreno, & Verčič, 2011). We believe that if communication professionals embrace the roles and practices suggested here, they will gradually gain an increased internal legitimacy and internal communication will be given higher priority.

Most of the suggestions presented here are not only relevant for crisis communication, but can also be applied to roles and practices of communication professionals in "normal" situations. However, in order to work strategically with crisis communication, it is necessary to integrate it into the everyday, continuous work, rather than regarding it as a separate task, isolated to specific situations and time periods.

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Note

Dialogue Strategies via Social Networks and Organizational Performance

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This study aims to examine social media dialogue strategies employed by 30 of the largest international companies, and to evaluate the relationship between dialogue strategies and organizational financial performances. The research uses a mixed-method approach by combining statistical analysis, based on a specific coding procedure, and conversation analysis (Zemel, Xhafa, & Cakir, 2009). Online dialogue strategies have been established within management and organizational studies. Each strategy has been operationalized through specific indicators and will be tested through conversational analysis methodology. The research appraises the social media usage to sustain dialogic organization-public relationships. Additionally, common patterns can be identified between high-performance organizations and dialogue strategies. The study provides valuable insights concerning the conceptualization of dialogue as a managerial process, which can be run differently by organizations. This paper provides a practical tool to approach online dialogue strategically according to organizational aims and context.

Keywords: Web 2.0; Social media; Online dialogue; Dialogue strategies.

Communication scholars have proposed a large number of definitions of dialogue. Generally speaking, communication studies conceive the concept of dialogue as rooted in philosophical and relational theories, stressing the ethical orientation of dialogue in order to develop and manage successful relationships between organizations and their publics (Kent & Taylor, 1998; 2002). From this perspective, the term dialogue has been conceived of as a product rather than a process and it has been increasingly used to describe ethical and practical approaches to communication with the aim to better understand how modern companies can serve both corporate aims and public interests (Kent & Taylor, 1998; 2002).

Kent and Taylor (2002) propose some tenets of the implicit and explicit assumptions of dialogue concepts, which represent a first step towards a dialogic theory of communication, influencing the implementation of a dialogic perspective in the online environment. Recently, Kent and Taylor's (2002) strategic framework has been applied to promote and facilitate dialogic relationships via the Internet, principally to websites and, more specifically, to Web 2.0 technologies such as Facebook (Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008), blogs (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007) and Twitter (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).

Empirical research reveals that Web 2.0 technologies could assure high potential to build dialogic relationships if approached appropriately. Nevertheless, what does 'appropriately' mean? How can an online dialogic approach be developed effectively? Communication scholars seem to have been limited in considering the organizational commitment and a general acceptance of the value of building relationships as two prerequisites to develop an effective dialogic approach (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Concerning the online environment, although extant studies provide useful insights to develop a dialogic orientation through new digital technologies, they take into account those technical characteristics of specific online tools, such as websites or Facebook and Twitter, which could promote a dialogic relationship.

Focusing on ethical and relational aims, communication studies seem to neglect the huge variety of corporate purposes that dialogue may serve. In this paper, we adopt an organizational perspective and we develop a strategic framework to manage online dialogue, summarized through the orientation-approach online dialogue matrix. Then, we test which are the most effective dialogic strategies within the largest organizations.

Dialogue in Management and Organizational Studies: Four Streams of Research

According to organizational and management studies (Isaacs, 2001; Schein, 2003) dialogue is a complex phenomenon, which can be investigated from diverse angles and perspectives (Dixon, 1996; Gergen, Gergen, & Barrett, 2004).

Four streams of research concerned with dialogue management can be identified:

- Knowledge and learning management;
- Organizational development and change;
- Strategy development and organizational decision-making;
- Consensus building and collaborative management.

Knowledge and learning management scholars define dialogue as a core process as well as a critical mechanism through which barriers to learning could be overcome on behalf of knowledge-sharing and understanding, as well as creating new insights (Gray, 2007; Isaacs, 2001; Mazutis & Slawinski, 2008; Schein, 2003). In particular, dialogue encourages participants to detect and surface eventual errors and inconsistencies in organizational practices (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2008). Dialogic practices imply an 'engagement between two or more people, which changes some meanings or processes' and through which topics, issues and events can be made more meaningful (Beech, MacIntosh, & MacLean, 2010: p. 1342). Tsoukas (2009) uses the term 'productive dialogue' referring to the dialogic form of conversations, which supports and allows the development of new ways of thinking. According to these remarks, web-based technologies have been explored as ideal and new means to conceptualize about knowledge building and sharing through dialogue (Koshman, 1999), as they provide a social and cultural context, even if virtually, characterized by the active members' participation in the social and dialogic constructions of reality (Hodgson, 2002).

Organizational development and change perspective underlines the increasing relevance of dialogue as an enabler of critical exploration and review of mental models, habits and practices which organizations could adopt and implement (Barrett, Thomas, & Hocevar, 1995; Ford & Ford, 1995; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Jacobs & Heracleous, 2005; Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007). The dialogue in particular allows participants to develop critical thinking by inquiring into the underlying assumptions of mental models and schemata used by individuals or organizations (Jacobs & Heracleous, 2005). It allows for the opening up of recognized evidences into multiple perspectives and the exploration of the strength and validity of the proposals (Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007).

Additionally, dialogue can be considered as a tool to stimulate participants' involvement and commitment to 'collective change agendas' (Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007: p. 992), as well as a process through which change can be activated and understood (Ford & Ford, 1995). Within this scenario where the conversational nature of organizational change is underlined, new information and communication technologies, including the web-based ones, can play a crucial role as they facilitate the development of different discourses used to promote or justify the needs of organizational change (Barrett, Grant, & Wailes, 2006).

Strategy development and organizational decision-making studies highlight the role of dialogue in facilitating group interactions during decision-making processes (functionalist perspective), as well as considering dialogue and, more generally, conversations, as an ideal locus where decisions are discussed and taken (constitutive perspective) (Huisman, 2001; Mengis & Eppler, 2008; Von Krogh & Roos, 1995). Dialogue is a specific form of conversation that could create an organizational setting. It is defined as a 'discursive coordination' that 'could bring organization into being' (Gergen et al., 2004: p. 56), or as a 'macro-conversation of interaction distributed across space and time' (Kuhn, 2008: p. 1233). Furthermore, dialogue has been conceived 'as the cradle of a company's strategy' (Von Krogh & Roos, 1995: p. 392). In particular, Von Krogh and Roos (1995) make a distinction between operational dialogue (focused on evidences, current facts and daily operations) and strategic dialogue (concerning strategic issues for the future).

Concerning this stream of research, recent contributions focus on the potentialities of social media in contributing to the development of innovative organizational strategies. Specifically, authors refer to the crowdsourcing phenomenon considered as the engagement process of external and undefined groups of participants within the development of organizational strategies (Howe, 2009). In these cases, online crowdsourcing is based on the exploitation of social media's dialogic features for stimulating continuous exchange and sharing of opinions, contents and information through conversational processes (Morgan & Wang, 2010).

Consensus building and collaborative management studies address the dialogue concept with the aim to create accordance among multiple subjects and to develop relationships based on shared missions, shared organizational values and the awareness of strong interdependence among actors involved (Innes, 2004; Moisanders & Stenfors, 2009; Nielsen, 1981).

As Susskind, McKearnan, and Thomas-Larmer (1999) argue, consensus-building dialogue constitutes 'a process of seeking unanimous agreement', which 'involves a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders' (p. 6). Organizations could use dialogic processes in order to develop a common view that 'reflects and focuses on those options that are logically acceptable to most people involved' (Isaacs, 1993: p. 26). On the basis of these remarks, dialogue is considered as an ideal speech situation where misunderstandings are minimized and shared viewpoints are enhanced (Cheyne & Tarulli, 1999). This perspective emphasizes the web-based technologies characteristics, such as equality and social inclusion, which are suitable to the aim of providing participants with opportunities to share their voices (Bradley & McDonald, 2011).

Conceptualizing Public Relations 2.0 Dialogue Strategies

Dependent on the analysis of the different definitions and dimensions of dialogue proposed in management literature, we define Web 2.0-based dialogue as a strategic conversational process carried on social network technologies (primarily Facebook and Twitter) which can be oriented to develop agreement among stakeholders or enhance multiple perspectives and which concerns issues of organizational or public interest. This definition underlines two dimensions of dialogue: *orientation* and *approach*.

Based on the studies by Bakhtin (1981) and Beech et al. (2010), *orientation* indicates the trajectory of dialogic practices, which can be twofold: centripetal and centrifugal. Dialogue has a centripetal direction when it focuses on searching for agreement among people (Beech et al., 2010). The term centripetal refers to the force of dialogue that tends to unify and to homogenise differences. In this case, the dialogue focuses on building mutuality by developing convergent views among participants (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Conversely, dialogue could have a centrifugal orientation when it focuses on the enhancement of multiple perspectives and points of

view (Beech et al., 2010). The centrifugal trajectory is subject to dispersion and de-centring forces. In this case, dialogue 'disrupts centralized and monological forms of understandings' (Kornrberger et al., 2006 as cited in Beech et al., 2010: p.1343). Therefore, centrifugal dialogue enables multiple insights (Beech et al., 2010), encourages attention and interest in other participants and stimulates their active involvement in the dialogic process (Gadamer, 2007).

The second dimension consists of the *approach* assumed by an organisation with dialogue: outside-in and inside-out. An outside-in approach implies that the organization reflects on and discusses an issue, a topic or situation from the outside, particularly as an external and uninvolved observer. In this event, the topic of discussion is not related to specific organizational activities or practices. Conversely, if an organization decides to adopt an inside-out approach, it reflects and discusses its own assumptions and experiences. It is directly involved in the topic and places itself at the centre of discussion and attention. By crossing the dimensions of orientation and approach, a conceptual typology of social network-based dialogue strategies has been developed. As shown in figure one, four online dialogue strategies have been identified: concertative, transformative, positioning and generative.

Concertative dialogue

Dialogue as a form of concertative conversation is focused on sharing settings to facilitate consensus building as well as the agreement among participants concerning a precise topic, issue, specific strategy or behaviour of organizations. (Innes, 2004; Nielsen, 1981). Concertative dialogue aims to create accordance among multiple subjects and to develop relationships based on shared missions, shared organizational values and the awareness of strong interdependence among actors involved (Innes, 2004; Moisanders & Stenfors, 2009; Nielsen, 1981). This strategy focuses on the creation of convergent opinions and points of view, mutuality and dependence between participants (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001).

The concertative approach does not aim to investigate implicit meanings, but to develop a common view that 'reflects and focuses on those options that are logically acceptable to most people involved' (Isaacs, 1993: p. 26). By using concertative dialogue strategies, organizations could create mutual understanding among themselves and their publics as well as improve the level of satisfaction, trust and commitment (Beech et al., 2010; Heath, 2007). This type of dialogue could foster the development of mutual relationships among participants (Hon & Grunig, 1999).
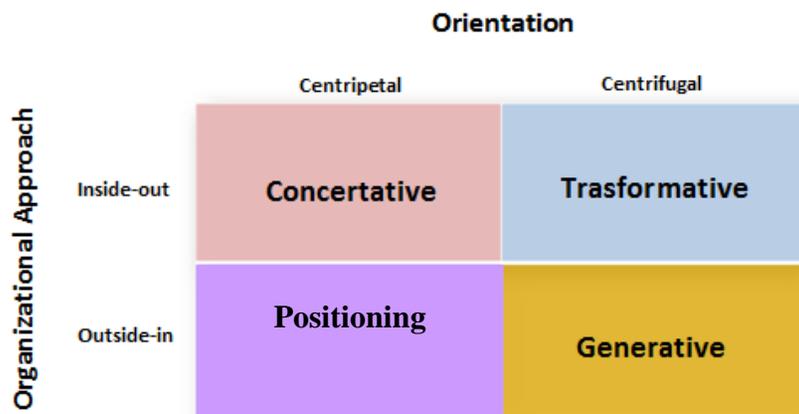
FIGURE 1: Orientation-Approach dialogue matrix via social networks

Transformative dialogue

By using transformative dialogue strategies organizations call for new assumptions or ideas about the implementation of their actual strategies and policies. From a practical point of view, by adopting this strategy organizations should stimulate self-expression of participants (Gergen et al., 2004), because organizations could give the actors involved the opportunity to utter and share their personal thoughts and feelings. Additionally, they are invited to speak personally.

Organizations create a space where participants could analyze an organizational topic or issue from different perspectives with the aim to multiply meanings and to create new significances and suggestions (Cunliffe, 2004; Gray, 2007). In this case, organizations act as space-builders to enhance multiplicity and polyvocality, which allow for the opening of new possibilities and new perspectives. Under this circumstance, dialogue enables participants to express themselves in a more comprehensible way as well as promoting audience engagement (Gergen et al., 2004). Organizations provide a participatory environment (Mezirow, 1997; Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007) where participants could engage in free dialogue and critical reflections about shared assumptions and problems. In this case, organizations are not interested in new arguments for enriching their positions, but they search for new practice-based knowledge to apply adopt (Beech et al., 2010; Grundin, 1996). Therefore, through transformative dialogue participants they enhance alternative perspectives and analyse strengths and weaknesses of taken-for-granted assumptions (Grundin, 1996). From an operative standpoint, organizations that intend to carry on a transformative strategy should implement the following four principles: *participant self-affirmation* (Jabri, 2004), through which organizations explicitly ask participants to express their opinion and give suggestions concerning organizational initiatives; *macro-conversational structure* (Mengis & Eppler, 2008), meaning that companies initiate conversations structured as whole interactive processes where organizations do not address specific stakeholders but rather all participants involved in the discussion; *performance conversation* (Ford & Ford, 1995), implemented by organizations when they use directive and commissive conversational utterances by expressing oriented requests and open promises with the aim to acquire information in order to get into action; and *multifocal conversation* (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005; Edwards, 2005), that is, organizations enhance multiplicity of perspectives and ideas by separating the topic into sub-topics and providing participants with equal opportunities to discuss each of them from their own perspective.

Positioning Dialogue

Dialogue as a form of positioning conversation allows the actors involved to participate actively in sharing realities, meanings and knowledge (Gergen et al., 2004; Isaacs, 2001). The main objective is to increase organization's visibility search for high visibility that reinforces organizational points of view and positions. Positioning dialogue promotes the development of convergent perspectives based on agreement, acceptation and integration of mutual differences (Gergen et al., 2004). In doing so, organizations guide participants within a common ideal space where they can activate a comparison about issues and topics of interest (Topp, 2000). By leading a positioning dialogue strategy, organizations choose specific topics. This selection allows them to be perceived by stakeholders as relevant and well-informed actors as far as these topics are concerned. Therefore, organizations search for new arguments, new contents, to reinforce the 'social prominence' of their stances. Positioning dialogue allows the exchange of different skills and information among individual subjects (Mengis & Eppler, 2008; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001; Steyaert, Bouwen, & Van Looy, 1996; Topp, 2000).

Generative dialogue

Dialogue as a form of generative conversation can be considered a kind of interchange among participants who are committed to develop respect towards other perspectives (Gergen et al., 2004). By using a generative dialogue strategy, organizations recognize the presence of different perspectives and points of view (sense of alterity) when they do not want to modify their opinion or position (Gergen et al., 2004).

This dialogue strategy fosters what Shotter (2008) defines as 'an enhancement of "voice" for minorities' and an increasing level of responsiveness from participants (Beech et al., 2010). In other words, participants are involved in interactive relationships that stimulate them in creating new ideas concerning specific topics. The generative dialogue could promote an increasing level of 'trust', intended as a form of confidence and openness towards interlocutors, and of 'control mutuality', which refers to the ability of participants to recognize and respect the position of other actors involved in the dialogue (Hon & Grunig, 1999). As a form of productive conversation, generative dialogue enables participants to reveal and modify those mental maps through which they shape meanings and realities by using critical explorations emerging from interactions with other actors (Jacobs & Heracleous, 2005). Generative dialogue is a participant-centred dialogue where the organization does not participate in conversations, but plays a role as proactive listener. Possible disagreement is considered a useful condition to deepen perspectives and find solutions (Jacobs & Heracleous, 2005; Mezirow, 1997). The main objective is developing new knowledge and new insights.

From a practical standpoint, organizations that use generative dialogue strategies should apply the following four principles: *suspension of assumptions* (Jacobs & Heracleous, 2005), that is, companies analyze dialogue results without expressing judgments or opinions explicitly; *relational responsibilities* (Gergen, McNamee, & Barrett, 2001), meaning organizations should promote a climate of respect towards different perspectives by providing a space where behavioural codes of conduct are explicitly declared and accepted by participants; *bottom-up conversation* (Smeds, Haho, & Alvesalo, 2003), when organizations stimulate all the actors to convey their messages through explicit requests or through the organization of contests and social games; and *responsive conversation* (Ferreday, Hodgson, & Jones, 2006), which refers to the participant's attitude to be responsive towards each opinion and utterance expressed by the organization (first post), or other participants.

Research Design, Method and Sample

Research design

In this study, we investigated the dialogue strategies via social networks (generative, transformative, positioning, concertative) implemented by the 30 largest corporations in the world.

The research adopts a mixed-method approach by combining conversational analysis and statistical analysis, based on a specific coding procedure (Zemel et al., 2009).

First, the orientation-approach dialogue matrix via social networks (figure 1) was operationalized by using a qualitative conversation analysis (Romenti, Murtarelli, 2011; Romenti, Murtarelli, & Valentini, 2011). Conversation analysis has been generally defined as the systematic analysis of conversations or talks produced in interactive situations (Have, 2007; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2002). This method aims to discover which procedures underlie the creation and interpretation of speech acts that are organized sequentially (Have, 2007; Huisman, 2001).

Second, results obtained by conversational analysis have been combined with performance data. Statistical correlations between dialogue strategies embedded within conversational threads and profit data have been calculated.

Sample

The sample has been selected from the Global 500 2011, the annual ranking of the 500 largest corporations worldwide. One of the most important issues related to the pilot study concerns the sample size; some authors recommend a minimum of 30 cases or 10% of the final sample size taken into account for the analysis (Johanson & Brooks, 2010). According to these remarks, a sample size of 30 cases has been considered suitable to meet the research aims (table 1). Cases were screened on following criteria: a) they are the largest organizations organized on the basis of the revenues; b) they provide official English language pages on both Facebook and Twitter whose links are indicated on their corporate websites. Those organizations without English language pages have been replaced by the following companies ranked in the Global 500 2011 with an official presence on the two social network sites. The Global 500 2011 ranking also provides information concerning each organization's profits.

TABLE 1: Sample of the 30 chosen largest worldwide corporations

Global 500	Companies	Revenues 2010	Profits 2010	Global 500	Companies	Revenues 2010	Profits 2010
4	BP	308,928	-3,719	42	Nestlé	105,267	-3,719
8	Toyota Motor	221,76	4,766	45	Honda Motor	104,342	4,766
10	Chevron	196,337	19,024	47	Siemens	102,657	19,024
12	ConocoPhillips	184,966	11,358	48	Nissan Motor	102,43	11,358
13	Volkswagen	168,041	9,053	50	Panasonic	101,491	9,053
15	Fannie Mae	153,825	-14,014	52	IBM	99,87	-14,014
16	General Electric	151,628	11,644	53	Cardinal Health	98,602	11,644
20	General Motors	135,592	6,172	55	Hyundai Motor	97,408	6,172
22	Samsung Electronics	133,781	13,669	57	CVS Caremark	96,413	13,669
25	Ford Motor	128,954	6,561	71	BASF	84,597	6,561
27	Allianz	127,379	6,693	73	Sony	83,845	6,693
28	Hewlett-Packard	126,033	8,761	79	BMW	80,099	8,761
30	AT&T	124,629	19,864	80	Procter & Gamble	79,689	19,864
39	Citigroup	111,055	10,602	84	AmerisourceBergen	77,954	10,602
41	Verizon Communications	106,565	2,549	89	Toshiba	74,706	2,549

(Source: Global 500, 2011)

Data collection and coding

Facebook and Twitter have been selected as they represent the two social media sites most used by public relations professionals, as recent empirical research has testified (Zerfass et al., 2010). Furthermore, they show a multipurpose mission. Differing from other 2.0 tools, such as LinkedIn or YouTube, the two analyzed digital technologies do not specialize in specific activities, like professional connections development or videosharing. Consequently, they appear more suitable to broadening and analysing different dialogic behaviours in detail.

The specific collected data set includes dialogic threads; these are the discussions initiated and conducted by organizations with online participants. Each thread is comprised of organizations' status updates and posts/tweets, organizations' comments, and replies to stakeholder posts. Specifically, the authors investigate the first ten dialogic threads carried out by the 30 organizations in the last fiscal quarter of 2011 (from October to December) both on Facebook and Twitter.

The methodological approach used to illustrate the organizations' online dialogue profiles can be defined as it follows. Firstly, for each analyzed conversation (N: 20), indicators have been clustered numerically within the four groups corresponding to the four dialogue strategies. Secondly, single or multiple dominant strategies have been identified by assigning a specific weight: in the case of a single dominant strategy, an unitary weight has been given; in the case of multiple dominant ones, a distributed weight has been assigned by applying the following equation:

$$a*concertative + b*transformative + c*positioning + d*generative = 1$$

where $a+b+c+d=1$.

Furthermore, for each Web 2.0 technology (Facebook and Twitter), the authors have calculated the relative and percentage frequencies of dominant strategies implemented by organizations in the ten conversations conducted online. Finally, the relative and percentage frequencies have been calculated by considering the online dialogue approach on the whole within the twenty analyzed conversational processes.

The data consist of 900 Facebook statements (both posts and replies) and 600 tweets (both replies and re-tweets). In order to investigate the organizations' online dialogic profiles, single cases were examined attentively and they were coded on the 16 items identified in table 2, by verifying the presence (1) or the absence (0) of each indicator of the model in the analyzed dialogic threads. Items describe each dialogue in terms of goal, structure, tone and content (Beech et al., 2010; Cunliffe, 2002). Dialogue strategies, and their items, are proposed in table 2.

With the purpose of checking inter-coder reliability and consistency, a random sample of 90 Facebook statements (about 10% of the total amount) and 60 tweets (about 10% of the total amount) were coded by two coders (Bauer, 2000; Stempel & Wesley, 1981). Cohen's kappa was .69 for the Facebook statements and .71 for the tweets.

TABLE 2: Dialogue strategies, dimensions and indicators

Dialogue strategies	Dimensions	Indicators
Concertative	**Organizational self-affirmation (Goal).** Organization declares its positions explicitly, it initiates the dialogue by orientating the attention on topics and issues related to organizational activities.	1. Use of expressions in the organizational utterances that introduce organizational opinions such as: According to me/us; I/we think that; My/our opinion(s) is/are; In our reality we.
	Micro-conversations (Structure). Organization focuses on micro-interaction processes carried on with participants by addressing replies and discussion to a single individual at a time.	2. In answering to stakeholders, the organization usually writes at the beginning of its answer the stakeholder's name (or nickname) by using the formula @ + name.
	Appreciative conversations (Tone). Organization uses affirmative/denials sequences and conciliatory tone in order to develop shared thoughts.	3. Greetings/instructions/denials/excuses in organizational utterances.
	Operational conversational interactions (Content). Organization develops detail-oriented interactions by providing participants with evidences, facts, daily operations, links and updated information concerning the topics of discussion.	4. Detailed information offered by organizations (e.g., economic data, activity results, research reports, internal links showing details, pictures, video).
Transformative	**Participant self-affirmation (Goal).** Organization explicitly asks participants to express their opinion and give suggestions concerning organizational initiatives.	5. Use of interrogative utterances in the first organizational post, such as 'What do you think about us/our products? What do you like among our projects/products?'
	Macro-conversations (Structure). Organization initiates conversations structured as whole interactive processes where organizations do not address to specific stakeholders by to all participants involved in the discussion.	6. Organization doesn't write at the beginning of its answer the stakeholders' names, but it writes its replies by addressing them generically.
	Performance conversation (Tone). Organization uses directive and commissive conversational utterances (oriented requests and open promises) with the aim to acquire information in order to get into action.	7. Acceptance/open promises or declines with motivations in answering to the participants' invitations about implementing specific changes.
	Multifocal conversations (Content). Organization enhances multiplicity of perspectives and ideas by stimulating opposites and contradictions.	8. Repetition of stakeholders' opinions in organizational utterances.

TABLE 2: Dialogue strategies, dimensions and indicators (continued)

Positioning	**Reflective punctuation (Goal).** Organization initiates conversation by focusing attention on generic contents/topics of public interest that could activate further discussions.	9.	Use of description or explanation sentences explaining: what, when, who, where and why about the discussed topic in the first organizational post.
	Diffusive behaviours (Structure). All organizational members or supportive stakeholders are explicitly or implicitly invited to support dialogue by sharing their knowledge.	10.	Organizational members/supportive stakeholders answer to other stakeholders' comments/critiques or it mentions in its comments employees/supportive stakeholders by using @+ their nickname (third-party citations).
	Sustained conversation (Tone). Organization guides the discussion between stakeholders in order to keep a high level of attention.	11.	Relevant use of pre-sequences – preliminary sentences to the main topic of discussion – such as title or question tags, attractive claims (e.g., here you are; before answering your comments we point out to you that), which can shift the focus to another topic of discussion and attract the public attention.
	Conversational storytelling (Content). For each discussed generic topic the organization spends time exploring the topic and introducing details and descriptions of the event.	12.	Relevant use of post-expansions: organizations conduct a longer dialogue with each participant by replying to their answers more than once and by trying to have the last word.
Generative	**Suspension of assumptions (Goal).** Organization doesn't express judgments or opinions explicitly in posting or in answering stakeholders' utterances.	13.	Organization posts external resources, such as links to pictures or videos, in order to initiate the conversation.
	Bottom-up conversation (Structure). Organization shifts the focus from enhancing dialogue among organizations and participants to stimulating dialogues between participants themselves by giving them a specific online environment (thematic pages).	14.	Organization sets the online environment by proposing a thematic page (identified by the title/subtitle/information in the introductive section of the page).
	Responsive conversation (Tone). Organizations participate only as moderator in order to keep a respectful online context suitable for free discussion.	15.	Organization assumes the responsibility to erase the stakeholders' comments which threaten the respectful environment and declares it explicitly.
	Relational responsibilities (Content). Organization provides a space where behavioural codes of conduct are explicitly declared and accepted by participants in order to promote a climate of respect towards different perspectives.	16.	Organization informs stakeholders about the existence of a code of conduct.

Results

Table 3 synthesizes information concerning the use of each dialogue strategy via social networking sites. As the results show, both on Facebook and on Twitter, the 30 largest companies in the world favour a concertative dialogue strategy (centripetal orientation and an inside-out approach).

TABLE 3: Online dialogue strategies: a descriptive analysis

Strategies/Indicators	%Twitter Conversations (30x10)	% Facebook Conversations (23x10)
Concertative	M: 29.92 SD: 22.95	M: 33.48 SD: 22.16
Use of expressions that introduce organizational opinions	3	11.30
Use of stakeholder's name, or nickname, in organizational replies	19.67	20.87
Greetings/instructions/denials/excuses in organizational utterances	43	40.43
Detailed information offered by organizations	54	61.30
Transformative	M: 6.25 SD: 3.98	M: 5.33 SD: 4.31
Use of interrogative utterances in the first organizational post	9	11.74
In organizational replies organizations address stakeholders generically	1	3.91
Acceptance/open promises or declines with motivations in answering to the participants' invitations about implementing specific changes	5.33	3.04
Repetition of stakeholders' opinion in organizational utterances	9.67	2.61
Positioning	M: 9.00 SD: 9.10	M: 11.67 SD: 10.46
Repetition of stakeholders' opinion in organizational utterances	17.33	21.74
Use of description or explanation sentences	2.33	4.78
Employees mentioning employees' comments/actions by using @+ their nick name (third-party citations)	16.33	21.30
Relevant use of preliminary sentences to the main topic of discussion	0	0.87
Generative	M: 8.42 SD:10.13	M: 11.56 SD: 14.97
Use of external resources or links to pictures or videos in order to initiate the conversation	20.33	33.48
Creation of a thematic page (identified by the title/ subtitle/information in the introductive section of the page)	13.33	13.91
Deletion of stakeholders' comments which threaten the respectful environment and declares it explicitly	0	0.43
Clear declaration about the existence of a code of conduct	0	0.43

In terms of organizational orientation, the values of the concertative strategy is higher (TW: M: 29.92%, S: 22.95%; FB: M: 33.48%, SD: 22.16%) than that of the transformative one (TW: M: 6.25%, S: 3.98%; FB: M: 5.33%, SD: 22.16%). Similarly, in terms of organizational

approach to dialogue, the concertative strategy assumes higher value than the positioning one (TW: M: 9% S: 9.10%; FB: M: 11.67%, SD: 10.46%).

According to these initial remarks, in dialogues with online stakeholders, organizations mostly adopt an appreciative tone by inserting greetings, instructions, and excuses forms (TW: 43%; TW: 40.43%) within the conversational process. Additionally companies provide online public with detailed information such as internal links to videos, pictures, reports, or articles concerning organizational activities or products (TW: 54%; FB: 61.30%). The centripetal orientation is also expressed by the use of positioning strategy. With this, organizations try to focus the public attention on specific discussion topics through which they can gain prominence, visibility and increase stakeholder support. Specifically, they repeat stakeholder opinion in their status or replies (TW: 17.33%; FB: 21.74%). In some cases organizations are not the only speakers; their utterances are supported by employees, who reply directly to comments on behalf of the organization, or organizations cite employee's comments in their status (TW: 16.33%; FB: 21.30%).

Finally, although the centripetal orientation and inside-out approach seem to be the most relevant and commonly used, some organizations adopt a generative strategy which aims to enhance multiple perspective and stimulate active stakeholder participation. Towards this end, organizations publish links and provide stakeholders with external resources (TW: 20.33%; 33.48%). Furthermore, organizations can create a specific thematic page (TW: 13.33%; FB: 13.91%).

By analysing Pearson's correlations, the most profitable companies use an inside-out approach when they engage in dialogues with their stakeholders on Facebook and Twitter (table 3). In particular, concertative dialogue strategy is the most used by the most successful companies, while the transformative is the second most used strategy. Searching for high visibility of organizational points of view and positions, which is the focus of positioning dialogue strategy, seems to be less important.

TABLE 4: Correlations between dialogue strategies and profits data

Dialogue strategies	r_s	Sig.
Concertative	0.361	0.083
Transformative	0.305	0.147
Positioning	-0.097	0.651
Generative	-0.162	0.449
Centripetal orientation	0.248	0.000
Centrifugal orientation	-0.051	0.811
Inside-out approach	**0.444**	**0.030**
Outside-in approach	-0.239	0.261

Discussions and Conclusions

At a first glance, two main results gain considerable relevance. First of all, the most profitable companies use an inside-out approach, which means that they use their own experiences to affect the process of dialogue (Cunliffe, 2002; Gray, 2007). In other words, companies that 'open their doors' on social networks are more appreciated. That seems obvious, but actually companies can manage dialogic processes in different ways.

Some companies open their doors to simply gain prominence on social networks. These companies choose topics which are already popular among the public and try to activate further discussion. This kind of strategy, called positioning, seems to be very popular among companies.

From a practical point of view, this also means that organizations explicitly or implicitly invite other people to support initiated dialogue. Companies add knowledge through the use of assertions and declarations, exploring the topic and introducing more details and descriptions.

This research says that positioning is not the dialogue strategy applied by the most profitable companies. On the contrary, the most successful companies open their doors by seeking agreement among participants about a specific strategy or behaviour, or, in other words, adopting a dialogue strategy known as concertative. In this case, companies try to create convergent opinions, points of view, mutuality and dependence about their real business practices. Practically, an organization using a concertative strategy should apply the following four principles: *organizational self-affirmation* (Gergen et al., 2004), where an organization declares its positions explicitly, initiating the dialogue by orientating the attention on topics and issues related to organizational activities; *micro-conversational structure* (Mengis & Eppler, 2008), where organizations focus on micro-interaction processes carried on with each participant by addressing replies and discussion to a single individual at a time; *appreciative conversations* (Powley et al., 2004), characterized by the use of affirmative/denial sequences and conciliatory tone in order to develop shared thoughts; *operational conversational interactions* (Von Krogh & Roos, 1995), where organizations develop detailed-oriented interactions by providing participants with evidence, facts, daily operations, links, and updated information concerning the topics of discussion.

The second interesting result is that the most profitable companies use a centripetal orientation rather than a centrifugal one. This means that they express their positions in a transparent way and try to gain evidence that seeks for consensus and mutual understanding with the public. On the contrary, the use of Facebook or Twitter to stimulate all the actors to convey their messages, to stimulate free discussions, to generate new insights, is not linked to higher financial performances.

This paper also offers a professional and diagnostic tool to analyze the dialogic profiles of companies on Facebook and Twitter. Items in table 2 can be used not only to describe, but also to build and manage specific dialogic strategies. For instance, if a company wants to implement a concertative strategy, it should implement a micro-conversational structure, use an appreciative tone, adopt an operational content, and so on. Through graphical representations in figure 2, companies can monitor how their dialogic profiles appear in a specific moment and how actions implemented on the Web can influence their dialogic profiles.

The research presents one limitation because it is a pilot study, and not statistically representative. Analysis should be extended in terms of sample and data collected. It would be also interesting to prioritize additional issues and directions for future research.

Firstly, it could be interesting to extend the research by adopting different research methods, such as in-depth interviews with the CCOs of those companies that have approached online technologies with success. This analysis can provide useful insights concerning the intended organizational behaviours.

Secondly, as online dialogue strategies can be implemented according to the organizational aims as well as the situational and contextual conditions, it could be useful to expand the research by including the analysis of an organizational online dialogue approach in different communicative scenarios, such as internal communication activities, financial communication initiatives, crisis and issue management processes and stakeholder engagement projects.
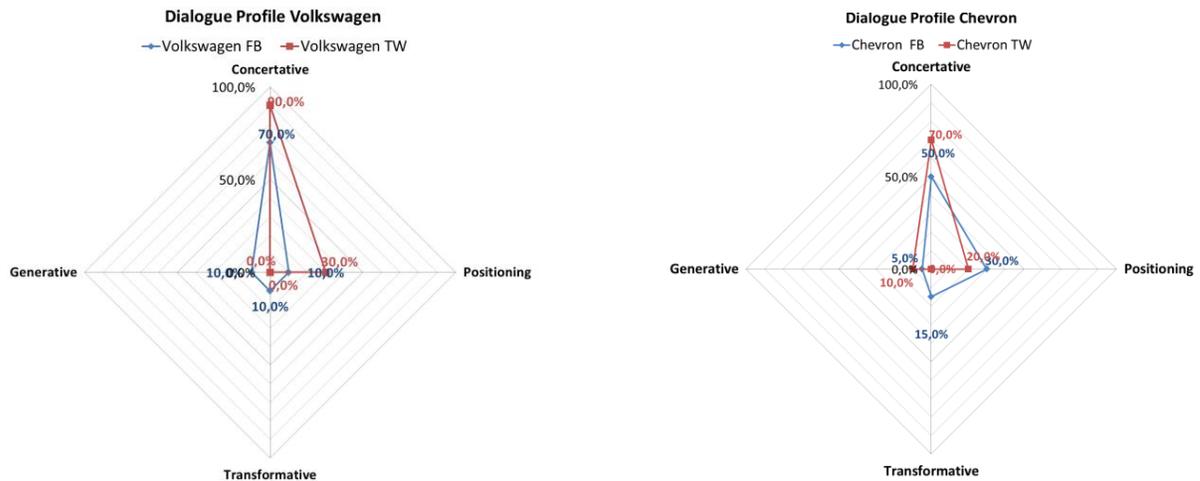
FIGURE 2: Graphical representations of online dialogic profiles: examples Volkswagen and Chevron

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Differences in Perceived Effectiveness of Upward Dissent Strategies between Employees and Managers

Evidence from Singapore

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Effectively communicating dissent in the workplace is important for successful internal communication. Previous literature on organizational dissent has primarily identified different upward dissent strategies and compared the perceived competencies of these strategies only through employees' self-reports. This study, however, compares the perceived effectiveness of upward dissent strategies from both managers' and employees' point of view in a Singaporean context. We conducted a survey among managers and employees to investigate whether these two groups perceived the effectiveness of dissent strategies differently. Through a scenario-based questionnaire, we asked participants to rate how each dissent strategy would bring about a specific desired outcome in various scenarios. While managers and employees rated factual appeal and presentation of solution as effective dissent strategies in different scenarios, both groups consistently rated the threat of resignation as the weakest strategy. Overall, managers rated all dissent strategies higher than employees did, which suggests that management seemed to take employees' dissent seriously. These findings provide evidence for organizations to facilitate their employees' dissent in internal communication.

Singapore is often recognized for its highly skilled and cosmopolitan workforce. The Singapore Workforce 2011 report, a study done by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) in Singapore, found that almost five in ten residents in the workforce have at least a diploma or other professional certification. Singapore also remains the top country in BERI's Labor Force Evaluation Measure, which signifies a consistently productive workforce.

Being a multi-racial society, Singapore has a diverse workforce. Foreign labor makes up a third of Singapore's labor, and the Economic Strategies Committee (ESC) recently announced that it intends to maintain this proportion for at least the next decade. Several months after this announcement, Singapore's defense minister stated that "diversity at the workplace improves the organization's performances".

While promoting diversity's benefits, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) also recognizes the threats that accompany it. In 2011, the Ministry assigned 11% of its budget to promote progressive workplaces. This initiative included the Inclusive and Harmonious Workplaces program. MOM recommended that workplaces should "handle grievances effectively". Its official website advises that "if disputes were left to simmer or are mismanaged, they could lead to more serious issues".

Based on Singapore's sample, we conducted this study to investigate the differences in perceived effectiveness of communication strategies between employees and managers. As

employees voice their grievances or dissent, managers may wrongly interpret the communication strategies that employee's use and not recognize their concerns. At the same time, organizations should provide internal communication mechanism for employees to constructively provide upward dissent. Therefore, this research identifies different perceptions of employees and managers as upward dissent is brought up by employees. Ultimately, the project provides evidence for organizations to improve their internal communication mechanisms and promote a culture in which dissent can be turned into a constructive feedback.

Literature Review

Dissent refers to verbally expressing disagreement or contradictory opinions regarding policies and practices in the workplace (Kassing, 1997). Principled organizational dissent is the effort of individuals in the workplace to protest and/or to change the organizational status quo because of their objection to current policy or practice (Graham, 1986). Unlike chronic complainers, principled dissenters do not object to every organizational decision or policy for random or non-existent reasons.

Dissent provides at least three ethical and practical benefits (Shahinpoor & Matt, 2007). First, dissent reveals an organization's shortcomings. If taken seriously, impersonal organizations can become more humane by responding to employees concerns. This is because dissent provides organizations the opportunity to restore dignity to employees who have been treated as human capital or labor inputs. Second, the dissenter seeks organizational improvement and exhibits integrity by refusing to turn a blind eye to wrongdoing. Questioning and challenging the status quo shows critical thinking and questioning skills. Such creative and analytical capacities are prized values in organizations. Third, dissenters are usually dedicated to moral principles and are loyal employees. Those dissenting employees who are ignored could behave in ways that harm their companies' reputation, or they could become whistle-blowers and potentially damage their organization. In short, when employees' dissent uncovers potential errors or mistakes, it can increase workplace productivity and efficiency.

Three categories of dissent

The literature categorizes the different types of organizational dissent into three types – articulated dissent, latent dissent, and displaced dissent (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001). Articulated dissent is communication with parties in an organization, and concerns feedback given to parties that have the means to cause change, which is usually a direct supervisor or upper management. Latent dissent also concerns voicing opinions to parties in an organization, but excludes higher authorities or the party that the dissent is directed against. Latent dissent is more likely to occur when employees lack the opportunity to express their opinions openly to management or their employer. Lastly, displaced dissent occurs when employees bring their dissent to external parties that are not a part of the organization, which may include a dissenter's significant other or their family and friends. It also includes voicing the dissent to the media or political sources, which is often referred to as whistle-blowing.

Upward dissent strategies

Kassing (2002) studies the various communication strategies that employees use to communicate dissent to upper management by surveying narrative accounts of what people did and said during the times when they expressed their concerns to someone above them in the chain of command.

Kassing identifies five upward dissent strategies: direct-factual appeal, repetition, solution presentation, circumvention and the threat of resignation.

First, direct-factual appeal refers to employees substantiating their dissent with factual information based on physical evidence, their understanding of organizational policies and practices, or their personal work experience. Second, repetition refers to employees mentioning the same opinion repeatedly over a period of time. This particular strategy explicitly concerns the others: that is, one would have to choose a particular dissent strategy, whether factual appeal, solution presentation, threatening resignation, or circumvention, to repeat. Research has revealed that, when employees repeat information, they most often use a direct-factual appeal (Kassing, 2009). Third, solution presentation refers to employees illustrating and proposing ideas about how the dissent-triggering event can be resolved (Kassing, 2002). Employees can use this strategy with or without a direct-factual appeal, and the solutions provided can vary in terms of form and need not necessarily be viable. Fourth, circumvention occurs when the dissenter expresses his opinions to someone higher than his direct supervisor. In Kassing (2005), circumvention was perceived as less competent because it could cause loss of face, which often leads to deterioration of relationships in the workplace (Kassing, 2007). Although, circumvention can solve the issue in question, it is most effective for overcoming organizational issues, however, the most threatening to workplace relationships. Fifth, the threat of resignation refers to employees using resignation to threaten responsiveness from his or her supervisors towards the dissent-triggering issue. In general, Kassing (2005) found that, out of the five upward dissent strategies, direct-factual appeal and solution presentation rated highest in terms of most effective, while the threat of resignation was rated least ceffective. Circumvention and repetition were moderately rated.

Factors that affecting the choice of dissent strategies

Scholars have extensively researched the factors that affect the choice of dissent communication. Kassing (2008) categorizes these factors into three main groups: individual factors, organizational factors, and relational factors.

Individual factors include employees' personalities or predispositions, as well as their affiliation with their organization. In terms of employees' personalities or predispositions, researchers have found that employees' preferences for avoiding conflict (Sprague & Rudd, 1988), loss of control (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001), and arguments (Kassing & Avtgis, 1999) influence their choice of dissent. In addition, Kassing (2000) found that expressing dissent was a function of workplace freedom, and employees who perceived greater identification with their organizations would choose to articulate their dissent more often (Kassing, 2000). Employee satisfaction is also related to their choice of dissent communication (Kassing, 1997).

Organizational factors are the workplace environments where employees express their dissent; that is, an employee's specific workplace context. Organization factors concern a workplace's freedom of expression, its corporate culture, and its climate. Perry, Hegstrom, and Stull (1994) suggest that efforts to engage employees will influence their choice of dissent. Employees' level of identification and attachment to their organization is also a factor when employees determine their choice of dissent (Kassing, 2000). Apart from these, an organization's responses to feedback, and the perception of organizational justice are also considerations that will influence employees' choice of dissent (Graham, 1986; Hegstrom, 1990; Kassing & McDowell, 2008).

Relational factors refer to the relationship between individuals in the workplace, and many researchers have explored the relationship that employees have with their supervisors and coworkers. Typically, a good relationship between supervisors or coworkers will lead to an

employee's preference for articulated and latent dissent over displaced dissent (Kassing, 2000, 2008).

Dissent-triggering events

Besides the individual, organizational, and relational factors, employees also choose to express their dissent as a response to certain circumstances. Kassing and Armstrong (2002) compiled nine categories of dissent-triggering events to study the relationship between each and the various dissent strategies. The nine categories are: employee treatment, organizational change, decision-making, inefficiency, role, responsibility, resources, ethics, performance evaluation, and preventing harm. The authors further classified each of these nine types into three orientations: self -focused, other focused, and neutral. The resulting 27 stems were then reclassified into three categories: Other-focused dissent (issues with co-workers), functional dissent (challenges and organizational issues), and protective dissent (ethical challenges and issues that may cause harm to organizational members). Kassing and Armstrong found that employees preferred to use upward dissent expressions in response to other-focused dissent-triggering events, and functional dissent-triggering events in response to feedback from supervisors and coworkers. (Kassing & Armstrong, 2002).

Hypothesis and research questions

As mentioned previously, because other-focused dissent (i.e., issues related to other coworkers) and functional dissent (e.g., decision making or organizational change) are more likely to generate dissent expressions (Kassing & Armstrong, 2002), we based our study on these two dissent-triggering events. In addition, while we investigated the solution presentation, the threat of resignation, direct-factual appeal, and circumvention upward dissent strategies, we ignored repetition because it only repeats these other four strategies. To assess employees' perceptions about the effectiveness of upward dissent strategies, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Employees will perceive solution presentation as the most effective articulated dissent strategy.

H2: Employees will perceive the threat of resignation as the least effective articulated dissent strategy.

Because most studies on organizational dissent are conducted on employees through self-report questionnaire, the body of scholarship has not addressed the effectiveness of upward dissent strategies from the manager's viewpoint. Therefore, this paper contributes to this area of research by comparing the perceived effectiveness of different upward dissent strategies from both the employee's and the manager's point of view. With the aim of comparing employees' and managers' perceptions on dissent communication, this study also answers the following research questions:

RQ1: Which articulated dissent strategy will managers perceive as the most effective?

RQ2: Which articulated dissent strategy will managers perceive as the least effective?

Methodology

We administered a paper-and-pencil survey questionnaire. The survey assessed which of the four upward dissent strategies– solution presentation, threatening resignation, direct-factual appeal, and circumvention – employees and managers would prefer in the three different scenarios. Based on these same scenarios, we designed two questionnaire sets: Set A for employees and Set B for managers. One hundred and forty one workers in Singapore participated in this study. Ninety two were employees and completed Set A, and the other 49 were managers and completed Set B.

Sample

Respondents worked for a variety of sectors that included communications ($n = 26$), civil service ($n = 23$), finance ($n = 19$), manufacturing ($n = 17$), education ($n = 16$), consumer ($n = 15$), social service ($n = 11$), insurance ($n = 4$), and others ($n = 7$). Three respondents did not indicate their industry. The sample comprises 58 men (42.03%) and 80 women (57.97%). Three respondents did not report their gender. Employees' ages ranged from 23 years old to 59 years old ($M = 31.01$, $SD = 8.340$), and their time spent at their current company ranged from one to 22 years ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 4.84$). One did not report their age. Approximately 81.6% of the employee respondents are Singaporeans or permanent residents. Approximately 85.7% of the employee respondents are Chinese, 2.7% are Malays, 4.8% are Indians, and the remaining 1.4% reported their race as something other than these. Two respondents did not report their race.

Data collection procedure

The survey questionnaires were distributed to graduate students enrolled in a local university, to friends of the researchers, and the colleagues of those friends. Only graduate students and other respondents who were twenty-three years or older and had worked in their current organization for at least a year were invited to complete the questionnaire. The researchers administered the surveys either at the beginning or the end of graduate classes, or distributed the questionnaires to their contacts. Employees who did not hold managerial positions were given the Set A questionnaire, and those with the managerial positions were given the Set B questionnaire.

Instrument

Effective upward dissent strategies are similar to other forms of relational communication competence in that they are goal-oriented interactions. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) propose that instruments to investigate a relational competence construct should meet four criteria. First, the measures of competence should reference behavioral and evaluative impressions. Second, the measures of competence should be related to functional outcomes. Third, measures of competence should be event specific (i.e., not across situations or episodes). Fourth, measures of competence should allow for self and other assessment.

Following these four criteria, the questionnaire constructed for this study employed Likert scales to assess how effective respondents think a particular dissent method was in a particular scenario. The questionnaire contained three scenarios, which we developed based on the dissent-triggering events literature (Kassing & Armstrong, 2002), followed by eight items that describe specific behaviors that represent the four upward dissent strategies for participants to rate their likelihood to achieve goals (Kassing, 2002). That is, we developed a set of two items to describe each strategy of four strategies, producing eight items in total for each scenario. After we checked the

internal consistency between two items by using a scale reliability test, we averaged them to produce a single measure for each strategy. Because this study's objective was to investigate the perceived effectiveness of upward dissent strategies, we operationalized this variable as the managers' likelihood to respond or take action after receiving the dissent. The study also asked participants to rate how possible each dissent strategy was to cause actions that addressed the problem. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were also given open-ended questions to share narrative accounts of their dissent situations.

Data analysis

We employed a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with one among-subjects factor (i.e., type of upward dissent strategies) and one between-subjects factor (i.e., employees against managers). That is, we analyzed the among-subjects factor using repeated measures that compare means of perceived competence for the four dissent strategies as reported by each participant. The among-subject factor was analyzed using an ANOVA that compares the means of employees group against managers group.

As with the open-ended questions, the study asked each respondent to describe an example of upward dissent that they gave or received in a workplace. Only 30 employee participants and 20 manager participants provided working data for this part. We coded their narrative accounts by seeking the patterns that emerge or recurrent themes. For participants who were employees, we identified the dissent strategy that was described, the reasons for dissenting in that manner, the triggering events, and whether the dissent was effective. We deduced the effectiveness by how the employees described their manager's response. For the participants who were managers, we identified their narrative accounts based on how they responded to the employees.

Findings

We employed a two-way ANOVA to compare the means of perceived effectiveness of each of the four dissent strategies between two different groups: managers and employees. We used the Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons to minimize the occurrence of a Type 1 error. We individually conducted the two-way ANOVA for each of the three scenarios because we found that the participants' responses were different among the three scenarios.

First, results of the repeated measures indicated significant differences among the means of perceived effectiveness of the four articulated dissent strategies. H1 proposes that employees would perceive solution presentation as the most effective articulated dissent strategy. The results showed that, in Scenario 2, employees perceived the solution presentation strategy (M=5.16) as the most effective dissent strategy, and direct factual appeal strategy (M= 4.51) as the second most effective dissent strategy. On the other hand, in Scenario 1 and Scenario 3, employees perceived the direct-factual appeal strategy (M=4.96; M=5.737) as the most effective dissent strategy, and solution presentation (M=4.359; M=4.935) as the second most effective dissent strategy. Thus, the findings only partially support H1 in Scenario 2.

H2 proposed that employees would perceive the threat of resignation as the least effective dissent strategy. The results indicated that employees perceived the threat of resignation dissent strategy (M=2.80; M=2.18; M=1.70) as the least effective across all scenarios. Therefore, the findings fully support H2.

RQ1 examined which articulated dissent strategy would be perceived as most effective by managers. The findings show that solution presentation strategy (M=5.15; M=5.83) was perceived

as most effective in Scenario 2 and 3, and the second most effective in Scenario 1 (*M*=4.81). On the other hand, we found that managers perceived the direct-factual appeal strategy (*M*=4.81; *M*=5.75) as the most effective in Scenario 1 (*M*=4.929), and the second most effective in Scenario 2 and 3.

RQ2 examined which articulated dissent strategy would be perceived as the least effective by mangers. Similar to the employee findings, managers perceived the threat of resignation (*M*=3.30; *M*=2.61) as the least effective articulated dissent strategy in Scenario 2 and 3, and circumvention as the least effective in Scenario 1 (*M*=3.49).
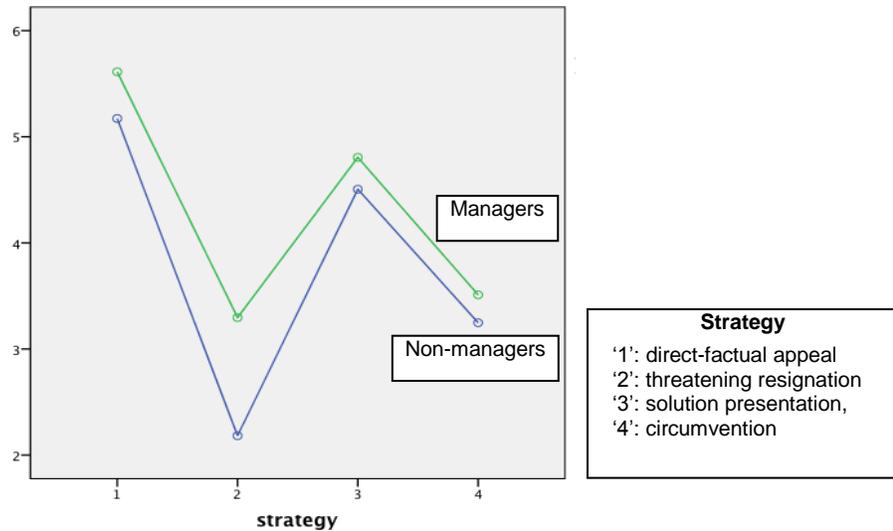
FIGURE 1: Scenario 1
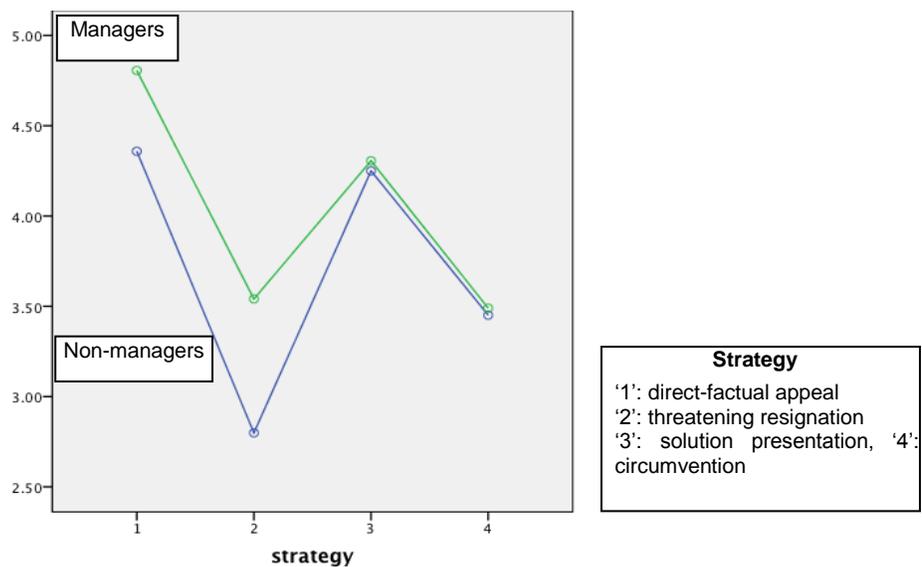
FIGURE 2: Scenario 2
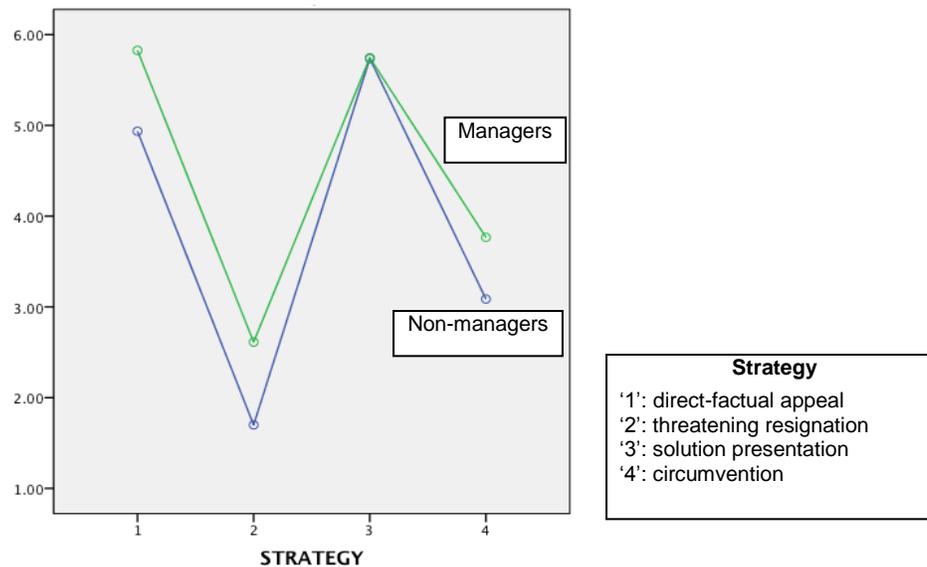
FIGURE 3: Scenario 3

From the narrative accounts that employees provided as responses to open-ended questions, 16.7% of the triggering events described were related to other-focused dissent, 43.4% were related to roles and responsibilities (which is a form of functional dissent), 23.3% were related to inefficiencies (another form of functional dissent), and the remaining 16.7% were related to other categories. These findings confirm that employees tended to express their upward dissents when faced with challenging organizational issues or functional dissents. Regarding the dissent strategies employed, we found that 70% described the use of direct factual appeal as a dissent strategy, 16.7% chose a mix of solution presentation and direct-factual appeal, 10% suggested just solution presentation, and the remaining 3.3% described the other forms of dissent strategies.

The common theme that surfaced among the employees' narrative accounts was the importance of the channel or medium to communicate the upward dissent. In other words, the setting and the tone of dissent communication were highlighted by most participants. Regarding the communication setting, many employees indicated the most effective way to express their dissent was to communicate "face-to-face" with their supervisor or to "[speak] to their manager personally". Many of the employee respondents felt that this led to more "direct and clear" communication. However, the effectiveness of the tone of communication selected by employees appears inconclusive. While one group of employees preferred to us a tone that was "more casual to listen to" in a "less formal environment", another preferred tones that were "matter-of-fact", "calm and professional", and "objective".

Over half of the managerial respondents' narrative accounts indicated some interest to understand the situation, which ranged from wanting to "hear" or "listen and consider his point", to "investigate" or "find out what exactly is the problem", and even to hold "group discussion and extended meetings to discuss the issue". About half the managerial respondents also said that they would "propose solutions" to their employees. In addition, in the response to employee's feedback section, the managers also reported that they would determine the validity of employee's claims, reflect the dissent to a higher staff member, and acknowledge, empathize, reassure, and show appreciation for the feedback.

Discussion

We find that both managers and employees perceived the threat of resignation as the least effective upward dissent strategy (which affirms H2). However, findings for effective dissent strategies were inconclusive because employees and managers perceived both direct-factual appeal and solution presentation as effective strategies in different scenarios. There are possibly two explanations for these findings. First, it is likely that these two dissent strategies are effective for different triggering events. Second, even though Singapore is traditionally a high-power distance culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), the country is trying to modernize its management styles and promote workplace democracy. Singapore's managers and employees are struggling to maintain and manage their evolving power relationships in the workplace. While traditional Singaporean values teach people to respect and listen to the instructions of people in higher positions, they often adopt more egalitarian practices in the workplace. Hence, employees providing solutions to managers when facing problems at work is more acceptable but not yet widely practiced.

Another interesting finding to note is that managers generally perceived all upward dissent strategies as more important than how employees perceived them across all scenarios. This suggests that managers generally appreciate hearing their employees' dissent more than employees expected them to. In her open-ended response, one managerial respondent said that "I am more than happy to attend to these problems. I would rather there be open communication and issues are addressed immediately than quiet dissatisfaction and tension". In addition, in response to their employees' dissent, a majority of the managers mentioned that they would "find out more" or "investigate" the problem. The managerial respondents also mentioned that they would prescribe solutions. This implies that effective dissent strategies do not necessarily lead to immediate solutions to a problem. Instead, the strategies direct the managers' attention to the issue.

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, each dissent strategy is treated as independent from each other in this research but, in reality, employees would most likely combine them. Second, the number of managers and employees who participated in this study was not proportionate to each other. It would have been ideal to have roughly the same number of people in both groups of participants. Third, the study was based on general hypothetical scenarios that certain number of respondents may never have encountered, or, if they had, may have had different details. In addition, respondents came from a wider variety of organizations, thus the scenarios may not have been relevant to some of them. Because we attempted to find general empirical evidence using a questionnaire survey, contextual factors such as the organizational culture, the nature of the industry, and the previous encounters of individuals in the organization were not taken into consideration. Future studies could investigate upward dissent in a more holistic manner.

Conclusion

While employees and managers saw direct-factual and solution presentation in different triggering scenarios as the most effective upward dissent , both parties rated the threat of resignation as the least effective strategy in this study. Additionally, our findings also suggest that managers seemed to be more open to upward dissent than what the employees expected. This provides evidence for organizations to a culture where employees feel trusted and comfortable to express their concerns. Most importantly, upward communication channels should be provided and management should honestly take feedback in order to demonstrate that employees' voices

are taken seriously and that there is no hesitation among employees to communicate their dissent.

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Do Internal Communication Efforts Aimed to Generate Trust Always Produce Employee Engagement

A Research Study at Micron Technology Italy

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Purpose: to investigate the relationship between employee trust towards the company and their commitment to it. For this reason, this study questioned if certain levels of trust presented in each department at Micron Technology Italy corresponded to the same high levels of commitment.

Approach: a survey involving 892 employees at Micron Technology Italia, according to the "Casual relationships model between organizational properties" (Bolognini, 2003) and the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

Findings: the research findings show that for departments where trust values are below 6.8, the commitment level follows the trust value: there is a positive relation between these two factors. However, departments where employee trust reaches values higher than 6.8, commitment does not correspond with the same high trust values. The system tends to reach a "satisfaction point".

Research Implications: the results are only partially coherent with previous studies. Further research is needed to determine whether these reports hold true under different situations/companies.

Practical Implications: internal communication managers should reflect about communication strategies aimed to generate trust as commitment does not seem to be continuously increasing. After a certain point it is not cost-effective for the company to implement communication strategies aimed at increasing employee trust in a non-targeted way. The need for customized communication strategies emerges as does the importance of understanding internal communication as integrated with other human resource management levers.

Keywords: Commitment, Trust, Internal communication

Paper type: Case study/research

The real challenge of the new millennium is about *people,* not technology. Even Nobel Prize, Gary Becker (1993) has not hesitated to define human capital as a powerful growth engine in contemporary society and the future.

Starting from a model developed on a scientific basis, the purpose of this paper is to question if and to what extent investment in Internal Communication aimed to build the trust of employees towards their own company produce their work commitment. For this reason, the paper presents a study that measured the correlation between trust and commitment for each department at Micron Technology Italy.

Conceptual Background

Several studies about the relationship between employees' trust and commitment have been conducted. Commitment can be defined as the employees' desire to maintain their position in the company, their participation, empowerment and emotional attachment to the company (Mowday et al., 1979). Trust can be defined as employees' expectation towards the company as a whole as well as towards the management (Bolognini, 2003). The working relationship looks more and more like a trust partnership in which both sides promise a mutual commitment. When there is no commitment the relationship ends (Weizmann, Weizmann 2000).

In the following discussion, previous studies and theories dealing with trust and commitment will be illustrated in more detail.

Social exchange theory

Eisenberger R., Huntington R., Hutchison S. e Sowa D. (1986) expanded the *Social Exchange Theory* and the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964) in order to explain the relationship between trust in management and employee commitment. According to Eisenberg and colleagues, "employee commitment to the organization is strongly influenced by their perception of the organization's commitment to them" (Eisenberger et al., 1986:1). Beneficial actions directed at employees by the organization will contribute to the establishment of high quality exchange relationships, which in turn, "create obligations for employees to reciprocate in positive, beneficial ways" (Setton et al., 1996, p.219). One way for an employee to "repay" the treatment is through increased commitment (Nasurdin et al., 2008).

Employees have the tendency to personify the organization. They interpret organizational actions as indicative of the personified organization's commitment to them. "In return, employees will reciprocate this gesture by increasing their own commitment to the organization" (Nasurdin et al., 2008). In this way, the social exchange theory is applied to the relationship between a personified organization and its employees.

Exchange processes evolve because individuals are interested in keeping a balance between inputs and outputs and having a positive balance in their transactions. Employees perceive organizational actions as something for which they 'feel obliged' to pay off or reciprocate with their commitment to the organization. In this way, according to Whitener (2001:519), employees' commitment to the organization will be "positively and significantly correlated with their trust in management". According to the Social Exchange theorists we expect to find trust and commitment as closely linked to one another because employees give to the company as much as they think they will receive.

Causal relationships model between organizational properties

Thanks to a study on 66 companies, Bolognini (2003) identified several organizational variables that enhance employee commitment. They are: trust, loyalty, identity, control and empowerment. Their presence or absence in a company can measure the weight, degree of sharing and lever effect in generating commitment.

Trust, according to Bolognini (2003), has a strong influence on employee commitment. Bolognini has affirmed that "one cannot expect high levels of commitment in organizations that demonstrate low levels of trust" because there is a positive relation between these two factors. Trust acts like a lever to generate commitment: organizations that nourish high levels of trust in

their company usually respond with behaviors characterized by the same high level of commitment.

The combined effects of all organizational variables in the described model have been studied on 66 companies by path analysis techniques. Figure 1 shows the links between organizational variables and employees commitment through two paths. The first one is the direct action to control the commitment, shown at the bottom of the figure. The second one is a more complex path that identifies as a starting point trust and loyalty levers that through a "chain reaction" allow the generation of empowerment which directly influences commitment. Empowerment and supervision are considered the direct levers for the creation of commitment and contribute in different ways and with different weights to influencing it; particularly, empowerment has a greater weight than the latter. Other levers (loyalty and trust) act indirectly on the commitment, because they directly influence the sense of identity that the employee has towards the company. Thus the sense of identity will increase or decrease the empowerment and only the latter will act directly on the commitment, generating committed behaviors by the employee.
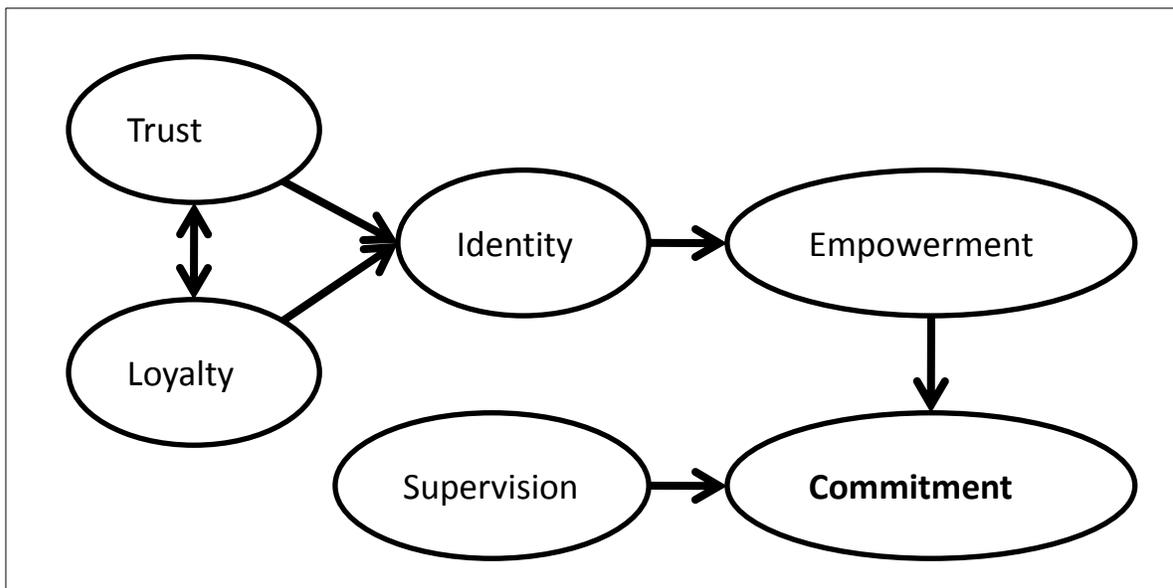
FIGURE 1: "Causal relationships model between organizational properties" (Bolognini, 2003).

Further Studies

Many other studies have dealt with trust and commitment. For example, MacMillan, Money and Downing (2000) developed a *model of corporate relationships* affirming that a company's past behaviors determine expectations for employee future conduct. Furthermore, they stated that whether by virtue of the company's past behavior, employees have received a high exchange value they nourish trust in the company.

This model forecasts, therefore, that the trust relationship will lead employees to engage in commitment behaviors (active allegiance). If, however, the company cannot measure the level of the relationship that looks like a problem, the employee will tend not to commit or to end the relationship. Basically, if the employee receives a positive report, she/he will maintain continuity

of commitment behaviors. The authors also said that commitment could be high and trust low when a business is using coercive power to ensure that its internal stakeholders/employees behave in a certain way. This is true exclusively in the short-term, when commitment may be maintained by the exercise of coercion. On the other hand, commitment could be low and trust high when a business is no longer offering employees benefits that are comparable to its competitors, but is still trusted because it has always kept its commitment to its employees. Also, this case is a temporary situation. If the company doesn't improve the employees' benefits, there will be trust reduction.

Also some scholars of *game theory*, inspired by the classic game of *prisoner's dilemma*, have shown that strategies based on trust are the best. In fact, when a working relationship is developed under conditions of risk, forecasting continuity in the relationship, the rational choice seems to be to trust each other. Trust is an important intangible resource, a major component of human capital which directly or indirectly influences peoples' behavior (Miller G.J., 1992).

Mazzei (2004, 2007 and 2010) develops a *Resource Model of Internal Communication* defining it as the set of interaction processes designed to generate resources for catalyzing operations. These resources are the knowledge that nourishes the work processes and the active allegiance of employees, which motivates them to enter knowledge into business processes. What motivates employees to commit themselves to apply their knowledge for the company they belong to? It is the active allegiance with their company. Active allegiance is loyalty which implies deciding to stay in a relationship and avoiding opportunism. Active allegiance produces behaviors such as "referring others to the firm or speaking well of it; contradicting others who seem to be falsely critical of the business; informing the management of the business if they believe something they observe is wrong and may harm the business in some way; and, themselves deliberately doing things to preserve or enhance the good name of the business" (MacMillan et al., 2000: 11).

Methodology

Based on the literature review, this research was aimed at finding if certain levels of trust present inside each department corresponded to the same high levels of commitment. The research was conducted in 2005 using a survey data collection method. The survey was rated as the most appropriate instrument to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of data and interpreted according to the "*model of the causal relationship between organizational properties*" (Bologini, 2003). The questionnaire was sent to all the 1580 employees of the company. 892 employees of Micron Technology Italy participated in the survey, with a response rate of 56.46%.

The survey's aim was to investigate the following study areas: corporate identity, supervision/control, empowerment, trust and commitment. The questionnaire included 78 statements (with a point-scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a negative value and 10 a positive value). The 78 statements were structured so that when employees expressed agreement or partial agreement on a given subject, it would have been seen as positive; otherwise, it would have been seen as a negative opinion.

This paper shows the data relating exclusively to the research areas of commitment and trust. For each single statement within the category, the average value was calculated. The data contained in the findings here below were obtained by calculating the average of the values obtained for all the statements within the category. In particular, the category commitment and trust were composed of 12 statements each. As an example, three questions are listed by category.

Commitment Category:

        I have never thought of leaving this company;

        I feel involved in the type of work I do;

        I feel that the company problems are also mine.

Trust Category:

        I trust the company;

        The company takes into consideration the employees opinions;

        I trust the decisions made by management.

Data relating to multiple choice statements were processed, graphical and tabular forms were elaborated using statistical system, utilizing as variables for stratification the demographics information collected (functions and pertinent departments).

Participants' qualification was distributed as follows: 685 employees were high school graduates, up to 76.8% of the sample; 185 participants were university graduates.

The sample is made up largely by the shift workers (67%)., Daily workers represent 33% of the sample.

Functions differentiation was summarized as follows: 59% of all the Micron Italy supervisors who are exempt, equal to 8% of the sample; 67% of the Micron Italy population who are not supervisors but exempts, equal to 23% of the sample; 72% of the Micron Italy population who are supervisors but non-exempt, equal to 5% of the sample; 49% of the Micron employees who are neither supervisors nor non-exempt, equal to 64% of the sample. The term exempt indicates an employee that does not have to clock out when he/she leaves the office, they only have to clock-in. The term supervisor indicates all those people who have the responsibility to manage other people.

As the paper presents a comparison between different departments, it is important that each of these is statistically represented compared to all the employees from that department. Departments' differentiation was summarized in Table 1:

TABLE 1: Departments' participation

Department	% of participation inside the department
MFG	56.9
FAB ENG	45.7
FACILITIES	57.2
ESHS	62.5
PURCHASING	78.8
IT	70.6
AMDN & SUPPORT	52.9
INTEGRATION	55.2

Findings

The graphs in figure 2 show that for both the departments and functions differentiation a one to one relationship between trust and commitment is confirmed where the trust value is below 6.8. In fact, according to the conceptual background, results highlight that, for each department/function, certain levels of trust corresponded to the same high levels of commitment.

Departments or functions that show high levels of employee trust also show high commitment levels. Commitment level is generally higher than trust.
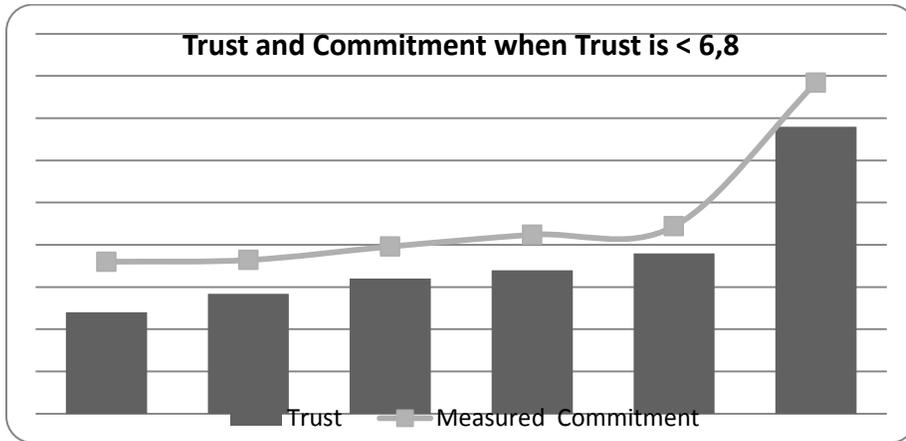
FIGURE 2: Trust and commitment when trust is < 6,8

According to the Bolognini's research, trust acts like a lever to generate commitment: the commitment level follows the trust value because trust has a strong influence on employee commitment. According to the *Social Exchange Theory* this means that individuals are interested in keeping a balance between inputs and outputs and having a positive balance in their transactions: in other words, the employee decides to commit himself depending on the level of trust he assumes the organization recognizes in him. A clear linear relationship with a 45 degree slope appears evident also in the figure 3.
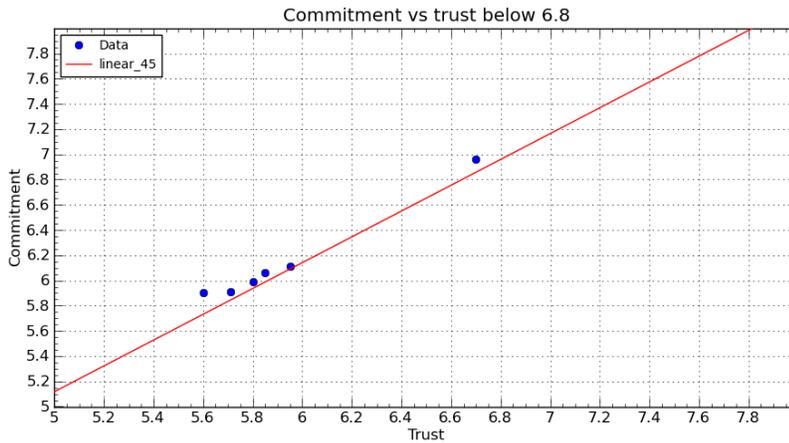
FIGURE 3: Plot of commitment versus trust for values below 6.8.

On the other hand, the results (Figure 4) show that departments where employee trust reaches values higher than 6.8, commitment values start to go into saturation and for every level of trust commitment does not correspond as expected with the same high trust values. In these cases, commitment is generally lower than trust. It tends to stabilize going under the trust level. The impact of trust on commitment ends.
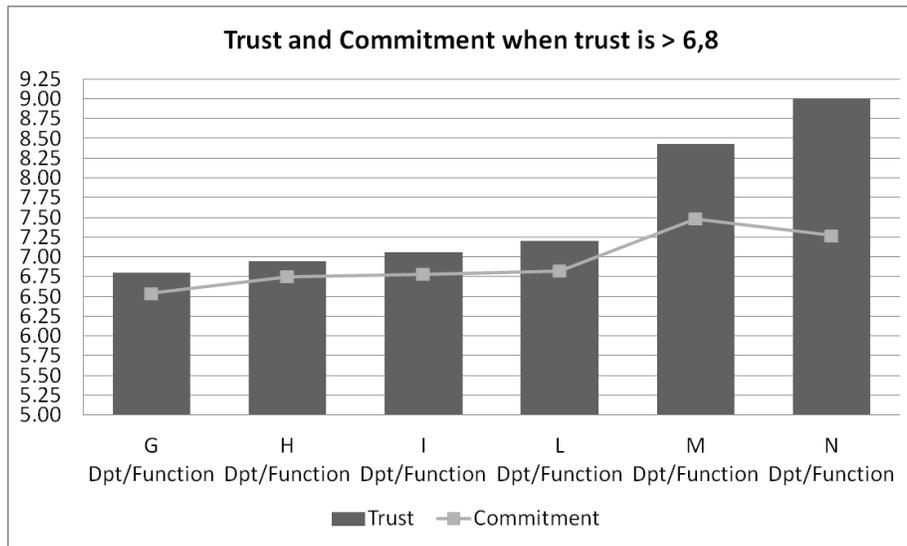
FIGURE 4: Trust and Commitment when Trust is > 6,8

Although inappropriate, we can state that after a certain critical threshold, every increase in trust does not result in commitment increase.

This is even more clearly visible putting together all departments (figure 5) and plotting the commitment versus the trust (regardless its value). Above 6.8/7 of trust the commitment reach a plateau around 7.25 of commitment. A good fit is obtained using a rational model. The R2 is 0.995.
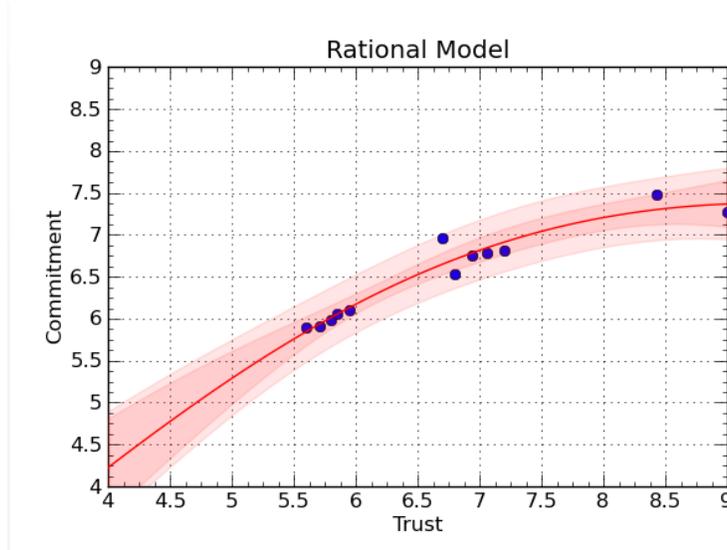
FIGURE 5: Plot of Commitment versus Trust.

The fit of experimental data has been done using a rational model given by:

$$C = \frac{a + bT}{1 + cT + cT^2}$$

Where C is for commitment and T is for trust. The free parameters of model (a, b, c, d) have been defined by the least square method. Below are their values (table 2):

TABLE 2: Free Parameters of Rational Model

Parameters	
Name	Value
a	7.308794670455595E-04
b	8.102740051373760E-01
c	-1.039213997255908E-01
d	1.142059071181677E-02

In the table 3 the overview of fitting parameter is reported. Notice the high R square value indicating a very good correlation between commitment and trust. The standard error is 0.143.

TABLE 3: Overview of Fitting data of Plot in Figure 5

Overview

Name	Rational Model
Kind	Regression
Family	Miscellaneous
Equation	$y = (a+b*x)/(1 + c*x + d*x^2)$
# of Indep. Vars	1
Standard Error	0.14348
Correlation Coeff. (r)	0.997837
Coeff. of Determination (r^2)	0.995678
DOF	9

Parameters

	Value	Std Err	Range (95% confidence)
a	0.000730879	0.143475	-0.323832 to 0.325294
b	0.810274	0.205463	0.345483 to 1.27506
c	-0.103921	0.044398	-0.204357 to -0.00348609
d	0.0114206	0.00210909	0.00664949 to 0.0161917

Discussion

Findings of the present study show that employees' trust does not always lead to employee commitment behaviors inside the organization: there is a point beyond which the mutual trust between the company and employees shall not create any leverage in commitment, which in fact stabilizes beneath the trust level.

Research results indicate that a very high level of trust produces commitment stabilization. The hypothesis to be explored with further analysis can be expressed with the concept of Marginal Utility.

Marginal utility can be defined as the utility brought by the last unit or dose consumed of a good (in our case of trust). Marginal utility is constant if the increase in the consumption of a good (trust) is followed by a constant increase of marginal utility of that good (in our case increase of commitment). Instead, the decreasing marginal utility law states that the increase of consumption of a good (trust), is followed by a decrease of the marginal utility of that good (commitment). Figure 6 shows a commitment value higher than that of the trust value before the

6.8 level. After this level, the commitment value does not show values as high but it stabilizes beneath the trust level. The "marginal utility in terms of commitment" that is generated by trust follows the trust levels until a certain point (6.8). After this point, the commitment values start to go into saturation and, for every level of trust superior to 6.8, the commitment does not correspond as expected with the same high values, which according to the exchanging theory should have been maintained. Instead the commitment levels are lower than expected.
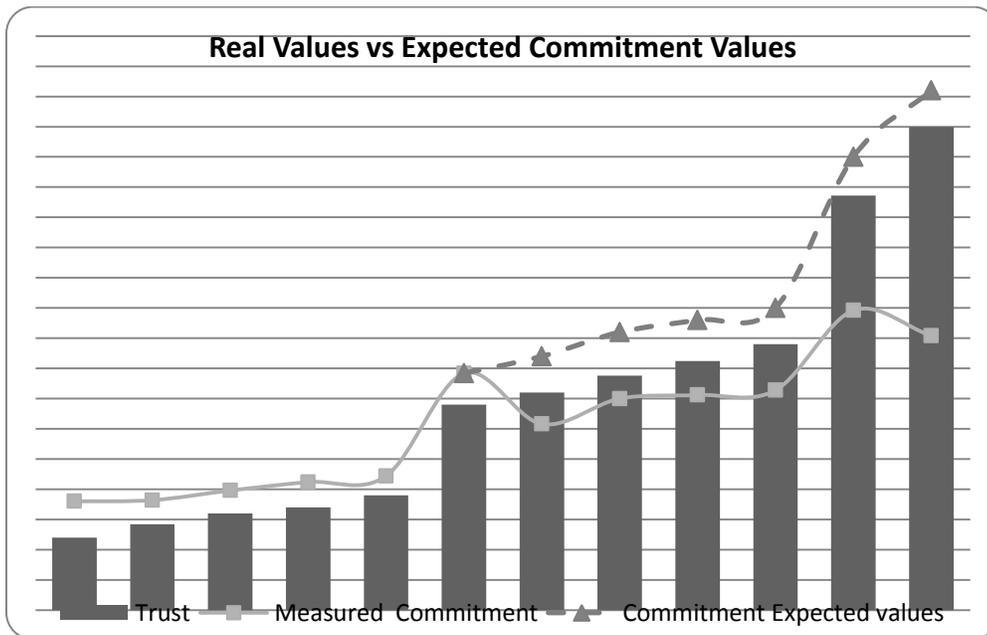
FIGURE 6: Real Values versus Expected Commitment Values

Figure 7 shows that starting from the 6.8 trust level the system tends to get near a "satisfaction point" and the increase of trust is followed by a decrease of the marginal utility. Although the level of commitment increases (with the exception of the N Dpt/Function – fig. 6) it doesn't increase as we expect it to, due to the decrease of the marginal utility generated by trust. Probably a satisfaction point will be reached when any other increases in the trust levels will not bring any increase in commitment utility (estimated value of 8.75). At the point of satiety, the marginal utility is zero.

The red line demonstrates the expected values if the relation was one to one or when the value of trust is lower than 6.8. The cyan circles represent the real data. As shown in the figure 7, the actual data coming from our research is quite a distance from the anticipated results (red line). Once again, the actual data tends to saturate around a value of commitment equal to ~7.25.
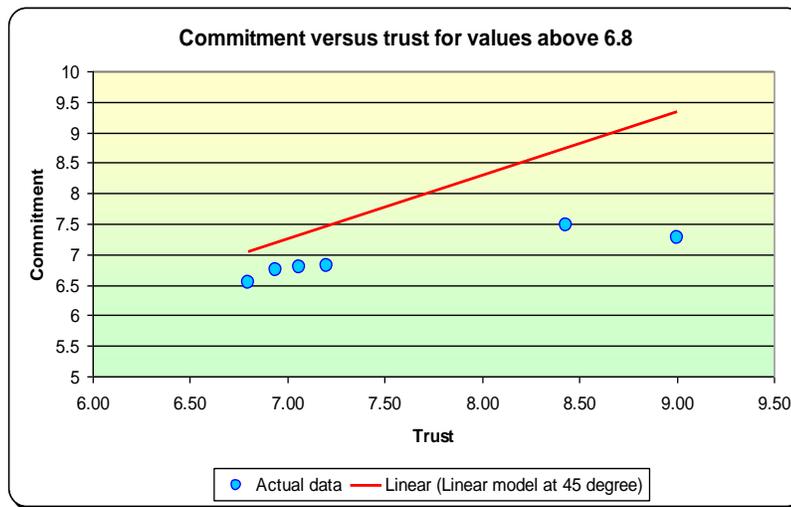
FIGURE 7: Commitment versus Trust for Values above 6.8.

To better understand the concept of Marginal utility we can think about the behavior an employee might have seeing a strawberry pie. The first piece of pie would be very pleasing, bringing a significant increase in utility. Utility increase that would generate a second piece of pie, although substantial, would certainly be less than the first one. The increase in the third one would be still less, and so on. In the case of strawberry pie, it is then also likely to imagine that there will be a point where our customer will be "full". Once the point of satiety is reached, any other increase in the consumption of the good (other pieces of pie eating) is useless and does not bring any increase in utility. At the point of satiety, the marginal utility is zero (the consumer is indifferent whether to eat the piece of pie or not) because his level of satisfaction is maximum.

Conclusion: Implications for Internal Communication Management

What is the point in investing money, time and effort on increasing employees' trust seeing that the commitment level does not grow once the trust has achieved a certain value? The literature highlights that internal communication acts as a lever to generate employee trust relationships. This study underlines that at a high level and in certain circumstances, a high level of trust is not directly connected to a proportional level of commitment. Because commitment is the real aim of internal communication, not just trust; it appears that in this case the investment in internal communication is not useful, although it is effective in building trust.

Hence, the need for customized communication strategies emerges. Beyond a certain point it is not cost-effective for the company to implement communication strategies aimed at increasing employees' trust in a non-targeted way. What becomes important is the relationship between management and employees, the combination of information that management provides to employees as a whole, which results in employees' disposition to show trust. To communicate for trust, therefore, generic messages, although aesthetically excellent, are not enough: the recipient is very careful and sensitive so there might be the risk of outcomes exactly opposite to those that the internal communication would activate.

Commitment is not an individual variable, but an organizational variable that results from policies, strategic choices, management methods, power relationships, conflicts and psychological climate (Bolognini, 2003). The complexity of the management levers from which

the commitment depends, makes internal communication just one among many possible solutions to be used, but not the only one. In particular, internal communication seems to be particularly suitable to generate trust that is the foundation upon which to build committed behaviors (Bolognini, 2003). The point is to figure out which way to invest in internal communication in order to ensure that efforts to build trust turn into commitment and actions. The need is to invest in a more targeted way on developing relationships which permit the passage from the "stage of trust" to the "stage of commitment". This passage includes also internal communication strategies that can lead to commitment if they are supported by other proprieties, such as a management *sensemaking* process (Weick, 1995), the combined use of several levers related to the human resources management, and the adoption of a shared and shareable vision. In other words, trust, the assumption of commitment, is transformed into a real commitment when internal communication is able to produce employees' enablement which places them in the condition to implement the employee strategic behaviors, as shown in a recent field study (Mazzei, 2011).

Also, the analyzed literature in this paper shows that commitment depends on an empowerment's lever (Bolognini 2003) and it is supported by a reciprocal commitment relationship between the company and employee (Eisenberger et al., 1986). So, when the lever of internal communication generates very high levels of trust, not reciprocated by a proportional commitment level, it may depend on the complexity of the variables on which the commitment is made. In order to obtain optimal commitment level, synergistic actions are required between all the variables in the game so integrated communication and human resources management efforts are needed.

Synthesizing, when the lever of internal communication generates a level of trust not reciprocated by a proportional commitment level, three interpretative hypotheses occur:

- lack of benefits compared to competitors (MacMillan, Money, Downing, 2000). Which is a marginal status and easily identifiable;
- the weakness of the employees perception of the organization's commitment to them (Eisenberg et al., 1986). Then the company must increase its commitment and make it transparent;
- the need for more investment in internal communication considered as an integrated propriety with other levers such as human resource management and interpersonal communication manager's skills and oriented to develop employee enablement in a targeted manner (Mazzei, 2011).

Based on the third point, internal communication moves from simple "messages sending" to a function integrated into human resource management and policy: a catalyst of resources, of knowledge, and allegiance aimed towards enabling pro-active employee behaviors (Mazzei, 2010 and 2011).

The results of this should cause scholars and professionals to reflect on the purpose of internal communication strategies. They should not necessarily be oriented to improve trust in all the employees at the same time, but be more and more personalized and managed by the direct supervisor. A communication policy of this kind can be a real instrument to be used in a variety of ways over time, in different settings and among various people.

As mentioned, commitment is not an individual variable, but an organizational variable and, given that in this paper employees' commitment is considered something directly correlated with their trust in management, further research is needed to determine whether these reports hold true under different situations/companies and variables.

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The Dynamic Interplay of Visual and Textual Identification Strategies in a Corporate Context

A Multimodal Analysis of *Grundfos* Employees' Magazines

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This paper explores how corporate identity is communicated through texts and images in Grundfos employees' magazines.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary methodological framework related to organizational identification theory and social semiotics, it proposes a multimodal analysis model through which several identification strategies are explored at the level of each semiotic mode and at the level of the modes' interplay. The paper explains how corporate identity is communicated in accordance with the potential and constraints of texts and images. It claims that by exploring how these semiotic modes reinforce, complement or subvert each other, the identification strategies can be more thoroughly addressed.

This paper expands the existing research work by examining the semiotic modes' complex interconnectivity and functional differentiation in corporate identity communication, extending the usual textual focus to a multimodal one. Shedding light on how the multimodal interplay contributes to communicate corporate identity, this model can be employed by communicators in order to nuance and improve their communicative practice.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Identification strategies, Semiotic modes, Multimodal interplay

The processes of identity construction, maintenance or renewal continue to be challenging for any organization. Issues relating to identity and the idea of employees identifying with their organization have been of interest for researchers for many years. Research in topics related to organizational identification spans different domains such as corporate communications, management, marketing, organizational behaviour, social and organizational psychology and human resources (Cornelissen *et al.* 2007; Chaput *et al*., 2011).

Although the topic of establishing, maintaining or renewing a corporate identity has been the focus of many research endeavors, none of them has referred in detail to the roles of semiotic modes other than language. Larson and Pepper consider that discourses are crucial in these processes because identities are "produced and reproduced through the discursive process of identification" (Larson and Pepper, 2003, p.532). Borrowing Barker's concept of "discursive formations" (Barker, 1999, p.32), Larson and Pepper claim that "identities are expressed through language" (Larson and Pepper, 2003, p.529), mainly due to the fact that they analyze interview accounts.

As this case study examines identification strategies in *Grundfos* employees' magazines (*www.grundfos.com*), we depart from their approach because our set of data, namely these magazines, is characterized by a continuous interplay of texts and images, and we consider that the discursive formations to be explored are multimodal ones. We consider that only by addressing this interplay it is possible to gather nuanced insights into how identification strategies

are articulated in multimodal corporate communication. Kress highlights that multimodality is "the normal state of human communication" in general (Kress, 2009a, p.1). Therefore, although "multimodal analysis is an intensive research process both in relation to time and labour" (Jewitt, 2009, p.27), we have chosen this in-depth analytical method in order to shed light on a range of multimodal aspects of identification strategies that haven't been explored until now. Our conviction is that educators, researchers and practitioners alike may gain inspiration for employing the following methodological tools and analytical findings in their interest fields.

The Conceptual Framework: Organizational Identification and Multimodality

Research on organizational identity[i] and identification is rooted in social identity theory, which describes processes of social categorization and identification with groups and organizations. The reasons for the research interest in identification can be attributed to a variety of organizational beneficial outcomes associated with the concept (Ashforth, Harrisson, and Corley, 2008). Organizational identification can increase employees' intrinsic motivation (van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000), work satisfaction and job involvement (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; van Dick *et al.*, 2004; Riketta, 2005), defence of the organization (Edwards, 2005), and decrease turnover intentions (Scott *et al.*, 1999) and reactions to downsizing (Brockner *et al.*, 1987). In this context, previous research has shown that management communication seems to play an important role in facilitating organizational identification (Tanis and Beukeboom, 2011; DiSanza and Bullis, 1999; Vaughn, 1997; Fiol, 2002; Cheim, 2002; Cheney, 1983).

 Cheney (1983) argues that organizations attempt to influence employee identification through persuasive communication. He states that an individual who is inclined to identify with an organization (or an organizational subunit) will be open to persuasive efforts from various sources within an organization. In his study (1983) of identification strategies in corporate house organs, he derived four common strategies used to facilitate employee identification: (a) *the common ground technique* (the organization communicates to the individual that they share the same values and goals, and offers the employee an organizational identity) (p. 148), (b) *identification through antithesis* (this strategy is defined as "act of uniting against a common 'enemy' and occurs when outsiders are portrayed as threats to the organization" (p. 148), (c) *the assumed or transcendent "we"* (this strategy is used when it is taken for granted that the employee and the organization share the same interests) (p. 149) and (d) *unifying symbols* (this strategy is used to portray organizational symbols and their meaning, e.g. a logo or a brand) (p. 155).

 Following and refining Cheney's categories, DiSanza and Bullis (1999) conducted a study on identification inducements in an organizational newsletter from the U.S. Forest Service and how the employees responded to that newsletter. They found that organizations continue to use the identification strategies and tactics that Cheney (1983) identified in his study and observed four new strategies: (a) *global recognition of individuals* (praise for a class or group of people), (b) *recognition of individuals' contributions outside the organization* (recognizes individuals for their donation of time, money, effort, or receiving awards from outside the organization), (c) *invitation* (requesting individuals to become part of the organization) and (d) *bragging* (boasting about dedication to a task). Supporting Cheney's line of thought, Chreim (2002) studied the identification-inducement strategies used by management in articles from house organs of two Canadian organizations during organizational change. She added the strategy *exemplification* to the common ground tactics identified by Cheney (1983) and DiSanza and Bullis (1999). The exemplification strategy was used to portray employees who had made a transition from embracing the old perspectives in the organization to appropriating the new

desired attributes by management. In this perspective, she concluded that management made extensive use of shift in identification, which consisted of dis-identification and re-identification. Related to this, Chreim introduced the notion of *confluence*, which was established by reframing the meaning of past organizational experiences (both negative and positive) so that they appeared consistent with the present and a positive and bright future. Additionally, in a study on rhetorical strategies used by management to promote change, Fiol (2002) identified the rhetorical tools that management used to redefine and transform organizational identities in order to help employees to progress through organizational change. Vaughn (1997) examined the corporate discourse in high technology industries to analyse the value-based identification strategies in a recruitment and socialization process. Her study indicated that organizational identification was created, nurtured and maintained rhetorically through the espousal of shared values in order to socialize individuals for aligning them with organizational goals and objectives.

In light of the important role that organizational identification is given in the context of management communication, only a relatively limited number of studies have focused on multimodal identification strategies in corporate contexts. Specifically, studies on how images in themselves or combined with texts can influence the ways in which companies try to facilitate organizational identification are underrepresented. In fact, multimodality as a methodological tool has been acknowledged rarely in corporate communication research, although the interplay of several semiotic modes has been employed traditionally in various corporate materials. Maier considers that "multimodal texts making meaning in multiple semiotic articulations and multimedia contexts are central in contemporary corporate communication" (Maier, in press).

In the field of multimodality research, several studies have addressed various multimodal aspects of corporate communication. Kress and Van Leeuwen, (2006 and 2001), Thibault (2000), Machin and Van Leeuwen (2007) and Stöckl (2004) are among those who address multimodal issues in corporate advertising, discussing a variety of changing semiotic landscapes and global contexts. Lemke (2009) transcends the analysis of advertisements and investigates the phenomenon of transmedia franchises, while Maier focuses on corporate videos (2011) and multimedia resource kits (2008a and b).

For the purposes of this paper, clarification of our understanding of multimodality and multimodal relations is relevant. We adopt the definition of multimodality provided by its founding fathers, Kress and Van Leeuwen, who state that multimodality is "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p.20). Kress defines a semiotic mode as "a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack are examples of modes used in representation and communication" (Kress, 2009b, p. 54). Stöckl highlights a well-known phenomenon for researchers in multimodality, the fact that "meaning made in one mode may be repeated or paralleled in another, or it may be complemented, negated, contradicted or reinterpreted etc."(Stöckl, 2004, p.26). For these researchers, "each mode is *partial* in relation to the whole of meaning" (Kress and Jewitt, 2003, p.3).

In the case of the present employees' magazines, the multimodal analysis of identification strategies is inextricably linked with the exploration of the meaning-making role of the combination of language and images. Furthermore, "by examining the interconnectivity of employed modes, multimodal analysis can also establish which modes are given prominence in creating different types of meaning" (Maier *et al*., 2007, p.454). We should mention at this point that various types of intersemiotic relations have been identified and classified by several researchers in multimodality in a wide range of multimodal texts: Van Leeuwen (1991 and 2005), Lemke (1998), Lim (2004), Macken-Horarik (2004), Martinec and Salway (2005), Unsworth

(2006), Knox (2007) and Royce (2007). Our investigation of language-image interplay and its roles in establishing and maintaining *Grundfos*' corporate identity in employees' magazines is based on the findings of these researchers, especially on Van Leeuwen's work, and it extends their classifications according to the specificity of our multimodal data.

Data Transcription and Method

The data of this case study includes 230 articles and 510 images from six *Gmagazines* that have appeared in 2010 and 2011. These employees' magazines address an international audience as *Grundfos Group* has extended to 62 countries. The magazines are translated in Danish, English, German, French, Hungarian, Chinese and Russian. Each magazine appears in 18,600 copies four times a year.

Each article and image in all six *Gmagazines* has been coded in terms of textual and visual identification strategies and their multimodal interplay. Our transcription strategy has been based on the assumption that the meanings of a multimodal text can be captured only by specifying the ways in which verbal and visual semiotic resources are combined. The full wording of each textual identification strategy has been included, and the image attributes have been verbally transcribed. The main types of images that are used in the magazines include photos, drawings, cartoon-like drawings and computer graphics. The types of photos that appear recurrently in *Grundfos* employees' magazines are (de)contextualized close-up and medium shots of individual management representatives and of individual employees, medium and long shots of groups of management representatives and groups of employees, various types of shots of *Grundfos'* logo, products, awards and prizes, and long shots of *Grundfos*' buildings. Apart from these types of images, there are also various types of shots of persons and places from all over the world that have been positively affected by *Grundfos*' international initiatives.

Although it has been necessary to separate the textual semiotic resources from the visual ones in order to discern how each of them contributes to making meaning, it is important to point out that we agree with Thibault when he emphasizes that "meaning is the result of the complex, often intricate, relations of inter-functional solidarity among the various semiotic resource system that are co-deployed" (Thibault, 2000, p.321). The following table provides a sample of the transcription method which was used for each *Gmagazine* text as a basis for the multimodal analysis.

Title & page	Textual identification tactics		Visual identification tactics		Multimodal interplay
	Type	Example	Type	Example	
Dear colleague p.2	The assumed "we"	*We have made it through the first six months*	Unifying symbol: visual identification *of* management representative	*Demand* image: medium long shot of middle-aged male, smiling, eye contact with viewers, relaxed posture	Extension through complementation: identification *with* management & organization
	Recognition of collective contribution	*We succeeded by working hard and by making clear priorities*			
	Espousal of shared values	*We will stand firm and strong*			
	The espousal of sustainability commitment	*Innovation Intent is our vision towards 2025 about creating sustainable innovation for a growing world*			

When introducing the social semiotic approach to multimodality as "a form of inquiry", Van Leeuwen highlights the fact that "it always requires immersing oneself not just in semiotic concepts and methods as such but also in some other field" (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p.1), thus

reinforcing our decision to combine the social semiotic approach to multimodality with identification theories stemming from organizational studies. As in the table above, Cheney's typology (1983) has provided the main foundation of our analytical endeavor to determine the set of identification strategies used in the multimodal texts of *Gmagazines*. This typology has been extended in order to accommodate new identification strategies that have been recurrently found in the *Gmagazines*. As already mentioned, we have also aimed to extend and nuance his typology in this case study to account for images and text-image relations that Cheney excluded from his exploration. We intended to focus on the multimodal interplay so that we could better highlight the dynamic character of the discursive processes through which identification comes into being.

As no attention has been devoted in either organizational or multimodal studies to detailed analysis of images belonging to employees' magazines, our approach to exploration of images is rooted in social semiotics' understanding of the visual semiotic mode, namely in Kress and Van Leeuwen's model of visual analysis (2006). Inspired by Halliday's social semiotic approach to language (1978), Kress and Van Leeuwen claim that not only language but also images and other semiotic resources "can be configured to design interpersonal meaning, to present the world in specific ways, and to realize coherence" (Jewitt, 2009, p. 29) in multimodal texts. As a direct consequence of our interdisciplinary methodological approach and of our above-mentioned research purpose, we have chosen to select from Kress and Van Leeuwen's model of visual analysis only their considerations about images as resources for constituting and maintaining the interaction between the producer and the viewer of the image. The types of interactive meanings found by Kress and Van Leeuwen are realized through pictures "from which represented participants look directly at the viewer's eyes and pictures in which this is not the case", namely *demand* and *offer* images (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p.117).Their approach has been adopted in our exploration because when addressing the roles of visual and linguistic structures, they stress the fact that "the two modes are not simply alternative means of representing 'the same thing'" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p.76). This claim is useful for our analytical endeavors because our data has been proved to contain a series of examples of multimodal identification strategies that could not have been correctly explained without taking into consideration the different meaning-making roles of visual and linguistic structures in the same text when designing interpersonal meanings.

Furthermore, an appropriate methodological framework for identifying not only the textual or visual identification strategies but also their multimodal interplay needs to provide conceptual tools that can pinpoint verbal-visual relations. As already mentioned, a range of multimodal researchers have explored these relations in various types of texts. Rejecting an "isolationistic" view of information, Van Leeuwen proposes a typology of information linking based on the assumption that "information can only be interpreted in the context of other pieces of information and of specific communicative interests and purposes" (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p.219). He also makes clear that his approach does not presuppose linearity as "every link is, at least in principle, reversible" (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p.230). Van Leeuwen's typology of multimodal relations has thus been adopted for this part of our analysis. His two key image-text relations are *elaboration* and *extension*. As far as elaboration is concerned, it is manifested through *specification* when the image makes the text more specific (or vice versa) or through *explanation* when the text paraphrases the image (or vice versa). The relation of *extension* includes three forms, namely *similarity*, *contrast* or *complementation*.

Analytical Findings

In what follows, we present the types of identification tactics employed by *Grundfos* in the selected *Gmagazine*s. Each tactic will be presented in its multimodal form and in connection with the other tactics that tend to accompany it. Like DiSanza and Bullis (1999), apart from Cheney's identification tactics, we have discovered the presence of three new identification tactics: the identification with the international *Grundfos*, the recognition of collective contribution and the espousal of sustainability commitment. The tactic of identification with the international *Grundfos* might be considered very close to DiSanza and Bullis's tactic called "global recognition of a unit or subunit of the organization" (1999: 386), but the discussion below will reveal that we have found other characteristics due to the specificity of *Grundfos* organization and due to the fact that we have explored the visual and multimodal aspects too. The presentation of our analytical findings begins with explanations concerning the identification strategy Cheney called *the assumed or transcendent "we"*, then the tactics within *the common ground* identification strategy are discussed, followed by the last identification strategy, *the identification through antithesis*.

The assumed or transcendent "we"

In his discussion of this identification strategy, Cheney claims that "the assumed or transcendent 'we' is both a subtle and powerful identification strategy because it often goes unnoticed" (Cheney, 1983, p. 154). In the case of *Grundfos'* multimodal texts, this claim can be maintained and, in addition, it can be nuanced due to our multimodal perspective. In most articles, this "we" appears in connection with top management's implicit appeals to the employees to identify with the *Grundfos* purpose, core values, company strategy and future goals. In "Our values are what unite us", the managing director uses "we" in order to encourage the employees to live out the values in their daily work: "We must therefore uphold and live our values*"* (*Gmagazine*, no. 9, p. 2). The assumed or transcendent "we" is also typically used in texts that express appreciation for the extraordinary efforts made by the employees or appraisal of the *Grundfos* products and sustainability commitment.

Recurrently, when this strategy is verbalized and is accompanied by (de)contextualized group medium or long shots of smiling young employees, this multimodal interplay facilitates a connection of the transcendent "we" with a young generation of employees. In these cases, the words and the accompanying image enter into a relation of elaboration through specification, as the group shot of the young employees illustrates how the assumed "we" could or should look. We have also found evidence that when this strategy appearing in the magazines' first text is combined with images displaying a management representative, the employees are visually encouraged to implicitly identify themselves with the management. When the image is a *demand* image consisting of a decontextualized close-up or medium shot of a management representative who has eye contact with the viewer, this identification strategy has an even stronger persuasive effect on a multimodal level. Our interpretation is motivated by the fact that this close-up shot is a visual manifestation of an identification tactic; it has the role of a unifying symbol that visualizes the transcendent "we". If the representative has no eye contact with the viewers, the image is an *offer* image, and the persuasive effect of the multimodal interplay is weakened. In both cases, the relation between words and the *demand* or *offer* image is one of extension through complementation as the content of the text adds further meaning to the image.

Unifying symbols

Unifying symbols appear rarely as a textual identification tactic*; Gmagazine* usually foregrounds the *Grundfos* logo and colors as significant key elements of the *Grundfos* identity: "The fan was in the *Grundfos* colors and had the *Grundfos* logo printed on it" (*Gmagazine*, no. 8, 2011, p. 7). Later in the same article, these unifying symbols are also accompanied by the transcendent "we": "we were already very visible with our name printed on courts and barrier boards and appearing at press conferences". However, not only the *Grundfos* logo and colors play the role of unifying symbols. Company values and products play a similar role as multimodal identification tactics twice in *Gmagazine* no.8 and once in *Gmagazine* no.7. For example, in "The newest member of the family", the *Grundfos* values and product are highlighted: "Large banners hang between the doors of the lift, signaling the company's values. Behind a glass door leading to reception you see the silhouettes of pumps" (*Gmagazine*, no. 8, 2011, p.24).

Not only images displaying shots of management representatives play the role of unifying symbols. Decontextualized images of *Grundfos'* products, buildings and logo have a similar role entering in relations of elaboration through specification with their accompanying texts as those texts make the images more specific. For example, in "Born as a classic", the decontextualized image of a pump is accompanied by the following text: "A classic is characterized by quality materials and elegant design and the SP pump live up to both…[I]t has been adopted in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York" (*Gmagazine*, no.8, 2011, p.34). In this example, the identification tactic manifested through a unifying symbol is present in both text and image. Thus, the foregrounding of the symbolic value of the product is multimodally secured. In "Grundfos brings water 2 life" (*Gmagazine*, no.8, 2011, p. 41), the decontextualized close-up of a canister is placed in the middle of the text. When *Grundfos* products appear contextualized in images, they maintain their roles as unifying symbols. The images enter into relations of elaboration through explanation with parts of the accompanying texts that paraphrase them. For example, in "Pumps survive wars and crises", the contextualized image of a pump used by two Africans at the center of a long shot is accompanied by the text, "At a school in Dashen, Adamawa in Nigeria, the *Grundfos* pumps are doing an exceptionally good job too" (*Gmagazine*, no.7, 2010, p.55).

We have included management representatives and products among the more common unifying symbols that have been discussed in similar studies because their visual representations linked with the accompanying texts raise their status from mere illustrations to symbolic entities, whose overall signification can only be found on a multimodal level of interpretation.

Image from *Gmagazine*, no.8, 2011, p.4

Advocacy of company-sponsored benefits and activities

In the discussion regarding unifying symbols, the identification tactic of employing such symbols is accompanied by another tactic, the advocacy of company-sponsored benefits and activities.

Advocacy of company-sponsored benefits and activities appears in both a national and an international context.

The most important thing that pervades all the instances in which this tactic is used is the idea of diversity. This tactic appears in a variety of forms and can be seen in articles that describe sporting events, entertainment, employee services and benefits, celebrations, anniversaries and educational activities in the organization. In "*Grundfos* year 2025" (*Gmagazine* no. 4, pp. 12-15), a variety of employee services (e.g. a working holiday and marriage counseling) and benefits are highlighted to present employee "membership in the organization as a value in itself" (Cheney, 1983, p. 152). This example is interesting because it represents a specific relational identification between *Grundfos* and its employees. Here, *Grundfos* is part of important aspects of the employee's private life and the borders between work and private life are blurred. "Great interest in *Grundfos* Academy" explains that more than 4,000 professionals have already completed modules at the school that never closes (*Gmagazine*, no.8, 2011, p.6). The metaphor of the school that never closes is linked through a relation of extension through complementation with an image saturated with symbolic attributes like a blackboard and a computer. This multimodal combination is used in order to strengthen an idea of permanency in the organization's commitment to the education of its employees. The same idea is emphasized in "Part of our history" (*Gmagazine*, no.8, 2011, p.13), which claims that, with the establishment of the first flexi-workshops, *Grundfos* took social responsibility seriously long before anybody started talking about CSR. This is a rare example in which, accompanying the text, the medium shot of a young employee photographed while working enters into a relation of extension through contrast. The idea of permanency is multimodally established here through this contrasting interplay between the words related to the past and the shot of the young employee. Another example, "*Grundfos* Germany for 50 years" (*Gmagazine*, no. 6, p. 7), focused on the permanency idea by referring to the first major customer event in Germany during the Olympic Games in 1972, when *Grundfos* rented an escort vessel at a yachting regatta and invited colleagues from Denmark and 300 visitors on board. The following quote demonstrates the success *Grundfos* already had in the past with this sponsored activity: "Considering *Grundfos*' level of sales at that time and the costs involved, a customer event like this is very impressive. Many participants were still talking about the event several years later."

Expression of concern for the individual

Usually, the identification tactic presented above is combined with the expression of concern for the individual as a member of the organization. This tactic appears only in three articles of the studied magazines. Two of the articles focus on *Grundfos*' interest in employees with special needs and one article describes the important role of the individual in the organization. Our findings in *Gmagazine*s confirm Cheney's conclusion that when this identification tactic is manifested, "the stress is on the people who belong to the organization rather than on the organization as a collection of people" (Cheney, 1983, p.150). In one of the articles about flexi-workshops, these workshops are described as "a safe and secure workplace for those of our colleagues who, for one reason or another, need to work under conditions that differ slightly from those of the ordinary labour market" (*Gmagazine*, no.8, 2011, p.13). The shot of the young employee enters into a relation of elaboration through specification with this part of the text as the image makes the text more specific. Another article emphasizes the role of the employees as essential for the success of the company: "*Grundfos* is our employees. We develop the individual" (*Gmagazine*, no. 9, p.16).

Recognition of individual contribution

This form of identification is rare in *Gmagazine*s and the explanation of this rarity can be related to Cheney's work where he affirms that by "singling out individuals for praise", the organization can run "the risk of fostering divisiveness (i.e., segregation)" (Cheney, 1983, p.150). However, six articles contained statements that recognize individuals for their contribution to the organization in terms of educational efforts, loyalty to both clients and *Grundfos* and for the achievement of outstanding results. When singling out an individual, *Grundfos* does present him or her in praising words, but the main stress is put on the combination of this identification tactic with other tactics. For example, in "I want to make *Grundfos* my own success", the emphasis is not on the commitment and expertise of a Chinese person working as a trainee at *Grundfos*, but on his praise (as an outsider) of the organizations' outstanding results: "I have always wondered how a small country like Denmark…is capable of creating such great and internationally renowned companies, for example *Grundfos*" (*Gmagazine*, no.7, 2010, p.13). The big close-up of the trainee enters into a relation of similarity with the whole text because only half of the trainee's head is included in the image, suggesting his temporary presence in the organization. In a cluster of eleven short presentations of employees working in *Grundfos* Germany, in "Meet the brewer" (*Gmagazine*, no.6, 2010, pp.10-12), a series of identification tactics are combined with the recognition of individual contribution. For example, one of the employees is presented as having a highly respected expertise: he works to develop technologies. However, when quoted, he emphasizes that "we are at the waterfront of the new regulations regarding energy-saving electric motors". Consequently, apart from the recognition of his specific contribution, these words include two other identification tactics: the usage of the transcendent "we" and of the testimonial. Each presentation is accompanied by an image displaying the respective employee. As the presentations are separated from each other, the sizes and angles of the shots are varied and the genders and ages of the employees are varied, the unity of the whole text is given by the German flag's colors, which form the article's visual background. These visual elements enter into relations of elaboration through specification as the texts render the images more specific, making it easier for the readers/viewers to identify themselves with the portrayed employees across geographical borders. Even though the multimodal manifestation of this tactic is rare, in a series of cases, images of individuals accompany textual manifestation of the tactic to be discussed below.

Recognition of collective contribution

In close connection with the previously discussed identification tactic is a new tactic that we have recurrently met in all *Gmagazine*s, the recognition of collective contribution. It might be considered as a part of the identification tactic related to the assumed or transcendent "we", but according to our findings, it seems to be an identification tactic in its own right in the context of the *Gmagazine*s. In a significant number of articles, the effort and loyalty of all the employees as a collectivity are emphasized and praised both nationally and internationally. Employees are characterized as highly skilled, responsible, involved, dedicated and committed to the company. *Grundfos* typically recognizes groups of employees (e.g. a team project or employees in a subsidiary) in connection with special work efforts during the financial crisis, the success of a project, achievement of great results, good ideas, CSR initiatives and contributions.

If textually this identification tactic is manifested through words that convey a meaning of collectivity, as "all the employees" for example, the images accompanying these words do not necessarily represent groups of employees. Generally, the multimodal manifestations of this

identification tactic are characterized by the verbal communication of the idea of collectivity combined with the visual representations of individuality. In "Globalization of production", a management representative acknowledges, once again, in praising words, "Both transfers have been completed quickly, smoothly and very professionally, thanks to the great efforts made by all the employees involved" (*Gmagazine*, no. 8, 2011, p.31). In this case, the accompanying *offer* image of a working employee gains the status of a unifying symbol representing all the employees, and enters into a relation of elaboration through specification with these words. In "*Grundfos*' biggest market has many strong points" (*Gmagazine*, no.6, 2010, p.16-17), another management representative recognizes the collective contribution of *Grundfos* employees when addressing the viewer both through his *demand* image and through the praising words, "It goes without saying that you, the employees, have played an important role in this development". The connection between these words and the accompanying image is one of extension through complementation because the multimodal interplay facilitates an identification of the viewers with both the organization and management. The same interplay occurs in "Rewarding a truly extraordinary effort" (*Gmagazine*, no. 8, 2011, p.8), when the big close-up shot of a management representative who maintains eye contact with the viewer accompanies his words, "Everybody acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and worked incredibly hard during the difficult times. Employees all over the world made an effort". This is an example in which this identification tactic of recognizing the collective contribution is employed in close connection with the identification with the international *Grundfos*, to be discussed next.

Identification with the international Grundfos

In "Meet the brewer" (see above), an identification tactic that has not been identified by Cheney, but that appears regularly in *Gmagazine*s can be found, the identification with the international *Grundfos*. Being a global organization, *Grundfos* encounters a difficult task as it has to sustain a viable organizational identity while addressing employees from all over the world in its *Gmagazine*s. In one of the magazines, the fact that *Grundfos* is in practice a multicultural company is clearly acknowledged (*Gmagazine*, no.4, 2010, p.12). It is self-evident that such an identification tactic with the international *Grundfos* should be a top priority for the organization. Most articles focus on *Grundfos* as a global company with a strong product, name or reputation in the industry. *Grundfos* is also portrayed as a company with production facilities around the world and where the ethnic and cultural diversity among the employees plays an important role in the development of new products and of the company in general. These topics encourage the employees to identify with a strong global company with employees of different nationalities and high quality products, and they give the impression of a sense of community among employees across borders and nationalities.

The multimodal manifestation of this identification tactic is characterized by a continuous balancing act between generality and specificity. For example, the text about pumps by *Grundfos* in France signals this identification tactic from its very title, "The French Daughter has grown up". Specifically, the text is about French employees and their activities. However, *Grundfos* employees in general can identify with the French employees, as they experience similar things: "Employees are happy about the numerous employee benefits that we are offered" (*Gmagazine*, no.6, 2010, p.36). Visually, this balance is manifested through several shots of French employees working with *Grundfos* products and equipment known to employees all over the world. The process of identification with the particular French employees is weakened because all of them are displayed in *offer* images, having no eye contact with the viewer. The interplay between generality and specificity can also be detected at the level of a whole magazine and not only at the

level of an article. The process of identification with the international *Grundfos* appears at the level of the magazine both in articles that present activities and achievements of *Grundfos* in a specific country, as in the above example, and in articles that report celebrations and anniversaries of international *Grundfos*.

Praise by outsiders

According to Cheney, by communicating the praise of outsiders, an organization communicates implicitly that "employees should hold the same positive view of their employer that actors in the environment do" Cheney, 1983, p.152). Nearly all the studied magazines reproduce the praising words of outsiders in connection with awards and certifications received by *Grundfos* for their products and buildings. One article also praised the founder of *Grundfos*, Poul Due Jensen, and his son Niels Due Jensen (*Gmagazine* no. 6 pp. 6-9), for their life-long dedication to the company: "Poul Due Jensen is honored when the main school in Wahlstedt is named after him…As Niels Due Jensen approaches the microphone, he is greeted by cheers, not least from the pupils, as if he is a superstar". By referring to Niels Due Jensen as a superstar, his status is linked with the success of the company on the "world scene". Usually, when the awards received by *Grundfos* are highlighted, this identification tactic is employed in connection with another tactic, the identification with international *Grundfos*. This connection is realized both through texts and images. For example, the text, "*Grundfos* receives an award at Brazilian exhibition" and "*Grundfos* Indonesia winner of Best Stand Performance" (*Gmagazine*, no. 6, 2010, p.21). highlights international *Grundfos*' successes, while the accompanying *demand* images display the smiling faces of international *Grundfos*' employees holding the awards. In general the *demand* images in which the participants have eye contact with the viewer predominate and ensure the strengthening of the identification process. The text-image relations that make possible the multimodal manifestation of this identification tactic are various, but the elaborations through specification predominate.

Image from *GMagazine*, no.6, 2010, p.37

Espousal of shared values

A number of articles highlight the shared values in terms of management's trust in the potential of the individual, the spirit of the company, CSR responsibility and sustainability and the *Grundfos* Group core values. In "A working day at *Grundfos* 17 April 2010", the text summarizes the shared values of the organization: "The employees feel that by working for *Grundfos*, they will help make the world a better place to live" (*Gmagazine*, no.4, 2010, p.16). The recurrent images that accompany the textual espousal of shared values are *demand* images. In "Network supports water2life", the message is clear: "As a *Grundfos* employee you should do your bit to make the world a cleaner place to live, reduce pollution and hand over a green planet to the next generation" (*Gmagazine*, no.5, 2010, p.9). Visually, the modal form of the verb, *should do*, is reinforced by the four decontextualized *demand* close-up shots of *Grundfos* employees who communicate their espousal to the organization's fundamental values. The other type of images

that accompany texts in which the shared values are highlighted consists of visual unifying symbols, for example, the yellow water canister. In "Good ideas thrive in the playground", the Functional Manager, from Group R&D, comments on how *Grundfos* has begun to focus on exploiting the good ideas of the employees in order to develop high technical solutions to the market. He states, "Frequently, the best and most inexpensive ideas will come from employees, and therefore we give them the opportunity to develop their ideas in so-called playgrounds" (*Gmagazine* no. 6, p. 50). The playground idea is implicitly symbolized in the accompanying image by the sand and the unconventional posture of the manager.

GMagazine, no.6, 2010, p.51

Espousal of sustainability commitment

The core value of *Grundfos* that is recurrently integrated in the topic of most texts of *Gmagazine*s is the long-term commitment to sustainability. The identification tactic through which sustainability commitment is continuously espoused both verbally and visually can be considered the most important one because it is used to justify the identification with the organization in a way in which no other tactic could succeed. In *Gmagazine* no. 4, which is entirely dedicated to sustainability issues, the organization's sustainability commitment is emphatically communicated: "The very pillar of our company – sustainability is the precondition for responsible growth in the world" (*Gmagazine*, no.4, 2010, p. 9). Another example states explicitly that sustainability is integrated in the *Grundfos* vision: "Innovation Intent is our vision towards 2025 about creating sustainable innovation for a growing world" (*Gmagazine*, no. 6, 2010, p. 2).

The fact that *Grundfos* is a company that cares about the environment is foregrounded: "*Grundfos* does business in a responsible and increasingly sustainable way" (*Gmagazine*, no. 9, 2011, p. 14). For this reason, we have decided to approach this identification tactic as a tactic in itself and not as a variation of the above-discussed tactic of espousal of shared values. This identification tactic is also closely linked to two previously discussed tactics, the advocacy of company-sponsored benefits and activities and the assumed "we". For example, "Clean water helps those most in need," which presents a sustainable project in India, highlighted the fact that the *Grundfos* water supply improves Indians' state of health. Additionally, the water supply allows schools to grow crops more intensively (*Gmagazine*, no.7, 2010, p.41). Most of the articles report on concrete examples of the way in which *Grundfos* engages in various types of partnerships with suppliers and relief organizations, for example the Danish Red Cross, in order to promote sustainability. Concrete examples of the company's partnership with the Danish Red Cross are illustrated in a number of articles that are devoted to informing about an employee-financed water supply system called "*Grundfos* Brings Water 2 Life". Here employees in all *Grundfos* companies have joined forces to donate money to help provide clean water to people in developing countries. In these articles, the employees are actively involved in making the world a better place, which indirectly encourages them to identify with their workplace. Other articles

emphasize that *Grundfos* is a company that intends to do business in a sustainable and responsible way and has an awareness of climate change and the global challenge of providing clean drinking water to people all over the world. Most of the articles also touch upon how *Grundfos* intends to reduce Co2 emissions and develop efficient products and energy solutions (e.g. solar-powered pumps) in order to reduce energy consumption. Verbally, this extended sustainability agenda is described by unifying dichotomies like organization versus the world, universality versus individuality or profit versus help.

It has become clear to us in our research work that images play an outstanding role in reinforcing the espousal of the organization's commitment to sustainability. The commitment is expressed in words and the accompanying images are proof of how the sustainability statements and promises are concretized in behavior and enacted in everyday activities. The images enter into relations of elaboration through explanation and of extension of complementation with the accompanying texts. If the commitment to sustainability is verbally expressed, especially along a temporal parameter, the images display the spatial parameter, showing the implementation of this commitment all over the world and at all levels of the organization. The stamp of authenticity provided by images is also manifested through shots in which the *Grundfos* products are represented in geographical contexts that clearly need various improvements.

The display of the spatial parameter can also introduce a symbolic aspect in images like the one republished in *Gmagazine* no.6, 2010, from the cover of *Grundfos'* 2009 Sustainability Report. The image consists of a computer-manipulated photo of waterfront skyscrapers, whose reflection in the water is replaced by *Grundfos* products that match them in terms of size. Clearly, this symbolic replacement is meant to give the viewer an idea about the huge impact of *Grundfos'* approach to and work with sustainability and responsibility globally (*Gmagazine*, no.6, 2010, p.37). Verbally, the temporal parameter of the sustainability initiatives is assessed: "The objective, however, is to achieve even better results in the future" (*Gmagazine*, no.6, 2010, p.37).

Image from *GMagazine*, no.6, 2010, p.37

Testimonials

In close connection with the identification tactic is the tactic "testimonials by employees", which, according to Cheney (1983), include quotations by employees expressing dedication, commitment and affection to the organization (p. 152). Generally, testimonials are frequently used in close connection with the rest of the identification tactics presented above.

For these magazines, the majority of the testimonials are given by management representatives. For example, in "Grundfos' biggest market has many strong points", a management representative confesses, "When I joined Grundfos in 2001, I had great expectations of the company which I had read and heard so much about" (*GMagazine*, 2010, no.6, p.17). His testimonial is accompanied by a *demand* image of a smiling group of managers. Another characteristic of this tactic manifested in the magazines is represented by this combination of individual statements and group images. This combination reinforces the meaning of the individual statements, as it suggests that "the organization asks readers to listen to what 'others like them' have to say about corporate life" (Cheney, 1983, p.153) even if in this case those

"others" are managers. However, as in the case of the assumed "we" tactic, the hierarchical order seems to be unimportant. In these cases, the link between the individual statements and group images is one of extension through complementation due to the above-mentioned reinforcement of meaning. Testimonials also appear in most texts dedicated to *Grundfos'* sustainability commitment and both top management and employees talk about and praise the sustainability initiatives and contributions of the company. In "Everything can be recycled", a workshop assistant talks about a new recycling idea presented by the employees in flexible jobs: "I really think that we have hit the bull's eye with this recycling project. We have increased the need for employees on special terms, while at the same time taking care of the environment" (*Gmagazine* no. 8, p. 16). In "Values are not thin air", an employee comments on his own dedication to the company in relation to the espousal of shared values: "It makes me proud to say that I work for a company that takes care of its employees" (*Gmagazine* no. 9, p. 21). Testimonials are also employed in texts related to the financial status of the company, especially regarding the financial crisis and how it has challenged *Grundfos*, and this is in close connection with the next identification tactic to be discussed.

Identification by antithesis

This identification tactic is rarely employed in *Grundfos* employees' magazines. When it surfaces, it appears in connection with the financial crisis that has threatened the success and future of the company (including, implicitly, the employees) or in a subdued manner. In "Rewarding a truly extraordinary effort", the effort of the entire company to oppose the crisis is praised and highlighted: "The crisis resulted in a very turbulent period where we had to fight hard for every sale" (*Gmagazine*, no. 8, p. 9). In "The villain that becomes a hero", a management representative revealed that "our pumps use less energy than those produced by our competitors, and this opens up a very interesting perspective" (*Gmagazine*, no. 6, 2010, p.62).

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper has briefly highlighted some of the advantages of exploring the way in which texts and images are strategically co-deployed in order to persuasively communicate a specific corporate identity.

The table below displays the analyzed identification strategies with their multimodal characteristics and text-image interplay.

No.	Identification strategies and tactics	
	Type	**Multimodal characteristics and text- image interplay**
1.	The assumed or transcendent "we"	Verbal "we" combined with visualized management representatives or young employees; Elaborations through specification
2.	Unifying symbols	(Decontextualized) images of management representatives, buildings, logo and products; Elaborations through explanation
3.	Advocacy of company-sponsored benefits, activities	Diversity (visually expressed) and permanency (verbally expressed); Extensions through complementation
4.	Expression of concern for the individual	Atypical
5.	Recognition of individual contribution	Clusters of individual shots; Elaborations through specification
6.	Recognition of collective contribution	Collectivity (verbally expressed) and individuality (visually expressed); Elaborations through specification and extensions through complementation
7.	Identification with international *Grundfos*	Balance between generality and specificity; Elaborations through specification

8.	Praise by outsiders	Recurrent group *demand* images; Elaborations through specification
9.	Espousal of shared values	*Demand* images and visual unifying symbols; Elaborations through specification
10.	Espousal of sustainability commitment	Verbal dichotomies: organization /world, profit/ help, universality/individuality; Temporal parameter (verbally expressed) and spatial parameter (visually expressed); Elaborations through explanation and extensions through complementation
11.	Testimonials	Recurrent group *demand* images combined with individual statements; Extensions through complementation
12.	Identification by antithesis	Atypical

We have identified the main types of tactics proposed by Cheney (1983) and we have also found three main factors that influence the multimodal manifestation of all *Grundfos'* identification tactics in these magazines:

• The multilayering and interconnectivity of multimodal identification tactics
• The images' prominent role in creating or reinforcing the persuasive effects
• The recurrent and pervasive manifestation of three main identification tactics: the espousal of sustainability commitment, the identification with the international *Grundfos* and the recognition of collective contribution.

Firstly, we have discerned *Grundfos'* ability to multimodally combine multilayered identification tactics in each text. This ability might be considered a tactic in itself because it reinforces the persuasive effects of each tactic in a process of multimodal overlapping, and it also produces novel persuasive effects that could not have otherwise come into existence. The identification tactics are multilayered in terms of voices (corporation/employee), text (words/images), content (internal/external) and context (national/international). For example, in the same text, a management representative may verbally recognize the individual contribution of an employee who is then quoted espousing shared values and identifying himself or herself with the international *Grundfos*. Visually, the text may be accompanied by the symbolic image of the award granted to the employee or by a *Grundfos* product.

Secondly, our analysis has revealed the images' prominent role in creating or reinforcing the persuasive effects of *Grundfos'* identification tactics. Our analytical findings allow us to claim that the convergence of texts and images can have unforeseen communicative potentials. In the *GMagazines* explored in this paper, the manifestation of certain identification tactics has received a new potential: the borders separating several types of spheres have been blurred suggesting responsible openness as an overarching core value of the corporation. For example, by introducing *demand* images in the layout of texts, the employees are encouraged to engage with a wide range of people, from powerful individuals (*Grundfos* management representatives) to powerless individuals (helped by *Grundfos* all over the world). *Demand* images of *Grundfos* employees from all over the world contribute visually to the blurring of geographical and national borders. By displaying the smiling faces of all these people with whom the employees have eye contact, the employees' *Grundfos* identity is enriched as the persuasive effects of several identification tactics is enhanced. The strategic choices of faces and gazes make it possible for the employees to increase their personal sense of active responsibility and their personal capacity of empowering empathy and commitment, and to perceive themselves as a part of *Grundfos*. The rare appearance of *offer* images is motivated by the fact that any kind of imaginary barriers between the employees and the individuals represented in the images should not be raised. When these *offer* images appear, they show individuals engaged in working activities that are familiar to any *Grundfos* employee and, in this way, the visual emphasis is on the performed activity and not on the represented individuals with whom the employees don't have eye contact. The fact that two of the tactics found by Cheney (1983), "expression of concern for the individual" and

"identification by antithesis", are weakly represented in *GMagazines*, should be related to these findings. The uniqueness of the individual employees' identity is not to be found in particular characteristics or by contrasting it with others, but in what these employees dynamically share as part of *Grundfos*. Apart from blurring hierarchical, geographical and national borders, the distance between the private sphere and the public sphere is multimodally diminished as *Grundfos* is shown as being involved in the employees' lives. Furthermore, the choices in terms of decontextualization or recontextualization of (parts of) images facilitate the transition from concrete representation of some objects like a yellow water canister to multimodal symbols of perpetual sustainability commitment that transcend the daily reality of recurrent sustainable activities.

Thirdly, across the above-mentioned multilayered identification tactics, *Grundfos* foregrounds three identification tactics that explicitly or implicitly "color" all their employees' magazines that we have explored: the espousal of sustainability commitment, the identification with the international *Grundfos* and the recognition of collective contribution. As shown, this finding is confirmed at a multimodal level, but it should be mentioned that the role of images has a unique relevance because the choice of images reinforces the persuasive effect of these three tactics in all the magazines that have been analyzed. Although the above-mentioned blurring of the borders separating several types of spheres stretches *Grundfos*, it also unifies it because the recurrent multimodal manifestation of these three tactics reinforces the essence of its identity.

In conclusion, in this paper, we have tried to raise awareness of the potential of the multimodal approach for the exploration of corporate identity communication, and to demonstrate how this approach can be used. In the next phase of our study, we intend to include a wider number of *Gmagazines* in our exploration in order to examine in more detail how the three specific *Grundfos* identification tactics manifest themselves across time. On the basis of our present research work, we suggest that the systematic approach to the multimodal communication of corporate identity can facilitate the understanding and the employment of more efficient identification strategies and tactics through which companies can reach their employees. We therefore consider that the approach employed in this paper could provide reliable analytical tools that are relevant to researchers, educators and practitioners.

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Note

[i]When calling for an intensification of "interdisciplinary cross-fertilization", Cornelissen *et al.* (2007:3) have investigated in detail the differences and similarities existing across various research traditions between organizational identity as communicated inside the organization ("a system of shared meaning") and corporate identity as communicated to an external audience ("a projected image"). In this article, we integrate the understanding of these two concepts being committed "to promote a more integrated understanding of the role that collective identity plays in creating the meaning, the form, and indeed the very possibility of organizational life" (Cornelissen *et al.* 2007: 12). Cheney and Christensen also acknowledge "the fuzziness of organizational boundaries" and "the significant ways in which internal communication activities and campaigns can be used for external purposes" (2001:247).

Framing Press Releases: An Analysis of the Use of Topics in Crisis Communication

Examples from a Large-scaled Crisis Management Exercise

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The aim of this study is to answer the question: "How do press releases in crisis situations communicate to different audiences?" 'Topics of crisis' are studied through text analysis using a rhetorical approach and focusing on the topics of the texts.

Empirically, this study focuses on press releases produced during a large-scale crisis management exercise in Sweden involving a nuclear power plant. One finding is that the press releases could be categorized into three themes, each with different aims: those that focused on the crisis, those regarding the handling of the crisis, and those with a direct focus on the public (such as exhortations and local information). With its qualitative approach, this study contributes to the field of crisis communication by showing how the use of different topics in press releases can frame a crisis. T o crisis communicators it gives examples on how the press release can address different audiences.

Keywords: Rhetoric, Crisis communication, Press release

Paper type: Research

It is highly unlikely that a researcher will physically ever find themself in an organization the moment a crisis occurs, and thereby be able to study the communicative crisis management. Attending crisis management exercises is probably the closest we as researchers can get to actually observing crisis management in the acute phase. In Sweden, during 2011, a large -scale crisis management exercise was arranged; SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011 (Samverkans- och kärnkraftsövning 2011/Cooperation and Nuclear Emergency Exercise 2011). The purpose of this exercise was to test the Swedish capacity to handle an emergency in a nuclear power plant, and their ability to return to normal status. My colleague and I were fortunate enough to attend this exercise. During almost 48 hours we observed the crisis management staff in a simulated nuclear accident Being present during the exercise not only gave us the opportunity to observe how different groups within the management staff communicated with each other, but also how information from these groups was externally communicated.

In the event of an actual nuclear crisis, it is of great importance that the different groups within the crisis management team are able to quickly reach the public with vital information. The nature of a nuclear crisis is such that it poses an acute threat to the population at large, including animals and, of course, the environment. The press release is a well-established channel for organizations to reach the public through the media. Through press releases organizations can quickly communicate the same information to various forms of the media, and therefore (hopefully) spread the information. This study focuses on press releases made by four of the organizations with large responsibility in the crisis management of this exercise. This study aims

to contribute to the understanding of how press releases function in crisis situations, especially through the general use of common topics.

A press release is written and distributed by the organization, at a time of their choosing, and contains the information they want to communicate. For example during an interview, the aspects discussed and the answers from the organization, will always be framed by the interviewer's questions. I hope to identify, through the study of press releases, what aspects crisis managing organizations choose to highlight. This is a qualitative study with a rhetorical point of view, focusing on how press releases are used and structured in a "crisis situation". The four organizations studied were all important in the crisis management, and had different tasks and stakeholders. Later in this text, it will be discussed how this is shown in their press releases.

The situation simulated in the exercise is, without a doubt, a crisis situation. Serious accidents in nuclear power plants have catastrophic potential (Perrow, 1984) in terms of negative consequences for people, animals, oceans, and the environment as a whole. In addition, they affect varying organizations in the society and confidence in the nuclear industry. One recent example can be seen in the events following the accident in Fukushima, when consequently Germany decided to dismantle their nuclear industry (Dagens Nyheter, 01.07.2011, p. 17. Sektion: Världen). A crisis situation is, as Heath puts it, "the time to speak" (Heath, 2004, p.149). It is expected, and demanded, for crisis managing organizations to communicate with the media and the public. In case of an accident in a nuclear power plant, the effects of the crisis can be disastrous, and that is a well-known fact. Given that people's lives and health are in danger, and not only the reputation of the organization, the responsible organizations must act when an accident occurs.

Press Releases in Everyday Life and Crisis Situations

The first question that this study has to address is "what is a press release?" Simply put, it is a text sent out from companies and organizations, to the media, in the hope that the media will spread the information. The text is preferably written with a catchy headline, an ingress, followed by interesting, easily read text with a good use of language. The press release is not more than one page and presents the information from most important to least important, preferably including quotes from the Managing Director (MD) or another important person in the organization, and a picture. There should also be contact information, if the reporters want to ask questions (See for example Applegate, 2005, Westanders pr-handbok, 2011). This is, largely, what we find if we search the handbooks and "how do I write press releases"sites. The press release is a well-used communication tool for companies and organizations. . Professor of journalism, Edd Applegate, saysthat it is "one of the most popular communication tools used by public relations practitioners" (Applegate, 2005, p. 25). According to the linguist Pander Maat, PR researchers have also found that press releases do impact what journalists write (Pander Maat, 2007, p. 60), but he does not say what percentage of press releases actually get through to media editors.

Conditions for communication have changed due to new possibilities available in the modern landscape of media. There are more channels to use, and the other part of the communication, the receiver, can be interactively part of the communication. Nevertheless, the press release is still an important part of many companies communication. Cmeciu and Miron (2011, p. 63) discuss how organizations have digitalized the traditional press release, by publishing them on their web sites. Thereby the texts are more interactive and easier to access.

When it comes to the functions of press releases, professor of Rhetoric, Orla Vigsö highlights several ways political parties use press releases that can also apply to other organizations. Some of these functions are giving *information*, for example official arrangements

, a wish to reach a *wider media space* in terms of getting journalists to produce material about them, and also to affect the *image* of the sender (branding) (Vigsö 2012). The organization behind the press release is largely interested in content; often the focus is to create a larger understanding of, and sense of good-will for, the organization.

Research focusing on press releases are often based on quantitative studies (See for example Seletzky and Lehman-Wilzig, 2010, Hill, Pitts, Smith and Smith, 2010, Cmeciu and Patrut, 2009, Cmeciu and Miron, 2011, Avery and Kim, 2009). Avery and Kim's 2009 study on press releases examined how health agencies used press releases during the avian flu crisis. They studied aspects such as: purpose, invitations to further information, and eventual localization of the warnings or threats. This study does not focus on the structures of the texts, but instead examines the overall standards. In the analysis presented here, the focus is on the quality of the texts, from a rhetorical point of view. Avery and Kim raise the issue of information accessibility in crisis communication when they point out that information should be accessible to all publics "including those who do not have Internet access" (Avery and Kim, 2009, p. 197).

Günter Bentele points out that press releases must be shaped in order to fit the existing context, and should include qualities such as "truth, objectivity, precision, accuracy, credibility and trust" (Bentele, 2010, p. 116). Every communicative situation is unique, and, as a result, the organization must adapt to the conditions of each new situation. Bentele´s qualities are needed not only for press releases in everyday life, but are also needed in crisis communication (Millar and Heath, 2004). The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency stresses, in their handbook of crisis communication, a similar aspect: "The authority must actively work to achieve and maintain a high degree of credibility – the most important concept in crisis communication" (Crisis Communication Handbook, SEMA´s Educational Series 2003:1, p. 13). Four fundamental criteria used to assess the texts are: : 1) degree of openness and honesty, 2) the organization's competence, 3) the fairness of the actions, and 4) the empathy displayed (Crisis Communication Handbook, SEMA´s Educational Series 2003:1, p. 13). These criteria are not surprising, but the question to be raised is: do crisis communicators fulfil them? How is communication through press releases formed and stated?

Material and Method

In the crisis management exercise SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011 (Samverkans- och kärnkraftsövning 2011/Cooperation and Nuclear Emergency Exercise 2011), from which the press releases originate, about 60 organizations participated, including governmental and private, local, regional and national organizations. A total of more than 2 000 people were involved. During almost 48 hours, a nuclear core meltdown was simulated in Oskarshamn Nuclear Power Plant, and the task was to handle this in real time. After this acute phase, the exercise continued as discussion seminars during the following months. One of the main goals of the exercise was that the organizations were supposed to cooperate effectively and concurrently communicate with the public and media (Övningsbestämmelser SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011, p. 8). This highlighted that the "co" aspect— as in cooperation and concurrence— was crucial to communicative management. The organizations in this study are:

1) The County Administrator Board in Kalmar County (Länsstyrelsen i Kalmar län, Lst in Kalmar), a government authority, which functions as a link between people and the municipality on the one hand, and the administration, the parliament and central majorities on the other. (Länsstyrelsen i Kalmar län, web site)

2) Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, MSB), whose task "is to enhance and support societal capacities for preparedness for and prevention of emergencies and crises" (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, web site).

3) The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (Strålsäkerhetsmyndigheten, SSM), an "authority under the Ministry of the Environment with national responsibility within the areas of nuclear safety, radiation protection and nuclear non-proliferation" (Strålsäkerhetsmyndigheten, web site).

4) Oskarshamn Nuclear Power Plant (Oskarshamns Kärnkraftsgrupp, OKG), private industry with "three nuclear reactor units – Oskarshamn 1, 2 and 3 – which together account for ten per cent of the total electricity generation in Sweden" (OKG´s web site). OKG is one of three actively running nuclear power plants in Sweden, located close to Kalmar in the south of the country.

These organizations produced 41 press releases during the acute phase of the exercise.

When studying communication on the nuclear industry in Sweden, it should be noted that the general opinion on this industry is considerably positive. In a 2010 survey, 52 % of Swedes answered that their attitude towards nuclear energy was positive, and that they wanted to use and renew, or build new plants in the future. 22 % said that they wanted to dismantle the nuclear industry when existent reactors are superannuated, whilst 8 % wanted to dismantle immediately. These results showed that increasingly more Swedes are in favor of nuclear energy (Hedberg and Holmberg, 2011, p. 2) This means there is strong support for the nuclear industry, and it is interesting to see how a serious accident is communicated in a context like this.

The study is a rhetorical text analysis. Roderick P. Hart says that "rhetorical criticism provides general understandings via the case-study method. By scrutinizing a small number of texts, the critic restricts the range of available insights" (P. Hart, 1997, p. 25). A basis for the understanding of the texts is the "rhetorical situation", a term coined by Lloyd F. Bitzer. In the short version, the rhetorical situation consists of a problem that must be solved by communication, the exigence, there is a receiver to the communication who has the possibility to react, the audience, and there are circumstances that affect and limit the sender's choices, the constraints (Bitzer, 1968).

In this study, the analysis is focused on the content and the topics of the texts. What are the texts saying, and to whom? P. Hart points out that there has been an interest in themes, and systems for building communication since the ancient Greeks. The naming *topoi* dates from this time (P. Hart, 1997, p. 64). Topoi is the Greek word for place, and concerns the "places" and intellectual views we can "visit" to find material when building a message (Hellspong, 2004, p. 93). Lennart Hellspong, a professor in Rhetoric, says that there are specific and general topoi (here I will refer to them as topics). General topics are those that can be used in all contexts and issues, for example cause, effect, time and function (Hellspong, 2004, pp. 99). In this study, I will focuson the occurrence of common general topics, and how these are being used.

Analysis

An analysis of the press releases reveals that the four organizations used the texts in different ways. The reasons for this are multiple, for example, the organizations did not have the same tasks and responsibilities. In terms of content, the texts are similar in overall topics (an aspect which I will explore later). In order to summarize the analysis of this material, I have included the following table:

	Number of press releases	Design of press releases	Contact information	Picture*	Quotations**
Lst Kalmar	17	Headline Text	13 of 17	0	2
OKG	10	Headline Text	10 of 10	0	2
SSM	11	Headline Ingress (7 of 11) Text	0 of 10	0	11
MSB	3	Headline Text	1 of 3	1	

* "Picture refers to photographic pictures", not maps of evacuation zones
** Quotations refer to the number of quotations in total, not the number of press releases with quotations in them.

In a crisis, the tempo is intensified for the communication staff in the crisis managing organization. They suddenly find themselves under the scrutiny of the world and under tremendous pressure to share information about the situation at hand. In cases like this, when the crisis is an accident in the nuclear industry, it may be crucial for people to receive regular updates regarding, for example, staying indoors or evacuation schedules. The press release is an established channel for organizations to reach out to a concerned audience..

Press releases should have an attention-grabbing headline. In the texts that I have focused on here, most of the headlines could probably not be classified as quick-witted, but in most cases are clear and relevant. This may be one substantial difference between press releases in crises, and the everyday "selling" press release.

The purpose of the press releases studied is clearly different from ordinary ones. Headlines such as "Wreckage alarm at OKG", "The evacuation goes on", "The work to handle the cooling problems at Oskarshamn 3 continues", and "Unity around the prognosis for filtered exhaustion" do not seem remarkable, despite their relative dreariness. An analysis of all of the headlines indicates that the organizations collaborate to draw a picture of a serious situation.

To abstract the primary information in an *ingress* is unusual in the texts. Only The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) does this (in seven texts out of ten). One can only speculate as to why this is the case. When looking at the organizations' ordinary press releases on their ordinary web sites (not on the web site used during the exercise), it shows that all four of the organizations normally use ingresses in their press releases. Speculation on the reasons for the absent ingresses raises questions for further research; is the high tempo in the crisis an explanation? Or is it possible that the people in the exercise did not take the exercise as seriously as they should have, and were not as thorough as they normally are?

The information in press releases is structured like a *funnel turned upside down*, meaning that the most important information is put first, and the least important last. In the press releases studied, some of the texts are structured this way, while others are not, and some texts have different themes stacked on each other. It does not seem to be a current strategy to write them in the form of the every-day press release.

The usual technique of using quotations and pictures (of people) has not been followed. Quotations from people in high positions in an organization can give substance to the content, since they can contribute with their ethos. The four organizations all use quotations once or twice in total in their press releases. In the 41 press releases, only one press release, from the Swedish

Civil Contingencies Agency, contained a picture of a person.   It seems like the organizations use the press release more as a communication channel, rather than following the traditional design, form, and structure. Whether this applies to press releases in crises in general, or is a characteristic of this exercise, is a question for further research.

"Co"-communication?

The exercise regulations for SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011, emphasized that communication from the crisis managing organizations should be coordinated and concurrent (Övningsbestämmelser SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011). What this means is not specified, but it is pointed out that communication from different organizations should conform, so that the audience does not get disparate information. The evaluation made by The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), pointed out that the organizations cooperate best on organizational matters within already established groups, and on a local/regional level (Utvärdering av SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011 p. 65). To summarize, it can be said that the press releases produced by the four organizations are connected, since they all focus on the same crisis. The organizations have different stakeholders, and focus on different aspects in their texts, something that can be seen in the following examples:

The County Administrator Board in Kalmar County (Lst in Kalmar) initially focused on the events, and, later, concentrated more on the public. This organization is commissioned to care for citizens and obviously needed to communicate with the public. i They mainly communicated to citizens in the neighborhood, giving advice on how to act. They also used their pre-crisis communication, referring to previously distributed brochures, which explained how to act in the case of an accident in the nuclear plant.

Oskarshamn Nuclear Power Plant (OKG): focused on information about the events within the plant, and their efforts to deal with them. Their most difficult task, as can be expected, is to explain what it is they are doing and what the events mean. The language used in these documents is neither technical jargon, nor is it directly accessible for the lay person. Expressions such as "in hot shutdown", "in cool shutdown", "controlled release", "unfiltered release", and "soil contamination" are examples of the kind of language used in these documents. This shows the difficulties in communicating technical concepts to an audience that may not be versed in the jargon. A specific audience is not identified as there are no "signals" in the use of language and content on who the receiver is supposed to be.

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) focused on their organization, their actions, and how they helped other organizations. It seems as if they write their texts as an answer to the question "What is Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency doing?" They do not detail events in the nuclear power plant, but rather give examples of what the tasks of the organization are, and how these are being carried out. There is a distance between MSB and the crisis management, which can be seen in the light of Bentele (2010) where objectivity and truth are important factors, something that MSB's texts exemplify.

The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) turns to the broadest addressees, focusing in different texts both on the events and on the way in which they are being handled. This information is directed towards the general public, as well as other organizations. They give advice to both citizens and the County Administrator Board, and "makes technical radiological assessments" (The County Administrator Board, press release no 2). They call attention to their assessments and advice and also inform about the events in the nuclear plant.

Three comprehensive themes

Despite the varying content of the texts from the different organizations, there are obvious similarities when it comes to the topics. Mainly, there are three recurring, comprehensive themes, used by all the organizations, even if the way to build around these topics differs between the organizations. The themes focus on 1) the crisis, 2) the handling of the crisis, and 3) a direct focus on the public. These press releases build around these themes in different ways, and many of the texts use more than one. These themes can show what main direction, and, in an extension, what aim the texts have. While two of the themes, on the crisis and the handling of it, focus on information, the third one is more focused on direct exhortations to the citizens on how to act.

Concerning *the crisis,* the course of events is described in a variety of ways. For example that a fast stop in a reactor has been made, that reinforced alert prevails, that a fire has started, that cooling of the reactor proceeds, and similar information. In short, the information details what actually happens.

When it comes to *how the crisis, the events, are handled*, things such as as the organizations´ remits, and how the organizations act in different matters are described (such as staff gathering, radiation analyzes, etc.).

The content of the press releases that *address the citizens* deal with exhortations to stay indoors, to listen to the radio, to follow the development of the crisis, and to take iodine pills. There is also information directed to animal owners and those who are at sea, and exhortations telling them how to act.

The purposes of these themes vary from purely informative to giving directions as to how citizens should act. Through this, the organizations establish themselves as credible, competent, and knowledgeable. In the case of a nuclear accident, it is crucial to give information and instructionsthat inform citizens on which actions to take. A further question is whether the press release is the communication channel to carry these different aspects.

Topics showing control

Further examination of the structure of the content in the texts shows that it is common to build it around one or both of the systems of past – present – future, and event – measure – consequence. Structuring the message by giving time aspects (past – present – future) is a classical model. As Hellspong points out, the topos of time is a general topic, which can be used in all issues (Hellspong, 2004). In times of crises, it is important for the crisis manager to demonstrate that the situation is under control (Millar and Heath, 2004). This can be done in different ways, of which one can be to use topics of time, showing that one has knowledge about what has happened, to be able to describe the current situation, and also present plans for the continued action. Nuclear accidents may lead to substantial negative impact for people and the environment, not only nationally, but as in the case of Chernobyl, for a large number of countries. The anxiety among citizens, when an accident occurs in the nuclear industry, is understandably great. Accordingly, showing knowledge and control is urgent in cases like these. However, it is not enough to structure the communication around a specific topic (like the past – present – future), it is the content that matters. When it comes to the above studied crisis management exercise, one example of this structure is seen in the fifth press release from the County Administrator Board in Kalmar County. As can be seen here, information is given about 1) *the past*: a fire has started at the waste management by a nuclear reactor, some people were injured, 2) *the present*: the situation is better concerning the cooling water, and the injured people at the fire are taken care of by ambulance personnel, and 3) *the future*: the Emergency Services is leading the operation,

striving to be one step ahead in the development of the events, and there is an exhortation for everyone to listen to the radio to get the latest information (Press release from the County Administrator Board in Kalmar County, 2011.02.2, 13:30: Brand i avfallsanläggning på OKG (Fire in waste management at OKG)).

The other salient structure, of building around the topics event – measure – consequence, also gives the impression of comprehensive control. This structure describes what has taken place, what is being done, and the different possible outcomes that can be expected. But also here, it is the quality in the descriptions that matters. The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority's fifth press release tells us about 1) *the event*: that the wreckage alarm started at 17:40, since one of the three nuclear reactors lacked electric maintenance, 2) *the measures*: radiation measures in the funnel shows that there has not been a release of radiation from that source, and 3) *the consequences* if the problem is not solved—a filtered release can take place after eight hours, at the earliest (Press release no 5 from The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority: Haverilarm vid Oskarshamns kärnkraftverk (Wreckage alarm at Oskarshamns nuclear power plant)).

The general topics, as shown here, can be used by all organizations, with different subject matter. This way of using the same topics for arranging the information can probably explain the coherency of the communication.

Who is the press release for?

A press release is originally written to be sent to media editorial staff, with the aim of reaching the public. The text can, as such, be used in its totality, by the media editors to publish as the organization has written it, but often the press release serves as the basis for an article, or notice, designed by a journalist. When publishing the press release on the organization's web site, though, there are also other audiences: the citizen, other organizations, and anyone else who might be interested. This gives the press release a very broad audience, something that was sometimes obvious in the press releases in the crisis management exercise. One example is the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, who entitles one press release with "Stay indoors!" and tells those who live within a specific area to stay indoors. Thereafter they give, in five steps, recommendations to the County Administrator Board in Kalmar County (Press release no 7 from the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority: Stanna inomhus! (Stay indoors!). Very succinctly they address different audiences, in a text sent out as a press release. This leads to confusion regarding who is supposed to be reached by the information, and in what way it should be done. The new way of not only sending the press release t media staff, but also publishing them on the web sites like a news item, creates new conditions for the press release. A broader audience means that more interests must be highlighted, and demands more of the author.

Concluding Remarks

Despite the fact that the four organizations studied have different responsibilities and focuses in their press releases, there turned out to be some general topics and three overall themes that were used by all of them. These texts can be seen as arguments from the organizations; they are communications, framed from a time and a managing perspective, that say that they are in control of the situation. In further research, it would be interesting to study the occurrence of these (as well as similar) topics and themes based upon a more comprehensive study. This would determine if they can be seen as general topics of crises in other crisis discourses.

Since the press release traditionally is intended for media editorial staff, the occurrence of direct address to the citizens is notable. New technology has changed the conditions for

communication, including crisis communication. In a serious accident in a nuclear power plant, reaching out to the citizens is paramount. Both the informative and the exhortative aims of the communication are relevant, since these aims help people understand the events as well as the actions they are supposed to take. This can, in nuclear industrial accidents, mean the difference between life and death. In this regard, the texts seem to meet the expectations of a crisis managing organization staff. A question of interest for further studies is if the press release is the right medium for addressing different audiences. In this study, the organizations seemed to use the press release as a medium, rather than follow the traditional structure and form of such a text. I hope to understand the use of the press releases in crises in a broader sense and in my continued work it will be central not only to discuss how press releases *are* being used, but also how they *should* be used. Since this still is a work in progress, and the results presented here are only the first findings, hopefully in time the results and the discussion concerning them will lead to a deepening of our understanding on this subject.

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SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011 – Press releases

Tuesday February 2

07:01 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Höjd beredskap på OKG

07:29 OKG: Pressmeddelande – O1 och O2 snabbstoppade

08:59 MSB: Pressmeddelande – Med anledning av driftstörning i Oskarshamns kärnkraftverk

09:38 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Förvärrat läge vid OKG

09:58 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Oförändrat läge vid OKG

10:22 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Intensivt arbete pågår för att få igång kylningen

11:38 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Fortsatt höjd beredskap vid OKG

13:34 MSB: Pressmeddelande – Pressträff hos MSB med anledning av driftstörning i Oskarshamns kärnkraftverk

13:40 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Brand i avfallsanläggning på OKG

14:20 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Utrymning av Simpevarpshalvön

14:32 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Utrymning på OKG

15:40 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Branden på OKG är släckt

16:20 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Vidare information kring branden på OKG

17:40 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Haverilarm på OKG

18:40 Lst: Pressmeddelande - VMA – Utrymning av inre beredskapszonen

19:15 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Myndighetsmeddelande från Länsstyrelsen Kalmar län

19:29 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Oskarshamn 3 snabbstoppad – haverilarm utlöst

21:31 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Utrymningen fortsätter

23:54 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Arbetet för att åtgärda kylproblem på Oskarshamn 3 fortgår

Wednesday February 3

00:26 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Elförsörjningen i länet

02:06 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Utsläpp från OKG

02:45 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Kontrollerat utsläpp från OKG

04:32 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Utvidgad zon för inomhusvistelse

05:05 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Radioaktiva utsläppet stoppat

05:29 MSB: Pressmeddelande från Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap (MSB)

07:45 Pressmeddelande – Inget utsläpp från OKG

09:40 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Saneringsarbetet inlett

09:42 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Kraftigare utsläpp än tidigare befarat

12:15 Lst: Pressmeddelande – Gynnsamt saneringsläge

14:12 OKG: Pressmeddelande – Oskarshamn 3 obrukbar på grund av

SSM has not set the times for publishing of their press releases

Tuesday February 2

Höjd beredskap på OKG – Oskarshamns kärnkraftverk

Händelsen i Oskarshamn: Inga risker för allmänheten för närvarande

Råd till Länsstyrelsen i Kalmar

Brand i avfallsanläggning på OKG

Haverilarm vid Oskarshamns kärnkraftverk

Enighet om prognosen för filtrerat utsläpp

Stanna inomhus!

Wednesday February 3

Beredskapszonen utvidgas

Haveriet på OKG en femma på INES-skalan

Rättelse om beredskapszonen – Nu med rätt karta

Pressträff hos MSB kl. 11.30

Google Doodles As Corporate Communication

An Exploration of Extrinsic and Inter-media Agenda Setting

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Through its Doodles, Google highlights ideas, personalities and events on its home page. Doodles, once clicked, reveal search results for their topics, which, because of Google's primacy as a search engine, get extensive traffic and attention. Though there are no criteria about which topics get the Doodle treatment, patterns among the Doodles can be surfaced, as is done in this study. This research identifies what Doodles communicate about Google as a corporeal entity and how this framing extends to the print new media. Guided by agenda setting theory, this content analysis covers Google Doodles and the attendant print news media coverage about them in 2011 using the Press Display database. Contrary to popular estimation, correlation between the patterns across Doodles and the nature of print coverage about them is limited. Findings thus inform inter-media agenda-setting from an online non-news media outlet to traditional print media.

Keywords: Agenda-setting, Inter-media agenda-setting, Internet, Media agenda building

Google is one of the most powerful transnational media corporations in the world. From its beginnings as a search engine in 1996 it has expanded to include cloud computing, social networking, advertising platforms and more (Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful). In October of 2011, Google commanded 65.6% of all searches done on the Internet, a total of 18 billion searches. Second and third place fell to Yahoo with 15.2% (2.7 billion searches) and Microsoft with 14.8% (2.68 billion searches) of the total share (Brockmeier, 2011). Furthermore, in May 2011 Google's websites surpassed the 1 billion unique visitor mark, making it the first web property to do so (*Google Reaches 1 Billion Global Visitors*, 2011).

Google's dominance in the search engine market and its growing presence in other ventures make it a force to contend with. There is speculation that one day Google will overthrow traditional media to deliver news, entertainment and more to its users in a customized manner, which will characterise the future of information gatekeeping (Hof, 2007).

Google currently hosts the most visited sites on the Internet, with its search engine page being the primary website people visit. On its search page, Google displays its Google logo, which is sometimes amended. That amended logo is classified as a Doodle, which serves to commemorate holidays, anniversaries, personalities, inventions and more. Google maintains that it is their way of demonstrating the "creative and innovative personality" of the company (*Doodle 4 Google*). The Doodles form part of Google's corporate identity. This role of the Doodles is facilitated by the traditional print media that covers Doodles as a part of their news stories.

Guided by agenda-setting theory, this study investigates the inter-media relationship between Google and traditional print media and the meaning that Doodles communicate in building a corporate identity for Google. We hope to add to the body of inter-media agenda-setting by examining the inter-media influence of Google on traditional news media. This study will be an important addition to scholarly work on explicating inter-media agenda-setting from an

Internet non-news media outlet to traditional print media and to the field of corporate communications and corporate identity.

Google as Media

Google's origins can be traced to a small garage in California. In 1998, two Stanford graduates, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, were working on their Stanford Digital Library Project. Page and Brin conceptualized a search engine that produced results based on relationships between websites. They called this new technology PageRank, where the number of pages, and the importance of those pages, that linked back to the original site, determined a website's relevance. Page and Brin originally nicknamed their new search engine "BackRub", because the system checked backlinks to estimate the importance of a site

Over the years, the company has captured the Internet market and emerged as the biggest player on the World Wide Web. A key feature in Google's rise has been the company's emphasis on innovation and its ability to break rules and tread into territories that others consider untouchable. This feature of Google is aptly represented in its use of the Google Doodle. Trademark lawyers have often advised organizations against tampering with company logos. They argue that modifications in logos, by changing the original design, may dilute a company's exclusive rights over trademarks. Google has disregarded that rationale. The company says, "Having a little bit of fun with the logo is part of the brand" (*Doodle 4 Google*).

Corporate identity became a subject of managerial interest in the 1970s. Then it was viewed as a design issue and came to be regarded as a tool for competitive advantage (Downey, 1987; Bickerton, 1999). Corporate identity may be defined as the set of meanings by which a company allows itself to be known and through which it allows people to "describe, remember and relate it" (Toplain, 1984; Olins, 1989, Markwick & Fill, 1997). Traditionally, corporate identity was seen as serving seven purposes. On the employee side, it motivates employees and enables employees to adapt existing culture and integrate new cultures after mergers or acquisitions. Corporate identity also helps companies employ high-calibre talent (Stigler, 1962; Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gray & Smeltzer, 1985, 1987; Olins, 1990; Melewar & Saunders, 1998). The stakeholders of a company also become exposed to a company's competitive distinction and product and service diversity through its identity (Buzzell, 1968; Lippincott and Margulies, 1988). Consumers become aware of products. Importantly, corporate identity allows the creation of a strong brand that leads to stakeholder loyalty (Balmer, 1995; Markwick & Fill, 1997). A strong corporate identity also attracts investors (Milgrom & Roberts, 1986). More recently, it has been agreed that corporate identity is a multifaceted notion that comprises business strategy, corporate culture, behaviour and corporate design (Melewar, 2003).

Corporate Communications and Doodles

Doodles are a way that Google communicates its corporate culture. As an employer, Google has earned a reputation for promoting an informal work culture. This is communicated by the Doodles, which are a testimony to the company's emphasis on innovation. Corporate identity pertains to the impressions, image and personality projected by an organization (Schmitt & Pan, 1994). The communication, planned or unplanned, creates an impression and conveys an image (Olins, 1991). Corporate communications may also be defined as the sum of sources, messages and media by which the corporation conveys its uniqueness to audiences (Olins, 1991). Doodles represent a visual identity for Google. The company, in a way, sets the agenda for discussion on Google and conveys a message through that. Markwick and Fill (1997) argue that some of the

communications constitute an organization's visual identity: design and graphics associated with a company's symbols and elements of self-expression.

According to Balmer and Soenen (1998), corporate communication includes five types of communication. Uncontrolled communication includes the communication between the staff and external stakeholders. Controllable communication comprises management, marketing and organizational communication. Visual identity and behaviour of employees are also ways an organization communicates. Indirect communication refers to any communication about the organization initiated by external stakeholders, such as articles in the press. This paper seeks to study this indirect communication from the lens of the Google Doodles.

Google Doodles

The Doodles on the Google homepage, if clicked on, link to a search. The Google Doodle has sent millions of people to that particular search page. For instance, Wikipedia has kept track of the increase in traffic to their website related to a particular Doodle. Mary Blair's (a Disney artist who was featured in a Doodle) Wikipedia page had 1.9 million page views in the month of October, and a similar increase was reported for Art Clokey, a stop-motion clay animation artist who was also featured (Kohs, 2011). Similarly, when Google celebrated Marie Curie's 144th birthday, the top search was the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity page. The page reported an increase of ten times the usual amount of traffic (Kohs, 2011).

Google Doodles are released for a number of different events and holidays. For instance, the Marie Curie Doodle is an example of how a Doodle commemorates a personality. Google also releases Doodles celebrating national days of respective countries, such as Poland's Independence Day on November 11, when, in 2011, the Google Doodle was fashioned in the colors of the Polish flag. Often, global or local festivals are highlighted, as in the case of Mexico's Day of the Dead Festival on November 2, 2011, when a table of offerings for the dead was loosely shaped as the Google logo. Google releases Doodles that announce their own Google news, either on the birthday of the company or for their Doodle 4 Google competition, in which people from around the world send in their renderings of the logo to be used as Doodles. Doodles are released globally, such as for the Marie Curie Doodle, by country, for national days and local festivals and sometimes by specific regions or countries, such as the case for Halloween (*Holiday and Events - Google style!*, 2011).

News media has been proactive in picking up stories about the Google Doodles. Newspapers often write articles upon the release of a particular Doodle, whether that Doodle is commemorating a personality, national day, global or local festival or Google announcement. The occasion can be the topic of their text (Marie Curie's Doodle, 2011). Other times, the article concentrates on the design of the Doodle, whether it is the technology or creativity that encompasses the design (*Google doodles a playful mix of art and technology*, 2011). Sometimes, the text is not based on a particular Doodle at all and may just be about Google Doodles in general. For example, stories are published discussing the Doodle 4 Google contest (Mahale, 2011)

Framework

The ability of the media to influence the salience of topics and their attributes among the public is known as the agenda-setting role of the news media (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). The salience of elements on the news agenda has a direct impact on their salience in the public agenda. This process of influence begins with the media giving prominence to the "agenda of objects". The

expression "object" is defined as something that the public has an opinion about (Caroll & McCombs, 2003). Newspapers provide an array of ways to give certain objects more prominence than others in daily coverage. Whether a story is the lead story on a page, whether stories appear on the front page as opposed to other pages, the size of the headline and the length of the story all indicate the attention given to news objects. The biggest indicator of media salience for an object is coverage given consistently over a stretch of time (Carol & McCombs, 2003).

While traditional agenda-setting theory focuses on the transfer of issue salience from the media to the public through news coverage, our study seeks to understand what sets the media agenda. Unlike traditional agenda-setting, the media agenda is referred to as something that is built over time and is a negotiation between the source of information and the media. The media outlet decides which news it will cover based on this relationship or sometimes on the perception that the media outlet has of the source, especially if the source is perceived to be an authority or exert some sort of power (Denham, 2010).

Research has compared the effects of news releases and advertisements on media content. It explored how political-public relations are a factor in media agenda building during a 2006 state-wide election in the United States. First of all, public relations professionals are considered to be information subsidies for media, as they reduce the cost of gathering first-hand information. As a result, the salience of the issues in the news releases is often echoed in the media. The study found that there was a strong correlation between the salience of the issues in news releases and in media content (Kiousis, Kim, McDevitt, & Ostrowski, 2009).

Closely tied to media agenda building is the theory of inter-media agenda-setting. This idea states that mass media agendas influence one another and shape one another's agenda. It also states that one media will mirror another in a way to reflect the transfer of object and attribute salience (Du, 2010).

Inter-media agenda-setting occurs for a number of reasons. One reason is that news media usually do not report on news that would offend advertisers. However, if the news of a particular company is already exposed, the news media are less likely to offend anyone by reporting on it. Since another outlet has already brought up the topic, the news media are simply letting the public know about it. Another reason cited for the transfer of salience is the power and influence of discourse on the Internet. Blogs, websites, forums and more have millions of people communicating their views, which journalist and media outlets often monitor. Sometimes those conversations can be reported in traditional news (Denham, 2010).

In a 2006 study, McCombs and his colleagues looked at the correlation between political campaign advertisements and their subsequent news media coverage. His study showed that television broadcast news was likely to feature the candidates in the advertisements more than print media did (McCombs & Min, 2006). Conversely, in a similar study done by Sweetser, Golan and Wanta (2008) it was found that there was no correlation between political advertisements and broadcast news media. Still, they did find a reciprocal relationship between candidate blogs and broadcast news media. (it's already there in the references)

Studies on inter-media agenda-setting with one or more of the media outlets being on the Internet are limited. One such study that we encountered compared the relationship between two different online newspapers and a wire service in South Korea. While the paper initially hypothesized that the wire service would have more influence in setting the agenda of the online newspapers than vice versa, it was found that the leading or more prominent online newspaper had a greater influence on the news of the second online newspaper and the wire service (Lim, 2006). Another such study examined the effect of traditional media and social media networks on blog content. According to the study's findings, both traditional and social media content set the

agenda for what was covered on blogs. It found that traditional media no longer held the monopoly in agenda-setting (Meraz, 2009).

One of the latest studies on Internet inter-media agenda-setting was done in South Korea, to examine the influence of Internet bulletin boards on newspaper coverage of the general election in 2000. It was found that newspapers influenced Internet bulletin boards at the first level of agenda-setting, but that Internet bulletin boards in turn influenced the newspapers at the second level of agenda-setting. The newspapers influenced what the Internet bulletin boards discussed and the Internet bulletin boards in turn influenced how those issues were framed in newspapers. The results of the study indicate that the Internet has a role in gatekeeping not only for the public who read it but also by affecting the coverage of news in traditional media (Byoungkwan, Lancendorfer, & Ki Jung, 2005).

Research Objectives

This study seeks to explore how the Google Doodles might be building the agenda for print media through inter-media agenda-setting. Although there have been a few previous studies on the effects of traditional news media on Internet media or vice versa, there have been none that have examined a media like Google, which is a company and a medium in one.

Past literature has helped established that Google is an extremely influential search engine and network that millions of people access each day. Consequently, media are often influenced by other media, which, in a process known as media agenda building, may shape what issues they cover. Accordingly, it has also been studied that Internet media such a blogs, bulletin boards and more are increasingly influencing traditional media when it comes to their news coverage through a process known as inter-media agenda-setting.

Within the framework of this study, we aim to explore how Google, as a medium, influences traditional media and what is the message that the Doodle communicates in this process. We will do this by comparing the Doodles released by Google in terms of their topics as defined earlier (personality, national day, Google announcement, global event/festival) and the regions in which they were released (West, Non-West, Global) and comparing their coverage in newspapers. The coverage in newspapers will be analyzed by looking at which Doodles were covered by topic, the topic of the article as indicated by its headline (occasion of the Doodle, design of the Doodle, Google) and which region the newspaper is from. Finally, the prominence of the article will be measured according to its position in the newspaper, its page position and whether it has an image.

In order to determine the influence of the Doodles on news coverage, we will compare the proportion of Doodles of a particular topic with the Doodle topics that are picked up and also with the topics of the articles. By doing this we will be able to see if similar topics were covered by news media, which will determine the salience given to a particular topic. Additionally, we will compare the topics of the Doodles with the prominence of the coverage in the newspaper.

Based on inter-media agenda-setting theory, which posits that the issue salience of one medium may influence that of another, our study aims to do the following:

1. To identify the nature of Google Doodles
2. To compare the level of similarity between the Google Doodles and their subsequent newspaper coverage
3. To compare the proportion of Google Doodles by topic with the proportion of newspaper coverage based on those Doodles
4. To compare the Google Doodles by region with the newspaper coverage by region

5. To determine which Google Doodles, by topic, get the most prominent coverage in newspapers.

Methodology

In this study, quantitative methods were used to investigate Google Doodle coverage in traditional media. Quantitative research was employed to provide a sense of the visibility and the characteristics of the coverage. To study inter-media agenda-setting effects, this study analyzed two units of analysis: the Google Doodles and the news coverage of print newspapers.

Sample

The newspaper articles were selected from the Press Display database, which is available in the Nanyang Technological University's online library resource. This database was chosen over more popular news databases, such as Factiva.com and Lexis Nexis, because Press Display provides a digital version of the actual newspaper. The option of studying exactly how and where the articles appeared in the newspapers helps us answer various elements of our research. A search was done for the keyword *Google Doodle,* which generated 166 results. After that, the search was further narrowed down to reflect only English language articles, as that was a limitation of the coders. Of the 139 articles in English, seventy-three were found to be relevant. As the database provides results for only the current year, the study was for the period from January 1, 2011 to November 1, 2011.

The second unit of analysis, Google Doodles, was also analyzed. To synchronize with the sample of news articles, Doodles from 2011 only were coded. All static images of the Doodles and information on the country of display was available from the Google website. Since the Doodles were available on a scheduled basis, the sample was stratified by selecting every fifth Doodle starting from the first Doodle of 2011 up until November 1, 2011, creating a final data set of forty-four Google Doodles.

Coding Guidelines

Four trained coders, who are also the authors of the research, coded all advertisements independently. The coders were provided with coding guidelines that used literature on content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). Together, the coders coded several newspaper articles from Press Display and Google Doodles from before 2011 to ensure consistency before the commencement of the formal coding process.

Content variables: Google Doodles

The forty-four Google Doodles were coded and analyzed based on the information available on the Google website. The following variables were coded: 1(a) Country of Display and 1(b) Topic of Doodle.

Country of display

The Google Doodles were categorized according to the country or, more specifically, the region in which that the particular Doodle can be viewed on the day that it is displayed on the search engine. The categories were West (Western countries including Europe and the United States),

Non-West (Non-Western countries including Asia, the Middle East and Latin America) and Global (for Doodles that appeared in every country).

Topic of Doodle

The Google Doodles were categorized according to the topic of the Doodle. The designated categories were Personality (Doodles created as a special commemoration of a person), National Day (Doodles created for an occasion specific to a country), Google Announcement (Doodles created specifically to spread a message about Google and contest entries for Doodle 4 Google) and Global Event/Festival (Doodles created for global holidays, festivals and major sporting events)

Content variables: newspaper articles

All seventy-three news articles were coded using the information visible through its headline and page position. The following variables were coded: 2(a) Country of Publication, 2(b) Topic of Doodle which generated the Coverage, 2(c) Topic of the Article (by Headline), 2(d) Position in the Newspaper (Right/Left), 2(e) Position on the Page and 2(f) Image/No Image

Country of publication

The newspaper articles were categorized according to the country or, more specifically, the region in which the particular newspaper article was published. The categories were West (Western countries including Europe and the United States) and Non-West (Non-Western countries including Asia, the Middle East and Latin America).

Topic of Doodle

The newspaper articles were categorized according to the topic of the Doodle that was the basis of the article. The designated categories were personality (Doodles created as a special commemoration of a person), national day (Doodles created for an occasion specific to a country), Google announcement (Doodles created specifically to spread a message about Google and contest entries for Doodle 4 Google), Global Event/Festival (Doodles created for global holidays, festivals and major sporting events) and No Occasion (News articles that were generated without a particular Google Doodle).

Topic of article

The newspaper articles were then categorized according to the topic of the article, as suggested by the headline. The designated categories were Google (News article headlines that discussed Google), Design (News article headlines that indicated the design of a particular Doodle) and Occasion (headlines about topic of the doodle).

Position in the newspaper

The news articles were then coded to gauge their prominence in the newspaper through their position in the newspaper. The designated categories were Right (Articles positioned on the right-

hand side page of the newspaper) and Left (Articles positioned on the left-hand side page of the newspaper). Articles on the Right were classified as being more prominent than those on the Left.

Position on the page

The news articles were coded to measure their prominence in the newspaper through their position on the page. They were ranked in the following descending order of prominence: Full Page (Articles that take up the entire page), Top Half (Articles that take up the entire top half of the page), Bottom Half (Articles that take up the entire bottom half of the page), Top Right (Articles positioned on the top right of the page), Top Left (Articles positioned on the top left of the page), Bottom Right (Articles positioned on the bottom right of the page) and Bottom Left (Articles positioned on the bottom left of the page).

Presence of an image

Finally, the news articles again were coded to gauge their prominence through whether there was an image accompanying the article. Articles with an accompany image were classified as being more prominent than those without.

Findings

Google introduced Doodles in 1998. The idea, which was born before Google was incorporated as a company, has remained an integral part of the Google personality. From 1998 to 2011, Google produced 224 Doodles. These Doodles were based on the commemoration of national days, personalities and Google announcements, among other things. Analysis of the 224 doodles showed that the majority of the Doodles were dedicated to national days or local festivals. This was followed by Doodles dedicated to global events such as the Olympics and festivals such as Christmas. These doodles accounted for 31.03% of Doodles from 1998 to 2011. These included a weeklong series on the holiday season in December and days like New Year's Day, which are celebrated across the world. The analysis of the Doodles showed that Google actually used very few Doodles for announcements related to the company, such as Google's anniversary or Doodle 4 Google competitions. Doodles based on personality, which formed the majority in 2011 and were the most covered in print media in 2011, account for roughly a quarter (21.12 per cent) of the Doodles from 1998 to 2011.

Half of the forty-four Doodles selected for in-depth analysis were based on National Day, 34.1% was based on Personality, 9.1% on Global Event/Festival and 6.8% on Google Announcements. This proportion was not replicated in the sample of seventy-three articles on Google Doodles that were covered in newspapers. Only 8.2% of the Doodles covered by newspaper articles were based on National Day Doodles while the majority of the articles were based on Personality Doodles (54.8% Google Announcements came third in terms of proportion with 15.1% while 19.2% of the Doodles that were covered had No Occasion in terms of topic, that is to say that they were based on topics such as 'Website to Visit' or the Google 4 Doodle contests.

Doodles were first of all divided into West, Non-West and Global Doodles, while Doodle newspaper article coverage was divided into West and Non-West. The larger proportion of Doodles was released in Non-Western countries at 54.5%, while just 13.6% was released in Western countries. This trend was paralleled in the proportion of articles covered in the

corresponding regions. Most of the Google Doodle news coverage was released in Non-Western countries (84.9%) while Western countries released just 14.9% of the articles on Google Doodles.

The majority of the Doodle-related news articles (57.5%) was placed on the Right and deemed to be prominent. By topic, the Doodles which garnered the most right-hand side page coverage were the Personality Doodles at 31.5%, and this was also the overall largest group with 54.8% of the total news article coverage. National Day Doodle topics were given the least prominence, with all of the news articles (8.2%) placed on the Left page and with a very low news frequency. Google Announcements were relegated to the Right page for nine out of the eleven articles on that particular topic, and it made up 15.1% of the news article coverage. Global Event/Festival Doodles generated the fewest articles at only 2.7% but both were placed on the Right page. News articles on the Google Doodle that were not based on a particular Doodle had about equal Right page (eight out of fourteen) and Left page (six out of fourteen) frequency, and made up a total of 19.2% of the news article coverage.

The majority of the Doodle news article coverage was considered prominent, as 76.6% had an image Doodle. By topic, the Doodle that was the most prominent by image was again the Personality Doodle, with 42.5% of its articles having an image. Of the six National Day Doodle news articles, four had an image. Similarly, Google Announcement (eight out of eleven), Global Event/Festival (two out of two) and No Occasion (eleven out of fourteen) Doodle news coverage all mostly had images accompanying the article.

Discussion

Our findings show that the print media differed significantly from Google when it came to Google Doodle news article coverage. First of all, print media chose not to cover all of the Doodles released. There was a total of 224 Doodles released in 2011 and only seventy-three news articles were picked up for coverage. As such, it can be inferred that not all Doodles released by Google were covered in traditional print media.

This trend persisted when it came to print media's coverage of specific Google Doodle topics. While Google dedicated 50% of its Doodles to National Day, print media devoted only 8.2% of its Doodle coverage to the same topic. This could be explained by the fact that National Days generally generate news on their own and Google Doodles may not be perceived as important in contributing to the significance of the events. The preoccupation of print media with Personality Doodles may be attributed to the fact that people's lives make for interesting reading. Most personalities covered by Google comprise achievers from a bygone era. These are not people one hears about on a daily basis.

The other significant finding was that while only 6.8% of Google's Doodles were dedicated to Google Announcement, 15.1% of the news coverage articles on Doodles related to Google Announcements. The findings show the importance that the print media accords to Google, which is one of the most prominent technology companies of today. This shows that the Google Announcement Doodles are proving to be a good way for Google to be featured in the news. Though not discussed in the findings, the salience accorded to Google is also reflected in the topic of the newspaper articles, of which 41.1% were about Google as a company.

Our research also showed that Non-Western countries generated the most Google Doodle news. Several factors may account for this. Firstly, the number of Non-Western publications could be much greater than the number of Western publications. Another reason could be that Google has existed in the Western world for longer than it has in the Non-Western world, and it has gone past its peak coverage in print media in that region. With the company expanding in the

Non-Western world, more news seems to come out of that region. This is also aligned with the finding that 54.5 % of the Doodles were released in the Non-Western region.

Analysis of the prominence accorded to Doodles by topic showed similar results to earlier findings. As was the case with the news article topics, the prime page position (the right-hand side page) and the articles with the greatest proportion of images was the Personality Doodle. Hence the Doodles that traditional print media deem as most prominent are Personality Doodles, despite the fact that Google released more National Day Doodles.

The overall prominence of Doodle stories in print media showed some interesting results. Prominence of articles was gauged by page position (Left or Right) with the right-hand side page deemed more prominent. It was also gauged in terms of the article's position on the page and the positions were accorded significance as mentioned earlier. Most Doodle articles (57.5%) appeared on the right-hand side page, showing that more than half of the time, Doodle articles tend to be placed prominently in a newspaper. Thus Doodles do not only find a place for Google in print, they also find a position where the reader is likely to read the news. On the page, too, Doodle news was placed favourably most of the time. 26% of the Doodles were placed on the top left of the page. This is significant, as Google Doodle news is likely to be deemed as soft news that should hardly ever make it above the page fold. In addition, most Doodle articles were also accompanied by images (76.7%), which further indicates the prominence given to Doodle news. Space is considered sacrosanct in newspapers. An article with an image would be a reflection of the newspaper's editorial decision to deem the story important.

While traditional print media seems to give Google Doodle news and Google as a whole prominence in their coverage, they do not seem to reflect the transfer of salience by frequency or topic. Regional coverage is echoed in terms of proportion but even those numbers are loose at best. As such, our research shows that Google may not be an example of how an online medium influences the agenda of traditional media.

Limitations and Future Research

The result of this study has a number of limitations. First, it is important to note that the variables have emerged from the coders' judgments and interpretations of the units of analysis. Given different routes of item segregation, different factors may have emerged.

One of the limitations was the short time period allocated for this study, which may have resulted in Google Doodles generating a disproportionate amount of coverage across publications and across topics. For instance, there was more coverage based on Personality Doodles, and there was more coverage in Non-Western media. A longitudinal study of the Google Doodles and their subsequent news coverage would ensure a larger data set, which could combat this problem.

As only newspaper articles in English were examined, language would be a limitation of this study. Coverage of the Google Doodles in publications of different languages could bolster the findings. This study was focused on traditional print media coverage with articles available in the year 2011. A more longitudinal study would be recommended, along with a study of its coverage in other traditional media such as broadcast media. A future study of inter-media agenda-setting between online media such as Google and online news publications could also contribute to the literature.

Despite its limitations, the research has both academic and practical implications. By demonstrating how an agenda can be woven into newspapers through Google Doodles, we believe this study will take a step in the direction of understanding inter-media influence between online media and traditional media. It lays an empirical foundation for future studies to understand whether Google or other online media companies consciously set the agenda.

Quantitative content analysis has shown that Google Doodles does not have the ability to drive inter-media agenda-setting. Still, the study was not designed to investigate how the aesthetic design of the Doodles affects the news coverage they garner. In order to have a holistic understanding of this issue, future studies could also analyze the Google Doodles in the context of their production and design. This will help determine the link with the coverage Doodles receive.

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A Holistic Corporate Identity Communication Process

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Purpose of paper: *This paper seeks to address the holistic corporate identity communications process. Specifically, it aims to examine the meaning of informal corporate identity and the process through which this phenomenon develops. It examines the nature of corporate identity when an informal corporate identity and the formal lines of corporate identity are combined and how this results in an aligned or misaligned corporate identity system. Similarly, this study also seeks to highlight the risks inherent in the exhibition of a misaligned corporate identity and how they can be managed.*

Design/method/approach: *A thorough review of theoretical literature involving a conceptual and analytical framework of the meaning of informal corporate identity and its process of development together with the outcomes of integrating formal corporate identity with informal corporate identity communication were drawn. A review of literature incorporating the risks associated with the development of a misaligned corporate identity in business organizations was also highlighted and conceptualized. Importantly, two diagrammatic models highlighting how the informal corporate identity develops and the stage-by-stage processes through which the total corporate identity communications process works were drawn and established.*

Findings: *A definition, which underscores the role of employee behavior as a critical factor in the meaning of informal corporate identity was developed. A six-stage development process for informal corporate identity includes (1) corporate personality appraisal; (2) appraisal melding and positioning; (3) communications; (4) assimilation of corporate personality and corporate identity; (5) informal expression of corporate personality and corporate identity and (6) development of a corporate image. A similar model highlighting how a total corporate communications process works was advanced. The potential risks resulting from the development of a misaligned corporate identity were identified. Similarly a three point advisory guide of how these risks can be curtailed or managed was put forward. These include a coercive, radical management and soft (mindset) management approach.*

Theoretical implication: *Existing literature on corporate identity communications process has focused mainly on the formal aspects of corporate identity. There is little or no literature addressing the concept of informal corporate identity and its effect on the total corporate identity communications process. This paper attempts to fill this gap. This study will add to the existing literature of corporate identity and create a better, in-depth understanding of this phenomenon.*

Practical implications: *The development of a conceptual definition and management process of informal corporate identity will provide managers with an understanding of how corporate identity communications can be better managed.*

Limitation of study and future research direction: *This is a conceptual study. There is a lack of empirical evidence to support the arguments presented in this study. The absence of an empirical analysis, presents an opportunity for future research.*

Originality and value of paper: This paper provides an original contribution towards the field of corporate identity by providing insight into how informal corporate identity expressed through employee behavior can derail the total corporate identity communications process. Insights into this process allow managers to circumvent a possible derailment in the total corporate identity communications process by developing preventive measures that will avert such problems. A work of this nature is highly limited within the literature and it therefore makes this study unique, useful and original in all ramifications.

Type of paper: Conceptual

Keywords: Corporate identity, Corporate communications, Informal corporate identity.

Some decades ago, corporate identity would hardly have been considered as an important issue worthy of inclusion in strategic planning. Today however, it has become a buzz word and an important business practice especially in profit led business organizations (He and Balmer, 2007; Cornelissen, et al. 2006; Cornelius et al., 2007; Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Suvatjis and de Chernatony, 2005; Balmer, 2002a; Melewar, 2003; Christensen and Askegaard, 2001). Several things happened in recent years that changed this attitude. First, is the unrelenting desire of businesses to differentiate themselves from similar organizations that are at the center of a corporate scandal (Marwick and Fill, 1997). Second, is a greater understanding of the role of corporate identity throughout business consolidation exercises (Marwick and Fill, 1997). Third, is the fiercely competitive business environment (Schmidt, 1995), which has led to the increased desire for re-engineering and globalization (Balmer and Dinnie, 1999; Schmidt, 1995).

The core idea behind the corporate identity concept lies within: (1) the acts of appraisal and conceptualization of an organization's corporate personality and (2) the presentation and expression of these personalities to stakeholders. This is done through a variety of communication channels including but not limited to corporate visuals, corporate behavior, advertisements, corporate events etc. (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002; van Riel and Balmer, 1997; Melewar, 2003). The rise in the use of corporate identity among profit led business organizations is driven partly by the desire to construct business activities that are favorable in the minds of stakeholders. In this regard, some practitioners and corporate identity consultants have argued that corporate identity has a very important role to play in attracting customers (Balmer and Wilson, 1998); increasing sales levels (Simeons et al, 2005; Margulies, 1977); along with maximizing investments and wooing investors (Melewar, 2003). Consequently, business organizations have consistently invested heavily on corporate identity since the 1990s.

For example, in 2000, BP invested over $US7m on the promotion of its corporate identity (Melewar and Wooldridge, 2001). In another corporate identity management exercise BT (British Telecom) committed over £5m on its corporate visuals and appearance to mark its entry into new businesses, new markets and to signify the internationalization of its personality (Melewar, 2008). Across the Atlantic, Lucent Technologies, an American organization, was reported to have spent as much as $US50m on the advertisement of corporate identity (Barboza, 1996). In Nigeria, the twenty-five financial institutions that emerged from Central Bank of Nigeria's forced consolidation exercise in 2005, have committed a fortune to the redevelopment of their corporate identities. Although there are no credible figures, it is estimated that millions of US$ were spent by key operators to reposition their corporate identities. Knox and Maklan's (2005) work on Guarantee Trust Bank Plc supports this argument.

The continued recognition of the role and benefits of this concept and the ever changing and fiercely competitive business environment combined with the huge investments sunk into corporate identity projects have encouraged many other large national and multinational business

organizations to plan their corporate identity formally. However, it is unfortunate that a vast majority of corporate identity plans fail to accommodate or specify how the informal aspects of the concept of corporate identity can be effectively managed.

The failure to plan and manage the informal expression of corporate identity has led to the misalignment of corporate identities and has adversely affected business organizations of all sizes and influence. The businesses most affected by informal corporate identities are service based institutions such as banks, restaurants and hotels, the retail industry, transport organizations, and police). Employees who are in regular contact with stakeholders (Olins, 1995) are primarily responsible for expressing an organization's identity. The behavior of these employees contributes significantly to how stakeholders perceive the organization's image and reputation in the short and long run.

But what is informal corporate identity and how does it develop? What happens when an organization's informal corporate identity activity is combined with the formal lines of corporate identity communications? Does the combination of these two forms of communications result in an alignment or misalignment of an organization's corporate identity? What are the risks inherent in the exhibition of a misaligned corporate identity and how can these risks be managed?

The review of theoretical literature indicates that very little has been done to address these questions. In fact, it appears that there is limited understanding among academics and practitioners how a combination of formal and informal lines of corporate identity communications and informal lines of corporate identity, which are commonly expressed via employee behavior, work collaboratively. The absence or limitation of academic and practitioner literature in relation to these issues, and the limited understanding of how these practices work integratively, has influenced the development of this text.

This conceptual study is important and valuable for a number of reasons. First, insights into the meaning of informal corporate identity will enhance understanding and add to the growing literature on the meaning of corporate identity. Second, an understanding of the developmental processes within informal corporate identity will give managers the technical knowledge of how to avert identity challenges and reinforce the desired corporate identity, which is being expressed through the formal channels of corporate communications. Third, understanding the implications of integrating the formal and informal lines of corporate identity will enable business organizations to develop policy guidelines in order to strategic avert risks and problems such as the development of a misaligned corporate identity. Fourth, this study is important as it provides academics and managers with a useful template that explicates how the fallout of a misaligned corporate identity can be effectively curtailed, managed and addressed.

This study has been further delineated into four sections – this section constitutes the first. Section two examines the meaning of informal corporate identity and how it develops. Section three addresses the holistic corporate identity communication process with insights into how this process may lead to an alignment or misalignment of corporate identity communication and how a misaligned corporate identity can be curtailed or managed. The study ends in section four with a summary of the issues discussed. It underscores the contributions from this study and its implications for theory and practice. The limitations of this study and future research directions are highlighted.

Meaning of Informal Corporate Identity

As we have stated in the previous section, the notion of informal identity stems from the concept of corporate identity which has become a buzz word and an important business practice. In order

to fully understand the key idea behind informal corporate identity, it is important to examine the meaning of corporate identity, the forerunner of this concept.

Until recently, the concept of corporate identity was conceived by many practitioners as a phenomenon depictive of how corporate visuals are deployed as a means of expressing the corporate personality of a organization. Recent work by (Otubanjo and Melewar, 2007; Balmer, 1995; van Riel and Balmer, 1997; Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, 1997; Cornelissen and Harris, 2001; He and Balmer, 2007) indicates that the meaning of corporate identity goes beyond the use of corporate visuals. As reported in a recent study (Otubanjo and Melewar, 2007), corporate identity is conceived as the planned expression of the corporate personality through a variety of channels of the CI mix (Melewar, 2003).

Corporate personality, for the purpose of this study, refers to the formal expression of who and what a business organization is; what it does and what it's good at; its history; what it stands for and believes in and how it operates (Melewar, 2003). Consequently, these characteristics are expressed through a variety of corporate identity mix channels such as advertising, visuals, events, guided editorials, sponsorships, office interiors, architecture, employee behavior (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002; van Riel and Balmer, 1997), etc. The corporate image and personality emerges following the receipt and interpretation of these personality traits by stakeholders.

Now, if corporate identity is the planned presentation of a organization's personality through the channels mentioned above including employee behavior, then it would be reasonable to argue that a organization's corporate identity is communicated both formally and informally. The rationale behind this argument resides within our conviction that human behavior is subject to a lot of informalities, especially when these are expressed within unguided, undirected and unmanaged atmospheres, conditions and circumstances.

The concept of informal corporate identity is a recent phenomenon that emerged from the utter disregard by business organizations for the critical role of employee behavior within the overall corporate identity strategic plan process. It is reflective of the unconscious, unintended and non-deliberate expression of an organization's corporate personality through the channel of employee behavior. The notion of employee behavior in this context refers to unspoken human actions such as physical gestures, postures and facial expressions. It also includes the visual appearance of employees and their quality of dress and beauty. The list of human actions is endless. The philosophy behind the concept of informal corporate identity stems from the notion that everything including all human behavior communicates (Brønn, 2002). If this is true, then it implies that verbal gestures and cues of prospective candidates seeking employment play a crucial role on recruitment decisions.

The informal identity process: how an informal corporate identity develops

The notion of informal corporate identity develops through a series of stages ranging from corporate appraisal to the corporate image phase. Thus, in the following paragraphs, we present a six-stage model (see Figure 1) to explicate how this process works.

Stage one - Corporate personality appraisal: The informal corporate identity process begins with a review of elements that constitute the personality of an organization. These elements include a unique combination of skills and experiences, faults and abilities, all matched to opportunities, which exploit the strong points and correct the weak ones (Hussey, 1998). The corporate appraisal exercise is conducted during staff retreats and meetings and is designed so that all staff can contribute. The appraisal must seek to establish who and what a business organization is and what the organization is good at doing in addition to what the organization stands for within the

business environment. The appraisal must seek to provide accurate historical information of the organization; where it is now and why, and where the organization is headed according to specified goals. It must also highlight how business organizations produce and sell products or services and how the business should be organized. Moreover, the corporate appraisal exercise must seek to establish where business organizations make what they produce; how they behave; how they ought to behave under specific circumstances and how they ought to expresses their personality at all times (see Melewar, 2003).

Informal corporate identity communication process

Source: developed by the authors
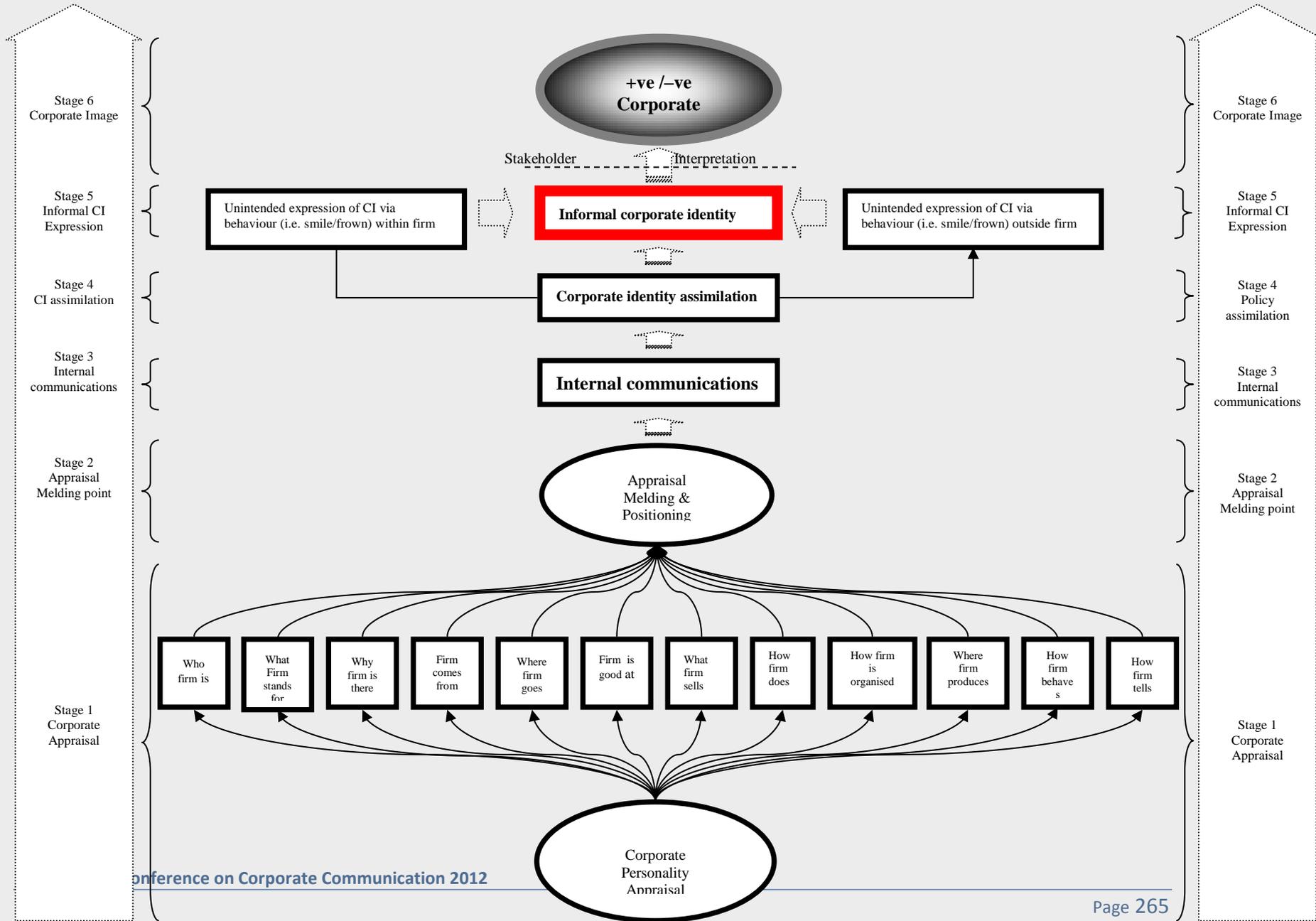
Stages two and three - Appraisal melding, positioning and communications: Following the corporate appraisal exercise, the corporate communications manager shall head a steering committee comprised of senior executives from each department and work to meld the variety of elements that constitute the organization's corporate personality. A corporate personality/corporate identity position paper, which gives a synthesis of the key elements of the organization's personality, is developed. When completed, the position paper is communicated to every member of the staff through a variety of internal corporate communication channels.

Stage four - Assimilation of corporate personality/corporate identity: The melding of the agreed variety of elements of an organization's personality leaves room for the pursuit of a corporate personality assimilation exercise. Under this project, all members of staff attend corporate personality assimilation seminars, which are designed to enhance successful and comprehensive absorption of the organization's personality. The personality assimilation seminars provide the platform through which unresolved issues about the personality of business organizations are clarified.

Stages five and six - Informal expression of corporate personality/corporate identity and the development of a corporate image: Once an organization's corporate personality is absorbed by employees, especially customer service representatives, these corporate personalities are expressed through behaviors or gestures such as nods, waves, smiles, laughs, body postures etc., contributing to the development of a positive corporate image. The danger is that employee negative behaviors such as a frown or slow response to customer's inquiries may overtake the corporate communications process. Consequently, the interpretation of a frown by the customer, no matter how efficient the customer service representative and the service offered may be, would leave stakeholders, especially customers, no choice other than to interpret the corporate identity of the organization as cold and unwelcoming, or hostile and unfriendly, leading to the development of a negative corporate image.

Holistic Corporate Identity Communications

The corporate identity of organizations, especially those within the service industry, does not emerge exclusively through the informal corporate identity communications process. Service industry organizations are reputable for expressing their corporate identity through combined efforts of the formal and informal lines of corporate identity communications. Thus, it would be shortsighted to develop a communication model in isolation of the formal lines of corporate identity communications. Consequently, a six- stage framework was developed that incorporates both types of these corporate identity communications.

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Informal corporate identity communication process

Stage 6 Aligned/ Misaligned Corporate Image	Stage 6 Aligned/ Misaligned Corporate Image
Stage 5 Aligned/ Misaligned Corporate identity	Stage 5 Aligned/ Misaligned Corporate identity
Stage 4 CI assimilation	Stage 4 CI assimilation
Stage 3 Internal communications	Stage 3 Internal communications
Stage 2 Appraisal Melding point	Stage 2 Appraisal Melding point
Stage 1 Corporate Appraisal	Stage 1 Corporate Appraisal

Aligned/Misaligned Corporate Image

Stakeholder — Interpretation

Aligned/Misaligned CI

Unintended expression of CI via behaviour (i.e. smile/frown) within firm

Unintended expression of CI via behaviour (i.e. smile/frown) outside firm

Expression of CI via formal lines of CI mix or corporate communications

Corporate identity assimilation

Internal communications

Appraisal Melding & Positioning

Who firm is | Firm stands for | Why firm is there | Firm comes from | Where firm goes | Firm is good | What firm sells | How firm does | How firm is organised | Where firm produces | How firm behave | How firm tells

Corporate Personality Appraisal

Holistic corporate identity communications: How it works

The total corporate identity communications process (see Figure 2) works in a similar manner as the informal corporate identity communication process. The first stage begins with an appraisal of the personality followed by the melding, positioning and communications in the second and third phases and the assimilation of corporate personality/corporate identity in the fourth stage. The fundamental difference between informal corporate identity communication process and the total corporate identity communication process appears at the fifth and sixth stage of the framework where the informal corporate identities expressed within and outside the organization are combined with the corporate personalities expressed through the formal lines of corporate communications. This leads toward the development of an aligned or a misaligned corporate identity to be interpreted by a variety of stakeholders in the business environment.

Aligned corporate identity and its benefits: Following the review of literature in the paragraphs above, one can conclude or assume that an aligned corporate identity is a phenomenon reflective of a fit between the informal corporate identity messages and the formal corporate identity messages. The key point behind the concept of aligned corporate identity is that a formal corporate identity must be reinforced by the informal corporate identity messages expressed through employee behavior. Anything short of this is likely to lead towards a misalignment of corporate identity.

Service based business organizations can experience many benefits when their informal corporate identities align with the formal corporate identities. First, it positions the organization in the minds of stakeholders as a credible, honest, trustworthy, responsible, ethical and reliable business organization that could be trusted and relied upon. Second, awareness among consumers of an organization's ability to meet customer expectations will automatically differentiate the organization's services strategically within a fiercely competitive business environment and present it with a positive corporate image. Third, employees will be motivated to work collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve organizational goals. Fourth, reinforcement of the organization's image as one with a sense of purpose may help such organizations recruit talented employees and executives. Fifth, organizations with a strong overall corporate identity can project a positive corporate image and attract quality investors.

Misaligned corporate identity and its risks: Misaligned corporate identities can develop in the short or long run when there is a misalignment between the corporate personality messages expressed through the formal lines of an organization's corporate identity communication and those conveyed through employee behavior. It's common that personalities of service-based industries are judged by the formal expression of their corporate identity but they are more profoundly judged by the corporate identities expressed through employee behavior.

There are several risks associated to the development of a misaligned corporate identity resulting in a negative corporate image including: a decline in customer loyalty, investments, profits, and a lack of employee motivation. It's important to note in this situation that the risks associated to the development of a misaligned corporate identity are converse to the benefits organizations get when formal corporate identities are reinforced by their informal corporate identities. In the following paragraph, we will propose a solution for curtailing or managing the development of a misaligned corporate identity.

How to curtail or manage misaligned corporate identities: In order to effectively thwart misalignments in corporate identity, we suggest three possible approaches:

1. *A radical management approach:* Evaluate all employees that are in direct contact with stakeholders, especially customers. Consider their personality along with visual and physical postures and gestures to ascertain whether they are in conformity with the defined personality of the organization and whether these personalities are capable of delivering the organization's personality to stakeholders. Under this managerial approach, employees whose personality does not fit or conform to the defined personality of business organizations are either sacked or posted to back office functions.

2. *Coercive management approach*: Organizations may develop a managerial scheme that coerces employees with direct contact with stakeholders and customers to develop and convey specific body gestures and postures that reflect the personality of the organization. Employees that fail to develop and express such gestures and postures are heavily penalized. Such penalties may come in form of salary reduction or freezing of promotions.

3. *Developmental management approach:* Employees are trained, encouraged and motivated to present body gestures and physical positions that conform to an organization's personality. These are achieved mostly through training and retraining until these body postures and gestures are fully and comprehensively imbibed. Organizations following the soft (mindset) management approach would reward employees through incentive schemes, increases in salaries, bonuses and commendations.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper underscores the behaviour of employees as an important resource in the expression of corporate identity (Brexendorf and Kernstock, 2007). The significance of employees and the relevance of employee behaviour in corporate brand identity have been hypothesised by Grönroos, (2000) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001). However, this study is significant because it makes unique and novel contributions to the growing literature on the role of employees in strategic corporate identity management by adding completely new perspectives to theory building in identity management through identifying and discussing a growing endemic called informal expression of corporate identity, particularly in the service industry. This paper argued that informal projection of corporate identity via employee behavior, if not properly managed leads to the misalignment of corporate identity and distorted perception of firms among stakeholders.

It also argued that issues of misaligned corporate identities deriving from unplanned corporate identity communications, particularly within the service industry, are caused by the failure of management to manage employee behaviors. The study warns that the unfortunate disregard for corporate identity management to include employees in direct contact with stakeholders and customers will ultimately spell doom for the corporation and lead to the projection of antagonistic and counterproductive multiple corporate identities (Brexendorf and Kernstock, 2007).

The authors addressed the objective set in this paper by delineating the study into sub-themes. These are: the meaning of informal corporate identity; the informal identity process and how an informal corporate identity develops; holistic corporate identity communications; aligned

corporate identity and its benefits. The paper also addressed the notion of misaligned corporate identity, the risks inherent in this phenomenon and how it could be curtailed or managed. Most important, was the discussion and robust insight into the emergence of the informal corporate identity phenomenon that arises due to poor management of employee behaviors.

The authors define informal corporate identity as the unconscious, unintended, and non-deliberate expression of an organization's corporate personality via the channel of employee behavior; especially through the behavior of employees with direct contact with customers. We argued that physical gestures such as sitting postures and facial expressions of employees serve as the main channel through which an organization's corporate identity is expressed. These contribute significantly to how stakeholders and customers perceive a business organization (Kranz, 2002; Taikn, 2006).

The study offers a limited understanding of how formal and informal corporate identities work or don't work well collaboratively. It argues that when informal corporate identity goes unmanaged, it can disrupt strategic corporate identity and image. This study emphasizes how employees are capable of projecting positive or negative tendencies in the corporate identity process (Burmann, Jost-Benz and Riley, 2008).

Our work presents a six-stage model explaining how informal corporate identity develops and how organizations can effectively manage it. Features of the model include personality appraisal; appraisal melding; positioning and communications; assimilation of corporate personality and corporate identity; informal expression of corporate personality and corporate identity, and the development of a corporate image.

This study is important because it draws attention to the idea of informal corporate identity. This adds to the growing literature on the meaning of corporate identity. It enhances understanding of how poor management of employee behaviors can have a dysfunctional influence on corporate identity strategy. In addition, it provides insight into the developmental processes of informal corporate identity. This will enable management to utilize these processes in order to effectively manage the corporate identity mix through the formal channels of corporate communications.

This conceptual study enhances the knowledge of academics and practitioners on the implications of integrating the formal and informal lines of corporate identity communication and identifies strategic identity issues, risk perception, and problem signs of a misaligned corporate identity. The timely discovery of identity hazards should compel management to develop a blueprint and toolkits for effective management of formal and informal corporate identity. It also provides academics and practitioners with a useful template for managing reputational risks, identifying hazards, and effectively curtailing misaligned corporate identity without endangering the overall image and reputation of the organization (Fombrun, 1996). Timely attention to misaligned identities will ensure stability and cohesion (Gioia, Schultz and Corley, 2000).

The primary finding of this study purports that an aligned corporate identity (Lovelock, 2000) represents a fit between informal corporate identity messages that are unconsciously or inadvertently expressed through employee behaviour and the formal corporate identity deliberately projected through planned communications. The point is that there should be intentional alignment of formal corporate identity messages and the informal employee behaviour, which can have a long-term positive impact on the development of organizations (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). An aligned corporate identity can enhance stakeholders' perception of a corporate brand (Balmer, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 1997). It is also a valuable strategic resource that promotes corporate performance (Balmer, 2005; Mitchell, 1999).

Moreover, the authors enunciated the advantages of aligning the formal and informal projection of corporate identities. These include positioning the organization in the minds of

stakeholders as a credible, honest and trustworthy corporation that is responsible in meeting stakeholders' expectations while reinforcing a positive work attitude among employees and motivating them to achieve a set of organizational goals. A positive corporate image influences net worth and encourages investment in the organization.

Another important finding is the identification of risks associated with misaligned corporate identity. They include negative corporate image and reputation, which result in customer disloyalty, revolt, and disaffection as well as business divestitures, loss of profit, loss of brand equity and lack of motivation amongst employees and disenchantment by all stakeholders.

Moreover, the study enumerated three fundamental approaches for addressing unexpected corporate identity misalignment. The approaches are *radical management approach*, *coercive management approach and developmental management approach.* The radical management approach proposes that employees, with personalities, attitudes and behaviours not fitting into the defined personality traits of corporate identity should either be sacked or placed in back office functions. The coercive management approach states that employees having regular contact with customers should be forced to adopt and convey well-defined customer friendly gestures, behaviours, and attitudes that reinforce the corporate personality of the business. The developmental management approach consists of training, encouraging and motivating employees to adopt and project positive body gestures, behaviours and attitudes toward customers. The radical and coercive approaches are quick in bringing about desired attitudinal and behavioural traits for identity management, but they are developed under fear and can be counter-productive in future. The developmental approach is slow in bringing desired attitudinal and behavioural changes for corporate identity management. However, such behaviours are developed within psychological conditions that are positive, natural, productive, and sustainable.

This study reveals some limitations that offer promising opportunities for future research. First, the study fails to provide an empirical analysis of misaligned corporate identity in the service industry. Two, the study does not test the effects of informal corporate identity among service industry staff to prove the validity of its impact on corporate image and corporate reputation. Also, this study does not test the informal corporate identity communication model among communication practitioners to determine its workability. These limitations notwithstanding, this study has opened a vista of research opportunities for other scholars. For example, it would be interesting to see an empirical study on how the projection of informal corporate identity through employee behaviors affects corporate image and corporate reputation among stakeholders. In addition, it would be fascinating to get practitioners' insights into the application of the informal corporate identity communication model in the service industry in order to enhance understanding for academics and practitioners.

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The Impact of New Media on Public Relations

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Every once in a long while, the times and technology significantly impact the way that people receive and distribute news. The 20th century brought television, radio, and the Internet. Just as these media channels defined their times, so the rise of new media will also define the 21st century. In modern society, all public relations practitioners are confronted with a startling series of new communications channels and struggle with the impact of new media. This "new media" gives rise to a new style of marketing that is characterized by conversation and community. Internet-based social media tools include blogs (WordPress); podcasts; online video (YouTube); and social networks like Facebook, which is the most widely used, free-access social networking site and now has 400 million users worldwide; and MySpace (www.myspace.com), which has about 200 million users. The Internet affords a particular chance for public relations practitioners to gain information, monitor the public's opinion, and directly enter into dialogue with the public about various issues. This indicates that public relations practitioners need to realize the importance of the mainstream, new media in the dissemination of information.

This paper aims to draw attention to the rising influence of new media on the process of public relations, and to discuss what extent the media influences the publics. The paper will address three areas: the first discusses what "new media" is, and how it differs from traditional media; the second part focuses on new media's impact on current conventional thinking in public relations; finally, I will discuss how new media affects the public.

There is no single accurate definition to describe what new media is, because the definition changes every few years. Some research describes new media in a very general way, combining some traditional media with new media. For example, it combines movies, pictures and written language, with interactive computer and communication technology. There are many opportunities linked to these advances. For instance, people can access information at any location or time by using electronic devices. Companies can quickly and easily receive consumers' feedback, and create and engage in the forming a community centered on the media content. Another pivotal promise is that of the creation of a democratitive space where people can freely create, publish, distribute and consume media content. New media distinguishes from traditional media for the digitizing of content rather than keeping it analog. There is also a dynamic factor in the content production, which can be done in real time. Another definition emphasized new media to be focused on a train of media practices, and takes advantage of digital technologies and the computer in one way or another (Dewdney & Ride, 2006). Using these two different definitions, we can surmise that new media is not just a kind of

technology used in our daily life, but can also change the way today's PR practitioners practice.

What are the fundamental differences that warrant such distinction? There are four that we should be aware of. The most significant difference in new media is that it is dynamic and can be changed. For example Facebook, MicroBlog (Twitter) and web sites can be updated rapidly when events happen or unfold. A good example is that today, more and more companies use micro-blogging to establish awareness and expertise for a company. They present their company logos and branding in the micro-blog page and use micro-blog updates for customer service, and even add value by using micro-blogs to post on events in the community and their company topics as well (Baruch New Media, 200). By contrast, traditional media is delayed when reporting on same issue.

Another difference is that traditional media forms are single, like newspapers, magazines or television; all of these channels are used independently. However, new media can be combinations of several forms; it can contain words, audio, video, or graphics together, to express one event. When expressing an issue, new media presents a more dynamic way.

The third difference is that traditional media only broadcasts a message. New media brings people into a conversation. More specifically, new media is "open" communication; it permits all people to respond and interact with material directly. New media also gives people real power to create, express, even produce their own ideas. For example, a sightseer or a reader can leave his comments on a blog. Nevertheless, traditional media is controlled by the content producer, and is not convenient for people to voice their own opinions and ideas. Traditional media revolves around the "information producer", and how or what it says. New media is friendlier, more humane, and more people centered, than traditional media.

The final difference is about manipulating information. It's very hard to efficiently extract and process data that has a large amount of information through using newspapers, magazines or other traditional media. There is a huge difference here. For example, we can get news on the Internet in the morning - the same news we can from TV in the afternoon or evening and can read in the newspaper tomorrow.

Although there may be striking differences between the two forms of media, ultimately, we must recognize that both have the same destination. The emergence of new media has not changed the content of the demand itself, but changed the content of the form and means of communication. The contents are the same in both traditional media and new media. Secondly, traditional media depends on new technologies to expand distribution channels for new content development. Thirdly, the integration of new media is the current trend; multi-media is becoming increasingly popular.

After defining and comparing new media and traditional media, the following key content is about how new media influences public relations. The impact of media is apparent on the public. First and foremost, new media is changing models of communication. Change is inherent to advancing a field of study. Original public relations models can no longer adequately describe the relationship between organizations and stakeholders. Grunig's once common four models of public relations (press agency, public information, one-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical) has

not traditionally been used in modern society. The Internet has had an impact on everything public relations practitioners do, from the research phase and monitoring of brand communication, to the way they reach out to people in their web communities and use new media tools to create compelling information. The Internet enables people to extend their communications in ways never before imagined and to connect with groups they probably never thought they could reach. All traditional communication such as one-way, two-way and multi-directional has been replaced by point to point, point to multi-point, point to server narrowcast and point to server broadcast. In addition, traditional communication's characteristics emphasize the sender and the existence of a communication gatekeeper. The new media, however, gives people direct access to information. For instance, some social networks like Facebook and Myspace give voice to the opinions of millions of consumers.

Secondly, new media supplies public relations practitioners a unique opportunity to collect and deliver information, monitor public opinion on issues, and engage in direct dialogue with their publics about a variety of issues (McAllister & Taylor, 2007). Because the Internet is the only truly free and autonomous medium that allows anyone to express their own ideas and their objections, public relations practitioners can get honest feedback easily from web social networks. They also can send news and information via these new media. For example, when public relations practitioners want to send information to customers, they can use Internet and Email, which can help them transmit messages more quickly. In the late 1990s, a consumer web site was instrumental in aiding Ford to recall hundreds of thousands cars and trucks whose ignition switches could cause a fire in the vehicle. In addition, new media tools should be carefully managed, and information that is sent should be clear and accurate. If unclear messages are disseminated, some people could misunderstand and pass along the wrong information quickly to others. This indicates the most important characteristic of new media – interactivity - and in today's society information can be delivered to the public at lightning speed. Therefore, Internet PR has two elements. The first is in seeking, learning and applying the best practices of the day and the second is constant re-evaluation, re-learning, and evolving of offline and online practices.

Finally, new media brings more challenges to public relations practitioners. The new media brings good news to young aspirants in the field of public relations. It represents a new niche in the PR practitioner's market, and the challenge is that current practitioners have to understand new media's potential, and use these new avenues constantly or integrate them in a business strategy, and give them legitimacy in front of those in charge. It can give people more channels to receive messages. If a crisis were to impinge on an organization, consumers now expect instant updates in their inboxes. However, sometimes the organization does not want to publish this information. So public relations practitioners may be under more pressure to produce this instant content, and cannot ignore the importance of the valuable tools social media gives them access to.

Generally speaking, the Internet is the only truly free medium that allows anyone to articulate needs and express objections. New media is influencing nearly all spheres of human activity - changing work relations, communication processes, forms of relationships between people, ways of spending free time and even spirituality. Thus far,

I have considered new media as it involves public relations in many directions. As part of that discussion, I noted that new media also has several effects on the public.

New media provides more extensive channels to acquire information. In the new media world, people have the option of autonomy - they can find almost anything about what they are interested in. When they search for a subject, they will meet the target information displayed in many different ways, be it is someone's blog, a person's question, or many others. In other words, the Internet allows us to choose information and delivers it to us in a method we prefer. Users can choose what information they want to receive and from where they will accept it. Moreover, they can distribute information to any other cyber citizen all around world. Another key advantage is people through web sites (Facebook, blogs, etc.) can reflect on what they are interested in, what their lifestyles involve and what are they concerned about. Furthermore, they can discuss popular topics and find friends who have common tastes among this global audience. (Phillips, 2001, p.9).

We can also observe that new media influences public opinion. Marshall McLuhan (1967, p.305) gave life to an important theory - "the medium is the message" - as a means of explaining that where the message appears, or how the messages is distributed, is more important than the message itself. (Gorchels,West & Marien, 2004). We know the new media has a strong social and cultural impact upon today's society. YouTube shows thousands of videos every day; people cannot only find video content seen on TV and films but also could post their own video clips, and share thoughts and views with other cyber citizens. Because some of these videos attract a huge audience, corporations make use of them as a pervasive viral marketing tool for their interests. All of this indicates that new media provides virtually limitless space to people. (PRSA, 2009) All in all, new media can impact public behaviors and attitudes.

As a whole, new media is obviously changing the way we think about public relations, but as even more PR companies adopt new media, they are still struggling to find effective metrics for deciding how to combine new media and public relations in a better way. New media provides a timely opportunity for rethinking approaches to the currently practiced way of core public relations. I have demonstrated how new media has been used to create both positive and negative outcomes for public relations. Coombs & Holladay (2007, p.126) states that new media is much like the law; sometimes it will be used to hurt, and other times it will be used to benefit society. It is misleading to assume that new media is inherently good or inherently bad. Ultimately, new media is as good as the people that employ it.

Coombs & Holladay (2007, p.126) state that no matter whether we adopt new media, public relations practitioners will continue to manage mutual influence. New media provides valuable societal benefits to public relations, although sometimes these are not perfect. We have seen a variety of approaches to incorporating social media into the PR mix, from both clients and peers, which is sufficient to demonstrate that new media is a natural and necessary function in public relations. What is important to understand is the approach to make new media and public relations mutually interact. In order to perform well, a public relations practitioner needs a sense of order to effectively handle its network of new media. By understanding how public relations work, we are

better able to resist those efforts when need be and use those same tactics to improve the quality of life for ourselves and others. (Coombs & Holladay, 2007, p.126).

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Implementation of the Project Management Office Within Petrobras' Corporate Communications Department – Brazil

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Our case describes the structuring process for integrated project management, implemented within Petrobras' Corporate Communications Department through assisted operationalization by the Project Management Office (PMO), and how it has contributed to spreading the project management culture throughout Petrobras's Corporate Communications area. The Project Management Office methodology was based on the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) approach, which was developed by the Project Management Institute (PMI®).

Keywords: Organizational change, Integrated process management, Management culture

According to Dinsmore (2007), a project is something that is unique, outstanding, and peculiar, and represents a set of actions and activities that had never been done before in the same way or in the same context. We would suggest that communication projects go a little beyond this idea. Managing communication projects means being "face to face" with singularity, creativity, and with a scope that can often become infinite.

When organizations decide to use the best project management practices, such a decision is strongly correlated with the existence of support already given to managers and project teams, such as through standardization, resources, and information systems (Barbalho, 2009).

The project office is an organizational structure that plays an important role as a facilitator for project management and as a driver of improvements to the process of managing the organization through portfolio management and project alignment with the corporate strategy (Crawford, 2002). Companies have created these organizational structures, which have become known in the corporate world as project offices, and by the English acronym PMO -Project Management Office – (Barbalho, 2009).

The use of project offices in general is a subject that merits attention on account of the difficulties encountered in quantifying them appropriately in terms of dimensions, standards, procedures, skills required of qualified people, and the cultural barriers involved; and even issues such as the company's decision-making structure, strategy, and project portfolio management (Valeriano, 2001; Crawford, 2002; Kerzner, 2006; Martins et al., 2005).

High-tech companies develop complex projects and often have several of them going on simultaneously. However, the hurdles that get in the way of the adoption of a PMO are especially important. Support resources are often seen as wasteful and project management techniques as approaches that are "bureaucratic" and diminish creativity and speed (Barbalho, 2009; ALI et al., 1995; Calderini; Cantamessa, 1997).

Case Methodology

From a methodological point of view, this study can be considered as one of action research (Thiollent, 1997). Because it deals with the description of the company's practices, it should be rated as a holistic case study (Yin, 2004).

This business case analyzes and describes the difficulties faced when implementing a PMO within Petrobras's Corporate Communications (CC) area. It aims to provide an overview of the process and the obstacles encountered and to identify possible factors that influenced or were influenced by them. I sought to gain a deeper understanding, through an empirical observation of the attitudes and beliefs of the audience that participated or was affected by the implementation of the PMO project, of the moment the CC area was going through, presenting its significance to those involved (the group of CC professionals at Petrobras).

This paper does not seek to be a comprehensive, detailed explanation of Petrobras's business reality. The conclusions and results might be mere hypotheses to be tested, and not definitive, generalized ones. The experience can be defined as "a method of looking at the social reality," without necessarily observing methodological strictness in data analysis.

The findings were obtained through the active observation of the daily project experience and informal conversations with project participants. I tried to get to know the individual and situational variables related to resistance to the implementation of the PMO. Thus, the information that was collected was subtle in nature, not explicit, and this required my personal involvement.

The focus of this business case is the search for a solution to a real and specific business issue. For this reason, one of its limitations lies in the use of "lessons learned" by Petrobras, since the problem is analyzed in the context of the company; therefore, the necessary managerial logic used must be adapted in order for it to be replicated in other companies operating in the industry and/or in similar contexts.

The Company

Profile of the organization

Petrobras -Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. -is a Brazilian publicly-traded federal energy company established in 1953. Incorporated as a joint-stock company, the majority shareholder of which is the Brazilian Government, its shares are traded in New York (NYSE), Madrid, Buenos Aires, and on the Bovespa Stock Exchange, in São Paulo (source: Petrobras).

The company operates in an integrated fashion in several energy segments: exploration and production, refining, and trade and transportation of oil and natural gas, petrochemicals, oil product distribution, electricity, biofuels, and other sources of renewable energy.

Petrobras is Brazil's largest company, the industry leader in the country, and holds a prominent place in Latin America. With a presence in 28 countries and on five continents, Petrobras is the world's eighth largest company (Ernest & Young, 2009) and its third largest energy company (PFC Energy Ranking, January 2011) -both in terms of market value. In 2009, Petrobras accounted for around 10% of Brazil's GDP (source: O Estado de São Paulo newspaper, 2010, and Petrobras´s 2009 Sustainability Report).

Petrobras is acknowledged worldwide as a technological reference in deepwater oil and gas exploration and production, in the pre-salt geological stratum, and in the development of biofuels.

In 2011, the company was ranked, for the fifth consecutive year, as the company with the best reputation in Brazil, according to Global RepTrak™ Pulse, a study carried out annually by the Reputation Institute (RI).

Petrobras is also recognized for its role in social and environmental responsibility, and since 2006 it has been listed on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and on Bovespa's

Corporate Sustainability Index (CSI). Petrobras was the first Latin American company in the industry to be on the International Board of the Global Compact.

The company's operations in Brazil involve 140,000 square kilometers of exploration areas; upwards of 130 production platforms; a fleet of 291 vessel; 16 refineries; 30,000 kilometers of pipelines; 8,477 service stations, 16 thermal power plants; six biofuel plants; and a wind energy unit. (See Schedule 1 -Petrobras in figures -attached).

As per the organization chart depicted in Figure 1 (attached), there are six corporate areas directly connected to the company's CEO. One of them is Corporate Communications, where the project that is the subject of this case was implemented.

The company's mission is to "operate in a safe and profitable manner in Brazil and abroad, with social and environmental responsibility, providing products and services that meet clients' needs and contribute to the development of Brazil and of the countries in which it operates." Petrobras's Vision for 2020 is to be "one of the five largest integrated energy companies and the preferred choice among its stakeholders."

Organizational culture

Petrobras has built a solid, cohesive organizational culture during its nearly 60 years of existence -a "way of being Petrobras," which includes values and beliefs shared by the workforce (employees and contractors). The company "has become part of the collective imagination as a solid organization, with vitality and one that fosters "Brazilian Pride," thanks to its history, its achievements, and its ability to overcome challenges, and it is associated with a corporate attitude that expresses and reinforces this "pride" as an element of professional and social differentiation" (Carvalho, 2007).

Culture is a powerful, often overlooked set of latent forces that shape behavior, the way you perceive things and think, and individual and collective values (Schein, 2001).

Petrobras's conduct is guided by values such as respect for human and cultural diversity, ethics, transparency, and equal opportunities. All conduct criteria and values have not only been clearly established, but are of public knowledge. The tools used to align and consolidate the understanding of such criteria include Petrobras's Code of Conduct, its Bylaws, and the Code of Competitive Conduct. Because of all of this, its internal audience has a strong sense of pride in being part of Petrobras.

We understand the organizational culture as "a system of values shared by members that differs from one organization to another; this system is what makes up the characteristics valued by the organization." In a strong culture, aligned members agree with the organization's views, affording "unanimity of purpose, cohesion, loyalty, and organizational commitment." The case of the implementation of the PMO at Petrobras's CC area reflects, symbolically, the views above (Robbins, 2004).

The Corporate Communications Area

The Corporate Communications area is the managing agency responsible for several initiatives that reflect Petrobras's efforts to be the one its stakeholders prefer. In general, the area focuses on developing the company`s corporate identity and on consolidating an organizational culture that is consistent with its values.

There are countless activities carried out by the Corporate Communications area. It is in charge, for example, of establishing relationships with the company's various stakeholders, in an ongoing effort to drive the continued valuation of the brand (Oliveira, 2010).

The Corporate Communications Department comprises nine key areas, namely: the Planning and Management area, the Regional Customer Service and Coordination Department, the Advertising and Promotions Department; the Corporate Social Responsibility Department; the Sponsorship Department (cultural and sports); the International Communications Department; and the Relationship Department (with the company). The area's organization chart is shown in Figure 2 (attached).

Strategic CC objectives

The area's strategic objectives include creating and consolidating the company's corporate image and the quest for the continued strengthening of the trust relationships between Petrobras and its stakeholders.

Value chain and critical macro-process map

The Corporate Communications area can be broken down into three major clusters of corporate activities: Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Brand Roles. These roles represent the set of human, physical, and technological resources, and the existing processes to manage and operate the communications chain in all of its dimensions.

The CC value chain is divided into three macro-processes (See Figure 3 attached): Reputation and Image Management, which unfolds into another macro-process level: Managing the Brand; Managing Communications -unfolded into seven other macro-processes; and Managing Corporate Social Responsibility. The Managing the Reputation and Image macro-process is subdivided into three other macro-processes: Managing the Brand; Managing Corporate Social Responsibility, and Managing Communications. Within the Managing the Communications macro-process unfolding, there is another level, which, in turn, is divided into seven macro-processes (see Figure 4 -attached).

The Business Problem

In November 2007, Petrobras announced the discovery of Tupi, an oil province located some 200 km off the Brazilian coast, nestled more than 5,000 meters below the ocean floor, in a geological layer known as the pre-salt. The discovery increased Brazil's estimated oil reserves by approximately 50% and became a topic of great importance both for Petrobras and for the Brazilian economic and political scenarios.

The pre-salt would generate an unprecedented expansion in Petrobras's degree of positive exposure (Neto, 2010).

Due to the great level of competitiveness existing today in the new global energy industry, Petrobras was forced to upgrade its management tools in order to achieve its strategic goals of expansion, internationalization, profitability, and productivity.

Because of this, the 2010-2014 Business Plan was reviewed, and its project portfolio and projections reconsidered based on this new dynamic. As a result, the 2010-2014 Business Plan now foresees investments totaling $224 billion, averaging $44.8 billion per year. Of this, $212.3 billion will be invested in Brazil, while $11.7 billion abroad.

This macro adjustment movement at the company set a number of other internal adjustments into motion, reaching various project management-related forums with a view to increasing efficiency and professionalism.

What was the problem after all?

There was a lack of centralized project management, and projects were being delivered after the deadline. Process management methodologies were not used and there were no clear criteria for the strategic selection of communications projects. The selection was usually made based on subjective criteria. This led to a number of organizational impacts such as projects lacking adequate strategic direction and new projects added without focus or clear objectives. Moreover, project and communication activity costs were on the rise, while good projects got set aside. Another important issue in this scenario was that CC had lots of projects at different levels of "maturity" and at different stages of evolution. There was also the fact that the projects competed for the same human and financial resources.

Questions that the Corporate Communications Area Needed to Answer

Needs and expectations

CC, and in particular the Planning and Management area, almost always came up against the same dilemmas: how to make project management more consistent, using the same methodology and the same tools? How to select communications professionals who could manage projects? How to recognize the essential skills needed for this work? How to train leaders in communication projects? Is it enough to teach planning and control techniques or are there more things that a good project leader needs to know? How to decide which projects are the most important? What kinds of tools do communication project leaders need? What types of software and "templates" should be used? How to support these communication project leaders? How to accommodate all these issues without imposing so much red tape that the area would be put in a straitjacket?

Thus, it was necessary to improve management practices relative to the strategic corporate communications projects of greater relevance to the area in order to ensure their centralized, customized management, by using a method that would ensure they would be completed on time and within the scope and budgeted costs, aiming not only to increase the number of projects actually implemented, but also their success rates shown in the return on investment based on measurable communications results. The goal was to seek to ensure the effective implementation of the company's investments in communications and enable the effective monitoring of projects, initiatives, and developments originating from the Integrated Communications Plan -ICP.

The "trick of the trade" was doing this through managed transformation. In other words, the CC area started acknowledging that the "project management" theme needed to be taken care of and fed as an organizational role, such as marketing, HR, finances, etc.

One of the strategic motivations behind the deployment of the PMO at CC resided in the fact that most projects are directly related to Petrobras's image and reputation. The other was the senior management's instructions to reduce and rationalize costs.

Project-Description of the Implementation

First of all, one must define what a PMO is exactly. Petrobras's Communications area believes it to be a practice that allows one to add quality to projects by means of structuring and implementing processes and monitoring and management methods. The vast majority of the PMOs in Brazil aim to provide organizations with information and standardized, systemic methods aimed at improving the performance of the solutions implemented.

The implementation of the PMO is of great importance and represents a breakthrough in Integrated Project Management for Petrobras and the Communications area.

Roles and responsibilities

The CC areas' PMO is responsible for setting the project management model guidelines through the incorporation of best practices based on the PMI (Project Management Institute) approach. The PMO is also in charge of implementing performance indicators for projects, training activities, and of ensuring the project managers' commitment.

Thus, the PMO becomes the guardian of the strategic alignment of CC's projects by setting and developing selection and prioritization criteria.

One CC concern was to build the PMO in such a manner as to ensure that support for project managers was effective, through structured coordination with them, through the development, customization, and implementation of methodologies, and through tools aimed at managers. The PMO should also set models to keep the CC coordination meeting managers abreast of the effectiveness of the initiatives that have been implemented by using a project monitoring panel.

With regard to the human resources working in the PMO, the team involved in the project management activities comprises seven professionals, including two employees and five consultants. These professionals are managers with expertise in project management.

In terms of internal organization, the PMO has several roles, including: planning and controlling the implementation of the communication project portfolio; defining, providing, and disseminating standards, systems, tools, and templates to be used in project management; providing specialized support; preserving concepts and methodology; acting as a project portfolio articulator, consolidating information and directing efforts in the strategic direction set by the company's Integrated Communications Plan -ICP; unfolding the project methodology to be used by the CC, increasing standardization among the various projects; maintaining a history of the projects and lessons learned; supporting the team and providing training to project leaders; validating project scopes and costs; guiding and validating cost estimates; evaluating project maturity; developing standards; providing training; evaluating schedules; coordinating the database of lessons learned, risks, and critical factors; and identifying and incorporating the best practices of the methodology.

Scope

The service specification scope of this PMO Office implementation project in the Corporate Communication area encompasses aspects such as identifying the main roles and responsibilities, and suggested minimum composition.

The description of services tendered includes structuring and implementing management plans for the project portfolio, inventorying and diagnosing ongoing projects in all Corporate Communications areas, process structuring and implementation, and expert support via coaching and mentoring, in addition to providing project management training for all Corporate Communications managers.

The main goal of the PMO is to ensure better communication project alignment and to ensure the alignment of Corporate Communications projects with the corporate strategies featured in the company's Integrated Communications Plan (ICP) and 2010-2014 Business Plan, which can allow CC to effectively contribute to successful results being obtained both by the area and by the company.

The PMO's objectives are directed at promoting an integrated view of projects; ensuring adherence to the project management methodology; project management procedure standardization and development of indicators; increasing the projects' overall quality; increasing its rate of implementation; cost optimization; result potentialization; and project memory construction.

The PMO should move towards driving the adequacy and alignment of the projects to the organizational goals and objectives within the strategic communication and corporate targets; their quality, the risk involved, timelines, costs, and any developments needing effective monitoring.

It is also essential that the procedures be systematized so the company can act in order to appropriate the lessons learned and, thus, move towards adopting increasingly improved corporate communications practices.

Once deployed, the PMO's mission would be to consolidate a project management culture within the Corporate Communications area, fostering an integrated vision, and contributing to the quality of projects by applying good management practices. Furthermore, the methodology should also provide for the construction of a project history -a memory of the communication actions carried out.

The vision of the PMO is to be a center of excellence and a reference in project management for Corporate Communications.

Confronted with so many specificities, with the urgency of the solution, and the complexity of the process, a decision was made to hire an outside consultancy firm that could provide expert knowledge in the short-term and support CC in all the project phases.

Challenges encountered

For a long time, Petrobras's Corporate Communications area was limited to managing individual projects, using limited project management practices. But the company's growth caused CC to gain unprecedented strategic proportions and dimensions. CC was gradually required to manage multiple projects with greater joint integration needs, something that makes sense within the integrated communications concept. This meant that the CC area was forced to shift from a situation of limited formalization with respect to project management to a higher level of maturity.

Allied with this, the company's level of demand increased in terms of quality (term, cost, and time), leading CC to seek an exit from a scenario lacking in a project management culture and forcing it to enter another scenario in which the use of methodologies was a fact. CC had to adapt its entire project management methodology, all its templates, standards, processes, and procedures to the area's new reality while respecting the culture of the professionals involved. Since communications projects are unique, they required customized, adapted management.

Among the main challenges faced in the PMO implementation process, the lack of a project-oriented organizational culture, controls and structured planning, and the resistance of the professionals affected and/or involved are worthy of note. Attempts to implement change in organizations often fail because of resistance motivated by various aspects and also because of the fact that the organizational culture is not always ready nor does it have the desirable level of maturity to accept the proposed change (KARYN, 2002).CC ran up against classic cases of resistance related to the context of that moment, to varying degrees, both among groups and among individuals, in accordance with their lower or higher predisposition to resist change. In other words, a reactive behavior was encountered - the exact opposite kind of environment necessary for the success of the project (Hernandez & Caldas, 2001, p. 22). Change must occur in

a manner that favors the generation of more value for the end customer and, thus, for business results (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

It is worth mentioning that other CC managers considered us as "annoying". They said that we were "sniffing around" the project manager, and that we were doing micromanagement. In their view, we were inspectors, a bureaucratic center, or just another "new passing trend."

Changing the culture at CC so that the new model could be understood and assimilated was another challenge we faced. This brings us to the third challenge: engaging all stakeholders around a solution that could allow for the construction of an integrated view of the CC area's projects.

There are several factors that trigger resistance to change: the individual is afraid of not being able to develop the skills that are needed to perform new tasks, or they react to change when they feel threatened in their comfort and safety zone (Motta, 1998; Judson, 1980 in Moura, 2002; Robbins, 2002). People resist because they fear the unknown, breaking away from the established standards, and they find it difficult to cope with the uncertainty inherent in a change. They may not have the ability to cope emotionally with the uncertainty as to how events will unfold and how they will perform in the new situation (Hitt, 2007).

It is known that the understanding factor is another crucial aspect for the assimilation of change -those involved feel insecure when there is a lack of understanding of what change may entail and, thus, they resist (Hitt, 2007). Therefore, communications directed at the process and transparency would be essential to confront the challenges presented.

One of the issues identified in Petrobras's case among those impacted by the changes was the diversity of opinions about what it would bring -would the costs be higher and benefits smaller than the agent of the change had stated? (Hitt, 2007)

Other issues that generated resistance, observed even among those who understood the reasons for the change, were the lack of belief that the expected results would be obtainedand the fear that they would be losing something of value -such as power and control -with the implementation of the changes (Hitt, 2007).

Individuals are likely to resist whenever faced with a complex situation into which they feel they have been inserted. Such an effect is greater on the most vulnerable people, who go on to act according to a subjective interpretation of reality, creating barriers to initiatives that point to the relevant the facts and benefits associated with change (Vasconcelos, 2006).

All these situations were experienced, to a greater or lesser extent, by CC during the PMO implementation process.

Strategy used

Before anything else, an attempt was made to identify the essential and indispensable conditions, the so-called Critical Success Factors (CSF), in order for the PMO implementation work to be successful. We knew that many implementation projects of this nature often fail simply due to a lack of a deeper understanding of the basic PM concepts and because of a lack of sensitivity, awareness, and enlightenment among those involved and impacted. There was a need to work a few issues: the culture (people), methodology (project management), and communications as project pillars.

To achieve this, it was important to have people trained in portfolio management practices, with knowledge about the company's business and specific personal skills to deal with the complexity of the process.

A diagnosis was also made to identify the CC's maturity level in project management to, later, set evolution targets.

It is clear that a project's success is related to the individual competencies in Project Management, translated in terms of the project manager's maturity, and the organizational capacity in project management, understood here as organizational maturity. Together, these two aspects define the project's success.

There is no universal and infallible way to overcome resistance factors. Coping with resistance to change is a complex management challenge, because it implies having a planned, balanced, and rational approach (Wagner III, 2004). Thus, the planning developed by CC to meet the above-mentioned challenges included different actions not only to minimize resistance, but also to encourage adherence to the process (O'Connor, 1993).

To minimize these obstacles, we adopted a strategy based on four pillars: participatory management, transparent communications, information sharing, and commitment by the company's senior management. An attempt was made to encourage the participation of those involved, so that everyone felt co-responsible for the success attained by the change and, thus, to garner greater commitment and engagement in change efforts rather than an attitude of resistance (KOTTER et al, 1986; MAKIN et al, 1989; WHITE; BEDNAR, 1991 in WADDELL; SOHAL, 1998).

However, individuals are likely to resist whenever faced with a complex, ambiguous reality into which they feel they have been inserted. To minimize such resistance, Petrobras prioritized working with the most vulnerable people, who, due to insecurity, create psychological barriers and do not recognize the potential benefits associated with change (Vasconcelos, 2006).

It is known that endorsement by senior management of new processes positively impacts the engagement of those involved and contributes to the deployment of an effective cultural change in which people have the way they usually do their work changed. By exercising this role, senior managers were active participants in the various stages of the process, and performed in the main settings, including: the formalization of the figure of the Project Leader, who had the responsibility to lead and manage all project development activities and to formalize and systematize management tools (Beer, 2002 & DOMINGUES, 2005).

Among other results, we include the improvement in the prioritization of projects in the CC portfolio in order to guide the scheduling of multiple projects and the allocation of critical resources; improving the identification and monitoring of the interfaces between communications projects; greater clarity in anticipating conflicts aiming at project integration; improved practices in defining the scope and preparing the EAP; more realistic timelines; use of the project management methodology with support from the tool and management sponsorship.

It would not be premature to say that there was indeed a great improvement in project control, measurement parameter standardization consolidation, and in project assessment regarding time, scope and costs; useful information is made available on time, projects have become more predictable; in sum, there has been an overall enhancement in project performance. And, as one could expect, there has been a certain increase in maturity in Project Management.

Points of attention and opportunities for improvement

On the other hand, we faced and had to deal with the lack of agility to hold follow-up meetings with representatives of the several departments responsible for monitored projects and with the development of activities. We also concluded that it is necessary to improve the measurement of the benefits and the projects' level of complexity (costs and risks) to prioritize the portfolio. Another item requiring improvement refers to planning and detailing of projects for the purpose of implementation and, also, enabling more time to train teams working on more than one project simultaneously while maintaining routine activities.

Final Considerations

From a preliminary assessment, one might say that we have achieved good results because we now have a documented methodology that is consolidated for project assessments, we have sponsorship for this initiative, we have improved the balance of the communication projects, and we have been able to secure greater visibility of the projects' status.

We hope this case will be useful to everyone involved in managing communications projects. It is not conclusive, at least in its entirety, on purpose. The goal was to encourage discussion of alternative solutions for centralized project management, contributing to developing critical thinking concerning communication project management.

In terms of the future outlook, we intend to consolidate and further improve the development and implementation of management models, reduce project leader support activities, and increase our monitoring and portfolio control activities.

The CC area believes that the pursuit of excellence in project management involves two key aspects: simplicity in the solutions adopted, and the consistent application of methodologies for project implementation. These issues must necessarily focus on optimizing costs and deadlines.

Finally, based on the theoretical system of references that has been presented (Barbalho, 2009), the need to adjust the PMO as a management tool to the organization's culture has been confirmed (CALDERINI; CANTAMESSA, 1997), as has the need to adopt it gradually, without major ruptures and, especially, based on the focus on concrete results attained throughout the implementation (MARTINS et al., 2005; RODRIGUES; RABECHINI Jr.; CSILLAG, 2006).

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Exhibits

TABLE 1: Petrobras in Figures*

Market Value -2009	US$ 238.8 billion
Net Profits	R$ 35 billion (approx. US$ 20.6 billion) **
(Value of the Petrobras brand:	R$19.27 billion Approx. US$ 11.34 billion)
Employees –March/2012	82,100
Employees of service providers, in Brazil and abroad	295,260
Number of shareholders:	576,975
Fuel Stations	8,477
Production Platforms	132
Thermoelectric plants	16
Refineries	16 (15 in Brazil and 1 abroad)
Average oil production	2,583,000 barrels/day***
Average natural gas production	428,000 barrels/day
Estimated oil and gas reserves	16 billion barrels of oil and gas equivalent
Investments foreseen in the 2010-2014 business plan	US$ 174.4 billion
Investments in biofuels -2009/2014	US$ 2.3 billion

* 2010 data -Annual update / Last update: April 2011.
Sources: company website (www.petrobras.com); 2009 Sustainability Report (publication that brings together both the financial, operating and economic results and the Company's Social Balance) and Business Plan 2010-2014.
** Source: BrandAnalytics (2010).*** Barrels per day of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG).
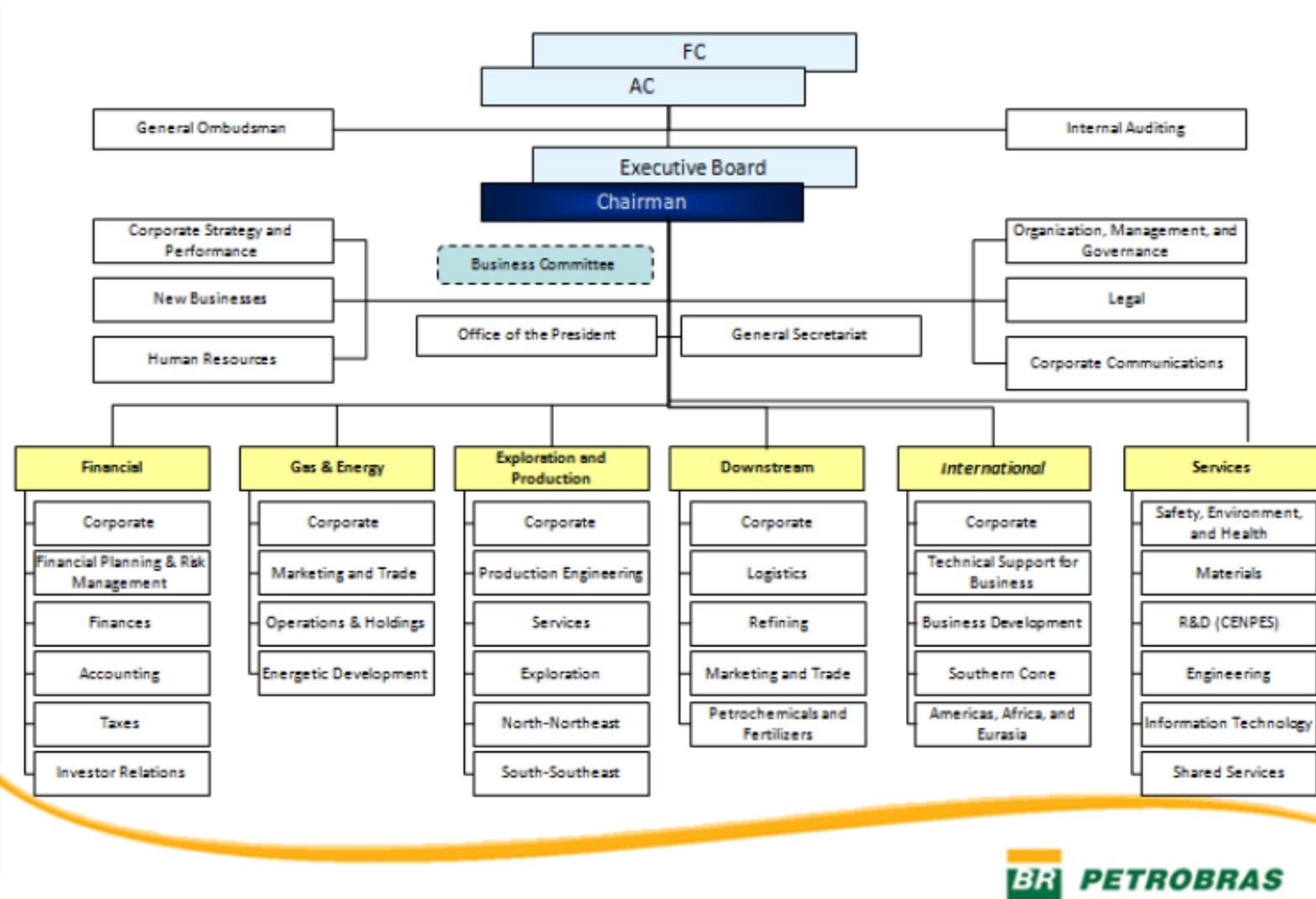
FIGURE 1: Petrobras Flowchart
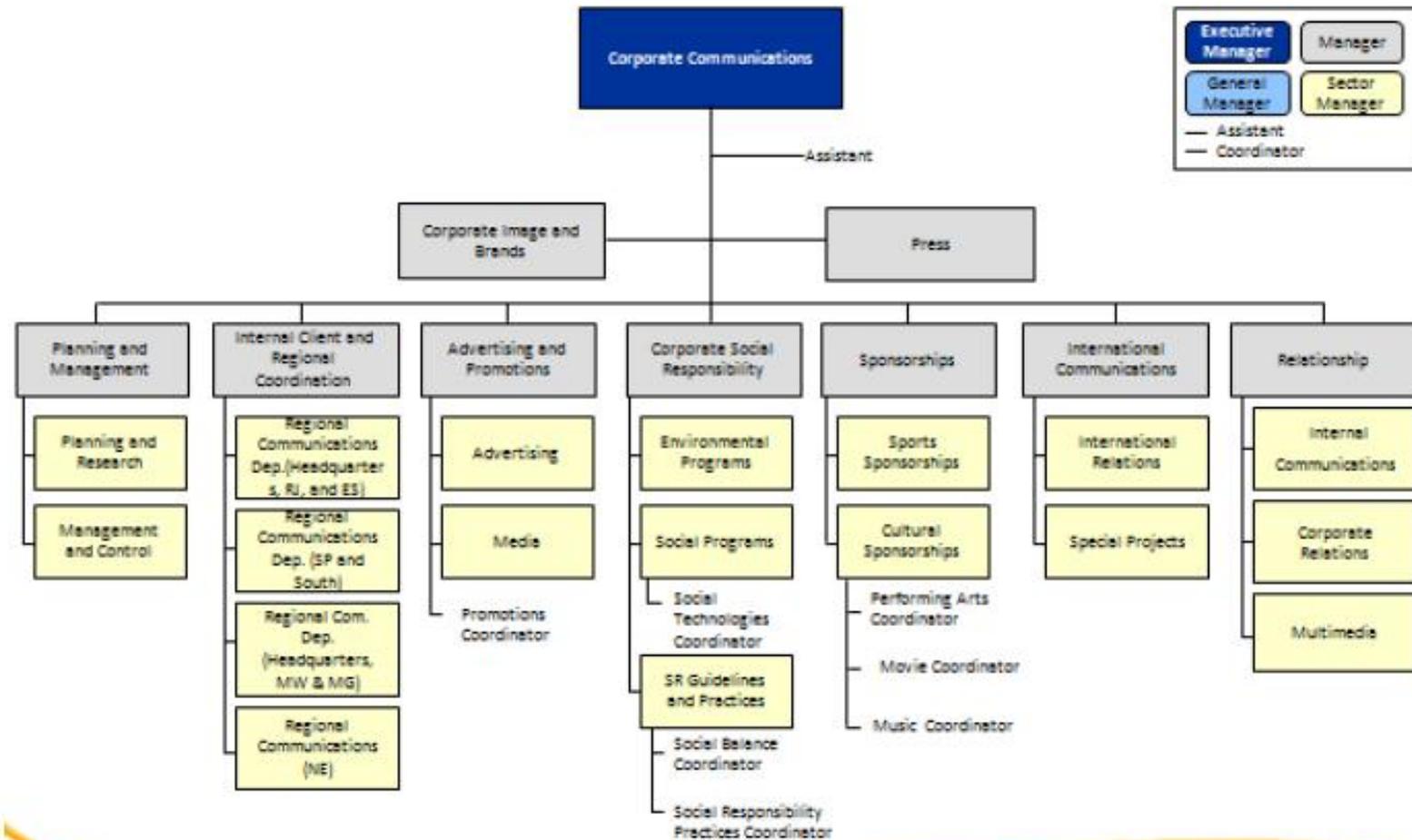
FIGURE 2: Corporate area organization chart -Corporate Communications
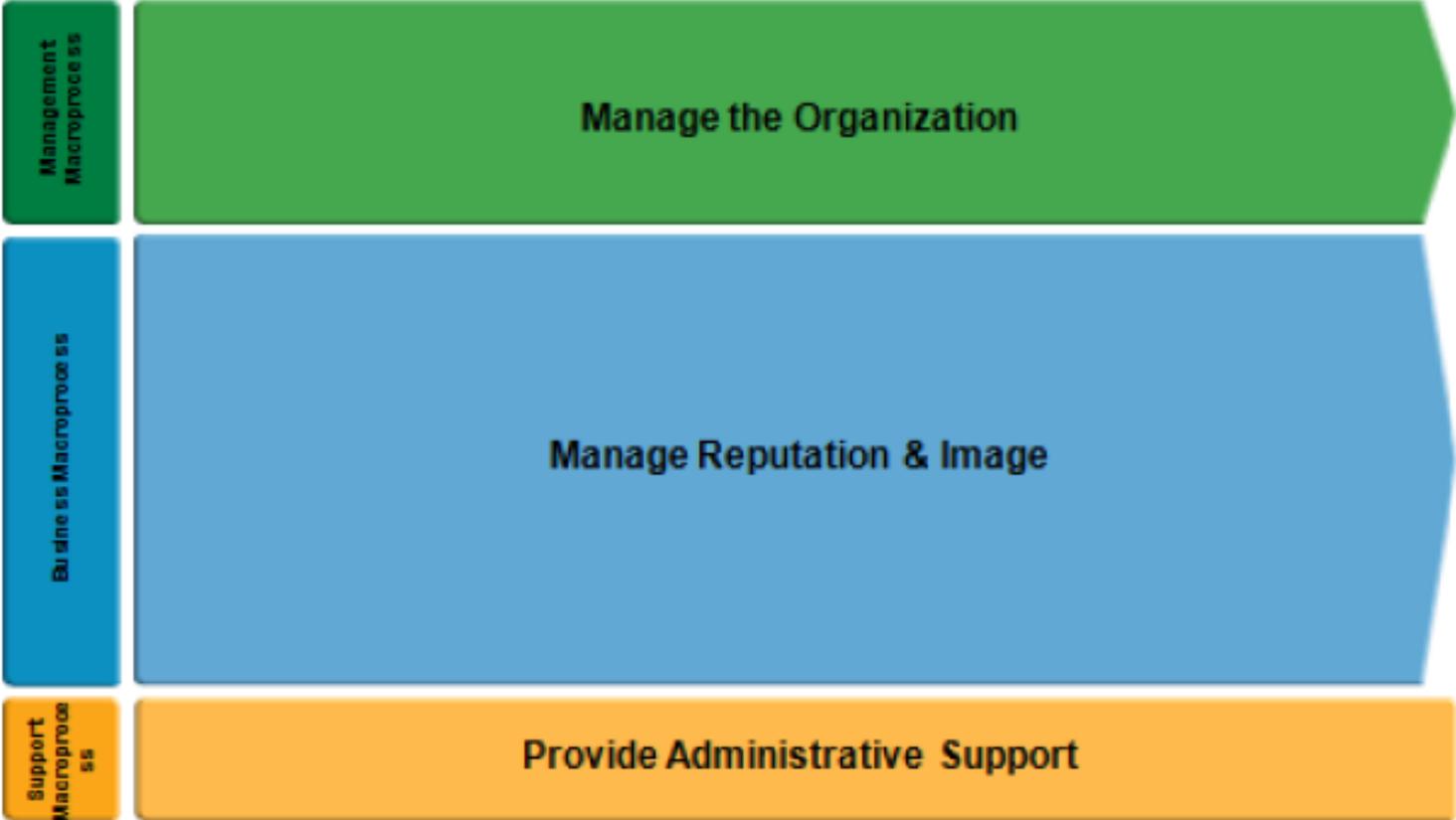
FIGURE 3: Corporate Communications Value Chain
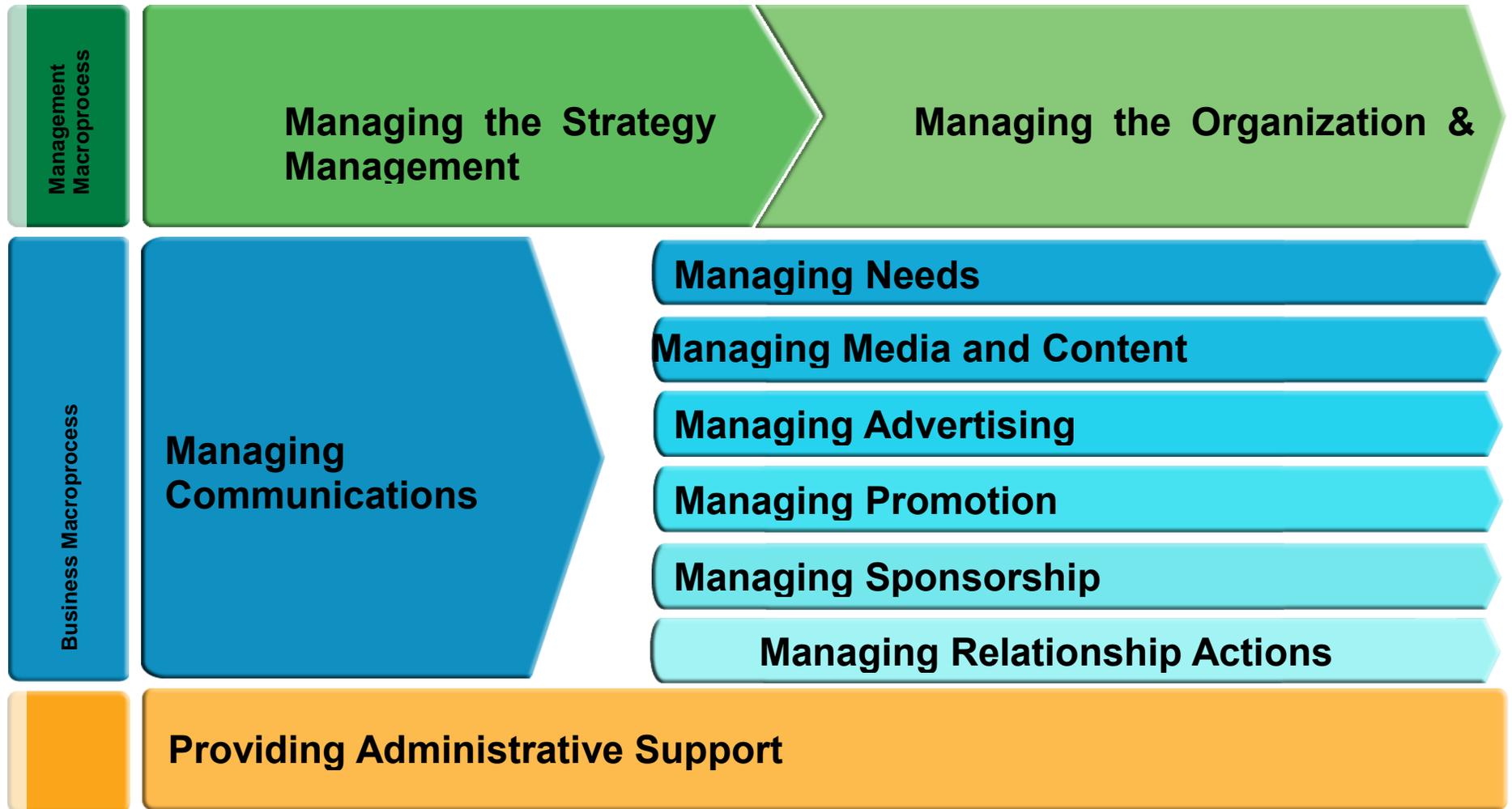
FIGURE 4: Corporate Communications Value Chain

An "Inside-Outside" Perspective on Corporate Branding

A Systematic Analysis of the Role of Communication

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Purpose: *Corporate branding (CB) academic and managerial literature appears varied and heterogeneous. Our paper is aimed, first, at exploring and interpreting the semantic links between CB and strategic intangible assets such as corporate culture, identity, image and reputation; second, at highlighting the role communication plays in CB efforts.*

Approach: *This study develops a systematic analysis of the current academic and managerial debate on CB through a software-assisted content analysis.*

Findings: *CB appears as a crucial crossroad between the "inside" and "outside" of a company acting as a "bridge" among key intangible assets. CB emerges as a managerial philosophy and a communication-based process capable of strengthening and spreading corporate culture, identity, image and reputation. It also emerges as an "inside-outside" interface between the company and its stakeholders.*

Research implications: *Thematic and comparative analysis of literature corpus sub-sets on CB allows the systematic exploration of significant relationships among crucial themes related to CB and communication.*

Practical implications: *The paper advances the knowledge on CB and provides guidelines for CB strategy design and implementation highlighting an effective use of corporate communication.*

Keywords: *Corporate branding; Corporate brand; Communication; Corporate culture; Corporate identity; Corporate image; Corporate reputation*

Background

Corporate branding (CB) appears as a prolific and multidisciplinary (Balmer, 1995) field of academic and managerial research and studies. Since the concept of CB has made its appearance in marketing literature almost thirty years ago, a great number of marketing, management, organizational, and communication scholars and practitioners have joined the CB field of inquiry contributing to its development and refinement.

Analyzing the CB literature debate so far, it is possible to identify three major shifts.

In marketing literature (Bernstein, 1989; King, 1991; Laforet and Saunders, 1994; Brown and Dacin, 1997; Ind, 1997; Keller and Aaker, 1998; Aacker and Joachimsthaler, 2000), the advent of CB can be ascribed to a shift in branding strategy perspective from a product brand centric to an organization-wide (Balmer, 2001) or pan-company (Schultz and de Chernatony, 2002) conception of branding. CB has be then conceived as a kind of overarching "umbrella" (Schultz and Kitchen, 2001), which guarantees the coherence and consistency of the whole organizational offering support to the integration of its elements and the development of

synergies (Einwiller and Will, 2002). In line with that, CB has been generally defined as "the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organisation's unique business model" (Knox and Bickerton, 2003) based on a communication effort aimed at protecting and supporting the plurality of product brands which can benefit from their belonging to a unique value-based and symbolic sovrastructure (Schultz and Kitchen, 2004).

As soon as the concept of CB entered business strategy literature (Balmer, 1995; De Chernatony, 2001; Balmer et al., 2009), another shift occurred pushing the debate toward new directions: management scholars argued that CB should not be conceived merely as an advanced marketing perspective; rather , it should be regarded as a corporate governance model and a managerial effort that informs the whole firm's corporate strategy (Balmer 1995, 2005; Hatch and Schultz 2001), and its organizational culture, mission, and vision eventually redefining the corporate business model (Balmer and Thomson, 2009). In this perspective corporate brand emerges as a crucial corporate asset which is inextricably linked to other strategic intangible assets such as corporate identity, corporate culture, and corporate reputation that in turn can be enhanced and amplified by the CB managerial process (Bickerton, 2000; Balmer, 2001, 2003; Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004) relying on integrated communication flows (Schultz and Kitchen, 2004).

Finally, recent studies on CB introduce a shift from a corporate-focused to a more stakeholder-centric perspective on CB highlighting that the corporate brand does not emanate solely from the organization; rather, it emerges from the encounter between the organization and its stakeholders' expectations through an ongoing dialogue about their visions, their objectives, their needs, and their plans. In this view, the corporate brand embodies the value covenant (Balmer, 2001) meaning a "bilateral promise" between an organization and its stakeholders (Balmer and Greyser, 2002; Balmer and Gray, 2003), which should be experienced and spread through corporate and marketing communication in order to become a real promise of reciprocal commitment (Biraghi and Gambetti, 2012). The maintenance of this covenant underpins the dynamic balance between what the organization has promised and the expectations held by its stakeholders. Hence, CB has progressively become a negotiation (Gregory, 2007) and co-creation (Hatch and Schultz, 2009) process uncovering its intrinsic relational nature (Hatch and Schultz, 2003) and requiring the engagement of firm stakeholders in the co-definition of the corporate brand promise (Hatch and Schultz, 2010).

After three decades, the debate on CB is still lively (see for example Balmer, 2010; Hatch and Schultz, 2010; Otubanjo et al., 2010; Pillai, 2012) since the corporate brand represents one of the most valuable resources which firms have at their disposal to effectively position themselves in the competitive arena (Hatch and Schultz, 2003; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Anisimova, 2010) and to successfully relate with its stakeholders. Despite that, the heterogeneity of perspectives in the field makes it difficult to discern the value and the contribution of the different viewpoints to practical knowledge advancement in the field of corporate brand management. In the conceptual "fog" (Balmer, 2001) of CB literature, we believe it is both necessary and valuable to systematically investigate and clarify how CB is concretely conceived and pursued in corporate strategies and how communication is meant to support CB efforts.

Based on this premise, in this paper we carry out a systematic software-assisted content analysis of the academic and managerial debate on CB in order to classify conceptual and pragmatic approaches to corporate brand management, focusing in particular on its link with corporate intangible assets and on how it may be nurtured by communication.

Aims

Our paper is aimed, first, at exploring and interpreting the semantic links between CB and strategic intangible assets such as corporate culture, identity, image and reputation; second, at highlighting the role communication plays in CB efforts.

To accomplish these aims, we systematically analyzed the ongoing debate on CB in the academic and practitioner literature.

The objectives of the analysis were to:

- highlight the main dimensions associated with CB and related concepts (i.e. corporate brand) as well as with communication in the management, marketing, and communication literature (How are CB and communication conceived and semantically linked? Which variables and issues are semantically related to them? Are there different conceptions of CB? Or is it a unified concept?);
- identify similarities and differences in the vocabulary most often associated with CB in academic peer-reviewed journals and professional journals, and in the contextualizations of CB most commonly used in management, marketing and communication literature (see "Method").
- explore significant relationships among crucial themes related to CB and communication (i.e. corporate intangible assets such as corporate culture, identity, image, and reputation).

Method

From a methodological standpoint, this study develops a systematic analysis of the current academic and managerial debate on CB through a software-assisted content analysis.

In particular, T-Lab software-aided content analysis[1] was carried out on both the titles and abstracts of all the academic and professional articles mentioning the concept of "CB and communication" listed in both Business Source Premier (Ebsco Electronic Publishing) international database.

In retrieving our data, the concept of "corporate branding" was not considered alone rather in association with the concept of "communication", since the general aim of our study was to emphasize the semantic links between CB and communication.

Consequently, our analysis covered only those titles and abstracts in which CB was:
- associated with communication, in other word both the words "corporate branding" and "communication" had to be included in the titles and/or in the abstracts.
- the central topic of the article.

Furthermore, in order to explore the semantic links between CB and the main strategic intangible assets of the firm, we also considered the concepts of "culture", "identity", "image", "reputation" when retrieving our abstracts.

A list of 92 titles and related abstracts was retrieved from Ebsco Business Source Premier database on February 20, 2012. The following key concepts were selected as search parameters using Boolean operators:

- *Corporate brand** (and)
- *Communication* (and)
- *Culture* (or)
- *Identity* (or)

- *Image* (or)
- *Reputation*

T-lab 7.2 made possible a quantitative analysis of how themes are explored in the various literature corpora. Compared with other widely used content analysis procedures (for a review, see Neuendorf, 2002), this approach seemed the best way to systematically explore coverage of CB in the ongoing literature debate, and to "characterize" the specific approaches adopted in the academic and professional literature. Our choice of T-lab was due both to the wide variety of statistical analysis that it performs on a textual database, and to the specific graphical representations of the main outputs (words occurrences and co-occurrences) that it produces. T-lab analysis is based on context units (CU) and lexical units (LU) (for further applications see Gilardi and Lozza, 2009; Gambetti and Graffigna, 2010). A text corpus can be divided into elementary contexts (EC) and variables, the two subsets of context units. ECs are portions of text, delimited by punctuation, that correspond to one or more statements. Variables are the criteria the researcher chooses when organizing and classifying the text corpus. Our study used two variables:

1. *Field of inquiry*, which divided the entire database corpus into two sub-corpora[2]:
    - an academic sub-corpus of 71 academic journal titles and abstracts that mention CB and communication;
    - a professional sub-corpus of 21 professional journal titles and abstracts that mention CB and communication.
2. *Type of intangible asset*, which divided the entire database corpus into four sub-corpora:
    - a culture sub-corpus of 8 titles and abstracts (from both academic and professional journals) identified by the keywords "corporate brand* + communication + culture";
    - an identity sub-corpus of 37 titles and abstracts (from both academic and professional journals) identified by the keywords "corporate brand* + communication + identity";
    - an image sub-corpus of 22 titles and abstracts (from both academic and professional journals) identified by the keywords "corporate brand* + communication + image";
    - a reputation sub-corpus of 25 titles and abstracts (from both academic and professional journals) identified by the keywords "corporate brand* + communication + reputation";

Lexical Units (LUs) are words or phrases that are analysed according to the graphic forms they assume in the text, or ascribed to dictionary headwords or semantic classes (e.g. working = work). The software produces matrices of relationships between the units of analysis (CU and LU) in which frequency numbers indicate occurrences or co-occurrences of the phenomena in question (Lancia, 2004).

Findings

Word Association Analysis (WAA) of the academic and professional sub-corpora was carried out to identify main key words and the lexical units (words, lemmas or categories) that share co-occurrence contexts with them. The selection was computed using an Association Index (Cosine Coefficient, see Salton and McGill, 1984[3]) and visualized as a radial diagram (see Figure 1-4) with the selected key word in the centre and other co-occurring words distributed around it, each at a distance proportional to its degree of association. The statistically significant relationships between the elements (i.e. lemmas and words) are therefore univocal and mono-directional (i.e. from the key word at the centre to each of the other selected words distributed around it).

WAA revealed that academic literature compared to practitioner literature is more prone to adopt a comprehensive approach to CB according to a holistic perspective which takes into account several corporate dimensions shaped by the corporate brand.

Academic literature (Figure 1) tends to emphasize corporate brand as a strategic company asset that should be managed directly by the *entrepreneur* or the *top-management*. This since the corporate brand is seen as a *sustainable covenant* representing the *promise* of corporate *behaviours* which are *aligned* with stakeholders' expectations so as to enhance the *reputation* of the company. Furthermore CB in academic perspective also shapes brand strategy in that the maintaining of consistency of the brand promise overtime may require a repositioning and *rebranding* effort in order to cope with the rapidly evolving market scenario.
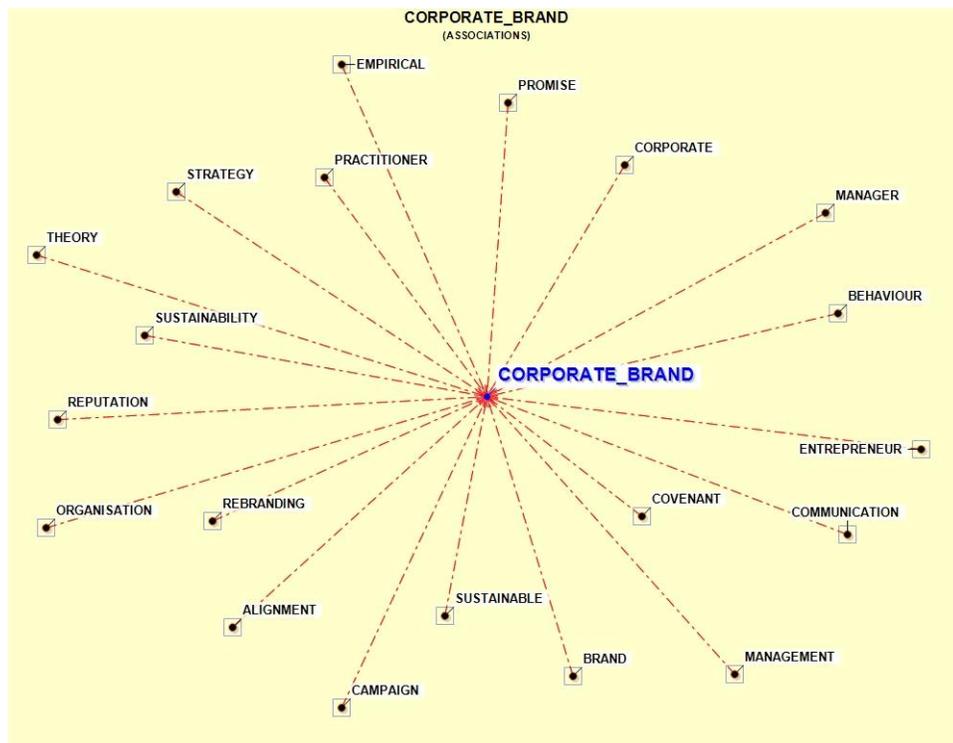
FIGURE 1: Word Association Analysis (WAA) of the academic sub-corpus for the key word "corporate brand"

Notes to figure 1-4: The graphs show the thematic elements most associated with the word "corporate brand" and "communication" in the two sub-corpora (academic and professional). The selection of associated thematic elements is based on an association index (Cosine Coefficient). The association value of each thematic element is graphically represented in terms of distance from the key word (i.e. "corporate brand" and "communication").

WAA showed that practitioner literature (Figure 2) tends to have a more focused view of CB, which is basically *marketing* oriented. Beyond marketing, due to their pragmatic approach, practitioners conceive CB as a tactical tool to be used in contingency situations of corporate life such as disruptive moments requiring *change* and *crisis* management in order to protect corporate *reputation* towards the *society*.
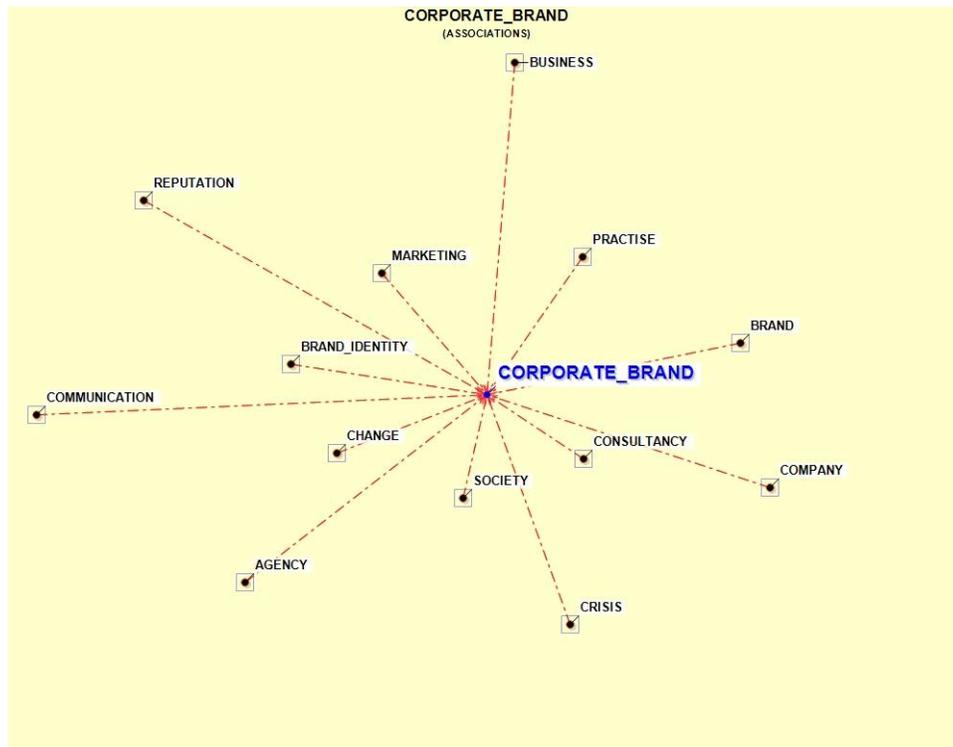
FIGURE 2: Word Association Analysis (WAA) of the practitioner sub-corpus for the key word "corporate brand"

According to the academic perspective (Figure 3), communication emerges as an *integrative* agent which establishes semantic linkages among corporate intangible assets such as *identity*, *image*, and *reputation*. Hence communication appears as a *stakeholder* relationship management tool which points to communication as a dimension that is part of a wider corporate marketing strategy (such words as: *corporate*, *marketing*, *brand*, *consumer*).
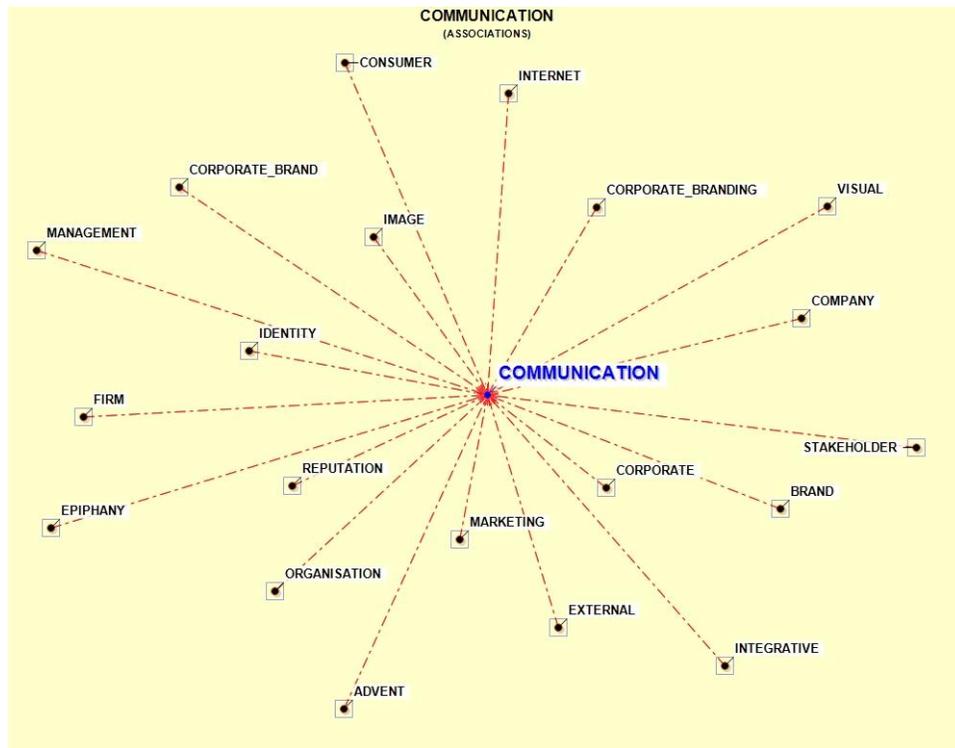
FIGURE 3: Word Association Analysis (WAA) of the academic sub-corpus for the key word "communication"

Also, in the practitioners' view, (Figure 4) communication appears as an *integration* element, meant to integrate marketing tools to enhance product brand level (such words as: *brand*, *campaign*, *advertise*, *agency*, *brand identity*). It is an integration element which appears particularly effective in both the *launch* and *rebranding* phases of product life cycle.
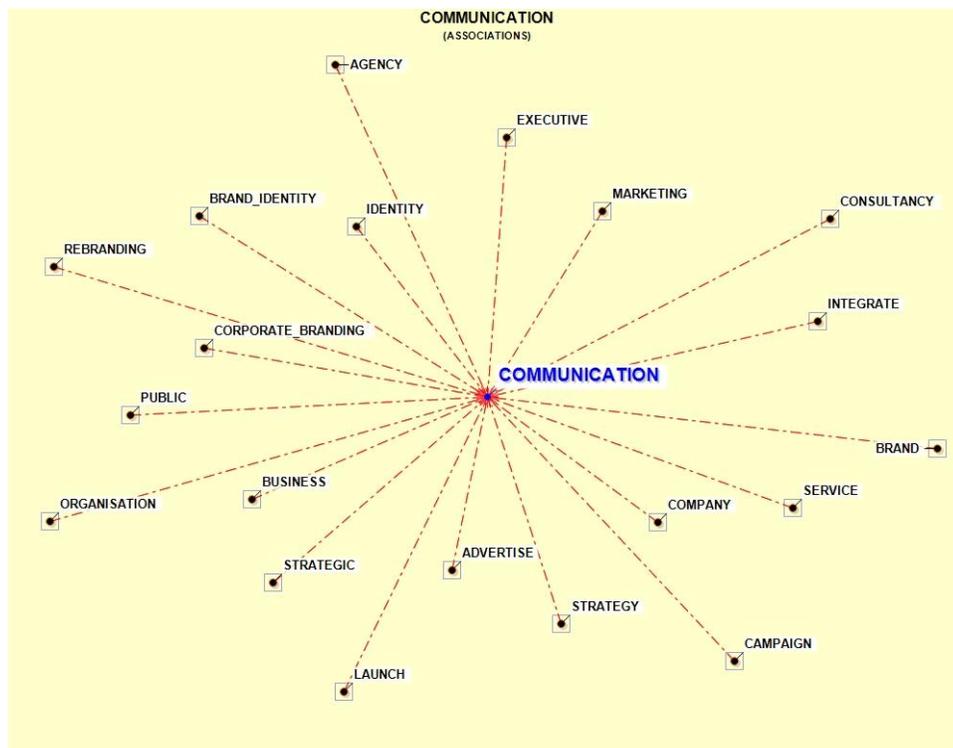
FIGURE 4: Word Association Analysis (WAA) of the practitioner sub-corpus for the key word "communication"

Thematic Analysis of Elementary Contexts (TAEC) was carried out to survey the corpus contents using a small number of significant thematic clusters, each consisting of a set of elementary contexts (i.e. sentences and paragraphs) characterised by the same patterns of key words, and described in terms of the lexical units (words and lemmas)[4] and variables most characteristic of the context units of which it is composed (Figure 5). In other words, TAEC made possible a preliminary systematisation of the main themes relating to CB in the literature debate.

TAEC analysis of the entire database corpus (i.e. all titles and abstracts included in the research) produced two factors explaining the lexical/thematic variance of the analysed corpus.

1. A focus on the *company management perspective* (*Factor 1*) in the adoption of CB strategy: *inside* vs. *outside*. The inside perspective points CB as an internal corporate process involving all the organizational levels of employees in the management of the identity of the firm to make as strong and significant as a brand promise. In contrast, the outside perspective emphasizes the relationship of the company with its external environment both off-line and on-line.

2. A focus on *CB general aims* (*Factor 2*) to contribute to corporate performance: *corporate intangible assets* vs. *brand equity*. The focus on intangible assets reveals a use of CB as aimed at developing and consolidating the competitive differential of the firm based on its intangible assets portfolio, stressing the value of CB as a strategic resource. On the contrary, the focus on brand equity shows a use of CB to enhance the firm's market performance relevant to the implementation of marketing efforts toward the customer base.

Factor 1

The focus on company management perspective in the adoption of CB strategy: inside vs. ouside

Polarity + **Polarity -**

Type	Elements	Test values
LEM	web	65,14
LEM	brand_management	48,02
LEM	Internet	38,63
LEM	brand_image	37,47
LEM	Social	35,68
LEM	website	35,26
LEM	environment	33,37
LEM	on-line	26,09
LEM	sustainable	23,86
LEM	reputation	22,25

Type	Elements	Test values
LEM	organisation	-65,03
LEM	internal	-41,81
LEM	organisational	-48,03
LEM	culture	-32,49
LEM	employee	-34,23
LEM	strategy	-34,84
LEM	integration	-38,87
LEM	firm	-39,54
LEM	identity	-20,03

Factor 2

The focus on CB general aims to contribute to corporate performance:

corporate intangible assets vs. brand equity

Polarity + **Polarity -**

Type	Elements	Test values
LEM	covenant	4,23
LEM	culture	4,07
LEM	identity	3,77
LEM	corporate	3,29
LEM	identity-based	2,97
LEM	image	2,09
LEM	stakeholder	2,03

Type	Elements	Test values
LEM	consumer	-6,44
LEM	brand	-5,90
LEM	relationship	-4,49
LEM	product	-3,18
LEM	market	-2,16
LEM	retail	-2,17
LEM	competitive	-2,31
LEM	brand_equity	-2,54
LEM	advertise	-2,76
LEM	advantage	-3,00
LEM	covenant	4,23
LEM	culture	4,07
LEM	identity	3,77
LEM	corporate	3,29
LEM	identity-based	2,97
LEM	image	2,09
LEM	stakeholder	2,03

FIGURE 5: Factors explaining lexical/thematic variance of the analyzed corpus in Thematic Analysis of Elementary Contexts (TAEC)

Notes: The tables list thematic specificities of the factors that explain variance between elementary contexts (EC). The factors are interpreted on the basis of the threshold values of their constitutive elements (i.e. the words that are 'more typical'/'concentrated' at each pole of the axes).

TAEC also identified four *conceptual clusters* in the analyzed corpus. A semantic map was drawn up, based on the two above-mentioned factors (Figure 6 and 7).

The first cluster (in the upper-right quadrant of the map) considers *CB as an alignment effort toward stakeholders* to enhance image and reputation. It points to CB as a company covenant toward stakeholders aimed at establishing trust-based relationships with them to gain and consolidate their consensus over time, especially in periods of difficulties like crisis or company strategic or tactical failures. In order to achieve this aim, CB ensures the ongoing alignment between company and stakeholders' reciprocal expectations.

The second cluster (in the upper-left quadrant of the map) presents CB as an *integration process among corporate culture, strategy, and identity*, this means that both company identity and strategy should be firmly rooted in corporate values and ethical principles. It also highlights CB as a process informing the entire organization with the aim of presenting the company as a strong employer brand toward both current and prospective employees.
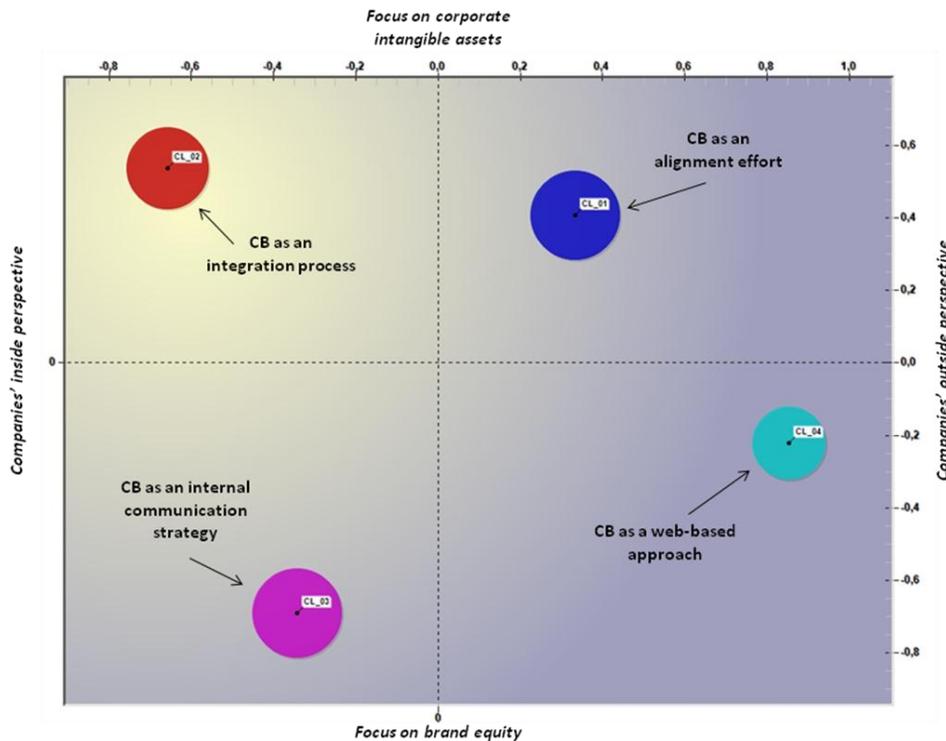
FIGURE 6: Semantic map of the four conceptual clusters of Thematic Analysis of Elementary Contexts (TAEC)

The third cluster (in the lower-left quadrant of the map) shows CB as an *internal communication strategy to enhance employee relation and customer service*. CB appears as a crucial crossroad between the "inside" and "outside" of a company acting as a "bridge" between employees and customers. This strategy is aimed at strengthening employees' involvement towards corporate goals, by enhancing their skills and competences (i.e. training) to enable them to deliver better service to customers and ultimately increase brand equity.

The forth cluster (in the lower-right quadrant of the map) points at CB as a *web-based approach toward external publics*. CB is conceived as an on-line company outlet to spread its messages basically adopting an asymmetrical communication approach. In this case, the potential of internet communication is underestimated by a one-way use of the corporate website as a mere image building tool rather than a genuine social platform linking the company to the environment.

Cluster 1: focus on CB as an alignment effort toward stakeholders to enhance image and reputation

Lemma	Chi^2	EC in cluster	EC in total
covenant	66,94	34	37
image	37,93	31	42
sustainable	34,52	15	15
failure	34,24	21	25
rebranding	30,24	25	34
crisis	28,23	14	15
corporate	17,16	81	184
trust	7,97	5	6
reputation	5,26	45	112
alignment	4,77	13	26

Cluster 2: CB as an integration process among corporate culture, strategy, and identity

Lemma	Chi^2	EC in cluster	EC in total
organisation	95,88	60	94
organisational	51,42	23	30
integration	36,77	12	13
culture	28,81	13	17
strategy	17,21	18	35
identity	16,40	52	144
employer	13,90	4	4
employer_brand	13,90	4	4
organisation-wide	12,87	5	6

Cluster 3: CB as an internal communication strategy to enhance employee relation and customer service

Lemma	Chi^2	EC in cluster	EC in total
internal	69,01	34	37
consumer	37,37	35	51
relationship	25,72	19	25
brand	25,17	79	168
employee	16,07	18	28
Internal_comm	14,17	6	6
involvement	11,80	5	5
training	11,80	5	5
service	4,39	13	27
brand_equity	3,91	4	6

Cluster 4: CB as a web-based approach toward external publics

Lemma	Chi^2	EC in cluster	EC in total
web	80,85	17	17
brand_management	39,58	15	22
Social	34,47	13	19
Internet	28,44	6	6
rhetoric	28,44	6	6
website	23,69	5	5
environment	22,70	6	7
brand_image	16,42	10	19
asymmetrical	13,60	4	5
on-line	7,67	4	7
communicate	6,30	6	14

FIGURE 7: Words featuring in the four conceptual clusters of Thematic Analysis of Elementary Contexts (TAEC)

Notes: Each table describes the main features of each elementary context (EC). Each EC is composed of all words and phrases that share the same meaning context. Each table lists the elements (words) that proved significant in the chi-square test. The rows of each table also give individual word occurrences in the EC and the entire data corpus.

Specificity Analysis (SA) on the two sub-corpora identified by our first variable (academic sub-corpus vs. professional sub-corpus) was carried out to identify the main thematic specificities of CB and ways of conceiving it in the academic world and business worlds. SA indicated the most typical words (over-used lemmas) in each subset. Chi-square test defined the significance of the analysis outcomes (see Figure 8).

SA of the academic sub-corpus revealed that academic literature is strongly focused on CB as a corporate identity management effort emphasizing thus both its fundamental role as an embedded component of corporate positioning and its process-based nature involving executives' responsibilities and participation in its management.

In contrast with this strategic perspective, SA of the practitioner sub-corpus showed a tendency to tactically conceive CB either as a marketing communication tool to support a new product launch acting as a corporate umbrella sustaining the entire brand portfolio; or as a corporate communication tool protecting the firm in time of crisis.

Over-used words

Academic sub-corpus

Words	Chi^2	Subtotal	Total
corporate	11,86	178	184
identity	7,13	138	144
management	4,06	48	49

Managerial sub-corpus

Words	Chi^2	Subtotal	Total
society	43,15	8	11
crisis	27,72	8	15
launch	24,46	4	5
advertise	22,82	8	17

FIGURE 8: Specificity Analysis (SA) of the academic and practitioner sub-corpora

Notes: The tables list significant words and their corresponding chi-square values, occurrences of words in the considered variable level, and occurrences of the same words in the entire data corpus.

Finally, *Multiple Correspondence Analysis* (MCA) was performed to synthesize the specific thematic features of each sub-corpus (academic sub-corpus vs. professional sub-corpus and culture sub-corpus vs. identity sub-corpus vs. image sub-corpus vs. reputation sub-corpus) and position them on a comparative thematic map. MCA cast light on the relationships between the various corpus sub-sets and their specific contents, and identified factors that explain the variance between variables. The significance of these factors was determined from the threshold values of their constitutive elements.

In Figure 9, the two variables of the analysis are positioned on a thematic map structured by two main factors. The first factor (horizontal axis), which explains 0.28% of variables inertia, opposes:

- at the positive pole, topics related to the *integration of marketing communication* (see Figure 10), especially, such words as: communication, integrate, advertise, campaign, marketer); in other words it includes articles that in their titles and/or abstracts focus on combining online and offline marketing initiatives with the aim of enhancing brand identity;
- at the negative pole, topics dealing with *employee and customer integration* (see Figure 10) especially, such words as: employee, consumer, integration), including

those titles and abstracts which leverage on corporate culture as a symbolic "platform" to facilitate ongoing confrontation and dialogue between employees and customers.
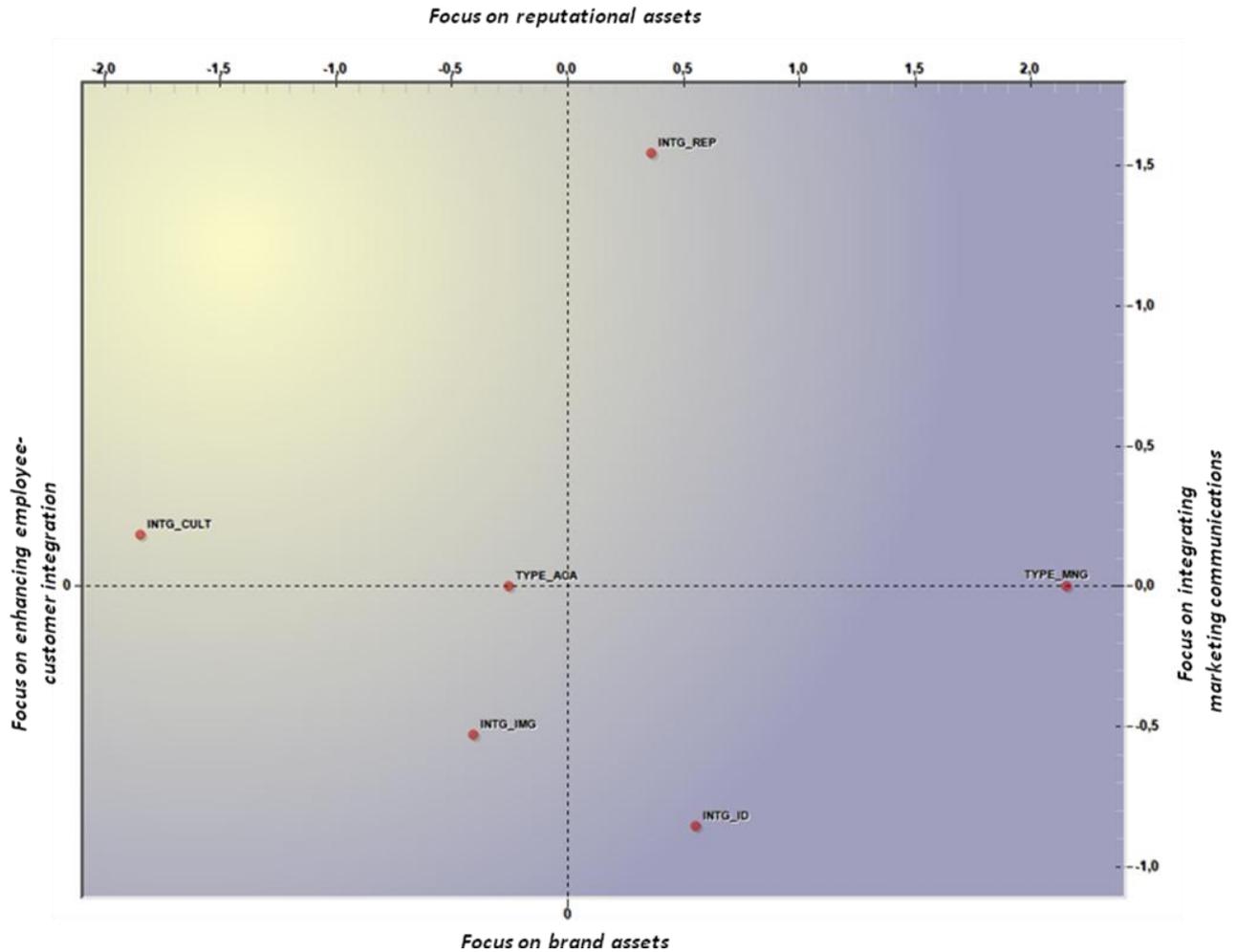
FIGURE 9: Thematic map of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)

Notes: Correspondences Analysis (CA) describes relationships between the semantic units (words) and variables that divide the corpus. The results are expressed as specific content similarities and differences between the various sub-corpora.

This factor differentiates the academic sub-corpus (the "TYPE_ACA in Figure 9, positioned on the negative pole of the horizontal axis and more focused on the employee customer integration dimension) from the practitioner sub-corpus (the TYPE_MNG in Figure 9, positioned on the positive pole of the horizontal axis, and entirely focused on integrating marketing communication).

Factor 1
Focus employee and customer integration vs. focus on integration of marketing communication

Polarity +

Type	Elements	Test values
VAR	marketer	4,57
VAR	society	4,39
VAR	advertise	4,03
VAR	communication	3,81
VAR	integrate	3,41
VAR	brand_identity	3,40
VAR	mobile	2,75
VAR	on-line	2,39
VAR	campaign	2,33

Polarity -

Type	Elements	Test values
VAR	culture	-4,38
VAR	cultural	-3,29
VAR	Internal_Comm	-2,01
VAR	integration	-2,34
VAR	consumer	-2,40
VAR	organisational	-2,42
VAR	employee	-2,97

Factor 2
Focus on reputational assets vs. focus on brand assets

Polarity +

Type	Elements	Test values
VAR	reputation	6,10
VAR	crisis	6,01
VAR	brand_reputation	3,46
VAR	covenant	2,44
VAR	reputational	2,39
VAR	value	2,32

Polarity -

Type	Elements	Test values
VAR	brand_identity	-3,95
VAR	brand_promise	-2,02
VAR	csr	-2,14
VAR	retail	-2,26
VAR	sustainable	-2,61

FIGURE 10: Factors explaining lexical/thematic variance in the analyzed corpus in Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)

Notes: Correspondences Analysis (CA) also identifies factors that explain inertia between variables. The factors are interpreted on the basis of the threshold values of their constitutive elements (i.e. words and the variables taken in account). The two factors generate a map that represents thematic similarities and differences between the sub-corpora.

The second factor (vertical axis), which explains 0.25% of variables inertia, opposes:

- at the positive pole, topics related to the *reputational assets* (see Figure 10) such words as: reputation, brand reputation, reputational);
- at the negative pole, topic relating to the *brand assets* (see Figure 10) such words as: brand identity and brand promise).

The MCA highlights that both academic and practitioner sub-corpora are positioned at the same level with reference on the vertical axis of the thematic map. This indicates that both the polar contents described by this factor may be equally represented in the two sub-corpora.

Furthermore, this second factor differentiates the four sub-corpora generated by the variable "type of intangible asset" (culture, identity, image, reputation). In particular, the identity and image sub-corpora (the INTG_ID and INTG_IMG in Figure 9) are positioned on the negative pole of the vertical axis because they are strictly related to brand assets, stressing a marketing orientation rather than a corporate perspective (INTG_REP sub-corpus).

Discussion

This exploratory study is a systematic content analysis of academic and managerial papers dealing with the role of CB in the theory and practice of marketing, management, and communication. CB appears as a crucial crossroad between the "inside" and "outside" of a company acting as a "bridge" among key intangible assets. CB emerges as a managerial philosophy and a communication-based process capable of strengthening and spreading corporate culture, identity, image and reputation. It also emerges as an "inside-outside" interface between the company and its stakeholders.

Our study is original since it represents a first attempt to carry out a literature review on CB relying on a rigorous and systematic software-based approach, which is capable of providing fresh insights into statistically significant relationships among crucial themes related to CB and communication.

The results require further investigation. It would be advisable to perform more extended software-aided content analysis of databases (sub-corpora) that are more similar in size and articulation. In this perspective, it would be worth including in the databases the full texts of articles on "CB and communication" published in academic and professional journals, so as to have more material to analyze.

As for the future steps of our research, we believe it will be valuable to CB managerial development and contextualization to deepen the results of the Thematic Analysis of Elementary Context we presented in this paper, which pointed out four interesting conceptual clusters related to how CB has been conceived and pursued so far. In particular our next research steps will encompass an empirical case study-based investigation of the four emerged clusters aimed at exploring and illustrating the distinctive features of each of the four CB approaches pointed out by the TAEC, the contextual elements in whose frame each of them is pursued (i.e. market situation, firm position in its life cycle, organizational and business model), and the company's approach to communication in each of the four CB strategies.

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Notes

[1]T-lab content analysis and text mining software is widely used by qualitative researchers in Italy and other European countries, and is usually listed as text manager software (Lewins and Silver, 2007). For a more detailed account of its design and function, see Gilardi and Lozza, 2009.

[2]The two sub-corpora considered in the analysis were of different lengths and derived from different numbers of sources. However, the fact that all T-lab comparisons are based on CHI-square tests helps the researcher to cast light (only) on significant thematic differences in the sub-corpus under investigation, and to avoid biases due to the differing sizes and compositions of the sub-corpora (Lancia, 2004).

[3]The Cosine Coefficient measure was first used by Salton and McGill (1984) in information retrieval studies to evaluate the degree of association between documents and words, and later to automatically classify both elements (i.e., document clustering and key word clustering).

[4]In linguistics, lemmas are the head words of dictionary entries.

Insights on CSR Strategy Influence

Who, What and How

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A given characteristic of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs is that they reflect stakeholder expectations and preferences for corporate behavior. This study examines the process of developing CSR strategy, focusing on who and what influences this strategy, and whether the process reflects traditional issues management, or the presumably more enlightened practice of stakeholder engagement.

Answers are based on an in-depth analysis of interviews with CSR managers from 16 industry-leading, Danish companies.

Results indicate that although there is a wide range of influencers, customers and company managers have a relatively strong influence on strategy. Also, not all influencers are stakeholders per se, as networks and consultants also have influence. CSR managers tend to adopt an issues management approach; they are keener on gaining insight into potential CSR issues than on forming relationships in the strategy-making process.

If stakeholder engagement is indeed a modern managerial ideal, these findings point to the need for more awareness of its benefits, or greater commitment to practice it. This study, however, suggests that issues management still has much to offer practitioners, and therefore should continue to receive attention in the CSR strategy literature.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility; Stakeholder management; Stakeholder engagement; Issues management

Paper Type: Research

A central, defining characteristic of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is that it involves business organizations' concerns with their role in, and responsibilities to, society. In this way, the development of CSR strategy in organizations inevitably involves an evaluation of what others require, expect or desire of them (Carroll, 1991). In other words, CSR strategy is necessarily influenced by many. The potential implications of this influence cannot be underestimated. For example, the environmental consequences of a global retailer being influenced to exclusively buy and sell products that are packaged in recycled materials would be so far-reaching as to be almost unimaginable. The overall aim of this paper is to gain a greater understanding of central characteristics of this influence on CSR strategy development. This will be accomplished through an analysis of interviews with CSR managers in 16 modern, Danish companies that have considerable experience with CSR. The paper is comprised of two parts. The first part questions who and what influences the companies' CSR strategy development. The

second, and most central, part examines how CSR managers understand the processes of seeking out and allowing, or disallowing, this influence. More specifically, the second part of this paper examines the extent to which CSR managers understand the *issues management* and *stakeholder relations* disciplines, and the ways they conceptualize company activities and interactions with others in strategy making processes. It will cover how the CSR managers' understandings of their strategy making processes seem to reflect these ideal conceptualizations. Indeed, while there is much theoretical work that involves these ideal approaches to strategy formation, there is relatively little work that aims at validating these theoretical constructs through an examination of empirical material from practice. Finally, it is also hoped that additional insights into the CSR strategy formation process, and how it is influenced, will emerge during the analysis. The findings from this study are intended not only to provide theoretically based insight on contemporary CSR strategy making practices for academics, but also to provide inspiration to CSR practitioners for critical reflection of their own practices. In addition, the findings are intended to provide insight on the CSR strategy making process for any person or group that seeks to influence CSR strategy in for-profit organizations.

To meet these aims, the empirical study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: According to the CSR managers, who and what influences CSR strategy formation? Which forms of influence are described as relatively important?

RQ2: How do the CSR managers describe the processes involved in seeking out, allowing and/or disallowing influence on the CSR strategy making process? Do these descriptions reflect an issues management approach or a type of stakeholder relations approach to CSR strategy making?

The paper is structured in the following way: First a more detailed, theoretical account of CSR strategy management is presented, with focus on the relevant fields of issues management and stakeholder relations. Within the stakeholder relations section, approaches to stakeholder relations that have been deemed particularly beneficial to corporations and their stakeholders are described. The empirical study and its findings are then presented. The findings include an overview of the most salient influencers on the participating CSR managers' strategy making processes, followed by an evaluation of the means by which this influence is sought out, allowed or disallowed by the CSR managers. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and thoughts on their possible implications.

Theory and Literature Review: Issues Management and Stakeholder Relations

Theory tells us that there are several means by which companies can gain insight into the requirements, expectations and desires that others have for a company, and thereby be influenced by when forming CSR strategy.

In the 1970s, the now widely referred to practices of issues management and stakeholder management began to appear in management and public relations literature. At that time, both fields focused on ways in which organizations could influence public policy. Whereas issues management was concerned with the development of corporate positions and strategy based on identifying important *issues* in the external environment and prioritizing them (Jones & Chase, 1979), stakeholder management was concerned with identifying *publics* who also had a stake in

the same issue(s), evaluating the potential for cooperation or competition with them in the policy process, and developing a strategy for dealing with them (Grunig & Hunt, 1983).

Since then, stakeholder theory has evolved. Focus is no longer on influencing public policy alone, but on a more general corporate strategy formation, as well as the importance of creating long-lasting, beneficial relationships with an ever broadening range of stakeholders. It has also gained a privileged position in the CSR literature. In fact, the stakeholder concept is central to many definitions of CSR, for example, Werther and Chandler's, "CSR addresses a company's relationships with its stakeholders" (2010). With this understanding of CSR, it is not possible to address the formation of CSR strategy in companies without also considering implications for stakeholder relationships. In this way, CSR is all about navigating and addressing stakeholder concerns:

> CSR addresses a company's relationships with its stakeholders. It is a vehicle for discussing the obligations a business has to its immediate society, a way of proposing policy ideas on how those obligations can be met, as well as a tool by which the mutual benefits for meeting those obligations can be identified. (Werther & Chandler, 2008, p. 8)

Managing CSR necessarily entails dealing with stakeholders. As noted above, ideas about how to go about this in a favorable way have shifted. Although the more recent issues management literature does note the importance of building mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders (e.g., Botan & Taylor, 2006; Taylor, Vasquez, & Doorley, 2003), primary focus in issues management has traditionally been on managing the issues themselves: identifying, monitoring and responding to the issues that emerge from stakeholder (or "publics'") expectations, demands, and interests. Indeed, a key component of issues management is environmental scanning which involves spotting emerging or current issues, and researching them to understand their potential to either threaten or benefit the organization (Heath, 2005).

With regard to stakeholder relations, the literature that examines how companies deal with stakeholders is very extensive. Despite the many ways that stakeholder relationships are characterized, it will become evident below that a key element in these descriptions is the extent to which the company-stakeholder relationship is primarily unilateral or bilateral. In other words, the extent to which corporations actively engage with, and involve, stakeholders in decision-making is central.

Stakeholder relations distinction 1: Stakeholder management contra stakeholder engagement

The distinction between unilateral and bilateral relationships rests on the extent to which stakeholders have true influence on corporate decision-making, and has been referred to as the difference between stakeholder management and stakeholder engagement. In other words, while stakeholder management involves mapping stakeholder groups and giving attention to the groups who need to be handled by the company, stakeholder engagement is a process by which "corporations involve their stakeholders in decision-making processes, making them participants in the business management, sharing information, dialoguing and creating a model of mutual responsibility" (Manetti, 2011). The literature on relational models typically takes a normative stance, presenting these distinctions in terms of growing enlightenment and insight (ibid).

Stakeholder relations distinction 2: Stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies

Because relationship building is so intricately entwined with communication processes, the communication literature also addresses the various ways in which managers relate to and interact

with their stakeholders. For example, through heavy reliance on Grunig and Hunt's influential public relations communication models (1984), Morsing and Schultz developed a 3-part categorization of CSR communication strategies refers to the extent to which communication is unilateral or bilateral, as well as the extent to which stakeholders are actively involved in influencing corporate decision-making. In the first strategy, the stakeholder information strategy, one-way information is supplied to stakeholders in order to receive their continued support. In the second strategy, the stakeholder response strategy, communication is two-way, and it involves attempts by a company to persuade stakeholders of the worthiness of their decisions and actions. Importantly, this communication is not intended to result in company changes. Instead, in this two-way strategy companies seek feedback from stakeholders in order to obtain stakeholder evaluations of the company, and thereby gauge their own performance. Finally, the stakeholder involvement strategy rests on dialogue and stakeholder involvement. While persuasion of stakeholders may be a key element of this strategy, focus is on negotiation with stakeholders, where they are invited to provide suggestions on the company's CSR efforts. Because stakeholders influence managerial decisions in this form of communication strategy, it has much in common with stakeholder engagement, as described above.

Stakeholder relations distinctions 3 and 4: stakeholder management contra sustainability models (3) and identity, business and stewardship orientations (4) in collaborations with NGOs

Interest in corporate stakeholder relationships with NGOs has increased significantly during the last few decades, reflecting the growing numbers and influence of NGOs. In 1990, the World Bank and the Union of International Organizations estimated that approximately 100 international NGOs existed, while less than 10 years later, the Union of International Associations put the estimated number of NGOs at 50,000 (Willetts, 1998). This reflects a general shift in the roles and responsibilities of government, business and civil sector actors, with greater involvement of business as and civil groups such as NGOs (Van Marrewijk, 2003). These trends have inspired much examination of corporate – NGO relationships, and several typologies have emerged to help evaluate them (e.g., Austin, 2000; Peloza & Falkenberg, 2009). It is interesting to note is the strong resemblance of these typologies to the relationship models already outlined above, as this lends validity to the established distinctions. For example, Huijstee and Glasbergen note two perspectives on NGO stakeholder dialogue: the strategic management model and the sustainability model (2007). In the strategic management model, stakeholder dialogues are part of risk management, research and development. Dialogue is seen as a means of obtaining information on the business environment, with a focus on issues related to the company in terms of risk and opportunity. The sustainability model, on the other hand, stresses dialogue as a means to stimulate learning for CSR purposes; that is, a search for ways to limit negative social and environmental impacts and make a positive difference in these spheres.

In their study, Nijhof and de Bruin also note differing corporate orientations to NGO relationships (2008), and the different ways that corporations view the role of (NGO) stakeholders. In the first of three orientations, the identity orientation, the NGO role is limited. Communication with NGOs is mostly one-sided. The communication is focused on defining CSR for the company and informing stakeholders about their CSR profile, two facets that resemble the stakeholder information strategy outlined above. In the business case orientation, NGOs give input and help set the agenda by identifying relevant stakeholders and topics for action. Dialogue with NGOs is viewed as a means to learn about demands, criticism and suggestions. This category bears resemblance to issues and stakeholder management, as well as the stakeholder response strategy. Finally, the stewardship orientation approach stresses the importance of

stakeholder dialogue that not only informs stakeholders of CSR activities, but focuses on finding ways to help solve societal problems. Importantly, dialogue is also a means to actively involve NGOs in improving corporate CSR strategy. In this way, there is an expectation that dialogue with NGOs can directly lead to organizational change.

To sum up, studies that examine stakeholder relations in a CSR context have identified many of the same distinctions between various forms of company communication and relationships with stakeholders. Much of this work, instead of including explicit normative claims and recommendations, seeks to understand the motivation for choosing one approach over another, and to identify potential limits and benefits associated with each approach. However, there is a clear indication in many of these studies that, due to the importance of aligning corporate strategy with stakeholder requirements and expectations, the stakeholder relationships with the greatest potential are those that actively engage stakeholders in CSR efforts. In addition, many stakeholder relationship models typically portray an evolutionary progression from environmental scanning of CSR issues to stakeholder management to active stakeholder engagement. There appears to be an implicit understanding that this is a positive progression. An overview of the various approaches outlined above is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Overview of issues management and stakeholder relationship models

Issues management		Stakeholder management		Stakeholder engagement	
Stakeholder information		Stakeholder response		Stakeholder involvement	
Strategic management model			Sustainability model		
Identity orientation		Business orientation		Stewardship orientation	

The Empirical Study

As noted earlier, the empirical study presented here primarily aims at evaluating the extent to which CSR managers understand influences on their process of developing CSR strategy in terms of issues management or the various types of stakeholder relations.

Because the literature review revealed a wealth of typologies, each with its own terminology, and several overlapping stakeholder relationship categories, the present study is guided by a newly established typology (see Table 2) which includes three categories of influence on CSR strategy: issues-focused, stakeholder-focused and strategy-focused. The categories are largely based on the same characteristics that inspired the typologies outlined above.

TABLE 2: Influence on CSR strategy: Issue-, stakeholder- and strategy-focused

	Issue-focused	Stakeholder-focused	Strategy-focused
Expressed aim(s) of interacting with potential influencers	To identify relevant CSR issues	To gain insight into stakeholder attitudes and receive feedback on company CSR efforts	To get input and ideas on how to shape the CSR strategy
Platforms of influence	One-way communication, e.g. interviews, surveys	Two-way asymmetrical communication, e.g. discussions, round table meetings	Two-way symmetrical communication, e.g. consultations

More specifically, the typology is primarily based on the CSR managers' expressed aims of interacting with potential influencers and the platforms where this influence occurs. The platforms of influence categories are inspired by earlier work that has linked platforms, or "tactics," to various types of stakeholder management (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 54). In this typology, the Issue-focused approach refers to company efforts to identify and gain insight into relevant CSR issues. CSR agenda-setting and information seeking are key concerns here, and the platform for this typically reflects one-way forms of communication, such as surveys or interviews. The Stakeholder-focused approach refers to company efforts to learn about stakeholder attitudes to a company, and within this approach, CSR strategy influence is viewed in terms of company attempts to meet stakeholder requirements, expectations or preferences. The platforms of influence are typically two-way (discussions, meetings), but information and insight that can benefit the company is in focus. The Strategy-focused approach involves two-way communication in which the company representative invites others to have direct influence on the CSR strategy. Here, the platform of influence is typically consultation since the company aims at actively involving others in developing corporate CSR strategy and play a significant part in instigating organizational change.

Method

The empirical study involves an analysis of 16 interviews that were conducted with CSR managers of very large industrial companies in Denmark. Each CSR manager represented one of the 16 companies. The companies belong to a large CSR network, and represent several industries, including aviation, food, pharmaceuticals, shipping, and energy. Due to their national reputations and experience with CSR, they are generally considered CSR frontrunners in Denmark.

Five different interviewers conducted the 16 interviews. The interviews were structured, but conducted in a rather informal atmosphere that allowed participants to occasionally stray from the prepared list of questions. Apart from questions regarding the CSR strategy-making process, and influencers on the CSR strategy, the interviewers also asked, amongst other things, about the company's history of CSR, implementation and organization of CSR, company values, and CSR communication. The interviews were conducted in English, recorded, and transcribed verbatim. The lengths of the transcripts range from 12 to 26 single-spaced pages, amounting to a total of 293 pages.

Following the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998), the interview transcripts were closely read multiple times before coding was employed to derive relevant themes and categories inductively from the data. Each transcript was coded individually by at least three researchers, who then compared and discussed the assigned code categories to ensure reliability. The code category for the interview excerpts, which form the basis of this study's analysis, is "CSR strategy: stakeholder relationships and influencers".

To answer RQ1 (According to the CSR managers, who and what influences CSR strategy formation? Which forms of influence are described as relatively important?), the interview excerpts from each manager were examined. First, for each manager, a list of the mentioned sources of CSR influence was compiled, but no count of how frequently each influencer was mentioned was made. In this way, the first stage of analysis sought only to identify the range of influencers and their relative salience rather than their relative importance. Further insight into the importance of particular influencers was then sought through additional examination of the interview data.

To answer RQ2 (How do the CSR managers describe the processes involved in seeking out, allowing and/or disallowing influence on the CSR strategy making process? Do these descriptions reflect an issues management or type of stakeholder approach to CSR strategy making?), the interview data was first analyzed using a five- step method (see Table 3):

Step 1: All utterances concerning CSR strategy influences were collected.
Step 2: The source of influence was identified. (e.g. NGO)
Step 3: The platform of influence was identified when possible. (e.g. survey, discussion)
Step 4: The CSR managers' descriptions of the aims of interacting with the potential influencers were noted when possible.
Step 5: The utterance was assigned the most accurate influence type or types when possible. (issue-, stakeholder- or strategy-focused)

TABLE 3: Illustration of the five-step analysis process

Step 1: Utterance	Step 2: Source of influence	Step 3: Platform of influence	Step 4: Aim of interacting with potential influencer	Step 5: Influence type(s)
"…we did a survey across all business units and made a sort of a traffic light investigation across the ten principles of the global compact"	Selected staff	Survey	"To find out if there were any gaps in terms of policies and so on"	Issue-focused

This five-step analysis subsequently provided the foundation for a deeper analysis of the interview data, both within and between companies. This data was used to identify patterns, trends and other insights about how CSR managers approach to the process of seeking out, allowing or disallowing influence on the company's CSR strategy. Of particular interest here was the extent to which there were any identifiable patterns in terms of influence type. In these cases, the relevant utterances were re-examined to further evaluate the nature of these patterns.

RQ1 Findings: Influencers on CSR Strategy

The range of influencers

As Figure 1 indicates, the CSR managers mentioned a wide range of CSR strategy influencers[i]. Although the results do not allow for absolute conclusions regarding each influencer's relative importance, they do give a tentative indication of the influencers' salience in the minds of CSR managers. Of the 16 types of influencers, most CSR managers mentioned customers/retailers (10), followed by NGOs (8). Several types of internal staff were mentioned by half of the managers, while investors, competitors and labor unions were only mentioned by one manager each.
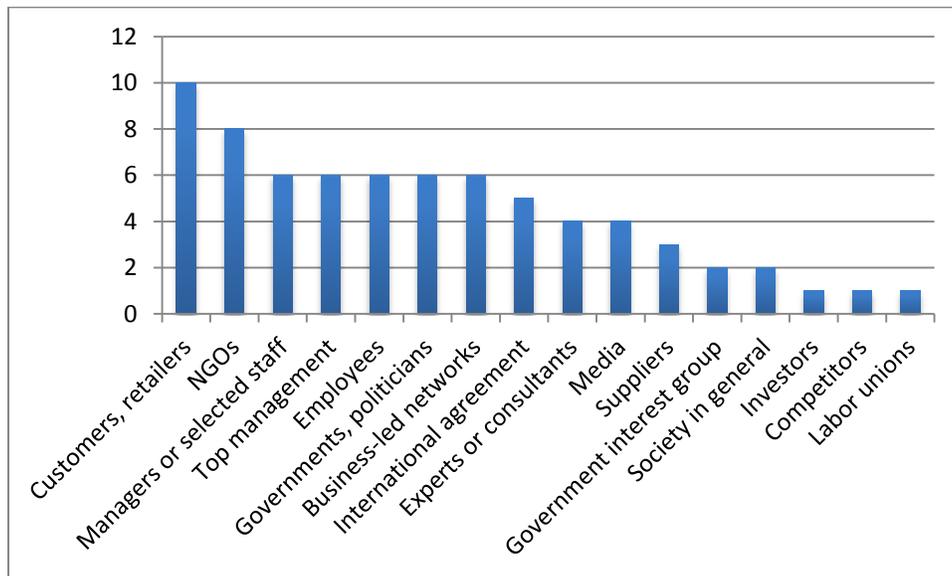
FIGURE 1: CSR strategy influencers and number of managers who mentioned them

Interestingly, while most of the influencers could also be called stakeholders, several do not fit commonly held understandings of the "stakeholder" concept, even if we adhere to Freeman's definition of stakeholders: "Any identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives, or be affected by the organization's achievements" (Freeman, 1983). In particular, business-led networks, experts and consultants are not likely to be considered stakeholders. In fact, several of the interviewees pointed out that not all influence necessarily comes from stakeholders. For example:

> **Interviewee:** I don't know what you'd call the institute, because we are calling, we are paying them for their service; I mean we are choosing them because they have a high level of expertise and integrity...But I don't consider them real stakeholders as such.

This is a first sign that stakeholder relations theories are not sufficient for understanding how CSR strategy is influenced by others.

Influencers' relative importance

There were two main findings regarding the relative importance of certain influencers. First, the interview data provided strong evidence that CSR managers are keen to involve internal stakeholders in the CSR strategy making process. It has already been established (see Figure 1) that CSR managers find internal staff members to be salient influencers. A closer look at the interview data indicates that staff also plays a key role in influencing strategy. Although CSR is typically understood as business organizations' concerns with their role in and responsibilities to society, CSR managers reportedly rely to a great extent on input from staff, and especially other managers, to determine what the company roles and responsibilities should be.

> **Interviewee:**...when we are looking at the strategy making process, it's something that takes place with quite a few stakeholders internally: it's my department, it's our boss, it's CF legal department, and IT security. The main actors when it comes to

insuring high ethical standard you could say, in one way or the other… and then a lot of, of course, you know, very well experienced top managers that are governing locally in countries where you see a lot of human rights and labor rights violations….And then of course it [the strategy] should be approved by the board of directors and the executives.

The second finding is that CSR managers are generally quite keen to consider customers and retailers. After internal staff, this was the next most discussed group of stakeholders in the interviews, and comments pointed to their central importance. CSR managers reported on wanting insight into customer and retailer demands, requests and "end-use concerns."

> **Interviewee**: What governs our strategy and, you could say, our approach is mainly our customers, so we try to align ourselves to the customers to the greatest possible extent…
> **Interviewer**: So you specifically ask them what they expect of you and?
> **Interviewee**: Yes, and we've done recently connections with establishing our next five year sustainability strategy where were going out to our key customers but also broader out to about 4000 customers and ask for their needs and they've then given an input to that. We have then segmented the input trying to find out how do we then specifically support them, what are the issues that they feel are critical to their business. So there is a structured process for that, and engaging with them. But I would also suggest that the of course, direction is given by senior management,

This finding provides support to the extensive literature that links the strengthening of CSR efforts to growing consumer interest, expectations and power. Indeed, recent literature on CSR trends even notes that contemporary CSR is best described as consumer-driven corporate responsibility (Claydon, 2011).

RQ2 Findings: CSR manager approaches: issues, stakeholder or strategy-focused?

The analysis provided several findings with regard to how CSR managers describe the processes involved in seeking out, allowing and/or disallowing influence on the development of CSR strategy.

First, despite the prevalent literature on CSR that frames it in terms of stakeholder relations, this study provides clear and convincing evidence that the CSR strategy process strongly reflects the concepts and processes set out in the issues management literature. In other words, the managers commonly take an issue-focused approach to the strategy making process. This is evident in several ways. It has already been established that some of the common sources of influence are not even stakeholders per se, but for example, business-led networks and expert consultants.

> **Interviewer:** And in the strategy you are intent to have, how does this strategy making process take place…?
> **Interviewee:** Yeah, more than you think, it's a management, and expert exercise. So you will have environmental experts for instance and CSR experts and so on, and then management, I think that's where we have to start…

The CSR managers also often described their aims of interacting with potential influencers in terms that reflect issues management, and they typically described the platforms of influence as being one-way. For example, the aims were described as "to find policy gaps", " to

pick up on trends", "to gain insight on the global CSR agenda" and "to be updated on the agendas that could become issues." Common platforms of influence were surveys and expert presentations at conferences and seminars. In general, the CSR managers often described their work in terms of *finding out through listening*.

> **Interviewee:** But then you can say that there are also issues within the ambition for customers that actually, you know, we try to evaluate our activities from the outside-in, so that means that we talk to our customers, we find out what is important for them and then try to incorporate that in the way we work.

Second, the interviews revealed that most of the managers use a variety of approaches, and the approach seemed to be dependent on the characteristics of the source of influence. One of the most salient patterns was that managers seem more likely to take a strategy approach when dealing with internal staff. In general, the strategy approach, in which the managers are open to direct influence, and in which they explicitly invite suggestions to the CSR strategy, seems to be a privileged approach reserved for key, internal influencers – especially top management. In only a few instances did managers take a strategy approach with external influencers, and they even seem to consciously avoid taking a strategy approach with certain external influencers:

> **Interviewee:** So what we do is that we show these scenarios to them [NGOs], explain them to them, and have their input on it. And not saying that we will choose the scenario that they would prefer, but more that we have the input and we can take that into consideration when we choose. Because that's very important that we are not guided by the NGO's. We listen to them, and we discuss with them, and...and of course want to go in that direction, but again we are running a business. So they do have...the initial question was if they had an impact on our strategy or...and you can say yes and no. We formulate the strategy, but we listen to them and we want to hear what they are saying and which way they see things are going.

Finally, the analysis revealed that the ideal, theoretical categories presented earlier do appear to accurately capture the different ways that managers seek out, allow and disallow influence in the strategy making process. As the utterance above illustrates, the managers, especially when describing the aims of interacting with potential influencers, seem to be very conscious of the different approaches, and choose them strategically.

Discussion

The main finding of this study is that despite much theoretical work which points to the centrality and benefits of engaging with stakeholders in the CSR strategy forming process, the practice in reality seems to paint a different picture. The managers in this study are still quite keen on approaching CSR in a manner that has more to do with issues and environmental scanning than stakeholder relationship building. At first glance, there seem to be two potential implications of this: either practitioners need to become more aware of the benefits of engaging in two-way, symmetrical forms of communication, and to adjust their practices accordingly, or else the academic community needs to adjust its current understandings of the CSR strategy making process, and gain a greater appreciation of the centrality and benefits of issues management. It does, after all, seem to be fulfilling an important role in contemporary strategy-making processes. Ultimately, the main implication is that practitioners should gain an appreciation of the relative benefits of the various approaches, and to become adept at choosing and taking the most

appropriate approach for a given situation. The strategy making process is complex, not the least because there are so many competing sources of influence.

Finally, this study has provided insight into how companies seek to understand, and thereby act on, their roles and responsibilities to society. It has shown that in this process, some influencers are more important than others. Because of the useful insight they can provide managers regarding relevant CSR issues, managers listen to customers and retailers, but also many other influencers. In the end, however, internal stakeholders, and especially managers, have the privilege of defining what they believe society expects and wishes of the company.

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Note

[i] "Top management" includes the company's executive board, "International agreement" refers exclusively to The Global Compact, and "Government interest group" refers exclusively to The Danish Institute of Human Rights.

Internal Communication

Communication Strategies As a Tool for Mediation - A French Study

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"Strategy" is a word that has escaped from its military background and has been adopted at all levels of organizations. Through our study of a large industrial group, we demonstrate how internal communication can be conceptualized through a framework of military strategy. We conducted a qualitative survey to measure the perception of the company's internal communication circuit and communication tools. We also set up a mediation strategy to solve malfunctions, such as compartmentalization and lack of involvement. We defined the issues of mediation within the organization and determined employees' expectations. Finally, we defined a strategy known as "staking" that corresponds to the organization of a network of internal relay to internally de-multiply communication tasks. This involves everybody in the company's strategy and generates real cohesion. Following this research, we can distinguish a methodology that resolves recurrent problems of internal communication.

Strategy: a decontextualized word today and whose different meanings involve the organization, the management, as well as a need to conquer. This term has strong evocative power that is not without suggesting a particular form of thought that Pascal Reysset (1997) called "the intelligence of war". Escaped from the military context, the strategy is a term now universally adopted at all levels of organizations. Is it a formula for success only, or of real benefit to a company? Individuals tend to be sceptical when attempting to demonstrate, beyond the obvious media appeal, that the lessons of military strategy can contribute to the renewal of a discipline — communication — that operates in an increasingly complex context. Yet, as General Gil Fiévet (1992) so aptly said: "Communication is not only about implementing techniques, it is above all about a real strategy (answering the questions what, where, when, how, why?)"

But not everybody uses a strategy, and a few people within a company still convey simply their message of direction. For, beyond the questioning process, communication strategies can be transcended and evolve into new forms of hybrid strategies at the convergence of military concepts and various aspects of internal communication: internal communication that would not be restricted to production and distribution of information only, but that would imply "a relationship between the sender, the message and the receiver." And if, as asserted by Dominique Wolton (2006), "to communicate is to recognize that we need others (...)", any internal communication would require that we "enter into mediation" with the social body of the company as we enter into relationships with others. However, "entering into mediation" is not accomplished solely through communication tools; it is essential to build a real communication policy involving the choice of one or more appropriate strategies. This choice will be determined by the construction of methodological tools based on research conducted within a refinery, so as to adapt certain military concepts to the context of internal communication.

From Military Strategies to Internal Communication: The Points of Approximation

At first glance, internal communications and military strategies seem two divergent worlds. Internal communication is part of the field of human resources while military strategies embody the foundation of what Sun Tzu (1993) called "the art of war." The points of connection between these two concepts may appear abstract. However, General Gil Fiévet highlights in his book *From Military Strategy to Business Strategy* that "numerous areas of a strategic, military and economic approach are linked (...)"

Our research shows that the field of internal communication tends to join these approaches. Three principles appear through the work of General Gil Fiévet as fundamental in the study of war and as applicable to internal communication:

1. The principle of concentrating
2. The principle of freedom of action
3. The principle of economy of force

These three principles can, by extension, relate to the three main tasks of internal communication as defined by Philippe Détrie and Catherine Broyez: inform and explain, promote a daily exchange, and animate the life of the organization.

The principle of focusing efforts:

The first principle reflects the will, the "want", and bias for action. In communication situations, it may be the desire to "develop the appropriation by each employee of the purposes of his unit." Philippe Détrie and Catherine Broyez (2001) highlight, through this principle, the concept of appropriation. According to these two authors, ignorance and misunderstanding of the objectives and policies of the company are key factors in a situation of non-involvement at work.

The principle of freedom of action:

The second principle emphasizes the desire to preserve its freedom to act. Applied to communication, this freedom can be tapped in order "to encourage everyone to communicate better." This is about "learning to work together" in order to prevent "skills that do not fit together" and thus maintain the notion of efficiency within the organization.

The principle of economy of forces:

The third principle concerns the economy of force "which can be expressed by the desire to organize forces to ensure their ability to concentrate and to have freedom of action." In the case of communication, this principle can be likened to the will "to move from coherence to cohesion" because, according to the authors, "the absence of cohesion leads to compartmentalization and indifference". These points define a field of research. Indeed, the company — we were particularly interested in the conditions of application of internal communication within a refinery — and particularly its internal communications can both be conceptualized through the prism of military strategy.

A Mediation by Default

According to Walter (1996) "organizational communication has two basic objectives: to convey the messages needed to run the company, and to enable participants to manage interpersonal identities, roles, and relationships with others inside the organization." The company in which we conducted our analysis is a lead site in communications. As such, it represented an ideal field of research. We conducted an internal qualitative survey, commissioned by the Directorate of Human Resources and Communications of the same company, to measure the perception of the company's communication circuit, communication tools, and topics. This survey highlighted certain dysfunctions both within the management of internal communications and within the production of information. However, what caught our attention during the handling of data was the breach of a fundamental objective, such as defined previously by Walter, "enable participants to manage interpersonal identities, roles, relations with others inside the organization." This objective is similar to what philosophy defines as mediation: "the process by which we establish a link between two people or two terms."

Internal communication plays an intermediary role in with the goal of:

- ascending information
- descending information
- developing communication between services (cross-communication)
- encourage direct communication
- promoting communication indirectly
- taking into account the opinion of the majority
- providing information

Our survey showed particular failures in the management of internal communication, especially concerning so-called cross-communication between services, and taking into account of the opinion of the majority. This is about the perception of relationship between employees and the internal communication system. It seems that, for some, internal communication is not playing its role as an intermediary — or, in other words, that it does not meet the internal demand for mediation. Almost half (49%) of employees surveyed agreed that internal communication was not exercising cross-communication. Similarly, 41% of employees complained that their opinions were not taken into account. These disorders could be symptoms of compartmentalization in the development of internal communication. Data appears to support this theory: 60% of employees preferred to pass information directly to their managers instead of through the communication service. However, within this company, information should be passed through the communication service, which should then act as an intermediary and disseminate that information. Only 17% of employees were using the communication service for conveying information. Here, the indifference towards the established service could be interpreted as a consequence of the absence of mediation within the organization.

The Principle of Economy of Force as a Mediation Strategy

According to Schwebig (1986), the concept of strategy encompasses the following principles:

…to define, for each target audience, what it should think or do, the key idea to communicate to do it that way, and arguments that will support this communication.

> These are also the message – the axes and themes to develop, a language/vocabulary, visual style ... — the priority targets of corporate communications, according to the specific challenges and expectations of communication for each target, and content, the message, specific to each target. (This should be an indented block quote, right?)

Initially, we defined the issues of mediation within the organization, namely the internal cohesion, as a response to indifference and compartmentalization. We also defined the expectations of employees concerning the mediation (descending and ascending information, developing communication etc.). Now we must define a strategy such as that defined by Schwebig. The principle of economy of forces, as we have developed, describes "moving from coherence to cohesion" and discusses the idea of "organizing its forces". For this purpose, this principle seems the most suitable for our case study.

Confronted with the modes of tactics action, this precept of organizing its forces could be called a defensive attitude as developed by Clausewitz (2006): "If A has an advantage to attack his opponent, not now but in four weeks, then B will benefit from being attacked by him now and not in four weeks. There is an immediate opposition, but this does not mean that B has interest to attack A immediately, which would be another matter."

In other words, "(...) the concepts of attack and defence are involved in the test of will, one wanting something positive, and the other one wanting not to yield." According to the final note of Clausewitz "the defence would be the strongest form with a negative end; the attack, the weakest form with a positive end."

Strategies to reduce these failures over time should be based on the concept of organization. Organization in a situation of internal communication means managing the framework of the service, particularly the communication network.

We must therefore determine the scope and the goals, as well as the human and financial resources, necessary to design the communication service. The goal that best meets the needs of employees is goal of listening, which, according to Jean-Pierre Beal and Pierre-André Lestocart (2003), requires the use of various devices:

1. Flexible devices
- Use existing indicators:
  - Structural (age pyramids, average age of the various positions, internal mobility)
  - Behavioural (absenteeism, turnover, work accidents, quality indices, number of ideas submitted in the suggestion boxes, resignations)
- Organize a network of "relays" (meetings/communications correspondents)
- Perform flash surveys (questionnaire)

2. Structured devices
- The barometer of internal climate (anonymous questionnaire on paper, distributed to a representative sample of staff and qualitative information collected from a group of employees)
- Surveys

3. Three devices essential
- Use of experts
- Market segmentation
- The choice of method of consultation
- Exploitation of results
- The different phases of information

The elements are gradually moving into place; however, we must now identify the mode of tactic action that would fit best within the framework of internal communication. In this context, the following table describes relevant military concepts and allows us, by amalgamation, to integrate one or more military concepts into our research.

Modes of tactics action:

OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Discovery:
Meeting a far enemy
Maximum field occupation

Recognition:
Meeting a close enemy
Getting (gaining) the strengths of the field

Manoeuvre of a resistor:
Break down a resistance by a manoeuvre: flank, overflow, wrapping

Flexible attack:
Attack a defensive position by infiltration (night)

Attack in force:
Power attack on a defensive position

Exploitation:
Moving forward, after a breakthrough, to disrupt the enemy.

Pursuit:
After exploitation, prevent the enemy from regrouping
Maximum field occupation

DEFENSIVE ATTITUDE

Staking:
Keeping up with a moving enemy without being approached

Retardancy:
Retreat in battle
Exchanging field against time

Halt:
Temporary firm defence from a favourable position

Firm Defence:
Defence of a position without thought of retreat

Against attack:
Offensive action, after retreat, to destroy the enemy or to recover the field

Harassment:
One-off minor actions as part of the guerrilla or defence on the surface

The mode-of-action tactic known as "staking" seems the most adaptable to the context of the communication situation that interests us. Indeed, initially, we explained that the precept for the organization of forces is a defensive attitude — because it corresponds to the willingness to act, not to yield. "Staking" refers to the act of keeping in contact with a moving enemy without being approached. However, to organize a service and the communication network is a decision that involves, as we have explained, a goal of listening and, therefore, contact with the public at the refinery. The organization itself is inert, the goal is to enable mediation through "tools" or a "relay" that is in direct contact with employees. We can therefore identify "staking" as the model of organizing a communication network.

The table below summarizes the path that led us to this methodological application.

Methodology

Defensiveness behaviour		Application to the communication	Framework for the deployment
Staking	Maintain contact with a moving foe, without being approached	Organize the service and the communication network - Scope and Purpose of a communications department - The human and financial resources necessary for the management of the communication service	The mission of listening: 1 Flexible device: - Use existing indicators: • Structural (age pyramids, average age of the various positions, internal mobility) • Behavioural (absenteeism, turnover, work accidents, quality indices, number of ideas submitted in the suggestion boxes, resignations) - Organize a network of "relays" (meetings / communications correspondents) - Perform flashes surveys (questionnaire) 2 Structured devices: - The barometer of internal climate (anonymous questionnaire on paper, distributed to a representative sample of staff and qualitative information collected from a group of employees - Surveys 3 Three devices essential: -Use of experts -Market segmentation -The choice of method of consultation -Exploitation of results - The different phases of information

In our case study, the solution that seems most appropriate would be to organize a network of "sensors". Indeed, this refinery has no internal relay of communication and voluntarily deprives itself of a network of mediators that could share the internal communication tasks and, so, involve all of the employees in the business strategy and generate real cohesion. This mediation strategy should take into account the three levels of public involvement inside the refinery and should give to each group (management, day staff, and shift workers) the opportunity to elect one or more representatives or mediators (for each age classification) that could contribute to the establishment of the communication policy of the company.

Conclusion

We have demonstrated that military strategies and internal communications are not as contradictory as they may seem at first glance. Indeed, the strategy as defined by von Neumann and Morgenstern — a plan that determines the choice to make in every possible situation and based on information available at that time — can be applied to many situations. "Military strategy being the matrix of any strategy," it seemed necessary to go back to the foundation of strategic thinking in order to attempt an "adaptation" to the paradoxical context inherent in internal communication generally and within the particular refinery that we studied. This comparison allowed us to develop a mediation strategy to solve internal dysfunctions that many companies are now trying to eliminate. Following this research, we can distinguish a methodology to address recurring problems that arise in any situation of internal communication. This tool takes into account the human dimension of communication, a dimension losing legitimacy in favour of technology and information overload, as Dominique Wolton emphasizes: "Communication involves the consideration of the receiver. Therein lays the difference between communication and information." The receiver is at the center of the problem, especially because internal communication is assumed to be an act of management — within the meaning of organization and management of a heterogeneous social group — bringing a solution "(...) to a problem of running the organization and its human potential (2001). "

Ultimately, we hope that the notion of mediation will be integrated into any internal communication policy. Meanwhile, this tool may allow a change in communication patterns and facilitate the passage from coherence to cohesion.

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Internal Communication Crisis and its Impact on an Organization's Performance

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The aim of this research is to study whether and how internal communication inefficiency can lead to an organizational crisis. An answer to this question was found through the study of previous empirical research on internal communication and organizational crisis. For the purpose of this paper, a case study of one particular organizational crisis was carried out by applying a combined research methodology – in-depth interviews and a survey. As a result of a detailed analysis of theory and a study of a case, a new concept –"internal communication crisis" – was coined in the master's thesis from which this paper is derived. The study established that an internal communication crisis is a result of asymmetrical formal internal communication, a lack of leadership, weak organizational culture and lack of values, as well as active grapevine communication. This research found that internal communication crises are directly related to organizational crises in which alternative decision-making processes, are established due to the failure of established internal communication channel and resulting in employees attempting to solve organizational problems by involving external stakeholders. Such attempts to involve external stakeholders lead to the very high risk of negative publicity and damages to reputation, which gives the national policy decision-makers an opportunity to expose the organization to threats of liquidation or resource reduction.

Keywords: Internal communication, Leadership, Organizational culture, Informal internal communication, Organizational crisis, Internal communication crisis.

With the arrival of the 21st century, essential changes in communication between organisations and audiences have occurred. In a communication context, the open communication environment with multiple channels in which the management of communication is no longer possible, is being increasingly discussed. Organisations are working diligently to fulfil their communication programmes responding to the desires of external stakeholders and the newest communication channels.

Equally important to external communication is the role of internal communication in communication programmes, which, to a great extent, is aimed on the engagement of employees –to define organisational targets, tasks and values and building of internal culture. Although communication scholars and researchers have had significant discussions about the role and importance of internal communication in public relations programmes, there is still a large number of organisations which do not have a clear understanding of the meaning of internal communication and its importance as a component in the creation of mutual understanding between the management and employees. Also, when assessing crisis situations, managers do not attribute internal factors to their cause.

The aim of this research was to establish the role of internal communication in the context of organisational crises, namely, in what way ineffective internal communication can bring an organisation to a crisis situation. Having regarded the historical development of internal communication theory in modern research schools, it may be concluded that internal communication has not been viewed as a factor causing a crisis. Therefore the author, using the case study approach, has developed an explanation of the impact of internal communication in the origin of organizational crisis.. The goals of the research were:

(1) to study the conclusions of the internal communication literature to date,

(2) to develop an innovative concept regarding internal communication crisis, and

(3) to carry out research in order to verify the theoretical model that had been formed.

During the research, the author looked for the answers to the following questions:

- What causes internal communication crisis?
- How does internal communication crisis influence organisation's activity?

Theoretical Frame

Both researchers and practitioners in the field of communication have already indicated that in the 20th century organisation's internal communication determines how efficient and successful a performance-orientated an organisation is. Yet, these discussions of internal communication are quite often related to such notions as "employee information", "raising the efficiency of employees" and "one-way communication". These notions, which are factually directed towards unilateral benefit for an organisation, indicate an application of the notion "internal communication". Accordingly, internal communication is considered rather as a tool affecting employees than a tool for employee involvement in a dialogue in order to achieve mutual understanding between the management and employees.

Two communication researchers Lyn Smith and Pamela Mounter believe that the role that has been described as still an immature one... Top managers continue to have different views on the role of internal communication, some seeing it as a little more than 'a message service' with no particular place in a wider scheme of things, while others regard it as an essential change agent (Smith, Mounter, 2008).

Researcher Pamela Mounter defines internal communication as follows: Effective communication means telling people where they are going (horizontal message) by welding different organisational divisions into one team and gaining information on how well the communication has been delivered (feedback from ground to top) (Gregory, 2007).

Pamela Mounter calls internal communication the corporate glue that helps build teams, reinforce pride in working for a company and encourages people to work that bit harder to beat the competition (Gregory, 2004).

Sandra Oliver speaks about internal communication by emphasizing its complex nature. Internal communication as a core function of corporate strategy is no longer a simple question of efficient bottom-up or top-down communication via line management (Olivera, 2009).

Symmetrical systems of internal communication

Most systems of internal communication are asymmetrical, however, and they do not increase morale or organisational effectiveness. A symmetrical communication system is one in which employees are provided mechanisms for dialogue with each other and with supervisors. Interpersonal communication is crucial in a symmetrical system, although employee media can complement it (Grunig, 1992).

Cultural perspective in internal communication

Organisational values determine how employees and management implements objectives, and are principles which are clear and understandable and help employees in the fulfilment of their tasks. According to researchers of organisational values Randolph A. Polhman and Gareth S. Gardiner,

the organisation itself cannot be a value. Values are brought in by specific people working for these organisations. The major challenge for managers is to balance organisational values, vision, targets and tasks with individual values represented by employees of organisations (Polhman, Gardiner, Heffes, 2000).

The role of leadership in internal communication

Researchers of organisational management have discovered and analysed various styles of leadership and have described characteristics of leaders. Yet, according to Daniel Goleman, Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee, the leader has been the one whom others follow and continuously view as an example. This group and others have also indicated that the leader acts as the group's emotional guide. In the modern organization, this primordial emotional task – though by now largely invisible – remains foremost among the many jobs of leadership: driving the collective emotions in the positive direction. The leader is also the one to whom others look for assurance and clarity on their job (Boyatzis, McKee, Goleman, 2002).

Christine M. Pearson and Judith A. Clair in a publication "Reframing Crisis Management" reveal various crisis aspects by indicating that in all cases a crisis is related to losing faith in leadership and confidence in organisational culture. Organizational members are likely to question the organization's cultural beliefs and to feel a need for a transformation of the culture. Finally, the social-political perspective suggests that crisis management is unlikely to be successful without a reformation of organizational leadership and culture (Pearson, Clair, 1998).

Informal communication as a crisis agent

A group of American communication theoreticians Scott Cutlip, Allen Center and Glen Broom speaking about internal communication and its role in the organisation have paid great attention to the notion of the "grapevine". The grapevine is neither formal, nor controllable means of communication, but communication expressed in direct contact with others quite often is the fastest means for obtaining and receiving information. The "grapevine" is thus a powerful channel of information. At times can be dangerous to the organization or it may become be threatening to it. (Cutlip, Center, Broom, 2002). Fearn-Banks says that rumours can be positive or negative. They can be absolutely false or partly false. They can also be undeniably true or premature facts. There is an expression "There's a ring of truth in every rumour" (Fearn-Banks, 1996) and people tend to believe rumours. Kimmel says that if rumour adequately explains unanswered questions or sufficiently fills in gaps in people's understanding about what is going on, they may serve to reduce their anxieties and eliminate their fears (Kimmel, 2004).

Organisational crisis

When communication theoreticians discuss the cause of organisational crisis, basically they relate to the external environment of the organisation which, under specific conditions, may paralyse company's or organisation's activity. Nonetheless, it is important to indicate that external factors are closely linked to the internal environment – the structure, management, communication and people working in the organisation.

Yet, theoreticians Elizabeth L. Toth, Kathleen Fearn-Banks, Matthew Wayne Seeger, Timothy Lester Sellnow, Robert R. Ulmer, Robert L. Heath and Timothy Coombs, who have studied crisis communication, have provided little insight into the influence of ineffective internal communication on organisational crisis. It can be concluded then, that the research of crisis

communication has a potention for innovation potential directly related not with factors in the organisation's external environment but with processes inside the organisation.

Elizabeth L.Toth defines organizational crisis as an unpleasant condition, a critical state, an accident, a huge disaster, a calamity or a catastrophe (Toth, 2007).

Crisis management expert Kathleen Fearn-Banks says that "crisis is a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome effecting an organization, company, or industry as well as its publics, products, services, or good name. It interrupts normal business transactions and can sometimes threaten the existence of the organization" (Fearn-Banks, 1996).

Seeger defines organizational crisis as "a specific, unexpected and non-routine organizationally based event or series of events which creates high levels of uncertainty and threats or perceived threat to an organization's high priority goals" (Seeger, Sellnow, Ulmer, 2003).

After gathering and analysing several research works and published theoretical discoveries conducted by professionals and researchers in the field of communications (Joseph W. Weiss, 1996; Anne H. Reilly, 2008; Joanne E. Hale, Ronald E. Dulek, David P. Hale, 2005; Rusaw A. Carol, Rusaw F. Michael, 2008; W. Tomothy Coombs, Sherry J. Holladay, 2005; Jim Suchan, 2006; Heiner Minssen, 2006; Cláudia Simões, Sally Dibb, and Raymond P. Fisk, 2005; Joseph Eric Massey, Ph.D., 2001; J. Suzanne Horsley, Randolph T. Barker, 2002; Mary E. Vielhaber, 2008; Denis Smith, *1990;* Dwane Hal Dean, *2004,* Sandra L. Christensen and John Kohls, *2003)*, it can be concluded that researchers in most cases have focused on crisis as a situation prescribed by external factors. For example, when referring to causes of a crisis they are related to accidents, non-quality goods or services or bad name deliberately created in external audiences. When examining the crisis literature, , great attention was paid to crisis definitions and direct causes of the crisis within the organisation's such as: deliberate breach of the organisation's rules and regulations, employee strikes or different types of violence in an organization rather than factors within the internal environment. This finding leads to the conclusion that crisis communication researchers should pursue new research initiatives directed specifically towards studying the internal organizational environment as a potential cause of crisis.

Under crisis conditions, organisation's problems will always come to light. Yet, organisations and communication researchers should be aware of a set of crisis agents which traditionally are not considered as the causes of the crisis, such as:

a) non-existence of organisational values or disagreement in the organisation;
b) asymmetrical communication in the organisation;
c) lack of leadership, vision and task disallowing employees to understand the organisation's direction;
d) predominance of informal internal communication over formal in the organisation.

Internal Communication Crisis

On a basis of the afore-mentioned theory, the author has created a concept in the internal communication theory, "internal communication crisis" (**see** Image 1) and verified this concept by applying a case study method. Internal communication crisis should be understood as a situation in an organization when there is a lack of active exchange of information, attitudes and opinions via formal information channels among organizational groups, instead an informal communication (grapevine) has been established in which gossip is circulated creating communication buzz, in effect, deafening official channels of information and the effectiveness of internal discussions are disturbed. If, in fact, there is no formal internal communication at all, it

allows informal communication to develop as an alternative for decision-making and can influence the direction that external decision makers can implement on the organization outside its control. Alternative decision-making of this kind specifically threatens the existence of an organization as internal mechanisms to counteract it are deficient or not in place. An internal communication crisis also establishes that employees do not trust their formal (actual) management. Management is no longer capable of controlling communication with its employees and therefore loses authority and the opportunity to attain organizational objectives.
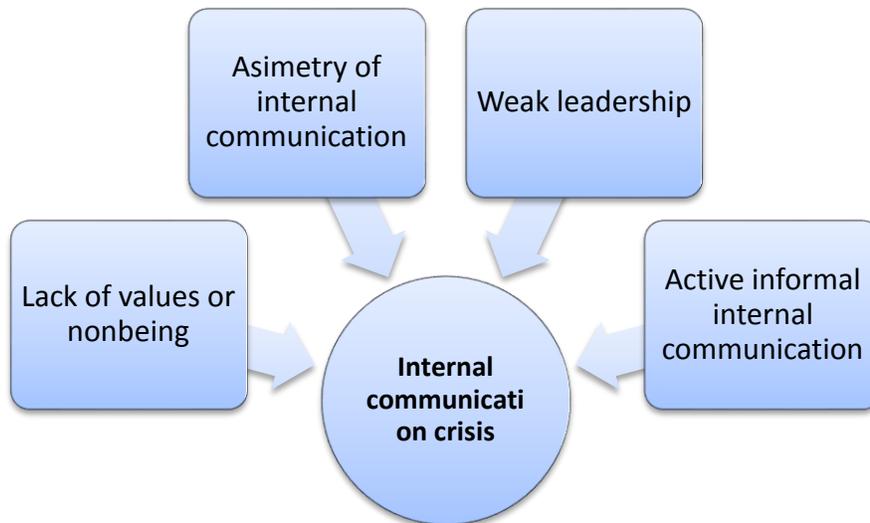
FIGURE 1

Research Methodology

The organisation which was chosen as the object of this case study is a public authority founded after 2002. This institution is state-funded and its objectives and tasks have been prescribed by the law. When the research was conducted, the authority employed approximately 50 people. Its mission, according to the principles of Western democracy, is to ensure efficient cooperation between the government andits citizens.

Despite the fact that the organisation started its operation with clear objectives and tasks set forth by law, in the long run multiple problems crystallized which were identified by its employees as – poor management, lack of management's understanding about the field of operation, and insufficient communication with employees.

When management had to implement governmental decisions regarding public authority budget cuts, the organisation suffered a serious internal communication crisis. The trade union representing employees prepared and published an open letter, describing multiple negative situations and giving examples of organizational inefficiencies .

This letter was addressed to the state's high ranking officials. It reached the media and initiated public discourse on the organisation's efficiency and importance which lasted for several months.

Negative publicity and negotiations in the *Saeima* and the Cabinet of Ministers was a significant obstacle for providing a quality defence to prevent even greater budget cuts in the next year. Public discussion resulted in opponents of this little known institution declaring publicly

that if there are conflicts inside the authority then perhaps such an institution is no longer necessary. One of Latvia's leading media outlets described the necessity for the liquidation of the organisation. A high ranking state official with decision-making power over the organization's existence indicated that it should be closed, thus saving a significant amount of resources from the state budget.

Eventually, the government authority was not discontinued, however, as a result of the negative publicity, its budget was reduced by half.

A combined research methodology was carried out. As emphasized by Christine Daymon and Immy Holloway, case studies differ from other methodological approaches by intensive examination of a single entity which is bounded by time and place. The purpose of case study research is to increase knowledge about real, contemporary communications events in their own context (Daymon, Holloway, 2002). Daymon and Holloway continue that a case study is suitable for developing theories or verifying them.

During the case study, qualitative (in-depth interviews) and quantitative (survey) methods were applied.

A survey was used to establish co-orientation. Jack MacLeod and Steven Chaffee offer a model of co-orientation. Under their concept, the authors present models of a spiral of reciprocal perspectives: a direct perspective is "what I think"; a metaperspective "what I think you think" (Botan, Hazleton, 1989). Accordingly, co-orientation allows the discovering of the viewpoint of two groups on one and the same issue and also representations of one group on viewpoints of the other group concerning the same matter.

Structured interviews with eight employees at different levels of the organisation were conducted. The selection of research participants was guided by purposeful sampling, described by Thomas Lindlof and Brian Taylor (Lindlof, Taylor, 2002).

Within the study, three groups were identified which would allow an in-depth analysis of issues discussed in this paper: management (dominant coalition and supporters of a manager), employees appearing as opponents of government and employees in neutral positions. Since the head of the organization refused to participate in an interview, the study defined and discussed the overall role of the dominant coalition of the organisation, comprising of a manager, his/her advisors and administrative manager. Larissa Grunig (Larissa A. Grunig), referring to a power-control theory, argues that organisations do what they do because people with the most power in the organisation – the dominant coalition – decide to do it that way (Grunig, 1992).

Results

Both information gained in interviews and factors verified in quantitative research indicate that internal communication crisis of the organisation, as a new concept put forward by the author, is caused by four factors: (1) deficiencies in formal internal communication; (2) undefined and disembodied cultural aspects of an organisation; (3) lack of leadership; and (4) very active and purposeful informal communication which predominates over formal communication and has definite aim – changes in organisation's operations.

Both interviews and surveys revealed that majority of participants consider **internal communication** to be an important precondition for the successful activity of the organisation. Yet this data also disclose a significant gap between views of employees and the dominant coalition regarding the role of efficient internal communication in providing successful organisational performance. If employees considered that efficient internal communication is a precondition to successful organisational performance than representatives of dominant coalition

more likely disagreed than agreed with this statement. The very same considerations were brought forward by representatives of both groups in the interviews.

Considering **organisational culture** in the reflection of organizational values, the qualitative research showed that employees (with one exception) were convinced that the organisation has no defined values, yet everybody named unwritten rules, based on their inner feelings about what they as employees are allowed or not allowed to do. Interviews disclosed that employees considered expressing one's opinion, an activity, or an initiative to be a taboo. Meanwhile, the dominant coalition mentioned loyalty towards the manager as an unwritten rule. Results of the quantitative survey supplemented the answers of interviews concerning organisational values.

In the section about the role of **leadership** in the context of organisational performance, data of both studies showed that the manager of the organisation had not been a leader with a personal vision regarding organisational activity, objectives and tasks. Also, the manager had not been an inspirer, motivating employees to work better or to carry out organizational initiatives. Instead, employees were speaking of passivity, disinterest and conformism. Also, in the quantitative survey which inlcuded the participation of half of current and former employees, it was expressed that the manager was not a leader more disagreed than agreed to the viewpoint that the manager had a vision guiding organisational activity, objectives and priorities. When evaluating co-orientation among the viewpoints of employees, the dominant coalition, and the views of both groups about opinions of the other group, it should be noted that this question was one of the rare occasions when opinions of both parties coincided, not only regarding the lack of leadership but also regarding opinions of the other group.

Both groups agreed with the statement that **informal communication** plays a significant role in information exchange and in the formation of the mood among employees. This opinion was reflected both in interviews and questionnaires. Yet, opinions of participants differed in questions regarding reasons and consequences of informal communication. Employees, both in interviews and questionnaires, showed an outstanding unanimity that the reason for informal communication was the inefficiency of communication between management and employees. The dominant coalition tended to point at the historical splitting of their colleagues between "the old" and "the new" ones, pointing to the norm within management to maintain the same operational routine as before when new managers enter the office.

When discussing what the employee group, who activated the informal communication network wanted to achieve, the overall opinion of employees agrees with the opinions said in interviews and information obtained in questionnaire – the desire for improving organisational activity and decision-making model, and the desire that management listen to employees. The quantitative questionnaire showed that in the aspect of co-orientation, the statement of regarding employees' desire to improve organisational activity was valued differently by both groups – employees agreed that this was the aim while the dominant coalition disagreed. Employees' views regarding the opinion held by the dominant coalition are equivalent, but management, nonetheless, didn't believe that employees thought their actions were guided by a desire to improve organisational activity.

The second question of the study discussed the impact of internal communication crisis on organisational activity. Having concluded that in the presence of conditions where communication symmetry in the internal environment is not implemented, employees are not led by a leader, there is a lack of definite value system, and all preconditions for informal communication to dominate over formal communication exists; there is a justified risk that employees who create an alternative decision-making model through informal communication channels, may also use resources available in external to the organization to influence ongoing

opinions and thus the reputation of the organisation. In this aspect, organisational activity may be threatened by the risk of the unfriendliness of externalstakeholders, the active circulation of negative information in the mass media allowing decision-makers and the society to express negative stands, which, in its turn, could threaten organisation's reputation, existence or the amount of financial resources avalaible for it.

Data from both qualitative and quantitative research indicate that internal communication crisis is directly related to threats to organisational activity. In interviews employees reveal that specifically asymmetric informal communication, lack of leadership and defined value system facilitated the impact of informal communication in the organisation. Active and symmetrical communication driven by employees also was a means to extend the conversation to external stakeholders, like the media and politicians, who should, in the employees view become involved in the struggle for better organisational performance. This step, labeled by employees as "a scream for help", was the one that threatened the existence of the organisation and also was determinant in the sharp decrease of funding for the organisation's operation.

Discussion

Results of the research permit discussions about the set of components of internal communication crisis discovered and visualised by the author in the beginning of the paper – asymmetry of communication, lack of leadership and of values, and active informal communication. Further on in the text, the author shall briefly touch on each of these concepts in order to discuss whether the four factors may cause internal communication crisis and how it affects organisation's operations.

The importance of symmetry has been pointed out by Gruning and Hunt, who described symmetric communication as a source and a recipient which cannot be separated but are equal participants of a communication process seeking (striving for) mutual understanding and proportional two-way effect (Grunig, Grunig A.Larissa, 1989). This research points at the lack of symmetric approach in internal communication, which is marked by the research participants (not representing the dominant coalition) as an important cause of the problem and of crisis in the organization. Employees have indicated that a dialogue between the organisation's management and employees was minimal and insufficient. Communication between the dominant coalition and employees has left more unanswered questions than clear answers. During the research it has been established that employees have felt uninvolved, uninformed and unheard. These answers led to the conclusion that the lack of symmetry is one of the factors causing internal communication crisis. Employees, who are not satisfied with communication and who are uninformed, are not perceived as equal team players thus not granted the opportunity to express their opinion, give feedback and participate in the decision-making process on important issues of the organisation, eventually forming grounds for internal crisis situation which cannot be resolved in any other way but by the means of strategic approach to planning and managing of internal communication. However, the devastating power of **asymmetrical communication** could be discussed with regard to this particular case.

Another aspect, which has been brought forward as a crucial one, is **organisational culture**. In this study, this aspect has been narrowed by analysing only values in the organisation as a possible cause of internal communication crisis.

Randolph Polhman and Gareth Gardiner (Polhman, Gardiner with Ellen M. Heffes, 2000) noted that organisational values determine how employees and the management implement the objectives, what are the principles which are clear and understood by everyone and which help employees in their daily tasks. Research conducted within the framework of the paper suggested that the organisation in question failed to have defined values. Firstly, a rhetoric question could

be asked: Should there be any? Regardless, <u>the answer</u> can be found in <u>narratives by the research participants</u> on the organisation's unwritten rules which would not flatter any organisation. Participants in in-depth interviews pointed out that in the organisation, indeed, there were unwritten norms: every initiative and activity is condemnable, an opinion which is contrary to the management's opinion must not be expressed, and double morality with regard to what is allowed to one person and disallowed to the other. Series of such unwritten rules points at such values as non-transparency, passivity and inequality. Value system of this kind, on its merits, is destructive for any organisation. Internal risk for the organisation in question was hidden, although there were undeclared values in the organisation which did not promote activity and initiative. Despite this employees sought a work environment with a completely different set of values: openness, transparency, dialogue, and open decision-making process.

The third factor of internal communication crisis is leadership or the lack of it. Researchers Pearson and Clair (Pearson, Clair, 1998), speaking about various aspects of crisis, indicate that in all cases such crisis is related to the loss of faith in the leader and conviction in the organisation's culture. The study findings underscore Pearson and Clair's points particularly as it relates to the managerial style of the organisation. The first conclusion repeated by every single participant in interviews was that the manager was not a leader. Yet, the problem that the manager is not a leader cannot be regarded as the characteristic parameter of the organisation. Still the main problem within the organisation in question is, how employees put it, "managerial style of no shape". Such managerial style is characteristic of passivity, disinterest, avoidance from problem solving, the use of mediated communication channels and the lack of vision and objectives.

The study's findings reveal that the lack of leadership, unclear managerial style and incomprehension of employees' need for information created a fundamental problem in the organisation's internal communication. If the leadership has no understanding that communication is a significant factor in the management of employees impacting organizational performance, then an effective internal communication programme cannot be implemented. Grunig (Grunig 1992) states that public relations must be a management function if it is to make organizations more effective. This study also reflects on the managerial responsibility for the implementation of (or lack of) of effective internal communication. The authority manager and his dominant coalition, most likely unknowingly, activated informal communication in the organisation, thus encouraging the development of horizontal communication between employees and vertical communication between employees and heads of their structural units. It could be discussed whether the organisation's management implemented asymmetrical communication on purpose or maybe it was incomprehension of the significant role of communication. Regardless of the reasons, such action facilitated informal communication among employees.

The role of **informal communication** and "grape-vine telegraph" in an organisation's communication is viewed as one of crucial factors influencing organisation's operations and may become a threat to an organisation. This idea is discussed by Cutlip, Center and Broom (Cutlip, Center, Broom, 2002). To sum up, the role of communication symmetry, organisational culture, and leadership must be considered to implement efficient internal communication. It then can be concluded that in a situation where all three factors are not being implemented, there is a high risk of activation of informal communication. Frank Laurich indicated that the aim of internal communication is to provide the missing information, soothe nervous emotions and help to orientate (Bērziņš, Klauss, 2006). If management is not able to prove to its employees with facts the necessity of a decision to be made, then rumours are created. Research respondents also have indicated that informal communication was activated because there was inefficient communication between management and employees. The dominant coalition, however,

disagrees with this viewpoint. Yet, this aspect once again proves that there is a huge gap between opinions of employees and the dominant coalition on various matters concerning efficient communication.

      Influence of internal communication crisis on the organisation's operation is related to the fact that employees, who are active and represent different values than those offered by the management and internal communication environment, are ready to activate those in the internal environment but also those external to it– decision-makers and the society - with the aim of receiving help. However, as the example shows, the hope for help in external setting may turn against the organisation both by threatening its funding and existence.

      Results gained from the study indicate that organisational crisis may not only be caused by external conditions which are difficult to control for an organisation, but also by internal factors which are closely linked to communication problems in the organisation. Although the case study analysis is based on a separate case, information disseminated in public domain during the course of the research also on other similar cases indicate on the topicality of the problem in organisational operations.

      The findings speak to the need for further research in internal communication and its relationship to organisational crisis. If, until now, crisis communication researchers have only partially confirmed that an organisation's internal factors may be a crucial condition for a crisis to arise in an organisation, then this research fully confirms this assumption, provides definite proof of internal factors which determine whether an organisation experiences or does not experience a crisis. In the same manner, the concept of internal communication is being expanded, which so far has been described only from the point of view of employees' performance (Pamela Mounter, Lyn Smith, Bill Kirk, Sandra Oliver) and satisfaction (Pincus, Reifield, Knips, Grunig), but difficult to locate examples in the literature dealing with internal communication crisis as a concept which the organisation must consider if it implements specific internal communication programmes or simply ignores the communication needs of its employees using asymmetrical approach to communication. The results fully answer to the questions put forward in the beginning of the paper. There is an indication of a gap in literature discussing the influence of communication on a crisis. Therefore the author offers to supplement communication literature with a new concept "internal communication crisis". Also, the study results add to theoretical concepts containing suggestions to communication practitioners on how to identify possible problems in organisation's internal and respond to them in a timely manner.

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Internal Communication Strategies for Employee Communicative Actions

A Qualitative Analysis in American and Italian Companies[i]

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Purpose: *To understand if, and how, internal communication strategies can promote strategic employee communicative actions such as to disseminate positive information that enhances the company's reputation. These communicative actions sustain the competitive advantage of a company.*

Approach: *Interviews with: internal communication experts; internal communication managers in 10 American companies and 22 Italian companies. A focus group comprised of internal communication managers and experts.*

Findings: *Employee communicative actions have been categorized as: exploration, interpretation, sharing and acting. Internal communication strategies enable employees to be effective communicators.*

Research implications: *To investigate the link between employee communicative actions and internal communication and relationship quality by means of a survey among employees.*

Practical implications: *Internal communication managers are expected first, to become enablers towards employees and line managers; and second, to facilitate sense-making processes and the quality relationship building.*

Keywords : *Employee communicative actions, Enablement, Internal communication.*

Paper type: *Research paper.*

Introduction

Many studies demonstrated that employee communicative actions are relevant for organizational performance because they produce competitive advantage. Usually employees have been seen as receivers of internal communication, but they are also senders and, in general, active agents in the communication arena of a company (Frandsen, Johansen, 2010; Kim, Rhee, 2011). Employees can process information in a passive way or search, interpret and spread information in an active manner. For example, they can be very effective in referring to and advocating for their organization, gathering and circulating strategic information and knowledge, building cooperative networks inside and outside the organization. These behaviours are the basis of a company's ability to generate knowledge, reputation and other intangible resources that are critical for achieving and sustain competitive advantage. For this reason, they are called strategic communicative actions. Alternatively, employees can leak sensitive information, malign their company publicly or not share knowledge with their colleagues.

The study reported in this paper explains the role of internal communication as a lever for enabling employees and managers to be strategic communicators. To this end the Internal

Communication Laboratory at IULM University, in cooperation with the Baruch College/CUNY, carried out a research project based on interviews with internal communication managers and specialists in 10 American and 22 leading Italian companies.

This paper presents the academic background of the study, the research design, the research questions, model and methods, findings and conclusions relating to managerial implications and future research studies. The study suggests that internal communication is no longer a message-spreading function targeted at managers and employees, but is intended to enable employees and managers to be strategic communicators.

Academic Background

The conceptual background of this research project consists of several concepts related to internal communication: corporate communication, resource model of internal communication, enactment theory, constructivist theory of communication, resource based theory, situational theory of publics, situational theory of problem solving, and relationship marketing.

Corporate Communication: This research project employs a management and corporate communication framework. Corporate communication executives are involved in communication actions that are central to corporate survival and growth (Goodman, Hirsch, 2010). Employee communication is one of the core responsibilities of a Corporate Communication Officer (Goodman, Hirsch, 2010; Cornelissen, 2008; Argenti, 2009).

Resource Model of Internal Communication: The specific model of internal communication to which the study refers is the resource model of internal communication (Mazzei, 2010). According to this model, "internal communication is a set of interactive processes aimed at generating two catalytic intangible resources that make a company work: knowledge to fuel working processes and employee active allegiance" (Mazzei, 2010: 224).

Enactment Theory: Enactment is the process of bringing companies to life (Heath, 1994). Enactment studies "are interested in knowing how people in companies create and enact meaning, a sense-making approach to the study of organizational performance" (Heath, 1994: 3). Through their daily conversations, meetings, plans, letters and corporate communications, people interact to learn which enactments to make and how. Organizations come alive through communication (Weick, 1977, 1979, 2001; Heath, 1994). According to enactment theory, all individuals take part in the enactment of organizations. Managers do not have a prominent role, although they try to persuade employees to enact according to their volition. This study focuses on management responsibilities in the enactment process.

Constructivist Approach to Communication: Constructivism states that communication is a social process of interaction and/or interpretation that gives sense and meaning to social reality, organisational actions, events and organisational roles and processes (Tompkins and Wanca-Thibault, 2001; Putnam *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, the responsibility for effective communication does not lie only in the hands of managers: it is shared among all organizational members. All of them are key communicators. Further, this approach seeks to avoid a focus on information flow. Communication is no longer considered a sending-receiving loop, but is a social, meaning-building process.

Resource Based Theory: The resource-based theory of companies states that competitive advantage stems from the ownership of firm-specific resources (Rumelt, 1984; Barney, 1991),

especially intangible resources (Grant, 1996). Furthermore, the ability to access, use, exchange and combine resources is crucial (Teece and Pisano, 1994). Organizational members' skill and behaviours, as well as social interactions that take place in trust relationship networks, are the milieu for the creation of intangible resources, such as knowledge (Nonaka, 1991; Colbert, 2004; Coleman, 1988 and 1990). This theory argues that organizational communication is relevant to the competitive advantage of the company.

Situational Theory of Publics: The situational theory of publics examines the different attitudes of people toward communication (Grunig, 1978; Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Publics can passively process received information or actively seek, interpret and spread information and then engage in action. Internal publics communicate in an active way when they engage in interpersonal, horizontal and cross-functional communication, seek information from multiple sources, including specialists and the environment, and search for management, job- and task-related information (Grunig and Hunt, 1984).

Situational Theory of Problem Solving: This theory adds to the situational theory of publics three concepts that are relevant for the present study: *megaphoning*, when employees forward and share information about their organization; *scouting,* when employees make voluntary efforts to gather strategic information outside and circulate it internally; and *microboundary spanning*, which is the sum of the previous two concepts (Kim and Grunig, 2011; Kim and Rhee, 2011).

Relationship Marketing: Authors from the marketing and management field have studied active communication behaviours, although they use a different term. Ritter (1999) developed the notion of *networking competence*: the ability of employees to build and maintain relationships with outside people and institutions who can provide knowledge. MacMillan *et al.* (2000) suggest the concept of *active allegiance*: a positive attitude to acting as an advocate of one's own company, the habit of bringing feedback to managers and signalling critical cues. Ritter and MacMillan refer to behavioural *intentions or attitude*. Marketing research has shown that intention is one of the best proxies for actual behaviours.

The literature also demonstrates that the most important variables influencing active communication behaviour include the *quality of relationships* between an organization and its employees, and that in turn depends on *internal communication* (Mazzei, Kim and Dell'Oro, 2012; Kim and Rhee, 2011; Welch and Jackson, 2007; Jo and Smith, 2005). Field studies suggest that two-way communication can improve the quality of relationships and active communication behaviours. This kind of communication is open, looks for feedback, includes listening, gives employees the opportunity to participate in decision making and is accessible (Kim and Rhee, 2011).

Goodman and Hirsh (2010) suggest four core principles for building high-quality relationships with employees: integration of all communication going out to employees and external audiences, sequencing of information sharing between markets and employees and with employees in different time zones should be taken in account, content and medium should be customized to clarify how news impacts the daily work life of employees, communication should be clear, simple and concise, and feedback should be solicited, with or without new media. In any case, seeking feedback should start from the willingness to give answers, to publish the findings honestly and take into account that employees tend to tell managers what they think managers expect.

On the basis of this background, the present study investigates how to enable active communication behaviour among employees by means of internal communication.

Research Design

Research model and questions

The academic background enabled the researchers to develop a model (Figure 1). Employee communicative actions involve referring to and advocating for one's own organization, gathering and circulating strategic information and knowledge, and building cooperative networks inside and outside the organization. Employee strategic communication behavior generates outcomes such as knowledge, networks, reputation, and damage reduction in crisis situation. The literature provides evidence about employee communication behaviors and their outcomes.

The research project focuses on the internal communication strategies for employee enablement. In other words it looks at promoting effective and positive employee communication behaviors. In particular, the research model investigates which strategies, methods, tools, principles and skills, internal communication managers and specialists use in their efforts to make employees effective communicators.

The model also considers some influencing variables: quality of relationships between a company and its employees, country and cultural variables, organizational variables such as size, industry, and specific situations of the company (i.e. crisis, start-up, market trend and HR system adopted by the company).
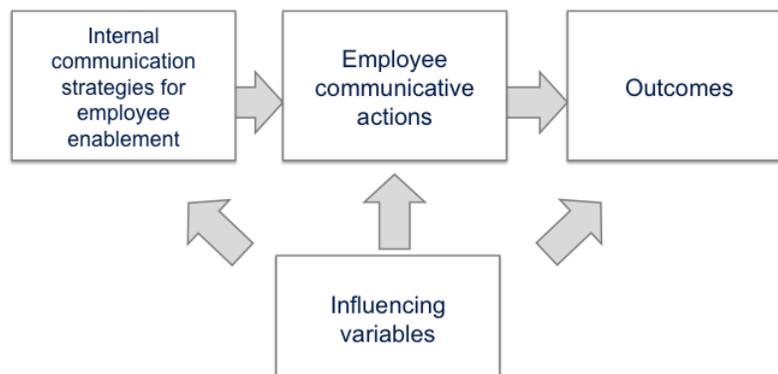
FIGURE 1: The research model

Based on this research model, the study aims to answer three questions:

Q1: Are employee and manager communicative actions a relevant issue? If they are, why are they?
Q2: How can a company enable its employees to implement strategic communication behaviors?
Q3: Can internal communication support employee enablement strategies?

Phases of the program

The study consists of four phases: literature review, interviews with scholars and experts, interviews with internal communication managers in the US and Italy, and focus groups.

The *literature review* consisted of an extensive review of journals and books on active communication behaviors, employee enablement, and the influence of internal communication on

the quality of relationships with employees and employee communication behaviors. Journals and books were chosen from the fields of public relations, corporate communication, organizational behavior and marketing.

The interviews with 8 scholars and internal communication experts aimed to test the relevance of the topics, and to gather insights about methods, companies to study, and topics to consider.

The interviews with American and Italian managers were the main data gathering strategy.

A focus group with internal communication managers and scholars validated the research design. Furthermore, 2 focus groups with the Italian interviewees analyzed and interpreted the main results of the fieldwork phase.

Sample

The research team selected the companies in the study according to three criteria: "best in class" in internal communication, heterogeneity in terms of industry, and large in size. In order to be considered "best in class" in internal communication a company must satisfy two of the five following criteria: 1) have had an institutionalized internal communication function for at least five years; 2) be in the Great Place to Work ranking (or Assorel Award for internal communication in the case of Italian companies) at least three times in the last six years; 3) show continuity of investment in internal communication over the last three years (internal communication budget stable or increasing); 4) have implemented innovative internal communication projects referred to by experts or signalled by other sources; and 5) have a relevant market share (be among the market leaders) in its own industry.

The research team selected the companies with the above mentioned characteristics paying attention to the heterogeneity of the sample of 22 Italian companies belonging to 17 industries and 10 American companies belonging to 10 industries. The heterogeneity makes for a representative sample, avoiding the influence of features typical of few industries.

Nevertheless the study is qualitative and its findings are not valid for all companies in Italy and the US.

Methods

The research is exploratory because there is a lack of knowledge in the literature about strategies for employee enablement. So the aim is to identify strategies, managerial methods, tools, skills and abilities that internal communication managers consider effective for employee enablement based on their direct and personal experience. Further research studies can explore the actual effectiveness of these strategies and their distribution among companies.

Data was gathered by in-depth interviews with internal communication managers and specialists. The interviews were face-to-face in Italy and lasted about 1.5 hours. In the US the interviews were face-to-face in most cases, or by telephone/Skype, and lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. Document analysis was conducted for Italian companies. A focus group with internal communication managers and specialists was used to support the interpretation of findings.

Areas of investigation

- The main aims and activities of internal communication in the companies
- Relevance of the employee enablement issue in the opinion of the interviewee, and reasons for that
- Employees' and managers' communication behaviours that are considered strategic in the company
- Expected benefits for the company stemming from strategic communication behaviours
- Strategies, managerial methods, tools, channels and content, used by the company for promoting strategic communication behaviours

Data Analysis Strategies

The researchers recorded and transcribed all interviews. Then they conducted a qualitative analysis of interview transcripts and grouped the contents according to the significance for the research questions and themes (*relevance*), the number of occurrences (*prevalence*), originality, and the importance of the content. All findings included in the final report were anonymized.

Findings: American Companies[ii]

Aims of Internal Communication

According to the interviewees, internal communication in American companies is traditionally more important than external communication and almost all companies have a dedicated function. One of the more prevalent features emerged from the interviews is that internal communication "is a much more action oriented kind of objective that we're working again to support with communication". Another prevalent feature of internal communication is its connection to company strategy. In the words of interviewees, internal communication aims to "arm with", "have people with", "connect to", "mobilize around", "help implement", and "give sights to corporate strategy".

A further aim of internal communication is to support managers and employees in being external and internal ambassadors: "To empower employees by giving them the information they need to get their job done but also to create brand ambassadors of the company and the corporate brand"; "The CEO invited the transition generation and asked them to be passion's spreaders: they were ambassadors of the message and the behaviours towards their colleagues in our company".

A relevant aim of internal communication is its culture-building and sense-making role: "The most important aim of the internal communication function is the building of a communication culture. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink"; "It was very important to us that people understood the long term road map because it gave context for the bigger decisions"; "At first people were unfamiliar with the new language used by the CEO. When employees began to use it, we knew that they truly internalized the message and in return it had an impact on their behaviors".

Enablement

The concept of enablement is relevant for US companies. One of the companies in the study adopted this term to name its former internal communication function: "We couldn't just push information but we had to enable employees to have conversations in the marketplace, in their communities, with their neighbors. (…) We changed the name of the function and we called it Workforce Enablement. (…) We really move from kind of creating messaging and sort of influencing employees to really enabling employees to act toward communication".

Another company used the term spontaneously during the interview: "We're doing things that are really activating, engaging and enabling employees to be successful, to be committed, to be focused".

All interviewees adopted the term during the interview in order to explain their position better. One of them said: "Enablement is that personal investment of the person: I care about outcome, results, I feel connection to the success of the organization. I can demonstrate empowerment towards active response, in terms of achievement". It comes first: "I see enabling as something that has to come first. Enablement says: 'I give you tools, I enable you', while empowerment says: 'I encourage you to have a voice and to rise up'. I think you can enable someone in order to empower them".

Enablement comes from two drivers: the need to reinforce the brand because "employees have become a very important constituency for us in terms of communication stakeholder", and the spread of social media: "Because of social media, any employees, no matter where they are, they can avail themselves of the tools of communication".

Strategic Communicative Actions

According to interviewees, strategic communicative actions of managers are to adopt an open communication style, to discuss critical issues with employees, to develop leadership languages. On the other hand the most important strategic communicative actions of employees are to be company brand ambassadors, spread messages about company products, to share expertise and information with colleagues, and to communicate openly with leaders.

Strategic Communicative Actions Outcomes

The main outcome when employees are enabled to be strategic communicators is that they actively contribute: "There is a sparks of new ideas and new solutions. It means there's a movement within the organization"; "To get a more skilled sales force that have better conversations with the clients and are more meaningful to their industry"; "Quality and innovation to have an open environment where people can share ideas and hopefully we can perform well and have innovative thinking and creativity"; "People always work better and smarter if they have a sense of mission, if they feel like the individual work they're doing is really helping to achieve a broader goal". Another prevalent outcome is the reputation building effect: "You also are spreading good words about your company in a very, very authentic role, because if I believe in it, I don't need official messages".

A relevant though rarely mentioned effect of enabled employees is to develop flat organizations where people are expected to act with high autonomy and little control.

Enablement Strategies

Enablement philosophy can be summarized in a few words: "To allow people to be reminded that this moment, when you feel like not doing anything, that is the time to take advantage and do something".

There are seven common internal communication strategies for employee enablement. First, to create a communication path: "Creating a path for communication for their group but also to understand that there's a myriad of other communications coming out. People have a broader sense of what kind of communication is going out".

Second, to adopt a full disclosure style: "Respect for communication is the foundation for trust; very transparent communication; promoting two-way communication in terms of get strategies, develop strategies to create avenues for mutual sharing and understanding"

Third, to build trust between managers and employees: "If there's an incredible amount of distrust no amount of effective enablement tools will produce the best outcome. Trust between the employer and the employee is very great".

Fourth, to be managers capable of effective communication: To be a good manager is being a good communicator. We help people in charge to enable better communication among the employees"; "We have to enable managers to have conversations with employees".

Fifth, to build accountability on corporate values: "Employees are held accountable to the values that we have. It's very important that they understand what we stand for. Their behaviors should be modeled after that and they should take responsibility for their actions in the business perspective and also from a values perspective".

Sixth, to state a mutual benefit: "We have three activation pillars for enabling employees: our employees, the society, the future of our business. Those three pillars are really the framework for our communication this year because we know through extended research that these are key concerns and issues that employees have".

And finally to adopt a lot of little practices: "There's no one thing, it's a little bit of this, a little bit of that, it's all of these pieces"; "For me the communication aspect is 50% of motivation. The other aspects that motivate people are paychecks, quality of life, enhancements, and a sense of accomplishment. But it's communication underpinning all that and so it's incredible important. And a company that doesn't invest adequately in communications would feel a result very quickly in terms of moral and lost of productivity".

Findings: Italian Companies

Aims of Internal Communication

Italian interviewees stated that internal communication is relevant for integrating different points of view in their company, for stimulating "the active participation of people in company life and their communication", for managing communication channels and making them effective, for managing external stakeholder relations and for sense-making: "Internal communication in the past was focused on instruments, then on corporate culture. Currently, [it is focused] on the creation of a new reality". And for business: "There is just one way to make more money; thanks to a communication system people decide to invest all their energy in their job/task".

Three threads emerge from the analysis of the aims of internal communication in the view of Italian interviewees. First, internal communication is both an agent for integrating people by means of shared culture and for enacting organizational roles, making employees characters. Second, the role of internal communication in managing the communication system to convey

necessary information is confirmed. Also, the sense-making role of internal communication is needed to give meaning to information. The sense-making role is increasingly important as organizational ambiguity rises (for example during crises), and as a lot of new organizational languages develop, with new technologies and new generations. Third, internal communication plays a crucial role in managing the relationships with stakeholders and the business environment, reinforcing the concept of weak organizational boundaries.

Enablement

According to Italian interviewees, the enablement strategy is "the current concept of internal communication. Internal communication managers and specialists who do not follow this mainstream will become marginal". Enablement is coherent with two drivers: the "need of companies to involve people more" and the "expectations of employees to be part of the company".

Strategic Communicative Actions

Strategic employee communicative actions are "the dream of every internal communication manager". They generate value for the company and must be spontaneous: "Each co-worker should believe in the company values so much that she/he will communicate them as a natural expression".

      The most quoted employee communicative action is to spread the company reputation. Other actions mentioned during the interviews are to be company allies, weigh up rumors, cooperate and share knowledge, and support the business of the company. Interviewees recognized the relevance of employee communicative actions but they were not so ready with examples. Most communicative actions were devoted to the external environment. This is the reason why a further investigation on this point was undertaken in a focus group with the respondents.

      During the focus group a checklist of employee communicative actions based on the findings of the interviews and of a previous study (Mazzei, Dell'Oro, 2011; Mazzei, Kim, Dell'Oro, 2012) was presented to stimulate discussion of a spectrum. The checklist grouped employee communicative actions into four categories: to explore, to interpret, to share, and to act.

      The participants in the focus group (the same people who were interviewed) revealed that the most relevant employee communicative actions in order to explore are active listening, giving feedback, searching for knowledge on company strategies and values, and searching for knowledge relevant for one's own job. Related to the interpretation of events, the most important employee communicative actions are dialogue with managers in case of ambiguous behaviors by the company, giving meaning to events with great accuracy, avoiding arbitrary attribution of meaning. The most important employee communicative actions for sharing are to spread the good company reputation, to share valuable knowledge with colleagues, to share knowledge in a purposeful way, and to spread correct information about the company in case of attacks. Finally, the communication behaviors related to action are to activate relations with external stakeholders beneficial to the company, to activate communication and relationship channels, to suggest business opportunities to managers, and to bring the company to the attention of potential clients.

      The interviewees consider communicative actions of employees very important, although they are not able to describe them in a clear and complete manner. In particular they mention communicative action with external stakeholders while communicative actions directed towards colleagues are rarely mentioned. When asked to indicate the relative importance on a list of

communicative actions they confirm their focus on external behaviors such as reputation advocacy, while increasing their focus on cooperative behaviors with colleagues.

Strategic Communicative Action Outcomes

The most important outcome of employee communicative action is its contribution to company economic performance: "There is a relation between employee involvement, client satisfaction and company performance". The others are involvement and participation in company life, reputation protection, mutual understanding: "People speak the same language".

Interviewees mentioned a limited number of outcomes, some of which may be seen as end results, such as economic performance and reputation protection. Other outcomes which support those final outcomes are participation and mutual understanding. Again, interviewees volunteer few examples, although they are very aware of the theme.

Enablement Strategies

Internal communication strategies devoted to employee enablement relate to three strands: integration with other managerial levers, mutual commitment and new languages. Internal communication in order to enable employees to be strategic communicators is not enough. It should be integrated with other managerial instruments such as human resources management, because "enablement is an internal communication topic only indirectly because it relies on human resources management", and oriented to positive relationship development in order to "allow continuous conversations" based on "synergies with managers".

Mutual commitment is the basis of an agreement between the company and its employees: "If a company expects an employee to behave as a supporter, it must behave coherently". At the same time, in order to promote the strategic communication of employees, "it is necessary to generate their commitment".

To develop new languages in internal communication is another challenge. First, it is necessary to consider all communication sources: "Communication was a pond, today it is an ocean; everybody can get information from many sources". Furthermore, the tone of internal communication "should abandon the adult-child style" and follow the interests of employees instead of imposing an agenda made of topics relevant to the company. And finally companies need open communication: "People activation relies on internal freedom. It is important to give people the opportunity to find information on topics wider than their job".

Discussion and Conclusion

The study described in this paper addresses three questions. The first is about the relevance of the communicative actions of employees and managers, and the reasons for that relevance. Findings from American and Italian companies show that communicative actions are considered to be the basis for company success. According to American interviewees, communicative actions are mostly linked to the implementation of the company strategy, while according to Italian interviewees they are a source of competitive advantage. This study confirms the relevance of the enablement issue for the development of internal communication, following its connection with the concept of employee engagement.

Enabled employees are key actors in organizational knowledge sharing and generating processes, stakeholder engagement and reputation building processes. In this light, internal

communication is no longer a phenomenon related to organizational boundaries. It is an ingredient for the generation of reputation, loyalty, brand, and business opportunity.

The second research question addresses how a company can enable its employees and managers to implement strategic communicative actions. Many strategies emerged. Most interviewees underlined the relevance of strategies based on the integration of multiple levers: human resource management, relationship building practices, managerial communication and internal communication. A key word for effective enablement strategies is mutuality. If the company values employee commitment, then it must show its own commitment as the basis for a mutual deal. American companies stress the importance of enlarged ownership among all employees. Enablement strategies require a proper communication language: openness, based on multiple and free-access sources, and an adult-to-adult tone of voice. Finally, the most effective link between the company strategy and employee communicative actions is managerial communication. Managers are increasingly likely to be key ties in organizational networks, sense-makers and sense-givers.

The third research question deals with the role of internal communication in enabling employees and managers. Internal communication, according to the findings, plays an important role in enabling employees to be strategic communicators. It gives the context of organizational actions, the meaning to events, knowledge, information and motivation.

The findings of this study support the changing role of internal communication as it is transformed into employee and manager enablement in order to enhance the company's competitive advantage.

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Notes

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[ii] Words between quotes are phrases taken from the interviews.

Investor Relations on the Internet

Dialogical Communication Capacities of the Top 100 ISEM (IMKB/Istanbul Stock Exchange Market) Companies for Investor Relations in Turkey

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Investors are one of the most significant stakeholders for private corporations. Investor relations is a relatively new phenomenon, which looks to share information and building relationships with the company's present and potential investors, economic analysts, economics correspondents, the general financial community, and several others. In the last two decades, expansion of the Internet offers private companies a strategic and dynamic tool for communicating and building with these groups. This paper is methodologically based on dialogic communication principles of Kent and Taylor (1998), and examines top 100 ISEM companies' investor relations links in their corporate webpages by operationalizing these principles in terms of identifying the relationships of these companies with their publics. We conclude that, although the Internet serves as a great opportunity for investor relations by creating dialogical communication, companies use it only for sharing limited information that they are legally obligated to.

Investor relations are based on enhancing relationships and sharing information in between the actors that are categorized in a financial community (Marston, 1996: 477; Tench and Yeomans, 2006: 468-470; quoted from Marston and Straker by Dolphin, 2004: 25). Research suggests that the communication established with financial public categories about future strategies and the current situation of the organization has a positive influence on the status of the organization, and that this positive influence will be the marker of both equity market valuation and the future evaluation of the investors (quoted Dolphin, 2004: 27). Therefore, companies today tend to share more information — and higher quality information — with different public categories, especially in investor relations. The Internet plays a significant role in this tendency because it is being widely used as an investor relations tool (Rowbottom et al., 2006: 32). The Internet provides the opportunity to both spread knowledge and, regarding investor relations, to establish two-way communication and mutual relationships.

The Internet plays a crucial role for most organizations, both for non-governmental organizations and government organizations, but if we focus particularly on organizations with shares on sale, the diversifying structure of the public categories increases the significance of the course even more. The Internet's structure, which allows companies to fulfill their needs for relationships and diversifying communications of different public categories, makes it especially more useful than conventional public relations tools regarding investor relations.

Due to these advantages of the Internet, investors have started to use it more frequently, which is interesting to both academics and regulatory bodies. Most of the studies to date analyzing the relationship between investor relations and the Internet bring forward the financial perspective on investor relations and focus on the universalization of financial information through the Internet (Bollen et al., 2006: 274). The contributions of the Internet in promoting relationships are rarely mentioned in these studies.

This study, which is based on Internet-mediated investor relations, places investor relations into the financial public relations context. We analyze the consideration of the dialogical

principles as a theoretical frame developed by Kent and Taylor (1998) in order to guide its continuity and development of the relations between organization and public categories through the Internet. In this study, the dialogical principles developed by Kent and Taylor have been made measurable in order to determine the dialogical capacities of the companies that are traded in the ISEM (IMKB/Istanbul Stock Exchange) in an investor relations context. A total of 25 dialogical characteristics are determined that can identify each of the dialogical principles in a measurable manner. We organized these 25 dialogical characteristics into a questionnaire, and analyzed investor relations links on the main pages of the companies that are traded in the ISEM 100 index on a specific date.

Investor Relations

Investor Relations Society UK, a leading investor relations professional body, describes investor relations as "…the communication of information and insight between a company and the investment community. This process enables a full appreciation of the company's business activities, strategy and prospects and allows the market to make an informed judgment about the fair value and appropriate ownership of a company" (IRS, 2011). Alternatively, United States National Investor Relations Institute, another leading professional institute, describes investor relations as "a strategic management responsibility that integrates finance, communication, marketing and securities law compliance to enable the most effective two-way communication between a company, the financial community, and other constituencies, which ultimately contributes to a company's securities achieving fair valuation" (NIRI, 2011). This study regards investor relations as a preplanned, continuous communication activity aiming not only to communicate with present investors of the organization but also with other financial stakeholders, aiming to establish relationships and maintain their continuity.

The recently elevated status of investor relations originates from sophistication of the world's capital markets: "In a complex business environment increasingly sophisticated information is needed in order to make investment decisions" (Marston, 1996: 479). In addition, the current economic conditions that are the result of widespread market failures and the recession that begin in 2008 have intensified attention to investor relations (Kelly et al., 2010: 184). Due to the tendency to loan, by applying to non-organization sources in order to expand their activities within its resources, financial recognition of companies has become more important to financial stakeholders, and emphasizes the importance given to investor relations.

In Turkey, companies have recently begun to pay closer attention to investor relations due to similar pressures. Current legal regulations require managements to approach investor relations more attentively. In Turkey, legal regulations exist regarding the information that management can share with their financial stakeholders, and a law regulates which financial information must be shared with the public. As required by the regulations of the Capital Markets Board (SPK) and the Istanbul Stock Exchange (ISEM), companies are required to engage in obligatory public disclosures, (monthly notifications, portfolio tables, statements of profit appropriation, merger and demerger, etc.). All information and documents shared with public must be sent to the Public Disclosure Platform (KAP). KAP announces the required notifications that need to be made public through an electronic system (IMKB, 2011). Besides these disclosures, companies share this information through their own company web sites. Furthermore, Turkish Trade Law (numbered 6102 and issued at February 14, 2011) obliges every corporation to build its own website and assign a specific part of the website to the legal announcements of the company: notifications that are important to stakeholders and shareholders; administrative board and preparations of annual meetings and requirements; announcement of documents

required to be shared with shareholders; invitations to these boards and meetings; voting; submission of all information and services considered useful to the information community and obligatory for disclosure to the public;, claims towards gathering or giving information; and all other similar transactions and subjects that proclaim the disclosure of shareholders or stakeholders in this law and the other laws (Türk Ticaret Kanunu, 2011).

Investor Relations as a Public Relations Function

Whether investor relations should be revised in finance or public relations is still open to discussion. Since the beginning, investor relations practices have been divided into two seemingly opposing camps: those who believe that the function is best practiced from a finance orientation versus those who believe that the function is best practiced from a public relations orientation (Kelly et al., 2011: 182).

Those who consider investor relations as public relations take investor relations as a sub-function of public relations. Most textbooks written about public relations, and that effectively edit the information, describes investor relations as one of the study fields of public relations (Haywood, 1997; Theaker, 2008; Lattimore et al., 2004; Cutlip et al., 1984). Grunig and Hunt (1984: 352) describe investor relations as a "hybrid of public relations and corporate finance"; theirs is a fundamental text concerning public relations. Similarly, PRSA — one of the prominent professional bodies in the area — include investor relations as one of the seven sub-functions of public relations, along with media, internal-employee, consumer, community, government, and fundraising-donor relations (Kelly et al., 2010: 185).

Investor relations professionals have a considerable background in finance, even when associated with the responsibilities of the public relations department. (Hong and Ki, 2006: 201). A survey carried out by the National Investor Relations Institute (NIRI) points out that 46% of the professionals working in investor relations have a background in communications and public relations, while 49% have a background in finance and accounting (Penning, 2011: 615).

Investor relations professionals, from either a finance or public relations background, are members of professional investor relations bodies, whose main focus areas are communication activities. The emphasis on communication in investor relations requires an approach focused on public relations for a successful investor relationfunction. Cutlip et al. (1994: 19) have defined investor relations focused on public relations as "the specialized part of corporate public relations that builds and maintains mutually beneficial relationships with shareholders and others in the financial community". For a successful investor relations program, public relations specialists and professionals who specialize in finance should work in jointly. Barmash has suggested that a specialist responsible for investor relations who does not have adequate information regarding communication may encounter difficulties in managing investor relations. Likewise, Grunig and Hunt emphasize that investor relations specialists should have knowledge of public relations as well as corporate finance, law, and economics (quoted by Hon and Ki, 2006: 202).

When investor relations are defined as a function of public relations, it is important to configure a successful investor relations program towards accurate investor stakeholders. Miller (1997) has defined 17 influential financial groups that are important for investor relations. These groups are stock exchange member firms; customers' brokers; branch office managers; members of the security analyst societies and individual analysts; unlisted or over-the-counter dealers; investment bankers; commercial bankers (trust departments); registered investment advisory services; insurance companies and pension funds that buy common stocks; mutual funds and investment trusts; investment counselors; trustees of estates and institutions; financial statistical organizations; investment magazines and financial publications (semiweekly, weekly, biweekly,

semimonthly, monthly, and quarterly); large individual shareholders; debt rating agencies (Standard&Poor's, Moody's); portfolio managers; lender banks; and foreign markets (163-164).

Investor Relations on the Internet

The Internet, especially corporate websites, provides an important channel for the purpose of corporate self-presentation. Websites of organizations are considered to be channels that can be used for improvement of press relations (Callison, 2003), better survey of public, and popularization of organizational information (Sharp, 2001). In addition, corporate websites are especially useful in cases of organizational crisis (Kent and Taylor, 1998; Taylor and Kent, 2007). On the other hand, the Internet is a direct channel that public relations professionals, as in various public categories and other mass communication styles, can use to reach the public directly and to communicate without filtering the messages (Jo and Jung, 2005; White and Raman, 1999).

Developments in Internet technology have provided new perspectives to companies in their relationships with financial actors. Many reasons exist for companies preferring the Internet as a tool to communicate with financial actors. Firstly, the Internet reduces time and costs involved in disseminating financial information. As financial information has found itself a place in organizational websites, financial information has become available to some public categories not previously foreseen by the company. The Internet has resulted in a more extensive display of data. Also, because of the Internet, companies are able to present financial information as soon as the user requests it. Importantly, Internet technologies enable small businesses to reach out to potential investors. They are able to present more financial information, such as company's weekly and monthly sales, via the Internet (FASB, 2000: 1; Ashbough et al., 1999). When investor relations on the Internet is compared to traditional channels, one of its advantages is the capacity to provide specialized information according to particular expectations by selecting specific actors among financial categories.

It is obvious that the Internet provides many opportunities to investors besides information sharing. One of the basic advantages of Internet regarding investor relations is its structure, which makes communication dialogical (or "two-way"). Kent and Taylor (2002: 31) indicate that the Internet is superior among other tools in improving relationships between the organization and public categories by providing a real-time interaction. In order to use the Internet to develop relationships with investor stakeholders, the website of the organization has to be appropriately designed for developing dialogical relations with these public categories (Kent and Taylor, 1998; Kent and Taylor, 2002). In order to explain the capacity of websites for developing relationships, Kent and Taylor (1998) developed dialogical principles based on organizations' abilities to establish open communication with their public through the Internet and to respond to different requirements. In public relations, dialog is placed against the traditional public relations approach, which reduces public categories to a secondary role and transforms them into a tool that is used for organizational objectives or marketing requirements and "increases the public categories to the same level as the organization communicatively" (Botan, 1997: 192).

Method

Selection of Websites
This study aims to understand how ISEM 100 corporations in Turkey manage the investor relations links on their own web pages to create dialogic communication with their financial

public. Among all the items featured on a corporate web site, this study focuses on the investor relations links only. In order to reach the websites, index values under the data tab of the Istanbul Stock Exchange website were used and companies that are traded in index data (IMKB 30, IMKB 50 and IMKB 100) since 2000 were reached. We obtained a list of the 100 companies being traded in ISEM 100 by determining a random date: January 2, 2012 The websites of the 100 companies in this list have been accessed through the electronic system called public disclosure platform (KAP) at which the notices that must be disclosed to the public are delivered by electronic signature and publicly announced according to the capital market and stock exchange regulations.

Dialogical Communication as an Analytical Framework

The dialogical principles suggested by Kent and Taylor (1998) form the analytical framework of this study. These principles can be applied as a theoretical framework for web pages to guide the improvement and sustainability of the relations between an organization and its public categories through the Internet. We used the study of Taylor et al. (2001), which focuses on the use of the Internet in improving relations, as a reference. A questionnaire was prepared according to the categories corresponding to the dialogical principles arranged by 5 dialogical characteristics under 25 titles and all the titles searched the answer to the question "does it exist?". We coded the data that we obtained, entering the value of 1 for yes and 0 for no. Table 1 shows the total of values for yes and their percentage for each dialogical characteristic obtained from the 100 websites that we analyzed. We obtained the mean value of the dialogical principles discussed by dividing the total of answers given to the articles specified below as yes by the number of articles. The dialogic principles developed by Kent and Taylor (1998) comprise dialogic loop, the usefulness of information, the generation of return visits, the intuitiveness/ease of interface, and the rule of conversation of visitors.

Kent and Taylor (1998) state that dialogic loop "allows publics to query organizations and more importantly, it offers organizations the opportunity to respond to questions, concerns and problems" and especially emphasize that simply sharing information is not sufficient for improving relations (326). Regarding investor relations, the principle of dialogic loop plays an important role for companies to establish relations with investor publics because dialogic loop is the basic principle that makes communication a two-way process. This study discusses the dialogic loop as it relates to investor relations by looking at titles for the existence of open channels that will provide the company with an effective approach to investor relations, such as: existence of the contact information of the person for investor relations, existence of the identity of the person to be reached regarding investor relations and existence of his/her position within the company, existence of online support option regarding investor relations, existence of invitations to various activities designed by the company for the investor publics.

The second of the dialogic principles is "the usefulness of information", and even though Kent and Taylor (1998) state that sites should make an effort to include information of general value to all public categories, and when considering investor relations, presentation of information, which pays regard to the expectations of investor publics rather than the expectations of the general public, is of great importance. A company should supply information about various subjects according to the differentiating information needs of investor stakeholders. The study also discusses the principle of " the usefulness of information" regarding investor relations in six different titles as the existence of company information supplied by the company, existence of financial data of the company, existence of information specialized for different investor stakeholders, existence of information regarding general economic situation (e.g. economic

situation of the company where the business is carried out or information about the sector, etc.), existence of corporate publications or presentations, and, finally, existence of information about investor conferences and road shows.

The principle of "the generation of return visits" refers to the characteristics of the website that attract users to visit the page once again. In order for this principle to be measured, we assessed the existence of an up-to-date blog or news forum, whether the website is followed through social media, existence of financial links that are not related to the company, and presence of online tools for the use of investors such as a calculator for stocks or a dictionary for investors.

The fourth principle that Kent and Taylor (1998) emphasize is "the intuitiveness/ease of interface", which refers to the ease of access to the website by visitors. As for investor relations, it is obvious that a website that cannot be easily accessed by investor public categories serves no purpose in establishing relations. The intuitiveness/ease of interface is measured on whether the website regarding investor relations has a configuration that is easy to access, i.e. the Internet page has an English version, keywords are present, and a built-in search engine exists.

The last dialogical principle of Kent and Taylor (1998) is "the rule of conversation of visitors" and concerns strategies that keep visitors on the website. This principle is measured in terms of short download time of the website, notification of last update date, offering downloadable files regarding investor relations, presence of a frequently-asked-questions option regarding investor relations, and opportunities for video cast/webcast and educational articles/videos regarding to investor relations and financial relations.

Findings

It was possible to access the investor relations website of 98 of the 100 companies in the research sample. One of the company websites could not be accessed because it was under construction, and the other company's investor relations link could not be reached through the website. Links on the websites of the organizations to investor relations materials were worded as "investor relations", "investor's corner", "shareholder and investor relations", "specific to the investor", or "investor's platform", for example. This study, which was structured to measure the dialogical capacities of the websites of organizations that trade in ISEM, has shown that the investor relations links of the 100 companies that were analyzed could not fulfill the dialogical principles that were functionalized. As shown in Table 1, the categories are defined respectively according to their mean value as "the intuitiveness/ease of interface" principle (M=56), "the rule of conversation of visitors" principle (M=43), "the usefulness of information" principle (M=22.8), "dialogic loop" principle (M=32), and "the generation of return visits" principle (M=7.7).

Among measureable dialogical principles, the principle of "the intuitiveness/ease of interface" has the highest ratio (M=56). The most important reason is that 98.9 % of the investor relations links had an easy-to-access configuration. This high ratio is not surprising because the companies put their services into practice by purchasing services from professionals that provide website developing services. The second highest value is having an English version of the website. 85.7% of the investor relations links that we analyzed had an English version. Having an English version is an important prerequisite to establish relations with foreign investors in a global market. Another specification, which provides ease of use of investor relations links, is the presence of a search engine or site map. Only 40.8% of the websites that we analyzed in this study had this feature.

The principle of "the rule of conversation of visitors" provides visitors with access to intensive information about the company and to improve their communication with the

organization. Investor stakeholders obviously seek answers to their questions regarding investments. However, the frequently-asked-questions option was present on only 37.7% of the websites. Likewise, regarding investor relations, information provided other than financial data of the company was very limited (5.1%). 97.9% of the websites provided downloadable files: all of these files were PDF files that synthesized financial data about the company. Up-to-date financial information is very important regarding investor relations and the best feature that provides this is the presence of an update date within the website. Only 18.3% of the websites that we analyzed had this feature.

The principle of "the usefulness of information" is important regarding investor relations because investors consider the trading sector and the economic conditions of a country as well as the financial condition of a particular company when making decisions. Investor relations websites provide such a channel, which can be used effectively to share this information. However, the websites analyzed in this study did not use this feature sufficiently. All of the links that we analyzed provided financial information regarding the company because the law forces ISEM companies to share their data with the public. Only a limited number of websites (3%) provided information about the general economic situation of the country or information about the field of business. Likewise, only 38 companies provided corporate publications and presentations. As we already discussed, the investor public has a heterogeneous structure. In order to communicate and establish relations with these different subcategories, the information provided should be differentiated according to the expectations of different public categories. However, only 13 of the links analyzed provided specialized information suitable for the expectations of the different public categories, and all of this specialized information came in the form of press releases published to answer the questions of economy journalists regarding investor relations.

The principle of dialogic loop is important for organization-public relations to develop on a "dialogue" basis. The companies analyzed have a relatively low value (M=32) regarding investor relations. Only 60.2 % of the investor relations websites that we analyzed had an open channel that provided access to the investor relations department of the company, and when we further analyzed the existence of contact information, this value dropped down to 55.1%. Especially in a situation such as investor relations, which is based on trust, it is important for visitors to find the name and the position of the investor relations specialist within the investor relations page that they want to contact via open communication channels. However, only 32 of the websites that we analyzed provided information about the identity and position of the contact person regarding investor relations. For companies to carry out relations with investors that are improved through Internet into daily life, they should establish executional and trust-based relations. In order to achieve this, companies can organize activities regarding investor stakeholders and invite them to participate in these activities through websites. However, only 12 of the websites analyzed in this research provided such invitations.

The lowest average of the websites we analyzed belongs to the "generation of return visits" principle. The highest rate under this title belongs to the links provided that were not related to the company (13.2 %). Besides corporate websites, social media are also effective for investor relations specialists in establishing communication with public categories. The public is able to follow the company through social media continuously; companies can create tailored messages for investor stakeholders and also deal with the answers of investor stakeholders that can be contradictory (Murrell, 2010: 341). However, only six of the analyzed investor relations links had an account in an active social media outlet. Besides the advantages mentioned above, connections managed through social media can lead to users revisiting investor relations links. Likewise, providing online tools such as a stock calculator, interest-loss calculator, or dictionary

for investors can prompt investors to revisit the website. However, only 12.2% of the links provided such online tools.

TABLE 1

	n	%
The intuitiveness/ease of interface (four characteristics, M=56)		
Does the page concerning investor relations have an easy-to-access configuration?	97	98.9
Does the page have an English version for the use of foreign investors?	84	85.7
Does the page offer some keywords that will guide the visitors?	3	3
Is there a search engine on the page?	40	40.8
The rule of conversation of visitors (six characteristics, M=43)		
Does the page download in a short period?	96	97.9
Is the last update date of the page specified?	18	18.3
Does the page offer any downloadable files regarding investor relations?	96	97.9
Is there a FAQ option on the page regarding the investor relations?	37	37.7
Is there a videocast/webcast on the page regarding to investor relations?	6	6.1
Does the page offer any educational articles/videos regarding investor relations?	5	5.1
The usefulness of information (six characteristics, M=42,6)		
Is there general information about the company on the page?	93	94
Is there any financial information about the company on the page?	98	100
Is there any specified information for different public categories?	13	13.2
Is there any information regarding the economic conjuncture of the business environment or the business sector?	3	3
Are there any corporate publications or presentations present on the page?	38	38.7
Is there any information about activities such as investor conferences or roadshows?	11	11.2
Dialogic loop (five characteristics, M=32)		
Are there open channels, which enable users to reach to the investor relations department of the company?	59	60.2
Is there specific contact information regarding the investor relations department of the company?	54	55.1
Is the identity of the person to be reached and his/her position in the company specified regarding investor relations?	32	32.6
Does the page offer an online support option regarding investor relations?	3	3
Does the page offer invitations to various activities designed by the company for the investors?	12	12.2
The generation of return visits (four characteristics, M=7,75)		
Does the company own an up-to-date weblog or a news forum related to investor relations?	0	0
Is it possible to follow the page through social media?	6	6.1
Does the page offer links to other financial websites, which are not related to the company?	13	13.2
Does the page offer online tools such as a dictionary for investors and calculator for stocks?	12	12.2

Conclusion

This research, which is structured to analyze the dialogical capacities of the investor relations pages of the companies that are in the ISEM 100 index in Turkey, suggests that the channel is not used efficiently despite the opportunities that it offers for improving investor relations. Nowadays, the Internet is considered to be one of the most important channels through which organizations can communicate with the public and establish dialog through interaction. Organizational websites provide the opportunity to establish such a dialogue and to interact with the public in real time through the various options that they offer to organizations. Technical considerations for investor relations links — such as having an appropriate configuration for access, being able to download in a short time, and offering downloadable files concerning financial data — can find a place on almost all websites that are subject to research. Other than technical issues, the dialogical characteristic that appears in all of investor relations links is the presence of financial information presented relating to the company in an investor relations context. Current legal regulations mandate that companies share information with investors that is determined by the law. This is why all investor relations websites consistently have this feature. In other words, companies share financial information about themselves not only to increase their dialogical capacity but also to fulfill a legal obligation.

Research data have shown that companies need to increase their dialogical capacities regarding investor relations. For this purpose, it is important firstly to locate investor relations at a distinctly visible point on the website. The researcher, among the websites of the companies that were subject to the research, had to use either the site map or a search engine in order to access several of the investor relations links.

The dialogical loop principle is one of the most important principles to consider because it enables companies to establish a dialog. It is obvious that investor relations links need to be improved to provide opportunities for dialog with investors. Within the investor relations page, the presence of open channels that will provide investor access to the investor relations department is important but not sufficient. Specific information about the identity of the person to be contacted regarding investor relations and his/her position in the company will encourage investors to communicate. Besides this, bringing an online support option into action plays an important role because it gives the process a real mutuality.

Investor relations links ought to be situated independently from other links provided on corporate websites. Visitors that click on the link, without the need to return to the homepage, can reach any information that he/she seeks about investor relations through the investor relations link. Examples of such investor relations links are Turkcell, TAV, and the investor relations page of Koç Company Group.

When compared to the other public categories of companies, investors find themselves among the neediest for information. In order to invest wisely, one should have information about various subjects to make an informed analysis. For this reason, most of the studies in investor relations literature focus on the information presented to the investors. Information presented to the investors is also an important component of dialogical capacity. It is important to provide information to different investor public categories regarding the company and its financial status; however, information is not sufficient in and of itself. Companies will succeed by diversifying investor relations into various subjects, and by styling the information to meet the expectations of differentiating public categories.

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In the Wake of the Deepwater Horizon

BP's Development and Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility As Core Business

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The motivation for this research was to understand why BP's Corporate Social Responsibility program failed so dramatically following the catalyst of the Macondo blowout in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010. The research aims to address the development and evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility as part of core business strategy at BP as a method of facilitating this understanding and developing recommendations for CSR at BP as it endeavors to rebuild its reputation. This research undertakes a thorough literature review as well as contributing unique insights through primary research. The paper particularly recommends the use of blue ocean strategy with a focus on becoming the new energy 'super major' focusing on alternative energy. This suggestion is based on the belief that Bob Dudley is moving the company forward and making the difficult decisions concerning change culture to address stakeholder desire. The paper concludes that CSR will have to become a reality for every company in the long run and if BP focusses on it now they will gain a competitive advantage, regain reputation, and become a sustainable, transparent, and genuine company that will thrive in the future.

Corporate Social Responsibility, (CSR) is a hotly contested and widely discussed concept in the business world. A debate rages over what it means, what it entails, how and if companies should integrate it into doing business. This paper will explore how BP has used the concept in the past and how they should use it in the future in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon Disaster. This in turn will provide a basis for the recommendations for CSR at BP in the future.

The idea of exploring CSR through the lens of BP came as a response to the massive backlash against BP's CSR campaign following the Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent massive oil spill. In light of this several questions arose, such as:

- Was BP's CSR program purely a public relations program?
- Could CSR be used as anything more than public relations for a company engaged in a 'dirty' business?
- Is there impetus for oil companies to commit to CSR?
- Was it wise for BP to engage with CSR so publicly through their rebranding?

This paper explores these questions. Through answering these questions, solutions will be found that should direct how BP, and oil companies more generally, can engage with CSR in a meaningful way.

The paper will proceed by illuminating the current debates surrounding CSR, followed by an in-depth analysis of BP's CSR program past and present. It will then discuss the results of a content analysis of CEO speeches from annual general meetings as a method of validating the secondary research. The paper will conclude with the suggestion that, if oil companies are able to abide by these recommendations, CSR has a future in the industry; if not, it may become a curse.

Before discussing the complexities of incorporating CSR into a particularly controversial industry, a general knowledge of the debate surrounding CSR should be established. This will be the framework, along with primary research used to formulate the recommendations for CSR in the future. There are several academic discourses surrounding the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, the particularly prominent ones being: the definition of CSR, the connection between CSR and reputation, the connection between CSR and profitability, and a final argument that suggests that CSR is inherently bad for business. In the following literature review, each one of these areas will be discussed; and, in each separate conclusion, the salient points for this paper will be emphasized.

Literature Review

Summary of key points from the literature review

Below are the key findings of the literature review. These points will be a useful touchstone in coming to the conclusion as regards the future for CSR at BP.
- CSR should include social, environmental, and economic goals.
- To have positive effects on reputation CSR must be genuine and transparent.
- Reputation for CSR provides the greatest benefit to companies facing the greatest crises, particularly those companies in 'dirty' businesses, such as oil.
- Being a good corporate citizen is no longer a choice, but a cost of doing business,
- BUT consumers will not assume that cost for the business.
- CSR can reduce cost.
- CSR can reduce risk.
- CSR can create competitive advantage.
- CSR must match stakeholder demands.
- Making undeliverable CSR promises is irresponsible.
- To ensure success CSR beneficiaries should receive what they actually need, not what the corporation thinks they need.

Definitional uncertainty surrounding corporate social responsibility

There are many competing definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility created as people have struggled to understand what the concept really means for business. Some trends have emerged in the discussion, for example, the inclusion of social, environmental, and economic goals, the notion of mitigating one's impact, and the idea of sustainability. A further trend is the idea of going above and beyond what companies are legally required to do, for example, Vogel suggests that CSR involves "practices that improve the workplace and benefit society in ways that go above and beyond what companies are legally required to do" (Vogel, 2005, p. 2). This definition is flawed because the law continues to adapt and, therefore, what is classed as CSR now might not be in the future.

Many definitions contain some or all of these aspects. For example, Malcolm McIntosh proposes that "organisations should understand their social and environmental impact, as well as their financial performance" (McIntosh, 2003, p. 27). Other authors stress social goals, but also suggest that because of these, the concept cannot avoid being political. Himmelstein and Windsor are good examples of this saying, respectively, "(CSR) sometimes becomes politicized because it is always inherently a complex social and political act," (Himmelstein, 1997, p. 2) and that,

"Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is, regardless of specific labelling, any concept concerning how managers should handle public policy and social issues" (Windsor, 2006, p. 93).

The UN talks about CSR in their Global Compact, which focuses on ten basic principles regarding human rights, labor, the environment, and corruption. Furthermore, the Rio Declaration stressed sustainability in businesses as a method of dealing with environmental issues; these themes coincide with the trends previously mentioned and strengthen their relevancy in the definition of the concept.

The UK government includes the three essential trends in the following definition: "Corporate Responsibility can be defined as how companies address the social, environmental and economic impacts of their operations and so help to meet our sustainable development goals" (Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills, 2011). After reviewing the literature this seems to be a universally acceptable definition, and should be the point of reference for the meaning of CSR as discussed in this paper. It is also relevant because BP is a British company.

Corporate social responsibility as an aspect of reputation

> A good reputation is an excellent calling card: It opens doors, attracts followers, brings in customers and investors—it commands respect (Fombrum & Van Riel, 2003, p. 4).

Ron Alsop understands this in his book *The Immutable Laws of Corporate Reputation;* and, in fact, as his fifth law he suggests that acting as a model citizen helps develop this great reputation that is so beneficial. He suggests that "it's not a choice anymore; it's part of the cost of doing business in the new millennium." He develops this argument further saying that companies are being judged on new levels, such as the environment and the impact of the societies in which the company operates, concluding that "they need to demonstrate that they have a heart and a soul, especially at a time when the public is so distrustful of corporate America" (Alsop, 2004, p. 70). This means that CSR has become an aspect of reputation, and that the way CSR is used in a company may affect whether that company has a positive or negative reputation in the eyes of the stakeholders. Across the literature there is consensus with the view that reputations attached to CSR matter, and, in fact, the idea has been developed to suggest that they may matter more to some than others. Research has come to the following conclusion: "a reputation for social responsibility provided the greatest benefit to firms facing the greatest crises—those firms in the allegedly environmentally damaging and labor-abusing industries" (Schnietz & Epstein, 2005, p. 341).

These conclusions are poignant for an analysis of BP. CSR is an aspect of reputation, and thus an aspect of a successful company. CSR should have been able to help minimize damage to reputation at BP and ensure future success; it did not. In fact, BP suffered a major blow to its reputation following the Gulf of Mexico disaster. This paper will suggest that this was because of a real lack of authenticity, consistency, and transparency (Fombrum & Van Riel, 2003) of the whole CSR program at BP prior to the spill.

The effects of corporate social responsibility on profitability

Profitability is probably one of the most controversial debates surrounding Corporate Social Responsibility because conclusions about the role CSR plays in profitability are likely to factor highly into implementation decisions.

The argument is between two competing viewpoints; these can be boiled down to whether CSR is a strategy that can be employed to increase profitability, or if it is a distraction that can actually decrease profitability by using money in a way that does not directly increase

returns to shareholders. The first viewpoint is the most commonly accepted with different authors adding caveats to the idea. For example, in his analysis ,Vogel concedes that CSR can lead to greater profitability, but adds that "one reason CSR often appears to pay is not so much because its benefits are so substantial as because its costs have usually been modest" (Vogel, 2005, p. 164). He also suggests that pursuing a strategy of CSR "makes sense for some firms, in some areas, under some circumstances" (2005, p. 3). Other authors have also suggested that the link between CSR and profitability is not as simple as it seems. Carroll and Shabana encapsulate this complexitywhen they say that:

> Mediating variables and situational contingencies affect the impact of CSR on firm financial performance. Therefore, the impact of CSR on firm financial performance is not always favorable. Rather, firms should understand the circumstances of the different CSR activities and pursue those activities that demonstrate a convergence between the firm's economic objectives and the social objectives of society. Only when firms are able to pursue CSR activities with the support of their stakeholders can there be a market for virtue and a business case for CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010, p. 102).

In the same article, the authors also suggest that cost savings and risk reductions have become particularly strong arguments for the business case of CSR. A further development of this business case/increasing profitability argument is that CSR can be a method of positioning for the firm; in this way, CSR is "a valuable and rare resource that can be exploited to create competitive advantages for the firm over its rivals" (Wahba, 2007, p. 96).

A few of the points raised above are particularly salient when analyzing BP's current CSR programs and projecting where they should go in the future. First, CSR may not make sense in some circumstances, and in that case it may have negative implications. Secondly, CSR must have the backing of the stakeholders to produce positive effects. Thirdly, CSR can act as a way of positioning to achieve marketplace advantage. Combining this with what has already been suggested about being genuine and transparent in CSR activities creates a theoretical roadmap for assessing the errors at BP and a way of charting a course for the future.

Corporate social responsibility skeptics

These are the individuals that focus on the emptiness of CSR programs. Their opinions serve as a reminder that CSR is not a panacea to the world's problems and provide a way to think critically and realistically about CSR implementation. For example, Fougere and Solitander suggest that:

> What is irresponsible is not only to (pretend to) believe that corporations can be the main actors in addressing social and environmental challenges only through voluntary action; what is most irresponsible is corporations making undeliverable promises, which will continue to tarnish their image and make them be seen as increasingly untrustworthy, thereby fuelling public cynicism and anti-corporate movements (2009, p. 222).

This view is poignant when analyzing BP; did they make an undeliverable promise?

Another argument found in the skeptic literature concerns the idea that very few people are willing to internalize the externalities of consumption (Vogel, 2005); products and services may come at higher cost and there is some doubt that stakeholders really care about triple bottom line in this case (Henderson, 2001). This will also be important to keep in mind regarding BP, as gas prices are a highly sensitive issue.

A final point of interest raised by the skeptics is that the focus on the 'Corporate' in Corporate Social Responsibility can really be the downfall of some CSR efforts. In his analysis of

oil companies in Africa, Frynas (2005, p. 589) points out that, "in contrast to best development practice advocated by the World Bank or Oxfam, CSR initiatives have often been conceived by the 'helpers' in the air-conditioned offices of oil companies and consultancies rather than through ongoing participation with the beneficiaries. He suggests that oil companies can create a "false development promise" by funding projects that government officials want, as a means to access, rather than what the community they are engaging in, actually needs. Frynas continues by saying that these problems could, to some extent, be overcome through increasingly sophisticated CSR programs, but that the commitment must be there.

Corporate Social Responsibility and BP: A Comprehensive Program?

John Browne's tenure as CEO and the development of CSR at BP

In May 1997, CEO Lord John Browne gave a speech at Stanford University that was to launch BP along a new path, as an innovator in environmental issues. During this speech, he committed his company to five objectives: to reduce their own carbon emissions; to fund research and development to create greater understanding about the issues; to take initiatives for joint development of activities in the developing world in order to reduce carbon emissions in those countries; to develop alternative fuels and energies for the future; and, to contribute to public policy debate in the search for wider global solutions (Browne, 2010). This was conceived by the CEO as both an important response to the emerging scientific research about climate change, and an important strategic matter for the company. In his memoir, he says, "If the needs of society were changing, and we were in the business of meeting that need, we had to change, too. If the scientists were right about climate change being in some way caused by carbon emissions, then our industry was unsustainable in its current form" (Browne, 2010, p. 81). It seems that at its origins the CEO envisaged the environmental aspect of CSR as being an imperative issue central to business.

In his memoir, John Browne also discusses his commitment to ensure that BP was a socially responsible business, suggesting that he worked to encourage diversity, hiring, and promoting in the areas from which BP extracts oil, such as Columbia—something previously unheard of. Furthermore, the company tried to make inroads into corruption in the oil business through creating the "Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, EITI" (Browne, 2010, p. 117) and finally, working with Human Rights Watch to create the impetus for the "Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights" (Browne, 2010, p. 230). He claims that these initiatives were not only the right thing to do, but also good business, and an integral part of strategy. Moreover, he believes that these programs were not initiated as a public relations effort, and that the social initiatives, in particular (for example EITI) did not lend themselves to a public relations campaign. EITI was good business for BP because it reduced corruption and made it easier to do business in countries such as Angola. But it also served a benefit to the society by reducing corruption and creating a path to more sustainable development. This is a good example of how an aspect of BP's CSR could be connected fully to core business.

During John Browne's tenure, BP rebranded itself. The company had undergone massive expansion acquiring Amoco, ARCO, and Burmah Castrol, and needed to reaffirm its identity. In 2000, BP launched 'Beyond Petroleum' along with a yellow and green helios; the rebranding was meant to represent the company's purpose and intention to become "a new type of global energy enterprise" (Browne, 2010, p. 195). There was a mixed response, with some accusing the company of green washing; however, there were also those who saw it as an innovative way to express the forward looking nature of BP's business and their efforts to introduce CSR to the oil

industry. The rebranding was obviously a public relations move. This increased BP's standing within the industry, creating an image of the company as being one that fulfills promises beyond simply extracting oil. For BP at the time this was not meant as an empty PR promise but as an indication that the company "was to be a competitively profitable force for good, which valued top-class safe operational performance, innovation, progress and environmental leadership" (Browne, 2010, p. 194). This signaled a change in core business strategy.

In 2005, in an effort to not only counter the green washing accusations but to also build upon the success of BP Solar, the company announced a commitment to invest $8 billion in alternatives by 2015. This money was to be administered by a new business unit called BP Alternative Energies which would focus on solar, wind, hydrogen, and combined-cycle-gas-turbine (CCGT) power generation. In a press statement John Browne said, "Consistent with our strategy, we are determined to add to the choice of available energies for a world concerned about the environment, and we believe we can do so in a way that will yield robust returns". Furthermore, he commented, "we are focusing our investment in alternatives and renewables on power generation because it accounts for over 40 per cent of man-made greenhouse gas emissions, the biggest single source. It is also the area where technology can be applied most cost-effectively to reduce emissions" (Nicholas, 2005). This suggests that John Browne was considering CSR in a highly strategic manner, focusing on doing good and doing well. In reality CSR may not have been as integrated as it seemed in these business units across the entire company.

Following the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, 'Beyond Petroleum' was again ridiculed; what should have been a reminder of the centrality of CSR to BP's business was stripped of meaning and reduced to the conclusion that BP had failed in integrating CSR into core business, and that it had become a sideshow which benefited the company's public relations. Why and how did it reach this point, after such a promising start for CSR as a business strategy?

John Browne: not only the creator of the corporate social responsibility, but also the arbiter of its demise?

The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico instantly undermined the good work that BP had invested in Corporate Social Responsibility, such as social inclusion. This was because people questioned how a company purporting to be an all-round responsible citizen could make such an irresponsible mistake regarding safety and the environment. This disconnect sparked several investigations, both governmental and independent, into how this event was allowed to happen. The next section will discuss the dominant external argument for why CSR failed, and why massive environmental, social, and economic damage occurred.

Up until 1987 BP was a nationalized oil company. It developed hierarchically and did not have to be competitive; it was an arm of the UK government. The first step in the transition to becoming competitive was made by Robert Horton: he tried to remove layers of hierarchy and streamline the management structure. The real moves toward making BP a viable publicly traded company were made by John Browne when he became CEO in 1995. At this time BP was a medium-sized oil firm with dwindling reserves, and at serious risk of a takeover. This was not John Browne's intended path; instead, he used his Stanford business knowledge to undertake a risky mergers and acquisitions strategy. It worked and BP became an industry super major. This period in the 90s was one of very low oil prices, and Reed and Fitzgerald (2011, p. 31) point out that this "low price environment shaped Browne's outlook, probably for the rest of his career." He made ambitious integration and cost-cutting goals in order to ensure BP's profitability. It is this mentality that may have undermined Browne's CSR strategy.

BP expanded rapidly and cut costs dramatically to ensure profitability. In their merger with Amoco they cleared out most of the executives who knew the business, particularly the refinery business, and failed to provide clear management (Reed & Fitzgerald, 2011). This mistake would be one of the main factors in the Texas City refinery explosion that killed 15 people in 2005. The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found "organizational and safety deficiencies at all levels of the BP Corporation," (OSHA, 2011). Cost cutting and delaying routine maintenance caused this problem. So, while BP was looking to the future with CSR investment in alternative energy, they were not attentive to the present nor the importance of looking after current social and environmental aspects of business.

This was not the only incident to occur that undermined the positioning of BP as a good corporate citizen during John Browne's tenure as CEO. In 2006 there was an oil spill at the Prudhoe Bay facility in Alaska. It was evidently a result of corrosion to the pipes owing to sediment buildup in the pipe. This sediment is usually removed as part of maintenance. BP chose to cut the normal maintenance routine and decided instead to use a solvent to dissolve the sediment. This method was not adequate in the long run; the pipe corroded and oil spilled onto the Alaskan ice (Reed & Fitzgerald, 2011). Highlighted again was the dissonance between the projection of a forward-looking, responsible company and one determined to make profits in the present at any cost.

When John Browne left the company in 2007, Tony Hayward was appointed as his successor. He recognized that "the company was excellent at obtaining access to new oil and gas reserves but fell short in operating its installations and executing its projects"(Reed & Fitzgerald, 2011, p. 144). He wanted to focus on safety, performance, and people. Hayward wanted to change the culture of the company, and make sure that safety was ingrained into management. He implemented the Operational Management System and senior managers attended an "OMS" academy created with MIT to provide training (Reed & Fitzgerald, 2011, p. 144). He had only three years to enact culture change and ultimately it wasn't enough to prevent the accident in the Gulf of Mexico. Reed & Fitzgerald also suggest that Hayward may not have had much impact on the Exploration and Production Division, since they functioned mostly as free agents owing to their high profits. He certainly had not been able to effect necessary changes in terms of safety procedure and best practice, despite the two wake-up calls of the Texas City refinery fire in 2005, and the oil spill at Prudhoe Bay in Alaska in 2006.

Tony Hayward may have been interested in changing the culture to improve safety but he certainly was not interested in focusing on alternative energies—another essential part of CSR for oil companies. In 2009, Vivienne Cox, appointed by John Browne in 2005 to run BP Alternative Energies, retired. It was widely reported that this was in response to the sharp scaling back of investment in the business unit. Previously, investments were running ahead of schedule and were in fact rising fast in 2007-08. In 2008, capital spending on alternatives was $1.4 billion and this number was predicted to be just $500m-$1 billion following the cut-backs. *The Financial Times* also reported that BP was trying to cut costs in the solar business at that time, and was shelving its plans to gain more external investors (Crooks, 2009). This suggests that Tony Hayward lacked foresight and that current performance was his priority. Like John Browne before him, he focused on but one aspect of CSR and was therefore unable to create the benefits of a transparent, genuine CSR program that could have assisted him in dealing with the Gulf of Mexico spill.

That the issues undermining BP's CSR program existed before Tony Hayward's tenure, is made apparent in this analysis. He continued to take a piecemeal approach to CSR and was unable to turn the culture around before the oil spill that would be his death knell, and BP's reputation for CSR.

Corporate social responsibility at BP under Dudley: Integrated and comprehensive?

Robert Dudley was announced as Hayward's replacement on the 27th July 2010; he assumed the role on the 1st October 2010. His challenge will be to build BP's reputation. Recovering reputation is not an easy task, but it is essential that the right thing be done by stakeholders in order to change perceptions. In this case, since stakeholders are demanding that the company becomes a good corporate citizen—this has to be the leading strategy. Furthermore, for this to be successful, it must be genuine and not an empty PR promise. BP has recognized this and made CSR a priority by focusing on the following areas of change:

1. Safety and Operational Risk
BP has "introduced a more powerful safety and operational risk (S&OR) function deploying its representatives to operating businesses to guide and if needed intervene in technical activities." These individuals, though independent of the businesses, are represented on BP's most senior executive team.

2. Risk management
This is also essential to improving safety, a social aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility. BP is reviewing the system to ensure that it only entails simple, consistent, cohesive processes across the entire company. This is an issue of culture and embedding changes in the way employees consider risk daily.

3. Restructuring upstream business
This is part of the process of simplification and ensuring accountability and transparency to senior management.

4. Values and behaviors
BP wants to realign values within the company and states that, "In 2011 we expect to carry out a program to renew employee and contractor awareness of our values and the behaviors everyone in BP needs to exhibit as we work to reset our priorities as a company."

5. Individual performance and reward
This provides real incentives for responsibility and safety.

6. Contractor management
A lot of oil work is done with contractors; these relationships are under review to inform future safety decisions.

7. Technology
BP continues to invest in technology to create a sustainable energy mix for the future. It is also investing in technology to improve the safety of operations.

A theme of safety and minimizing unnecessary risk taking emerges throughout the commitments Bob Dudley has made to change BP. Safety is certainly an aspect of a CSR program for an oil company. If operations are not safe, as they clearly weren't at BP, then social, environmental, and economic problems will arise; and, any CSR attempt will be flawed if efforts are not made to mitigate negative effects. Bob Dudley is attempting to change the culture from a 'cut costs, ask safety questions later' approach to one with safety at its core. Though too early to

determine the success of this strategy change, it seems that the new CEO is having more success than his predecessors creating a model in which CSR is connected to core business.

Alongside these commitments to change found in BP's 2010 Sustainability Review there were also commitments to continue and improve in other areas; this would suggest a future commitment to CSR as a way to rebuild reputation and create a sustainable BP in a low carbon economy. These commitments include (BP, 2011):

1. Ensuring human rights standards.
   This covers employees and communities in which the company operates, and also covers the activities of security companies BP hires in other countries.

2. Meeting the future energy challenge and investing in alternative energy sources.
   - Supporting a range of research and development projects aimed at expanding the future use of solar power.
   - BP has operational wind farms in seven US states and has focused the wind portfolio on these locations because they claim that this makes the most business sense.
   - BP is working to produce biofuels that are low cost, low carbon, and sustainable.

3. Addressing climate change.
   - Assessing the carbon costs of activities.
   - Stressing efficiency in operations.
   - Investing in lower-carbon energy production, such as natural gas.
   - Supporting technology and policy research.
   - Developing efficient fuels and lubricants.
   - Conducting education and outreach.

4. Encouraging socio-economic development.
   - Impact assessments for new projects. Plans are reviewed with a view to avoiding, mitigating, or minimizing the negative impacts, such as economic impacts or noise, odor, and other forms of community disturbance.
   - Sharing technical expertise with national and local governments.
   - Building business skills.
   - Supporting education and other community needs.

In conclusion, despite BP's best intentions, it lost its way when it expanded too rapidly. John Browne's charismatic leadership led the company to great financial success; his ambition led him to want to be the best; and, he perceived Corporate Social Responsibility as part of this. The rapid expansion resulted in his inability to fully control the business, and his desire for continued profits led to cost cutting. These two factors created a culture of unnecessary risk taking in the company that Hayward struggled to change, and ultimately undermined BP's efforts at corporate citizenship. Bob Dudley is striving to change the culture and commit to CSR in a way that creates a sustainable future; on the surface the plans seem comprehensive and linked to core business, but only time and further investigation will tell.

Insights from Primary Research: What Do these Findings Tell Us about CSR and BP

Content analysis

A content analysis approach was used to validate the findings of the literature review regarding the attitude and culture of BP during the tenure of the three most recent CEOs. The content analysis focused on CEO speeches at the AGM from 2007-2011. These specific documents were selected because the literature placed heavy emphasis on executive direction as the determining factor in the creation of a culture problem. The last five years were chosen, since it seemed a manageable sample size, while it also spanned the tenure of the past three CEOs: John Browne, Tony Hayward, and Bob Dudley respectively. After an initial reading, with the secondary research in mind, five different typologies were created; each was designed to span several concepts. The typologies included safety culture, risky frontier culture, performance driven culture, innovative alternative energy culture, and CSR culture. Each of these typologies had several different concepts associated with them, and it was through the concepts that the content was coded using frequencies. Throughout the coding process observations were made about the use of particular concepts alongside the noting of frequencies of use. The results for each typology were compared across the years.

Notable findings from content analysis

1. Safety culture–the culture that was missing
Concepts of safety were ever present in CEO's speeches from 2007-2010; they remained steady at a frequency ranging from 7-11. In 2011, the frequency was at 30 (three times larger than the previous period), and was present in everything Bob Dudley said. In previous years, ideas of safety had had sections of the speech dedicated to them separately. This shows a shift away from the 'lip service' approach, suggesting an effort to change focus, coinciding with the secondary research.

2. Risky frontier culture–an inescapable aspect of the industry
This was part of the culture on which Tony Hayward placed most emphasis. It is also the culture that, combined with the performance culture, is blamed for the significant damage to BP's reputation post April 20th, 2010. Bob Dudley never used the concept 'frontier,' although he does talk about the risk involved in the business. His acknowledgement of risk and expansion of the safety culture will hopefully restore balance between these two concepts

3. Performance driven culture
From the content analysis it appears that Tony Hayward was the CEO who was most concerned with performance; in 2008, he mentioned the concept of 'growth' 11 times throughout his speech. In 2011, Bob Dudley did not avoid discussing performance. Clearly, he doesn't want to move away from a financial performance-driven culture, but there were some new concepts introduced to BP's lexicon that could suggest a move to make this culture more sustainable. For example, the concept of 'compliance' was used 4 times—no other CEO considered such a concept. Bringing the idea of compliance, abiding by rules, and regulations for accountability into the performance typology is a major shift designed to effect a more sustainable culture and to repair reputation.

4. Innovative alternative energy culture

All three CEOs addressed the concept of 'alternative energy' as being necessary. Bob Dudley was the only CEO to discuss the concept in a strategic manner. Instead of being vague and mentioning alternative energies and technological advancements as a side business, he discusses particular alternative energies in detail as part of the future energy mix. This shows an approach that is focused on the long term, and less focused on instant gratification.

5. CSR culture

The content analysis reveals that John Browne was dedicated to the concept of CSR; he commits five paragraphs solely to discussing its benefits. Unfortunately, he also focused on cutting costs and taking risks and was clearly unable to see the contradictions in his beliefs and actions. Tony Hayward does not continue this pattern; in fact, the concepts of sustainability, impact, and trust were not part of his vocabulary in his three years as CEO. Without this, and combined with his heavy focus on the risk and performance culture, it is unsurprising that CSR, safety, and alternative energy culture did not thrive. Bob Dudley displays an invigorated commitment to this culture; concepts surrounding CSR emerge over 20 times in his speech, more than that of any other CEO. This is a distinct shift designed to conform to what the public expects of corporations, repairing reputation and creating a sustainable company for the future.

The content analysis validates the findings of the literature review regarding the role of each CEO in fostering culture at BP that has continually determined the role of CSR. It also provides further evidence to suggest that Bob Dudley is wholly invested in changing the culture. Finally, it clarifies that the environment is conducive to integrating CSR fully into core business.

Recommendations for CSR at BP in the Future

As previously mentioned, Bob Dudley has been making an effort to address some of the failings of CSR at BP. To his credit, these initiatives seem to be moving in the right direction and should be continued with some additions and adaptations. If BP is aiming to be a leader in the oil industry by having CSR issues at its core, it should seek to develop a "blue ocean strategy" (Chan Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). This does not mean it has to abandon oil immediately, but rather, it should focus on becoming the first 'super major' new energy company of the future. This approach is preferable because based on the research it was apparent that respondents felt strongly that CSR should be 'all or nothing'; furthermore, they suggested that doing nothing is not acceptable and that genuine CSR is essential. Due to the very nature of the oil industry, creating sincerity in its CSR programs is challenging; the fundamental basis of their business and its sustainability must be addressed. To achieve this, the company needs substantial motivation and the opportunity of a blue ocean could be the solution. Before implementing a blue ocean strategy, the culture at BP must change; having the right culture is stressed as the basis for this strategy (Chan Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). The next paragraph will discuss recommendations for ensuring that culture change endures. The subsequent paragraph will offer recommendations for finding that blue ocean space enhancing profitability through a CSR mindset.

       Bob Dudley has suggested that he will incentivize the new safety culture. He has also said that he will initiate a company-wide program to re-educate employees about the organization's values and beliefs. These are positive advances in culture change but there are two recommendations that should also be followed.

1. *Create allegiance to values*

BP had a code of conduct prior to the Gulf of Mexico disaster; yet, regardless of reports that several individuals on the rig were uncomfortable with how the drilling was proceeding, no complaints were made (Reed & Fitzgerald, 2011). This may not have been the case if employees felt allegiance to the company code.

Allegiance is created through ownership; therefore, it is recommended that a format similar to the IBM Jam be used to give employees ownership of the revamping of the code of conduct and the values that they want BP to represent. This should take place over a 72-hour period and include all employees globally. Responses should then be used to formulate entirely new or reinvigorated documents, which should undergo a second round of consultation, before being presented in their final format to employees.

2. *Reinvigorate the company's corporate social responsibility program with regard to employees, and advertise this internally.*

Research has shown that "CSR can be an effective way for firms to maintain a positive relationship with their employees" (Kim, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2010, p. 557). BP has an employee matching fund in place, the purpose of which is to enable employees to:

> …choose how [they] play [their] part in ensuring that communities benefit from BP's presence. A maximum of US$5,000 (or equivalent local currency) per calendar year is available to BP employees worldwide. For qualifying activities, an employee decides how to utilize the money across three options—Matching Gifts, Matching Effort and Matching Time. (BP, 2011).

This program should be continued, with the following improvements:

- Give employees a week's 'holiday' to be used solely for CSR purposes.
- Internally advertise this vigorously, by asking employees who undertake volunteer work to produce videos and post them on the intranet.
- Continue the employee matching program, but provide an additional bonus to the best quarterly video or pictorial.
- Undertake roundtable discussion with employees across all levels regarding the future of energy and commitment to being 'green', in an effort to formulate plans for reinvigorating external CSR.

The implementation of this strategy should follow the completion of the previous recommendation and Bob Dudley's training and incentive plan. Research has shown that, "A good structure with respect to salary, benefits, and working conditions aimed at all the employees fosters the development of positive attitudes toward the CSR programs implemented by the company" (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008). Following the appropriate order is essential to success. Finally, all strategies should have the appropriate metrics in place to measure success and identify areas for adaptation and improvement moving forward.

If Bob Dudley combines his plan with these recommendations the culture change at BP should be effective. From this point, it is recommended that he should proceed with a blue ocean strategy that would ensure CSR would not make empty PR promises but rather strive to provide sustainability, profitability, and a better reputation in the future.

BP is committed to alternative energies and technology, but these assurances do not go deep enough to capture the blue ocean. To achieve this, BP needs to shift its focus from numbers to the bigger picture; it is with this in mind that the following recommendations should be considered:

1. Invest more in alternative sustainable energies.
This should be prioritized and treated as 'the' business for investment and innovation. The downstream refinery business in the US was sold following the Gulf of Mexico disaster; this made financial savings that should be used to enhance and develop what could be a distinguishing factor for BP.

The 'bet the company' mentality of the oil industry takes big risks for high financial gain. The strategy of investing heavily in new technology in the alternative energy field—be it in the means of creating energy, the delivery infrastructure or new appliances that harness this energy— is certainly financially risky. Those who first create these technologies, however, have the potential to make considerable gains. Apple, with its iPad and iPhone, entered the blue ocean and continues to be a leader in its field. BP should take the risk and be the innovator in its field.

2. Create a timeline showing its commitment to alternative energies and creating sustainability in its current oil extraction business.
This shows BP's commitment to the long term and offers a way in which it can be held accountable for its progress in this aspect of CSR. Accountability and transparency engender trust and belief, which, in turn, improve reputation. This timeline should be widely circulated, internally and externally. It should be on the company website, and if targets are not met a detailed explanation should be given and the target readjusted.

3. Transparency in reporting
Currently, the sustainability report is vague in its descriptions of CSR activities. It mentions certain initiatives and certain successes. Its lack of thorough measurement gives the impression of empty rhetoric. Following the style of an annual report could remedy this. There should be financial information about budgets and spending in CSR. There should also be an opportunity to learn about the details of the company's CSR endeavors; each project should have metrics detailed in the report through which it is measured for success. Additionally, the report should not only include successes but also failures, removing the focus from the glossy cause that lent itself to the PR effort and creating a vision of the program as an integrated whole. Finally, the report should be audited by external specialists in CSR who are granted access to the company throughout the year at appropriate times.

4. Transparency in actions
The sustainability report should not be the sole aspect that external specialists consider. A third party should inspect all aspects of BP's global operations to ensure that it is abiding by an appropriate set of standards regarding safety, the environment, and human rights. This third party should be encouraged to write a report of their findings, available to anyone outside the company. Finally, they should liaise with the Board of Directors to ensure transparency.

5. Use CSR for PR with due consideration
The research highlighted the fact that CSR has become part of the zeitgeist. Combined with the current lack of trust in corporations this means that people are quick to criticize when it appears that false promises have been made. BP's sponsorship of a new series of advertisements for the Gulf's tourist industry has been a good example of how to use CSR in a way that benefits PR, but which also helps the Gulf states—the target of the CSR effort. BP should continue to use methods similar to this which are more balanced in their relation to PR and CSR goals. Finally, it is important to remember that the primary research revealed that many people desire CSR, yet are reluctant to make compromises to achieve it. To use CSR appropriately for PR goals there should

be a way to involve stakeholders so they feel they can make a difference without being disadvantaged. A perfect example of this is the 'Ariel turn to 30' campaign, created in 2006, when Proctor and Gamble launched a new washing powder that would wash as effectively at 30 degrees as it would at higher temperatures. In association with the Energy Savings Trust, who validated their energy efficiency claims, they were able to increase the number of consumers washing clothes at 30 degrees from just 2% in 2002 to 17% in 2007. They have also been able to capitalize on market share and enhanced brand recognition (Business in the Community, 2008). BP should consider how they could create a campaign based on a similar idea for their focus on alternative energies.

Conclusion

Following these recommendations is entirely within BP's reach. If it chooses to follow this path, it will be able to use CSR as part of its core business to distinguish itself from its competitors. On the other hand, if it continues to make empty promises, it will never recover its reputation. This should be motivation for BP to undertake the suggested recommendations, but it may still ignore them. BP may choose to ignore these suggestions because they are in a unique business. Everyone needs oil in one form or another, and it has become a necessity similar to food; in fact, most would probably be less discriminatory with oil than food, you don't ingest your gasoline. In the current environment this means that even if BP has a bad reputation people will still buy its product, provided it is competitively priced. This will change as culture continues to develop environmental awareness and BP will ultimately have to react to changes in ethos, stronger regulation of energy, and a declining supply of the resource that fuels their profitability. It is for these reasons that CSR will need to eventually become a part of the core business for oil companies, as in this stage of transition stakeholders already demand CSR and act upon it. The question then is whether Bob Dudley has the insight, and the will, to steer his company proactively into a sustainable future. Or does he, despite all he says, have a short-term, profit-driven objective? The research conducted for this paper indicates that he is ready to change BP and create a sustainable future, and it seems likely that he would be open to recommendations. There is certainly hope of BP becoming an authentic, transparent, responsible, and profitable company, but only time will really tell.

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Just-in-Time Research

An International Comparison of Media Coverage of Internet Corporation for Assigning Names and Numbers (ICANN) Control and Change Issues

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Purpose: Framing and central resonance analysis offer a model for generating reliable solutions to the challenge of managing multiple information streams and strategic communication.

Design: I focus on control and change issues related to international media coverage of ICANN. CRA (centering resonance analysis) software processed natural language and generated neural network models. Factor analysis identified relationships among main themes and chronological developments in media coverage of the topic.

Findings: News media employed various frames to represent ICANN in terms of control and change. Some variation of the main themes appeared in every newspaper but bore clear local markers in the form of specific choices for including players and events.

Practical implications: Identifying local and international concerns in media coverage of stakeholder dialogue is a continuously negotiated process. News coverage accurately reflected ICANN's goals and role. However, non-U.S. media accepted as often as they contested ICANN's ability and authority to exert control and effect change around the world.

Originality/value: This paper provides a working model that can be adapted for working with increasing amounts of information about a company and coverage in multiple media markets and outlets.

Keywords: ICANN, International media discourse, Corporate communication, Reputation management, Centering resonance analysis, Framing analysis

Paper type: Applied research paper

This study attempts to bridge the gap between public discourse and technical conversations about the role and mission of the Internet Corporation for Assigning Names and Numbers (ICANN), with a specific focus on media coverage of information control and policy changes. This model of analysis can be applied by any other business entity interested in benchmarking cross-platform communication by comparing corporate-issued information against coverage in traditional and social media. Of particular interest was ICANN presence in international media around two critical times in the life of the organization: 1999-2001, corresponding with its establishment in the international arena, after taking over the function of IANA, the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority; and 2009-2011, when the campaign for new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) was launched. ICANN expects many of the new gTLDs to go online in 2013.

Like any other corporation, for profit or not, ICANN appears to own several identities. According to the organization's website, the role of ICANN is to coordinate Domain Name System (DNS), Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, space allocation, protocol identifier assignment,

generic (gTLD) and country code (ccTLD) Top-Level Domain name system management, and root server system management functions. It aspires to generate "names and numbers policies" in a "bottom-up, consensus-driven, multi-stakeholder model." [i] Its value proposition, brand identity, and advertising concepts target current non-web users and web-savvy users to promote increased awareness of and business associated with Top Level Domains (TLD) and new generic top level domains (gTLD) registrations. The first research question assesses the degree to which news media reflect the mission and roles of ICANN accurately.

Due to exposure to a variety of news sources, individual and corporate internet users may perceive ICANN as a US government entity acting as a worldwide Internet gatekeeper; an organization focused on maintaining a web environment where intellectual property rights can be promoted and protected across a variety of legal systems; or, in a more abstract way, the very platform where multi-stakeholder participation in the global Internet governance battles are won and lost on a daily basis. Inevitably, media portrayal and consumer perceptions of ICANN will vary widely around the world, according to the delicate and ever-changing balance between local and global priorities. While covering the increasingly complex social, ethical, technical, and legal issues related to ICANN and the Internet, journalists will strive to write professional articles that connect with their specific audiences. In the process they will help or contest the legitimacy of organizations and individuals, lend credence to some initiatives, and ignore or criticize others, thus complicating the image of an organization with international outreach. The second research question will compare media representations of ICANN in U.S. and non-U.S. newspapers to analyze the combination of local stories and global topics.

Framing analysis and centering resonance analysis (CRA) offer the ideal combination for a just-in-time research approach to media coverage of ICANN in terms of control and change in Internet policy and corporate communication. This type of analysis would be a strong component of the strategic research performed by reputation management teams at global companies interested in launching or steering media campaigns in a particular location or targeting particular audiences.

Framing and News Coverage

Among the many definitions available for framing, they are recurrently described as cultural structures that represent the result of socially negotiated central ideas and peripheral concepts (Crossley, 2002; Ghanem, 1997; Goffman 1974). This is particularly meaningful in corporate communication, where sense-making involves a combination of individual and social processes triggered by messages sponsored by various stakeholders. In the information age, proponents and opponents of major issues can, in theory, access the same sets of data and arguments. The outcome of any debate is therefore judged by stakeholders' ability to activate specific media resources and gain public support (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). News frames, in turn, can trigger different interpretations with key audiences (Kinder, 1987; Reese, 2001) and further augment public debates.

As of the end of 2010, more Americans accessed news online than in print, and relied on critical mass gained from cross-platform coverage to seek exposure to top stories about their community (Rosenstiel, Mitchell, Purcell, & Rainie, 2011). Consequently, the ability to focus news stories on key themes and terms most likely to resonate with target audiences is now of critical importance, since users search for news by key words and phrases. While researchers disagree on frames' ability to actually alter the perceived reality of an issue or a problem, they often use frames to analyze the ways in which individuals make sense of their surrounding environments (Entman, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Iyengar, 1991). Framing analysis enables researchers

to gain and analyze snap-shot and trend views of large amounts of information, while offering substantial flexibility in terms of types of data and methods for data processing.

Recent studies used framing analysis for key scientific and political issues in textual news, in conjunction with discursive analysis, to answer complex questions about cross-platform communication and to examine the role of cinematic creations in shaping media coverage of the drug policy debate (Schulte, 2012). In a study focused on the framing of climate change controversies in French mass media Aykut, Comby, and Guillernot (2012) combined the sociology of public problems, media sociology, and science and technology studies to determine patterns in the life cycle of public debates. Other studies used framing in combination with content analysis to address structural bias in cross-national perspectives in government dominance of news coverage (van Dalen, 2012) or to assess the effect of news coverage on the public salience of issue interpretations in referendum campaigns (Wettstein, 2012). For visual data, Corrigal-Brown and Wilkes (2012) employed framing analysis to research the extent to which newspaper photographs promote certain paradigms and polarize public discourse in social movement campaigns. Similarly, Neumann and Fahmy (2012) studied news photographs to analyze framing in the 2009 visual coverage of the Sri Lankan Civil War in Western newswires. Framing, content, and eye-tracking data analysis were used to assess the relationship between photographic framing and participant perception of key messages in the stem cell debate (Dahmen, 2012). Unobtrusive observation of web-recorded data was used to compare framing of self-reported and media-reported usage of hallucinogenic sage (Casselman & Heinrich, 2011).

Previously published research about ICANN introduced issues such as multi-stakeholder participation in global Internet governance (Cogburn, Mueller, McKnight, Klein, & Mathiason, 2005) and its social and political consequences for developed and developing countries (Baird, 2002); as well as its role as a gatekeeper in the development of new technologies (Blue, 2004) and the ability of the Universal Dispute Resolution Protocol (UDRP) and other international agreements to protect property rights across a variety of legal systems (Alramahi, 2010; Armon, 2003; Dieguez, 2008; Honeycutt, 2008). The inherently technical aspects of the Internet, such as issuance, operation, and administration of domain names, Internet protocol numbers, root servers, and technical standards become deeply politicized issues when governments, business, and netizens debate the extent of rights and responsibilities in the virtual sphere. Traditional media serve both as platforms for message dissemination and augmentation devices that attempt to steer public opinion into idea partisanship.

Mission vs. Vision in News Media Coverage of ICANN

The dataset included 351 articles published in those English-language major newspapers with the largest numbers of stories covering ICANN. Articles were retrieved from LexisNexis Academic with a simple search for "ICANN" between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 2001 for the first period, corresponding to the establishment and launch of ICANN; and between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2011 for the second period, corresponding to the launching campaign for new generic top-level domains. *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The New Zealand Herald, The Australian*, and *The Globe and Mail (Canada)* are known as "newspapers of record," serving large in the U.S., New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, respectively. In addition to their substantial paper circulation, all of these newspapers are accessed virtually by large audiences around the world (see Table 1 for a summary description of the dataset).

TABLE 1: Number of Articles in Dataset

Source	1999-2001	2009-2011
The Australian	84	28
The New York Times	74	17
The Globe and Mail (Canada)	49	6
The Washington Post	37	12
The New Zealand Herald	15	29

For an organization situated at the center of all processes and issues related to Internet policies that influence the ability of both individual and organizational entities to operate online, the Internet Corporation for Assigning Names and Numbers often bridges and at the same time augments the gap between technical and lay communication. As a first observation, it is worth noting that, despite the fact that ICANN's role now impacts ten times the number of individual and business Internet users it did between January 1, 1999 through December 31, 2001, and in a manner infinitely more complex, media coverage for January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2011 decreased dramatically in four of the five publications included in this study, with the notable exception of the *New Zealand Herald*, where it doubled. Another interesting aspect for corporate reputation management refers to organizational name integrity in media coverage. To maintain uniformity in text coding, at least seven combinations of names used to designate ICANN were searched for and replaced in every set of articles. At one extreme, Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail* usually referred to ICANN only by its acronym; at the other, *The Australian* and *The New Zealand Herald* were incredibly creative in terms of spelling out ICANN's full name, using anything from International Corporation for Assigned Names, to various combinations of Internet, international, corporation, corp., company, assigned, assigning, names, and numbers.

Media coverage was analyzed using centering resonance analysis (CRA). This computer-assisted text analysis approach identifies nouns or noun phrases that, if linked consistently and frequently, form a network of semantic meaning and help identify fundamental representations of stories, themes, and patterns in the dataset (Corman, Kuhn, McPhee & Dooley, 2002). In the case of news media, CRA revealed the words, concepts, and phrases most influential in structuring meaning. Word similarity or resonance measures the extent to which stakeholders consistently use the same technical terms, ideas, or phrases to communicate about a particular topic. Thematic categories measure the degree to which groups of words or phrases generate similar links in two or more bodies of text. This terminology is entirely consistent with framing analysis and allows the researcher to identify main themes in media coverage, in order to determine various roles and representations in media coverage of ICANN.

The international media context offered a variety of combinations in terms of frames used for covering ICANN's activity and agenda. For this step of the analysis, all articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were combined to generate a U.S. media file. Similarly, all articles from *The New Zealand Herald, The Globe and Mail Canada,* and *The Australian* were combined to generate a non-U.S. media file. The two resulting files were compared to assess the degree to which ICANN's mission is reflected in media coverage in the U.S. and non-U.S. newspapers.

It was reassuring to see that the central idea in both files is of ICANN as an entity focused on the management of *Internet names* and *addresses*, *dispute resolution* for conflicts over e-property, as well as *new top-level domain names* (Figure 1). ICANN is almost always referred to in terms of its connection with *Washington* and the U.S. *Commerce Department*.
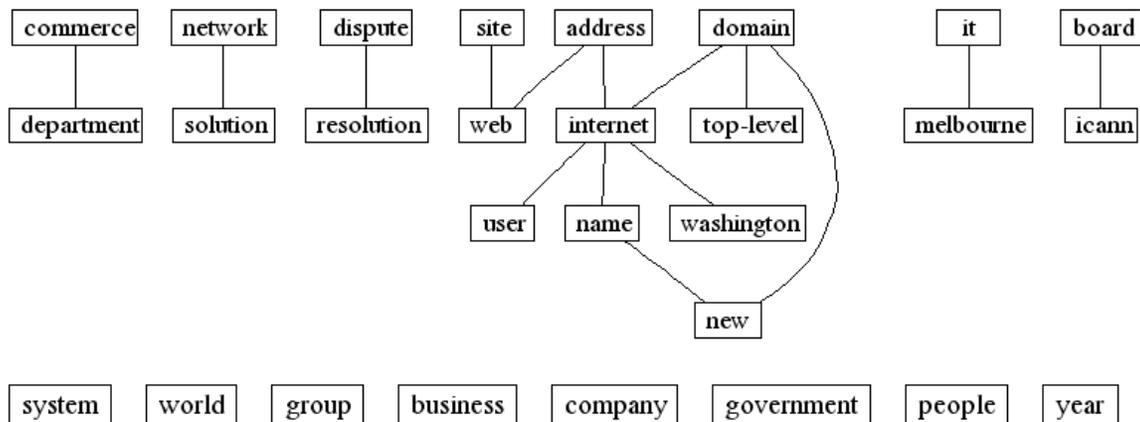
FIGURE 1. Aggregated media coverage of ICANN in U.S. and Non-U.S. Newspapers

ICANN voices are mostly recruited from the *Board* of Directors. The *companies* most frequently mentioned are two of the five major domain registrars, *Network Solution Inc*. and *Melbourne IT*, both involved in prolonged public controversies. It would thus appear that, by and large, ICANN has been very successful in managing its communication with the media, in ways that facilitated true representations of its mission and role in the world. The next step in this study was to analyze the dataset and identify the main themes in news coverage of ICANN, followed by a comparison of U.S. and non-U.S. coverage.

Main Themes in News Coverage of ICANN

Overall, four dominant themes appeared throughout the data set, with substantial variation in frequency and framing across newspapers and even between the first and the second period: (1) ICANN Control and Change; (2) Expansion of Internet Domain Names, with two sub-themes (Non-Latin Domain Names and the Porn Domain .xxx); (3) Internet Property; and (4) Cybercrime and Cybersecurity.

TABLE 2: Main Themes in News Coverage of ICANN

Dominant Themes	AU	GMC	NZH	NYT	WP	Total
Control & Change	54	12	4	44	20	131
Expansion of DNS*	17	11	9	16	11	64
* Porn (.xxx) Domain	0	1	7	0	2	10
* Non-Latin Domains	19	1	13	10	3	46
Internet Property	13	24	7	15	9	68
Cybersecurity	9	6	4	6	4	29
Total	**112**	**55**	**44**	**91**	**49**	**351**

Notes: The five newspapers are *The Australian* (AU), *Globe and Mail Canada* (GMC), *The New Zealand Herald* (NZH)*, The New York Times* (NYT), and *The Washington Post* (WP)

As Table 2 indicates, Control and Change was the most important theme in this study, dominating over one-third of all the articles in this dataset. In addition, half of all the articles in *The Australian* and *The New York Times* datasets were written with a primary focus on control and change. Stories followed changes in ICANN leadership, the process of generating Internet

policy and regulation, and managing Internet domain registrars. The main companies portrayed in these stories were Internet domain operators Network Solutions Inc. (more frequently in U.S. newspapers than in non-U.S. newspapers) and Melboune IT (only in *The Australian*), during their conflicts with ICANN. Over 80 percent of the control and change stories were published in the first period (1999-2001), when ICANN swiftly and assertively implemented steps to establish its authority over Internet operators and operations in every region. The more recent stories under this theme (2009-2011) continued to follow changes in ICANN leadership and generally reflected the bottom-up approach to Internet governance, since the US-management structure was replaced in 2009 with a more inclusive model where government-selected review teams collaborate on internet governance and accountability.

The second dominant theme focused on the Expansion of the Domain Names System (DNS). Between stories about the technical and logistical details associated with launching various generic Top-Level Domain names (gTLDs like .tv, .biz, .music, and .travel), Top-Level Domains (TLDs like .nyc, .nike and .redbull), and the non-English domain names (primarily Chinese, Arabic, and Russian), this theme included one-third of all the articles in this study. Web domain expansion elicited a variety of concerns, from the rapidly exhausting availability of Internet numbers in IPv4 (Internet Protocol version 4, including 32-bit IP addresses) and thus the need to transition to IPv6 (128-bit addresses), to the challenge of ensuring interoperability between IPv4 and IPv6 – a concern that holds back its worldwide deployment, despite wide adoption in the Asia-Pacific and some European countries. The key terms used to describe this dilemma were *chaos*, *risk*, *big change, major change, great opportunity,* and *imperative*.

Expansion of the DNS was the first dominant theme to carry heavily into the second period, due primarily to the emergence of non-English domain names (a major issue in *The Australian, The New Zealand Herald,* and *The New York Times*); and the debate over .xxx or the porn domain (present almost exclusively in *The New Zealand Herald*). Domain names in non-Latin alphabets constituted more than half of the DNS theme and articles were found predominantly in *The Australian* – obviously a major local interest, since the Australian Domain Authority (auDA) was the first operator to offer multilingual domain service. Other topics covered under this theme included the explosion of country code domain suffixes and a combination of opportunities and hopes for local governments to develop competitive markets through the increased demand for Internet infrastructure, tempered by the risk of increased numbers of cases of government-sanctioned censorship and monopolies.

For some reason, *The New Zealand Herald* was the only newspaper in our dataset to dedicate substantial coverage to the launch of the .xxx (porn) gLTD. This new domain name was seen both as a solution, by making it easy to block porn sites so they could not be accessed by children or in inappropriate locations, like schools or offices (even though the filter is relatively harmless, as a site can be accessed by typing in the numerical address); and a risk, because Internet users may perceive the creation of this virtual red-light district as a government endorsing of the adult entertainment industry, while at the same time governments could black-list all porn sites and block access for everyone. In an unexpected chain reaction, one of the two related articles in *The Washington Post* reports that schools bought tens of thousands of .xxx domains (like KUgirls.xxx and KUnurses.xxx) to prevent the adult entertainment business from using them.

The third most important theme was Internet Property, and again it was preponderantly present in the first period, when conflicts over domain names with high commercial value needed arbitration at the World Intellectual Property Organization and cybersquatting was the e-equivalent of real estate speculation. Several high-profile cases followed a David vs. Golliath format, with the victory sometimes going to the little man, such as in the case of Canadian writer

Kenneth Harvey, who successfully defended his right to keep wallmartsucks.com. One of the more interesting developments in this theme included stories about companies attempting to block the name games by acquiring hundreds of domain names that could have been used for badmouthing them online. Such an attempt backfired when Verizon's legal team inadvertently sent an intimidating letter to the owners of the website verizonreallysucks.com. The website owners, hacker magazine 2600, was threatened with a lawsuit on grounds of trademark infringement violating the Anticybersquatting Consumer Protection Act. However, 2600 decided to turn the inactive domain to the Communication Workers of America, where it was used to document CWA's strike against Verizon. In the second period, Internet Property dominated only three newspaper articles, all of them in *The Australian*, and focused more on the branding campaigns about to begin with the advent of the new top-level domains.

Finally, the theme of Cybercrime and Cybersecurity dominated fewer than ten percent of the articles in this study, which were almost evenly distributed between the first and the second period. While coverage in the first period focused on ICANN and government-led initiatives to fight hacking and spamming, the second period profiled examples of hackers recruited to help lawmakers and government representatives make the Internet a safer place for consumer and official information. At the same time, more recent news reports included stories about international negotiations to establish collaborative frameworks to provide cybersecurity.

For the final step of this study, news coverage was analyzed in terms of similarities and differences between U.S. and non-U.S. newspapers.

Framing Global and Local News about Change and Control

When the focus of analysis moves to investigating the types of key events, referenced sources, and major issues, the differences between U.S. and non-U.S. media representations are remarkable. The overall approach of media coverage in the U.S. has a decidedly technical and business flavor, punctuated by principle-based disputes among authoritative figures attempting to influence the formation and change of Internet policies. Outside the U.S., however, Internet policies and control are presented in stories focused on disagreements between various stakeholders.

Unique word centers for the U.S. media coverage (Figure 2) focused on the technical aspects of ICANN's activity (*address registration*, ICANN as a *non-profit* organization), usually recruiting sources from among senior leadership at ICANN and Network Solution (Mr. Michael *Roberts*, former ICANN president; Jim *Rutt*, CEO, Network Solution Inc.) and other various chief marketing officers and senior vice presidents. Mr. Joichi Ito was prominently featured in a story at the time he was named director of M.I.T.'s Media Laboratory, a highly innovative organization whose products were incorporated in today's mainstream applications. Very little attention focused on global concerns, and almost exclusively on the issue of launching domain names in non-Latin alphabets. Furthermore, while acknowledging the fact that English-language dominance in the world of Internet domains stemmed simply from the Internet's origin in the U.S., journalists at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* usually had little appreciation for the need to develop domain registries in local languages. In terms of other countries considered major players in the Internet debates, U.S. newspapers singled out China (*Chinese name*) and Russia (*Cyrillic* alphabet), stressing instead the value of maintaining the integrity of the Internet domain systems.
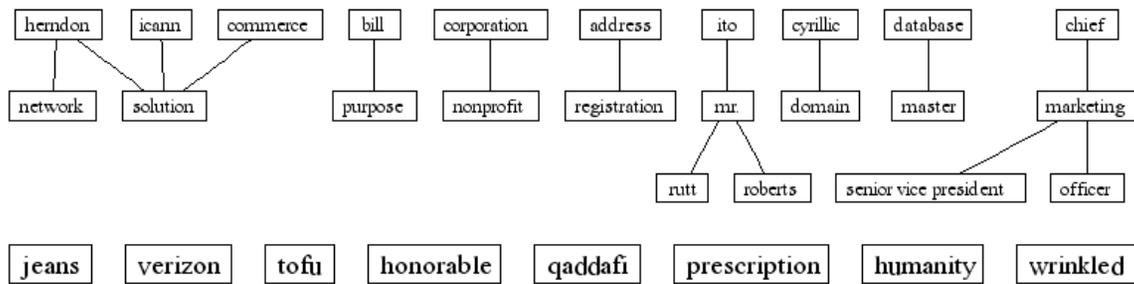
FIGURE 2: Unique Words for U.S. Coverage

Outside the U.S., newspaper coverage was under the stronger influence of local events and players (Figure 3). In *The Australian,* for example, ICANN coverage revolved around major dispute resolutions (like *Telstra* and the Australian government) and the activity of the Australian Domain Authority (*auDA*). Many stories focused on Australian ICANN directors Paul Twomey and Gregg Crew, as well as ICANN representative Robert Elz; this particular newspaper also had numerous stories on the emergence of domain names in non-Latin alphabets. Canadian newspaper *Globe and Mail* focused on the *Canada* Internet Registration Authority (*CIRA*) and its work to develop a *Canada* Dispute Resolution Protocol, modeled on ICANN's Universal Dispute Resolution Protocol (URDP). The US origins of ICANN are acknowledged in key references to the non-profit organization and its ties to the US government.
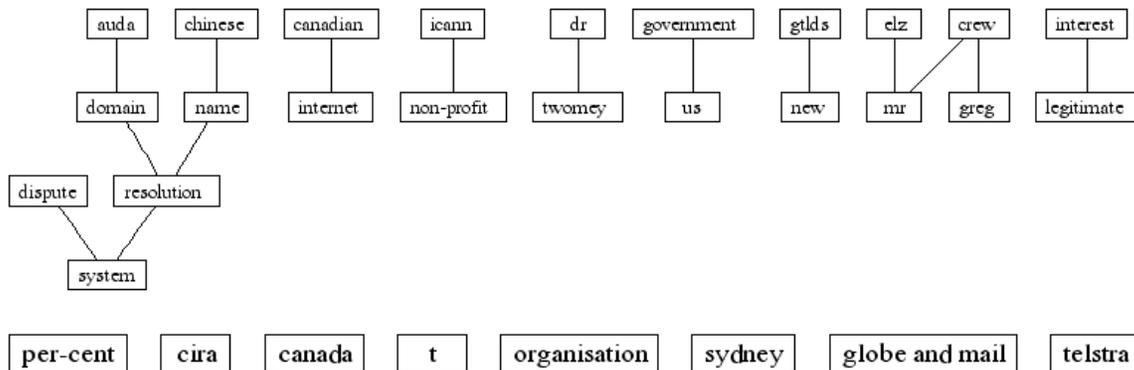
FIGURE 3: Unique Words for Non-U.S. Coverage

Conclusions and Implications

The goal of this study was to offer a model for generating reliable solutions to the challenge of managing multiple information streams. The first research question assessed the degree to which news media coverage provided an accurate reflection of ICANN's mission and roles. The analysis showed that each of the five newspapers portrayed ICANN as a non-profit organization who manages Internet names and addresses, serves as an arbiter for dispute resolutions in conflicts over Internet domains, and supervises the launching of new top-level domains. Furthermore, ICANN is almost always connected to Washington and other governmental or international organizations and agencies.

The study consequently employed centering resonance analysis to highlight clusters of articles organized around dominant themes: (1) Control and Change, (2) Expansion of the Domain Name System, (3) Internet Property, and (4) Cybercrime and Cybersecurity. The most frequent theme included stories about ICANN change and control in dispute resolution policies, organizational leadership, and the managing of DNS operators. The second theme focused on the expansion of the DNS, as well as technical and logistical challenges associated with the transition to the IPv6 and the new top-level domains. The theme of Internet Property primarily included news stories about conflicts among various players vying for control of domain names with high or potential market value. Finally, the theme of cybercrime and cybersecurity focused on top-down and bottom-up approaches to generate and maintain internet safety for consumers, companies, and governments around the world.

Comparing U.S. and non-U.S. media coverage revealed sharp differences in framing the main themes according to local interests and priorities. On the one hand, both U.S. newspapers presented ICANN as a legitimate and objective organization that works hard to improve and protect the Internet infrastructure around the world. At the same time, very little attention was dedicated to international events and players beyond those that had a direct and major effect on U.S. interests. What might be perceived as impartiality, due to the lack of human interest stories involving individuals from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds, could also be interpreted as a tendency to simply support the status quo.

Non-U.S. news coverage, on the other hand, revealed the dynamic balance between global and local priorities. Reporters felt free to criticize or support ICANN's actions and influence depending on how it reflected on local interests. An accurate portrayal of ICANN's mission and role did not prevent them from considering ethical, political, and logistical concerns to be critical elements in their assessment of the value and legitimacy of ICANN in each of those actions.

Overall, the findings of this study supported the need to generate accurate and timely snapshots of news coverage for complex organizations operating in multiple countries. Strategic communication teams can thus check the pulse and direction of media interest in news that help promote the organization's mission and address the needs and expectations of local or specific audiences.

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Note

[i] http://www.icann.org/en/about/welcome

Managing Workplace Romance and Its Implications for Corporate Communication

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Romance in the workplace could pose some challenges as it may lead to awkwardness, injustice, favoritism, or harassment. This paper seeks to understand workplace romance within a corporate communication context by examining how people feel about it and what their underlying reasons are. Our study extends current research on this topic to an Asian culture, Singapore, where traditional norms and rituals on dating are changing to increasingly follow the Western tradition. An in-depth qualitative study of workers' attitudes toward workplace romantic relationships was conducted through semi-structured interviews to allow the research team to glean past histories of workplace romances and expectations of relationships. The ultimate goal for this study is to suggest a set of guidelines for policies to properly manage sexual attractions in the Asian workplace. Romantic relationships are neither part of an organization's formal structure nor formally sanctioned by management. It is, therefore, crucial for managers to establish a set of guidelines that serve as internal communication between organization and employees to avoid awkwardness when romance arises in the workplace.

Keywords: Workplace Romance, Internal Communication, Employee Relations

Paper type: Empirical Research

Love is all around, even in places where we do not expect it. Many people found their true loves at work and it is not uncommon, these days, that we see our colleagues dating each other. In many cases, organizational members may find it a pleasant situation and feel happy for the dating couples. Yet, there have been incidents where workplace romance poses challenges and creates awkwardness for everyone in the office. Hence, internal communication practitioners need to understand and manage workplace romance properly. This paper reports in-depth interviews of Singaporean managers and employees. The study explores the Singaporean attitudes toward workplace romantic relationships, with the ultimate goal of providing proper recommendations for internal communication to address this issue.

Workplace romance is generally defined by researchers in a three-faceted model of relationship development whereby partners develop (1) intimacy, or a strong emotional bond, (2) passion, or a strong sexual attraction, and/or (3) commitment, or a conscious decision to continue a relationship (Sternberg, 1986). A particular relationship may have only one, two or all of these aspects. In the existing literature, psychological intimacy in the workplace is defined as an interpersonal work-related relationship in which two individuals of opposite sex experience high levels of spiritual, intellectual, and emotional connectedness (Lobel et. al., 1994). Pierce, Byrne, and Aguinis (1996) provide a fairly straightforward definition of a workplace romance, referring to it as a consensual relationship between two partners of opposite sex that does not constitute unwanted or harassing activity.

Existing Interventions of Workplace Romance

Workplace romance has been studied from the perspective of management scholars, particularly those in the field of human resources, with a strong emphasis on managerial intervention aimed at controlling and adapting to the phenomenon. There have been a number of studies conducted in North America to understand this phenomenon and this study hopes to extend the body of research on this topic in an Asian context. Singapore has been chosen as a site for the study as the country is a blend between Asian and Western cultures and thus offers a good point of comparison. Given that issues of fairness, social awkwardness, and management policy are affected by workplace romance, previous studies should give us an insight of how the perceptions of workplace romance have affected both employees and employers and provide us with issues we can explore in the Singapore's context. In addition, Parks (2006) reported that 40% of employees had engaged in workplace romance at some point in their careers. The increasing number of working women and the long hours employees spend together in the workplace are reasons for the increase in prevalence of workplace romance and these factors can be seen in Singaporean society too.

Dating couples are relatively common in the West and workers in those countries tend not to perceive workplace romances to be inherently problematic and believe that companies should not get involved (Fisher, 1994). However, this perception is culturally influenced and since Singaporean workplace culture is more uniformly respectful towards power distance and authority, perceptions of managerial involvement of workplace romances can be explored in this research (Hofstede, 2010).

In addition to finding out whether managerial involvement in workplace romance is acceptable or not, another area we hope to explore is how companies can manage workplace romances in a way that will benefit both the organization and the employee. Jones (1999) determined that management of workplace romance was a very sensitive task and desirable outcomes were influenced by the perception of fairness of management decisions. In this respect, the perception of fairness of management actions by employees is another area that needs to be explored, especially in an Asian context.

Cole (2009) conducted interviews with employees and looked at co-workers' perceptions on managerial inaction with regards to workplace romances. Her findings concluded that inaction was perceived to be fair unless workplace the workplace romance had a negative effect on the workplace, the parties involved worked in the same department, or the organization had a workplace romance policy. Her findings showed that in only about 10% of workplace romance cases did managerial action take place. For this study, the employee perceptions on managerial decisions on workplace romances as well as the actual level of managerial intervention in workplace romances will be explored.

Benefits of Workplace Romances

Workplace romance has also been shown to be a potentially positive force. Increases in motivation of the parties involved in romance have been observed, as have the parties involved working longer and harder and achieving self-actualization beyond the limits of their existing relationships. Energized workplace morale; motivation of other employees; encouragement of creativity and innovation; softening of work-related personality conflicts because the parties involved are happier and easier to get along with; improvement of teamwork, communication, and cooperation; enrichment of personal relationships for the couple involved and their coworkers; and stability of the workforce by retaining both partners are some benefits of

workplace romance. Coworkers may also work harder and longer with levels of enthusiasm and productivity that would not be possible otherwise (Eyler & Baridon, 1991; Mainiero, 1989). Benefits of workplace romance have clearly been examined by previous research. The intention of this project is to examine what effect the environments, management decisions, and co-worker perceptions have on workplace romances and what can be done to examine workplace romances such that managerial policies can be developed to create an environment where workplace romance is beneficial to the organization.

Risks with Workplace Romances

While positive outcomes of workplace romance have been proven by research , there are also possible negative effects with these relationships, especially during break ups. It can threaten career advancement, destroy professional relationships, be a source of co-worker confusion, cause work performance to dip, lead to losses of self-esteem and objectivity of the couple, and generate competition and conflict. Breakups can lead to resentment, anger, and upheaval in the workplace (Mainiero, 1986). If people at different hierarchical levels are romantically involved, their relationship can disrupt the power structure in the organization, potentially creating high-risk situations with professional conflicts of interest. Hierarchical workplace romances can cause the morale of coworkers to decline if a subordinate is perceived to be receiving preferential treatment, therefore disrupting mentoring relationships, and can create the possibility of retaliatory sexual harassment allegations and blocked advancement for the subordinate when it ends badly (Pierce & Aguinis, 2005). Workplace romance involving an extra-marital affair can be extremely uncomfortable for coworkers, especially if they know the injured spouse.

Managerial Reactions to Workplace Relationships

Overall, the benefits and risks of workplace romance present complex ethical, and legal dilemmas for managers, with far-reaching effects on organizational cohesion and efficiency. In spite of these, most organizations do not have formal workplace romance policies (Parks, 2006). The general lack of workplace romance policies means that most decisions to take managerial action regarding workplace romance are made only when other organizational policies regarding workplace conduct are violated. Hence, managerial action, if there is any at all, tends to be disciplinary in nature (Cole, 2009).

Yet in practice, most managers keep an eye on workplace romances that they are aware of, but do not intervene unless the relationship leads to a decline in performance or a breach of company policies (Parks 2006). The prevalence of workplace romance coupled with the emotional nature of this behavior for all parties, including co-workers and managers, makes the management of workplace romance a very sensitive task that must be performed carefully (Jones 1999).

Prior models of workplace romances have been offered by Quinn (1977), Mainiero (1986), and Pierce et al. (1996), incorporating to some extent managerial interventions regarding workplace romances. First, Quinn's (1977) model identified and categorized both co-workers' responses and managerial actions. Co-workers' responses ranged from approval to tolerance to outright objection expressed either to the participants or to management. Possible managerial actions ranged in severity from no action (e.g., ignore, feel problem will resolve itself, do not want to risk taking action) to positive action (e.g., openly discuss situation) to punitive action (e.g., reprimand, warn to change behavior or leave, transfer, terminate).

Second, Mainiero's (1986) model assumed that there is a high chance that one participant in a workplace romance might exploit the other by taking advantage of the other's dependency on the personal relationship, likely disrupting work group performance. According to Mainiero (1986), such circumstances call for managerial intervention. However, when no exploitation occurs within the workplace romance and the functioning of the work group is not disrupted, no managerial intervention is required. Mainiero's (1986) model focused solely on dependency issues within the workplace romance and did not distinguish between managerial actions directed toward the two participants.

Finally, Pierce et al.'s (1996) model included two types of managerial actions: relocations and terminations. According to these researchers, workplace romances between bosses and subordinates were proposed to have a negative effect on coworker morale, whereas workplace romances between workplace peers were proposed to have a positive effect on morale. In addition, lower-level participants were proposed to be more likely to be relocated or terminated than higher-level participants, especially if they were female.

It is also essential to note that legal principles may restrict the choice of management actions in a variety of situations, with punitive actions being the most constrained (Cole, 2009). In the United States for example, state laws banning discrimination on account of marital status have been largely used to overturn organizational policies against the joint employment of spouses (Massengill, 1997). Additionally, workplace romance participants faced with a managerial action have may file lawsuits based on invasion of privacy, wrongful termination, emotional distress, and other claims (Herbst, 1996)

Yet, Foley and Powell (1999) proposed that co-workers will prefer punitive managerial action when they experience a workplace romance that disrupts their work group or if the workplace romance involves a conflict of interest. One scenario study has suggested that perceptions of fairness regarding managerial action relating to workplace romance are determined by the situation. Results indicated that counseling is generally perceived as the fairest way to handle workplace romance but that stronger disciplinary action is perceived as fair if the parties' work performance declines or the romance is highly visible (Karl & Sutton, 2000).

Methodology

With the goals of exploring Singaporean attitudes toward workplace romance and to set up proper guidelines for management and internal communication, this study posed two research questions:

RQ1: How do Singaporean employees and managers view workplace romantic relationships?
RQ2: What managerial guidelines are seen as appropriate to handle workplace romantic relationships in Singaporean workplaces?

Qualitative research was adopted given the exploratory nature of this study. The research team conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with fifteen Singaporeans. This semi-structured interview format allowed the researchers to follow the same questions protocol (refer to appendix) to ensure consistency but, at the same time, it also allowed the researchers to be flexible during the interviews to probe for more information from each individual participant (Noaks & Wincup, 2004).

In this study, purposive sampling was employed to select participants who had experience of the interested phenomenon (Silverman, 2006). Specifically, the researchers recruited participants using a snowballing method and selected those who had witnessed and/or experienced workplace romance, had been in their workplaces for at least one year, and were

Singaporean. Altogether, twelve managers and employees were interviewed. Data analysis was conducted after all interviews were transcribed. The transcripts were coded following grounded theory approach to allow for emerging themes that respond to research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Constant comparison of all themes was performed until saturated and no new themes emerged.

Findings

The following were emerging themes from interviews that illustrated the participants' attitudes toward workplace romance, their awareness of workplace policy to handle such relationships, and their views on proper workplace policies to manage romantic relationships in organizations.

Awareness and Prevalence

Of all participants interviewed, eight interviewees reported that they were unaware if their organization had any WR policies that governed them as employees of the company. Three of the remaining who were aware only knew that there was an unofficial stance on WR. When queried, interviewees revealed that WR policies were never talked about or even introduced to them throughout the course of employment. This finding suggests that the corporate climate in Singapore does not often, if at all, mention WR to employees who, at best, will garner the company stance from alternative sources.

Awareness of WR occurrences, however, is high with nine interviewees reporting WR as a common phenomenon in the Singaporean workplace. Most cite the working climate in the country as a contributing factor to the high incidence rate. "I would say it is quite high, because most of the Singaporeans we all have to work and most of us are workaholics", as explained by interviewee one. The local work culture thus seems to play an important role in the incidence rate of WR due to the high amounts of time spent in office.

The prevalence of WR and high awareness of it within Singaporean society was affirmed by the finding that all 12 interviewees reported having seen WR in their workplace at some point. Due to the interviewees' employment in various industries and companies, it can be inferred that WR can be generalized to a significant proportion of the local work environment.

Workplace Romance Differentiation

Throughout the interviews, participants readily pointed out or differentiated that the WR dimension could comprise of two overarching units: The co-worker (CW) sort, or the superior-subordinate (SS) sort. When prompted further throughout interviews, interviewees also recognized that the WR was also further subdivided into the intra-departmental or inter-departmental types.

The CW is distinctly differentiated from the SS mainly through the perceived power differential between parties. As a result, ranking within the company is key to determining if the WR assumes a CW or SS nature. CW is characterized by low power differential between parties whereas the converse is true for SS, whereby the perceived power differential is high. Quoting interviewee 10, she makes clear the distinction by saying "again, I think there are different... it's more harmful between a superior and subordinate", then moving on to list why SS lies on a different plane from CW – later on being explained as power abuse.

The other significant differentiation recognized by participants is that WRs differ when they take on either intra-departmental or inter-departmental classifications. The distinction is made clear by the departmental divisions within the company, as assigned to each individual.

Acceptance

A review of the interviews illustrated the perceptions and reception of WR in the Singaporean workplace, with a clear distinction being made between the accepted type of WR and the unaccepted. When queried regarding the acceptance of CW romances, five of the interviewees reported that they accepted it and were open to having it in the workplace. The other seven indicated that they were indifferent towards CW romances.

SS romances, however, yielded distinctly different responses from the interviewees. Only three indicated that SS romances were allowed, with two having the disclaimer of favoritism attached, while six were opposed to the romances even taking place. The remaining three were indifferent toward the prediction and warning that SS romances could lead to the pitfall of favoritism as well. Interviewee eight warns of it by saying that "the superior will most likely be favoring the subordinate and that is where the biasness against the other colleagues will happen".

There is also comparison between intra and inter-departmental WRs with the latter being more acceptable than the former. Some interviewees, as explained by interviewee 11, call for intra-departmental WRs to be converted to inter-departmental WRs via the shifting of one party to a separate department. It can thus be seen that the interviewees are more accepting and tolerant towards the CW and inter-departmental sort of WRs.

Benefits

Surprisingly, some of the interviewees who were more experienced and took on managerial roles were the ones who highlighted that there were more benefits to be gained from WR. The first benefit that was inferred was organizational commitment. According to interviewee 4, "…when they are married, they have their commitments and then they know they cannot quit the next day. In that way, it benefits the company because once they have their commitment; they are married, they have their commitments, they have their houses to pay for; they take longer - they will not just quit on the spur of the moment."

The employer, who now has both individuals that tend to stay and contribute to the organization, reaps the benefits of organizational commitment brought about by WR. However, it was also noted by the same interviewee that upon marriage, either of the individuals tends to leave the company's employ due to perceived conflict of interest.

Another benefit of WR that was found pertained to Genuine Long-Term Relationships. Most of the interviewees reported observing WRs in their workplace that led to eventual marriages, and members of the company ultimately welcomed these. Among one of the many typical examples given was simply put by interviewee 5: "the colleague of mine, she's actually a studio director, she's like me, and the person she dated was actually a journalist. This sort of romance actually goes on quite a bit in the office these days… They are still working there, both of them, married and all". The participants further affirm the matter, and also make it a point to state that one of the main places that Singaporeans meet is at work. The general sentiment is that when the long-term relationship is formed, the benefits mostly lie on the side of the WR partners.

The third, but less often mentioned benefit would be that of synergy. Pointed out as a distinct benefit by interviewees 2, 3, 7, and 11, they propose that both the WR parties and the company can yield advantages from the presence of WR. Stating this point exactly is interviewee

11, who mentions that "then there is a lot of unity and synergy and there is a lot of helping each other". He then goes on to extrapolate the benefit to individuals also working with the WR pairing, therefore creating a positive climate for all direct and indirect stakeholders.

However, it should also be noted that five out of the 12 interviewees did not think there were any advantages to having WRs in the company. The difference is seen when contrasted with the complete listing of disadvantages.

Disadvantages

All of the interviewees listed disadvantages of having WRs in the workplace, which can be grouped into three major categories. The disadvantage mentioned most often falls under the major category of workplace dynamics. Six interviewees felt that the status quo of the workplace could be affected especially in the instances when the WR sours, thereby creating opportunities for disruption. Interviewee two details the worst scenario: "So it led to a sour experience and she come into the office, slapping the secretary and hurling vulgarities at the husband. It was very embarrassing and I recently heard that the firm had to be closed down".

The next most often cited disadvantage pertains to favoritism within the workplace, being cited five times. In most cases directly pertaining to the SS sort of WR, most interviewees highlight this as an issue that most employees are aware of. Due to the WR, certain professional lines and codes of conduct are perceived to be blurred due to the presence of a dualistic, even dialectic, relationship: that of employee and partner. The perceived disadvantage surfaces when the partner is, or perceived, given preferential treatment.

The final major disadvantage category mentioned is the issue of personal productivity, which is mentioned five times. The most often cited reason when mentioning the productivity issue is that of 'distraction.' Interviewees infer that the presence of WR and partner within the workplace leads to distraction of either or both of the individuals, hence leading to lowered productivity for the company.

Policy Implementation & Guidelines

In a slightly majority view, seven of the participants indicated that there should be some form of formal policy implementation with regards to WR. Four disagreed while the remaining one called for assessment of the nature of work. This is in stark contrast to the earlier eight who indicated they were unaware of any WR policies in their workplace. Therefore, it might be the case that some Singaporeans might want to have a clear stand on WR by their companies.

When queried, nine of the 12 interviewees also indicated that guidelines of WR policies should be explicitly mentioned and spelt out to both employees and managers. The remaining three called for it to be implied. As stated by interviewee 10, who called for explicit guidelines: "one thing to make clear is the SOP guidelines for, if a workplace romance develops, like what should the standard operating procedure – what should the couple do next. For instance, do they have to inform senior management? Do they have to request for permission?" The three who felt that the guidelines of the policy should be implied called for flexibility and an ad-hoc nature to the management of WR. In short, the majority of participants call for a clear cut policy to address this issue.

In general, the awareness of advantages and disadvantages of workplace romance as discussed by Singaporean participants in this study were consistent with previous literature. In addition, it seems that while the Singaporeans in this study demonstrated their accepting attitude toward workplace romantic relationships, their awareness and knowledge of guidelines and

policies to handle such relationships when they become destructive were minimal. This suggests that it is crucial for internal communication practitioners to formulate and communicate workplace romance policies more explicitly. As implied by Singaporeans in this study, adopting the view that this type of relationship is natural and unavoidable and thus should not be managed could cause more awkwardness, an unfavorable workplace climate, and eventually injustice. Even though explicit policies are needed, the way to communicate those policies should be considered carefully. Internal communication practitioners should be prudent, deliver the message of the policies, and avoid a punitive tone.

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Appendix: Questions Protocol for Semi-Structured Interview

Questions Guide for Co-workers
1. What are some of the organizational policies about workplace romances in your company?
2. What do you think are the kind of office romances between colleagues that will lead to favoritism/work disruptions?
3. What do you think of your co-workers who have developed romantic relationships with their direct superiors? What about co-workers who are of same hierarchical status?
4. Think of one WR relationship that you felt unfavorable towards. Why? How about another that you felt favorably towards. Why? What are the participants' motives for engaging in the WR relationship?
5. Think of one instance where work group harmony were affected by WR relationships? Is the group welfare more important than the individual?
6. Are office relationships a socially accepted practice in today's workplace? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of WRs?
7. How do you feel when people around the workplace talk openly about office relationships?
8. Describe an example where your management took action against WR participants. How was it communicated to the work group/parties involved? Do you agree? What's your opinion about their decisions?
9. Would you prefer transparency in management decisions towards WRs or would you prefer management to keep things under wraps?
10. How do you want policies to change/to help you as a co-worker and/or participant in a WR relationship?

Questions Guide for Managers
1. What is your position on relationships within your department?
2. Should handling intra-departmental relationships be under your managerial purview?
3. How might a relationship within the department implicate or help the company in the long run?
4. In your opinion, does a relationship between your employees boost or hinder efficiency? Why and how?
5. How do you think your position as a manager allowed you to influence ongoing relationships in the workplace?
6. How would you communicate your disapproval of the relationship to your employees in question?
7. Private/Public disapproval?
    a. Email
    b. Letter
    c. Personal Meeting
    d. Higher Management

e.   Telephone
8.   How would you communicate your approval of or indifference towards the relationship?
9.   Describe policies that are already in place that manage existing relationships.
10. Describe other policies that you think might be put in place that can effectively help the company manage relationships.

Negotiating Crisis in the New Media Environment

Evolution of Crises Online, Gaining Legitimacy Offline

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This study examines how crises originate online, how different new media platforms escalate crises, and how issues become legitimized offline when they transit onto mainstream media. We study five social media crises, which includes United breaks guitars and Southwest Air's too fat to fly. Crises are triggered online when stakeholders are empowered by new media platforms that allow user-generated content to be posted online without any filtering. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter emerge as top crises breeding grounds due to their large user base and the lack of gatekeeping. Facebook and blogs are responsible for escalating crises beyond the immediate stakeholder groups. Mainstream media, legitimizes issues offline when there are inherent news values like, human-interest, policy-making, celebrity or novelty factors present. This study suggests recommendations to manage reputational impact on organizations and instruct practitioners on how they can use different new media tools to counter crises online and manage the transition of crises to mainstream media.

The advent of new media technology and social media platforms are transforming how organizations communicate with stakeholders (Christ, 2007). According to White and Raman (1999) the World Wide Web is arguably the first mass medium which allows uninterrupted flow of information from source to receiver without any gatekeeping or filtering. However, as Siah, Bansal, and Pang (2010) noted, new media is a "double-edged sword" (p.143). While it can be an effective crisis management tool (DiNardo, 2002; Greer & Moreland, 2003; Hagar & Haythornthwaite, 2005; Hughes, Palen, Sutton, Liu, & Vieweg, 2008; Palen, Vieweg, Liu, & Hughes, 2009), new media can also trigger new crises.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, and niche online community chatrooms are becoming potential breeding grounds for organizational crises. In the last ten years, incidences of online crises reaching mainstream media have seen a ten-fold increase (Owyang, Jones, Tran, & Nguyen, 2011). The speed at which things are evolving on the Internet is unnerving. McGrath (1997) equates one year on the Internet to seven years in any other medium. The rapid evolution of new media technology and the expeditious transition to Web 2.0 has resulted in the practice of public relations and crisis communication moving beyond research (Coombs, 2008).

To effectively negotiate crises on new media, communication practitioners need to understand how crises are triggered online, how crises are escalated within the new media environment and how crises gain legitimacy offline through mainstream media coverage. By analyzing the transition of crises from online to mainstream media, practitioners can better respond with effective new media crisis management strategies.

This paper examines case studies of crises that originated online, gained momentum on social media platforms before transiting onto mainstream media. This research analyzes how crises are triggered and get aggravated online and how the crises are legitimized by mainstream media. By analyzing five crises' life cycles and how they were managed, this study identifies trends and potentially mitigating measures to help practitioners negotiate crisis situations both online and offline.

The significance of this paper is threefold. This is one of the first few studies that analyses how organizational crises originate online, gain traction and get escalated onto mainstream media. This will enhance understanding of crisis development online and useful in anticipating and planning effective pre-emptive new media crisis communication and response strategies. This study also identifies compelling new media elements that gain the attention of mainstream media. Understanding what causes crises to trigger online and gain legitimacy offline will enable practitioners to engage in effective crisis management strategies.

Literature Review

Emergence of social media and crisis escalation in new media

New media technologies share at least three defining features: They are digital, converging, and networked. Because its digitalized, multimedia information can easily be shared, accessed, and interfaced with other "smart" devices and users, which enables the public to interconnect regardless of geographical boundaries or time zones (Goggin & Newell, 2003). User-generated content leads to increased consumer participation and facilitates the free flow of opinions and the sharing of experiences online. As more consumers choose to connect, network, and collaborate with each other on social media platforms, they are able to enjoy a "more accurate, timely, and relevant customer experience without organizations disrupting the flow of influence" (Wang & Owyang, 2010).

Unwittingly, new media has leveled the playing field by shifting the command controls of communication from companies to consumers (Shapiro, 1999). Information and conversations online are no longer controlled top-down by governments, mainstream media, and organisations (Wheeler, 2001). Individuals empowered by social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and blogs are able to take on giant corporations quite successfully (Bernoff & Li, 2008). "Netizens", "citizen journalists", and social media influencers are emerging as important stakeholders whom practitioners need to engage (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011).

In Siah et al.'s (2010) study, the authors found that the very characteristics that make new media unique, such as user interactivity, multimedia capability and lack of gatekeeping are "also its Achilles heel" (p. 143). The internet allows news to travel to a wider audience at a faster rate compared to traditional media. New media offers alternative sources of news and information, especially during crises when organizations may not release information fast. This also leads to the spread of inaccurate information, spoofs and "spin-offs" that indent reputations (Ho, Auyong, Dong, Lau, & Pang, 2011; J. Siah, et al., 2010).

Current approaches to managing new media crises

Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith's (2008) four-stage crisis management model provides a framework to combat online threats. This model extrapolates potential online threats on a crisis life cycle from issues management and strategic planning to crisis communication and post-crisis management. This model enables practitioners to approach online crisis management as a holistic process rather than a one-off damage control procedure (Siah, Bansal, & Pang, 2010).

By integrating Gonzalez-Herro & Smith's model and the contingency theory of strategic conflict management, Siah et al (2010) developed the new media crisis communication model to mitigate threats posed by new media. By identifying the predisposing and situational variables

that may affect an organisation's stance during the entire crisis life cycle, this model offers recommendations that practitioners could consider enforcing.

While the two models offer suggestions on how to handle online crises, there is little clarity on how crises are triggered online and exacerbated within the new media environment. These approaches also do not address the challenges posed by individual new media platforms during crises and how crises gain traction and legitimacy offline. These approaches also do not address the transition of the crises from new media to mainstream media and the specific factors that cause the transition.

Transition of new media to mainstream media

Past research shows that the Internet has shifted the relationship between journalists and news consumers from a one-way, asymmetric model of communication to a more participatory and collective system (Boczkowski, 2004; Deuze, 2003). Beckett & Mansell (2008) describe journalism in the age of new media as one that relies heavily on new media technology, an unforgiving 24/7 news cycle and interactive. The news-gathering process has also shifted from a linear to a networked process whereby there is constant communication and interaction with sources and reactors. Jenkins (2006) describes the emergence of a participatory culture in journalism as one that is in contrast with traditional notions of passive media consumption. Content producers and media audiences have moved from occupying distinct separate roles to being "participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us [yet] fully understand" (Jenkins, 2006).

The advent of new media has also changed the role of the journalist. Traditionally, journalists filter, organize, and interpret information and deliver the news in ready-made, easy to consume packages. This was possible in an environment where access to media production was limited and restricted. With the floodgates open in cyberspace, news comes in various forms such as Twitter updates, Facebook posts and blogs. With the barrage of news coming from all directions, it is impossible for media organizations to analyze the collective sum of knowledge contained in these micro-fragments and bring reasonable meaning to the data (Hermida, 2010).

Skoler (2009) points out that the value of social media is in its ability to create the spirit of sharing, and journalists who operate in this new environment will benefit by using social media platforms to "establish relationship[s] and listen to others". Increasingly, journalists too realize the importance of creating a new media presence for themselves and their news entities. In a study conducted on Facebook, it was found that thousands of journalists have enabled the "subscribe" function, with journalists from prominent news organizations like *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* leading the way (Vadim & Betsy, 2012).

Mainstream media has also begun emphasizing content that is sourced from social media platforms to show that it is keeping up with the times, and rightly so. During the Iranian street protests that followed elections there in 2009, Newman (2009) observed that mainstream media such as the New York Times, the Guardian, CNN, and the Huffington Post emphasized information that emerged from social media and monitored the flurry of activities on Twitter, Facebook, and the blogosphere. Dramatic footage from all over the country was uploaded to video-sharing websites and it was reported that CNN and the BBC, at one stage were receiving up to five videos a minute (Newman, 2009).

News media coverage of issues that are discussed on social media platforms is also exacerbated by media hype, a concept that Vasterman (2005) posits. Media hype is defined as a "media generated, wall-to-wall news wave, triggered by one specific event and enlarged by the self-reinforcing processes within the news production of the media" (Vasterman, 2005, p. 515).

When issues trend over social media platforms, they trigger interest among mainstream media producers to analyze and evaluate if these warrant discussion and debate in the bigger public sphere. As Vasterman argues, increased media attention reinforces and amplifies news waves and lead to "an expansion of the definition of the problem" (p. 517) where issues get broadened and unfortunately amplified.

However, it should be rightly noted that social media content does not always set the news agenda and if issues do transit onto mainstream media, it is never covered with the same fervor or regularity. In a study conducted by Silver (2010) on the Occupy Wall Street protests, it was found that while social media space had accorded consistent coverage throughout the duration of the protests, most mainstream media outlets, in fact, ignored the event. It was only after the protestors clashed with the police that coverage intensified (Silver, 2011). A study conducted by Pew Research Centre's Project for Excellence in Journalism examined how mainstream media organizations utilized their social media channels to seek out stories. Results showed that only 2% of tweets from news consumers were used to attain information regarding a story or gain feedback (Holcomb & Mitchell, 2011).

While mainstream media continues to monitor and cover content from social media platforms, coverage is still largely dependent on the proscribed set of journalistic values and practitioners and scholars continue to debate how this may evolve in view of the growing affluence of Web 2.0. The Internet has empowered audiences by providing them with new and additional sources of information. This marks changing times for mainstream journalism as social media platforms continue to expand their influence (Kiesow, 2010; Skoler, 2009; Sonderman, 2012).

If new media platforms escalate organizational crises, this study seeks to examine the following questions with the specific crises:

RQ1: How do organizational crises originate online? Which new media platforms were responsible for triggering the crises?

RQ2: What other new media platforms were responsible for escalating the crises beyond the immediate stakeholder groups?

RQ3: How long did it take for the crises to get the attention of the mainstream media? How long were the crises covered by the mainstream media? How did the mainstream media cover the crises differently from new media?

RQ4: What was the subsequent impact to the image of the organizations/ individuals involved? Were any enduring images formed? How did the organizations respond to the crises?

RQ5: How can organizations respond to crises that originate and escalate online?

Method

We employed the multiple case study method as this approach offers the collation of rich data to allow detailed documentation of a relatively new phenomenon and a certain degree of generalization. Since multiple case studies tend to replicate and produce similar results (Siah, et al., 2010; Yin, 2009), as argues, this approach allows the capturing of the essential processes of decision making, implementation, and change (Gummesson, 2000).

We selected five crises case studies that were triggered online and gained legitimacy offline through mainstream media.

The cases

1) *Dell Hell (2005)*. In June 2005, popular blogger Jeff Jarvis posted a series of rants on his weblog at Buzzmachine.com where he complained about Dell's poor customer service. His "Dell Hell" postings sparked off similar rants and blog posts from similarly affected customers. At the height of the crisis, searching "Dell hell" in Google returned more than 2.4 million results, and "Dell sucks" returned almost 1.3 million results.

2) *Dirty Domino's (2009)*. Two Domino's Pizza employees uploaded a video on YouTube showing them assembling sandwiches in the most unhygienic manner before delivering them to customers. The video went viral and was viewed more than a million times within a few days and caused Domino's massive reputation damage.

3) *United breaks guitars (2009)*. United Airlines passenger Dave Carroll had his Taylor guitar destroyed by the airline's baggage handlers during a flight. After United Airlines repeatedly declined to reimburse him for the damage, he wrote a now-famous song decrying their customer service which ultimately dented its sales figures.

4) *Southwest Air's too fat to fly (2010*). Southwest Air's "customer of size" policy received a high-profile roasting when the airline targeted Hollywood director Kevin Smith. In response, he sent a series of exasperated Tweets claiming that he was kicked off a flight for being "too fat".

5) *Grace Fu – "When I made the decision…"(2012)*. In response to an ongoing debate over ministerial pay, Grace Fu, a Singapore politician, expressed her concerns over salary reduction on her Facebook page. Her post became viral and sparked criticism among netizens. Thousands of people reposted the post, creating an Internet meme that began with "When I made the decision to…"

Data Collection and Analysis

Following the case study selection, we collected and analyzed three sets of data. Drawing insights from Siah et al.'s (2010) study on the escalation of crises through new media, this study similarly used the qualitative method of analysis to track the life cycle of each crisis, the transition onto mainstream media and organizational responses.

Data Set 1: Internet documents such as blog postings, Facebook comments, Twitter updates, and YouTube videos were searched online.

Documentation by journalists, commentators, and bloggers online with screen shots of the original Twitter and Facebook posts were available for analysis. This set of data was used to track the life cycle of the crises; i.e the trigger event, public reaction, transition to mainstream media and back. The overall tone of postings and updates on social media helped to gauge public sentiments.

Data Set 2: News reports from major news publications and news agencies sourced from the Factiva database.

News sources were limited to English-language newspapers, and the duration limited to a period of six months after the first news article was published. The objective was to track the follow-up coverage and other related news after the crisis subsided. This data was used to analyze mainstream media coverage of the crises. The data was categorized into prominent news elements, the portrayal of the affected parties and how much info was taken of online by the mainstream.

Data Set 3: Online posts, press announcements and documents that originated from the organization or individuals involved.

Organizational response was used to analyze the actions and stances taken by the organizations and individuals involved in the crises. Both online and offline documents – that is, what was discussed on social media platforms and the mainstream media – were reviewed to better understand the organizational constraints and the effects of the crises communication strategies.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1 examines how organizational crises originated online and which new media platforms were responsible in triggering the crises.

In Case 1 (Dell Hell), Jarvis' first post on 21 June 2005 received about 250 comments, all of which were written by other consumers who had been on the receiving end of Dell's customer service. His third post started with: "Well my Dell hell continues….", which made the term "Dell Hell" synonymous with Jarvis' encounter with Dell (Jarvis, 2005b). His subsequent posts about his exchanges with Dell received hundreds of responses, and averaged between 200 and 400 comments per post. On 11 July 2005, Jarvis posted his final Dell Hell rant (Jarvis, 2005a). However, discussion about Dell's poor customer service had been ignited and online conversations continued throughout the summer of 2005 when mainstream media published the story.

In Case 2 (Dirty Domino's), two rogue workers at a Domino's Pizza unit – Kristy Lynn Hammonds and Michael Anthony Setzer – in North Carolina filmed themselves putting cheese in their nose and other stomach-turning acts with food that were to be delivered to customers, and then posted it to YouTube in April 2009 (NBC New York, 2009). In a single day after the video was uploaded, the video went viral and received 760,000 views (Advertising Age, 2009). Although the original video was removed after a few days, reproductions of the video are still circulating on the internet.

For the United breaks Guitars case, the crisis was triggered when a song depicting United Airlines' poor customer service was uploaded on YouTube. The spoof music video garnered more than three million hits in ten days (Mashable Business, 2009). The song "United Breaks Guitars" went on to be one of 2009's YouTube hits and has garnered more than seven million hits even after the crisis blew over (Social Media Risk, 2010).

In the case of Southwest Airlines' customer of size policy, the crisis started when Hollywood movie producer Kevin Smith decided to fly on a standby flight on Southwest Air and was send off the flight as he did not fulfill the policy where passengers who cannot fit safely and comfortably in one seat with armrests down, must purchase an additional seat (ABC News, 2010). After being sent off the plane, Smith went on a rampage of tweets about his negative experience to his more than 1.6 million followers on his twitter account (Economist, 2010).

In the case of Singapore politician, Grace Fu's Facebook comment, the crisis was triggered when she posted her opinion regarding the revision to ministerial pay online (Hoe, 2012). Her Facebook posting drew instant criticism online and went viral as netizens started sharing and commenting on the posting on Facebook, blogs and microblog sites (2012).

What we can infer from these cases:

- The crises were triggered and escalated by new media's power to reach a large population within a short span of time (Siah, et al., 2010).
- Social media platforms that connect large groups of people, such as Twitter and Facebook, enabled messages and content to pass on and shared within a very short span of time.
- All social media platforms that enables the sharing of user-generated content i.e. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and blogs have the capacity and following to create organizational crises.
- Video content tend to have a higher and faster reach compared to text-based postings and updates. For instance, the Domino's video and United Breaks Guitars videos were viewed and shared by far more people within a short span of time compared to the other cases.

RQ2 examined what other new media platforms were responsible for the escalation of the crises beyond the immediate stakeholder groups.

In Dell Hell's case, the crisis was mainly escalated through Jarvis' blog, Buzzmachine.com, which received a substantial number of responses from fellow customers and bloggers. At one point, Jarvis' blog was receiving about 10,000 visits a day (Leonard, 2006). This crisis was mainly discussed in the blogosphere because in 2005, other social media platforms were not as widely popular as today's Facebook and Twitter.

In the Dirty Domino's case, video went viral via YouTube, Twitter, Blogs, and Facebook. Even though the original video was removed, numerous reproductions have been made and were still circulating years after the incident happened (ebonygentleman79, 2009). Social networking platforms such as Twitter and Facebook were instrumental in spreading the word about the video beyond the initial YouTube audience and aggravating the crisis. After the Domino's Pizza YouTube video went viral, numerous reproductions of the same video made by both individuals and news organizations were uploaded on YouTube, adding to the search list under the term "Dirty Dominoes".

Similar to the Domino's case, the crisis faced by United Airlines was made worse when the offending video went viral through the YouTube platform. Dave Caroll's video for the song "United Breaks Guitars'" was posted on the popular file-sharing site Monday night and had received more than 600,000 hits by Thursday evening (Mashable, 2009). He also received thousands of emails and a flood of friend requests on Facebook that boosted his popularity online and offline.

In the Southwest Airlines case, the crisis was aggravated by the fact that Kevin Smith had quick access to more than 1.6 million cyberspace users who were following his Twitter updates and so his negative experience was broadcasted to this large group within a very short period of time. Also Facebook comments, postings and links to Smith's tweets further aggravated the crisis by spreading the word beyond his fan base instigated debate on the blogosphere regarding the "customer of size" policy (McEwan, 2010).

In Grace Fu's case, within a single day, her posting drew more than a thousand comments on her facebook account – mainly criticisms. A dedicated microblog site was created on Tumblr

http://whenimadethedecision.tumblr.com/ to post the best memes, where the term "Fu-isms" was coined. Her status update was also reposted by several prominent bloggers.

What we can infer:

- Facebook is a prominent social media platform that is responsible for spreading the incriminatory videos and posts beyond the immediate stakeholder groups.
- Facebook also amplifies the crises by popularizing the issue and the "underdogs".
- Likewise, Facebook also creates a platform for users to criticize organizations and individuals openly.
- Facebook's popularity and reach makes this social media platform one that organizations should monitor closely.
- Twitter also serves a large member base because posts and links can be easily shared via its microblog platform. Twitter users are able to post simultaneously on Facebook at the same time, multiplying their reach.
- Dell was spared from this phenomenon mainly because, in 2005, Facebook was still a newly launched platform and did not have a huge member base and Twitter was not yet developed.
- Blogs too escalate crises by providing additional content through opinion pieces, longer comments, and links to relevant websites. The blogs gain prominence mainly due to the celebrity status of the bloggers and their followers.
- Most bloggers and their followers also have Facebook and Twitter accounts and create links to blog posts via these platforms. Once posts are made on Facebook and Twitter, more people see the blog articles and the crisis gets amplified and gains more leverage.

RQ3 analyzes the transition of the crises from new media to the mainstream media and the time lag between the crises breaking out and mainstream media reporting on it.

In the Dell Hell case, the mainstream media generally picked up on the crises only a month after Jarvis posted his first rant (CMP Techweb, 2005). There were some earlier online media reports smaller, online web news portals that mainly linked bloggers (Jarvis, 2005a). About three weeks after Jarvis's first Dell rant, it was reported that Dell had shut down its customer care board on its community forum (CMP TechWeb, 2005). Another incident that interested the mainstream media was Jarvis's email to one of Dell's senior executives and his open letter dated 17 August to Michael Dell and Dell CMO Michael George, in which he lamented their lack of response and offered suggestions on how Dell could better interact with bloggers. Mainstream media, including *BusinessWeek, Fast Company*, *ZDNet*, *PC World*, and the *Houston Chronicle*, picked up on this story.

In the Dirty Domino's case, the offending video was uploaded and went viral on April 13 2009. An official response from Domino's was released a day after on its official website on 14 April 2009 (swifttallon, 2009). However, the mainstream media only started reporting on the incident on 15 April 2009 after the two employees were fired and charges were officially filed (Crowe, 2009). The mainstream media's coverage focused on the charges that were filed against the two errant employees and their respective backgrounds, not the discriminatory video. Coverage also focused on one of the offenders being a former registered sex offender. Subsequent follow-up news coverage focused more on issues such as the recruitment policies of organizations and the general impact of social media.

In the United Airlines case, the music video was first uploaded onto YouTube on 6 July 2009, while the first news report in the mainstream media appeared on 9 July 2009, three days

after the video was uploaded. The coverage in the mainstream media focused primarily on the unprecedented success of the video and exploited the human interest element of using music to get messages across.

In the Southwest Air's case, mainstream media covered the story a day after Smith's twitter updates (ABC News, 2010). The mainstream media focused largely on the personality involved. It also discussed the validity of the existing flight policy. The coverage tapered off after two weeks, but references to the Kevin Smith case continued to be made in reports regardingsimilar incidents.

In the Grace Fu case, Fu's original Facebook post was posted at 9:41pm on 4 Jan 2012. She clarified her comments about 20 hours later at 5.15pm on 5 Jan 2012 (Wong, 2012). Following the online furor from her first post, the mainstream media covered the event first as a side comment on 5 Jan 2012 with the ministerial pay issue, and then covered the online comments that were made on 6 Jan 2012 as an individual report. While the mainstream media's coverage of this crisis died down after first two days, subsequent commentaries – online and offline - published regarding the ministerial pay issues and never failed to mention the Grace Fu episode. By 15 January, there were no new headlines on the criticism, but the criticism continued online, albeit without the original gusto.

What we can infer and recommend:
- Traditional news values, such as novelty (United Breaks Guitars), celebrity factor (Kevin Smith's Too fat to fly), impact on society at large (Grace Fu), human interest (Dell Hell), relevance to public (Domino's) and regulations (Domino's), continue to guide mainstream media coverage.
- Mainstream media is more objective and balanced in reporting as organizations and the individuals involved are given space to state their positions clearly.
- Mainstream media, as an agenda setter, presented public issues of concern for public debate – food safety and employment guidelines (Domino's), ministerial salary review (Grace Fu), consumer protection (United breaks guitars and Dell Hell) and discrimination (Too Fat to Fly).
- Organizations should track potential "explosive" issues and manage them effectively before the mainstream media amplifies the crises.

RQ4 examines how organizations/individuals responded to the new media crises and the subsequent impact to the image of the organizations and if any sort of enduring images were formed.

In Dell Hell, the company remained silent throughout Jarvis' rants. Dell's company policy was to observe what goes but take a hands-off approach in regards to the Internet. Experts commented that Dell did not take blogging seriously then because it considered the blogosphere to be a fairly new medium. This further outraged the bloggers because they claimed that Dell was not "listening" to the conversation online or reacting to customers' dissatisfaction. About two months after Jarvis' first rant, a Dell public relations representative called Jarvis to talk about his Dell experience and company policies, but fail to engage unhappy customers online whether sentiments were not favorable. As a result, Dell's sales and reputation began to plummet. However, now, 7 years later, Dell has emerged as one of the pioneers of online engagement. The enduring image here is the term Dell Hell. This incident has become a classic example to quote and take cues from when analyzing the impact of new media on businesses.

In the Domino's case, the company responded to the video about 48 hours later. The videos were posted on Monday night; a response didn't come from the company until

Wednesday. While its internal team worked quickly to form a strategy on Tuesday, its initial response was to try not to unnecessarily draw attention to the video because it didn't want to alert more people to the scandal. It did eventually open a Twitter account to deal with consumer inquiries and then made an apology through YouTube. However the damage was already done. In a research conducted later found that 65% of respondents who would previously visit or order Domino's Pizza were less likely to do so after viewing the offending video (Flandez, 2009).

In the United Airlines case, the company initially chose to ignore Carroll's claim to replace his broken guitar, but, just two days after the video was posted and went viral, they offered to compensate him for it. In terms of reputational impact, the video was viewed by more than 6 million people by the end of 2009 and currently has more than 11 million views. This means that the negative associations to United Airlines continue to grow on the social media platforms.

Southwest Airlines issued an apology to Kevin Smith via Twitter and its website, which was titled "Not So Silent Bob", a jovial jab at the Silent Bob character that Smith played in his films. The statement read: "We would like to echo our tweets and again offer our heartfelt apologies to you… Our pilots... made the determination that Mr. Smith needed more than one seat to complete the flight" (McNeill, 2010). The apology added that the company offered the director a $100 voucher and that it would accommodate him on a later flight. Compared to the rest of the crises the reputation damage was marginal as the crisis evolved around an existing policy which Smith was very well aware and familiar with as he had experience purchasing two seats to travel.

In the Grace Fu case, the online furor over the original post led Fu to clarify her views:

> Thank you all for your candid views. I respect all of them. I realise my last posting could have been misunderstood. The committee has done a thorough job with a substantial recommendation over a fairly emotive topic. I accept and respect the recommendation (Wong, 2012).

Aside from the clarification made on Facebook, Fu did not make any further responses. What we can infer and recommend:

- The offending content had some level of permanence on new media platforms. Discriminating content is usually shared, copied, or imitated online, which makes it difficult to permanently remove the content.
- Search lists are immediately formed using key terms associated with the crises that enable easy search of the discriminatory contents.
- Reputation damage is largely dependent on the cause of the trigger event. In the "United breaks Guitars" and Dell Hell cases, customer dissatisfaction was an inherent problem and so the discriminatory postings were a point of engagement for other disgruntled customers and potential customers. Therefore the damage to business was more acute.
- For the case of "Too fat to fly", it was an existing policy that was enforced by all airlines, so other than the celebrity factor which triggered of discussions regarding discrimination and flight safety, the airlines did not suffer substantial reputation damage.
- Organizations should consider taking counter actions by strategically producing official responses to be posted on the same new media platform to counteract and balance the impact to organizational reputation i.e. Domino's posting apology on YouTube, Southwest Air's tweet and Grace Fu's Facebook update. These actions will

also reach the primary audience who viewed and reacted to the discriminatory postings effectively.

RQ5 examines how organizations can prepare and respond to crises that originate and escalate online.

Based on the findings, the authors would like to make the following recommendations.

1. Identify the stakeholders, opinion leaders, and relevant social media platforms

It is important for organizations to embark on social media initiatives with clear objectives. Organizations need to identify key stakeholders and opinion leaders online, and locate the social media platforms where their consumers congregate. For instance, airlines need to be well informed about popular travel bloggers and travel networks where experiences and reviews regarding service, price, and experiences are shared. Understanding key social media influencers (SMIs) is also becoming increasingly crucial for corporations. SMIs "represent a new type of independent third party endorsements that can shape audience attitudes through new media (Freberg, et al., 2011). When organizations know where to look for key opinion leaders and the bulk of consumers, they will be better able to track conversations and that may, if overlooked, become a potential crisis.

2. Have a strong social media presence and engage in dialogue

Given the pervasiveness of social media in today's context, organizations must participate and have an effective social media presence in order to effectively pre-empt and respond to potential crises that could arise from the social media platforms. Research conducted by Siah and colleagues (2009) and Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith (2008) point out the importance of identifying and tracking potentially contentious issues that are raised online early. While many organizations may already have a social media presence, few effectively use the tools that are available to them. As Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith (2008) rightfully noted, in the age of the Internet, "audiences are demanding high responsiveness, transparency and authenticity from companies and those that fail to deliver it quickly leave themselves vulnerable to attack" (p. 152). Organizations must, therefore, understand they should not only use social media to deliver information but also leverage on new media engage in their stakeholders effectively.

3. Track issues and devise response strategies – online and offline

Besides having an online presence, organizations should track potential issues that may arise from the social media platforms. In drawing up the model to manage crisis communications on the internet, Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith (2008) note that organizations should prepare for any possible crisis and plan for potential scenarios that require organizations to monitor the environment i.e., not just in search of warning signs but also prepare for a possible negative impact of an issue. From the Dell and Grace Fu's case, we can infer that organizations should be more sensitive to the potential negative sentiments that stakeholders may have. By using social media as a platform to monitor potential negative sentiments, organizations should determine suitable response strategies. Timely intervention will help organizations to minimize the impact of the crisis and may even prevent the issue from escalating onto the mainstream media. By tracking and analyzing the issues that are being discussed on social media platforms, organizations can intervene and address these underlying issues early. This would also ensure that organizations could devise suitable strategic responses to address these concerns appropriately even if the issues eventually attract the attention of the mainstream media.

4. Pre-empt crisis by responding before crisis escalates

With an effective social media presence and issue-tracking platform, organizations may still be unable to prevent an issue from escalating. Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith (2008) argue that, for most issues on the Internet to develop into serious crises, they still need to be picked up by the mainstream media (p. 149). However, organizations can also use the same tools that people use to escalate crises to respond. For example, a timely response strategy could mitigate possible issues and prevent them from escalating into the mainstream media. However, even if the issue escalates into the mainstream media, the coverage will be balanced and not skewed against the organization as compared to a one-sided narrative that occurs when organizations choose to respond after the crisis or to not respond at all.

5. Generate news to reduce permanence of crisis

Even after mainstream media loses interest in a crisis, conversations do continue online, albeit without the same fervor or hostility. To make offending materials on cyberspace less easily available to netizens, organizations should strategically generate news and web links which will counter produce a new list of results when people key in once-discriminatory terms on search engine. Organizations can creatively manipulate key search terms that were widely used in a crisis and generate positive news reports, blog postings or articles and reduce reputational damage in the long run.

Conclusion

From examining all the case studies, we observe that traditional news values still continue to guide news coverage in the mainstream media. Conventional news values such as celebrity factor ("Too fat to fly" - Kevin Smith, Hollywood producer, Grace Fu – politician), human interest and conflict (Domino's Pizza) policies (Dominos Pizza – employment policies, "Too fat to fly" – customer of size policy), novelty ("United Breaks Guitar" – endearing music video) and massive customer dissatisfaction (Dell Hell and "United Breaks Guitars".

The mainstream media is more objective in its coverage as it takes a balanced stance in its reports compared to postings online. Serving its function as an agenda setter, the mainstream media presented possible public issues for discussion and deliberation as a result of the crisis trigger event. Often the trigger events are in themselves insignificant compared to the bigger issue at play. If the issue is one of significant public interest, any related social media crisis will serve to present it to the public consciousness. This means that organizations may want to track online sentiments towards thorny organizational issues on cyberspace and social media platforms more closely because these sentiments – when presented and escalated through the social media – are more likely to be potential trigger points for crises when amplified by mainstream media.

While new media has empowered stakeholders with new tools and platforms to air their grievances, these incidences will transit onto mainstream media only if they are able to fulfill the inherent newsworthiness criteria of the newsroom. For example, if one is able to galvanize the support of an extraordinary number of people in a short time through new media, it increases the possibility of mainstream media taking note. Therefore, organizations that wish to manage online crisis preemptively should closely monitor online activities to understand whether any underlying issues are developing in cyberspace. Such management should not be just limited to how organizations cope with information in the new media and their day-to-day business operations. If we use the "United Breaks Guitars" case as an illustration, the video would not have gone viral if United had been more responsive to Dave Carroll's request.

This study explored how organizational crises are triggered online, which social media platforms are responsible for crises to be triggered and escalated onto mainstream media and organizational responses to new media triggered crisis. Although this paper only looks at five case studies and findings may not be generalized, it sheds light on how organizations can manage and pre-empt crises that trigger online.

Further research could examine specific social media platforms and analyze crisis trigger factors peculiar to these platforms and how organizations can counter them. Additional research could also explore the existing new media communication strategies adopted by organizations and assess their effectiveness in today's Web 2.0.

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Nothing Succeeds like Success

An Analysis of Causes of Negotiation Success and Failures in China

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This study aims at identifying Chinese negotiators' views of the causes of failure in intercultural negotiations. 86 Chinese negotiators were asked to scale the most frequently causes of failure, and 36 of them were further interviewed to testify about one case of successful and one case of failed business negotiation with international counterparts, and to identify the causes of failure. The questionnaire pre-cursors to business negotiation failure were identified as not equipped with enough information about the other party; not taking the initiative in negotiations; revealing one's own bottom line too early; extraneous factors; no alternative plans or emergency measures, and being impatient. Interestingly, the most frequent pre-cursors to failure revealed in the interviews were Chinese negotiators' lack of communication stills, especially inadequate proficiency in English, lack of cultural awareness and the use of inappropriate business behavior and protocols, and failure to compromise on price, delivery deadlines or payment terms. The study concludes that negotiators should focus more than just on the negotiation process, as other elements contribute to the success of the business negotiations.

With China's becoming the second largest economic entity in the world, its level of international business is constantly on the rise. Since almost all international business starts from negotiations, it is useful and necessary to reflect on past negotiation experiences to raise our successful negotiation rates in the future. Because of the nature of business negotiations, i.e., they normally are not observed or recorded, this study approaches participants of business negotiations after the events, and has them reflect on their experiences as to what contributes to successful business negotiations and what leads to failed ones.

Literature Review

The word "negotiation" stems from the Roman word *negotiari* meaning "to carry on business" and is derived from the Latin root words *neg* (not) and *otium* (ease or leisure). Obviously, it was as true for ancient Romans as it is for most businesspeople of today that negotiations and business involves hard work.

In the past five decades or so, the research field of business negotiation has been plowed by the inch. Being a process, business negotiation is analyzed as a whole in its parts. Being an event, business negotiation has been studied as causes, the process per se and results. The following review demonstrates how business negotiation studies have

developed over time. Roughly, related studies can be categorized into the following ten sub-categories:

1) Negotiation: theory and practice

This category accounts for a large part of the negotiation literature. Firstly, the need for negotiating is well represented by Nierenberg's classic "needs theory of negotiation", which is thoroughly explained in his "The Art of Negotiating: Psychological Strategies for Gaining Advantageous Bargains" (1968) and "How to Read a Person Like a Book" (1971). Seminal studies include the following: Weiss and Stripp (1985) and Weise (1987) studied negotiations systematically and abstracted 12 variables of negotiations, which found wide application in later studies; Fisher, Ury and Patton (1991) looked on negotiations as "Principled Negotiation." Other studies like Zartman (1976), Scott (1981), Pruitt (1981), Winkler (1984), Wall (1985), Young (1991), Kolb and Williams (2003), Ghauri and Usunier (2003), Rudd and Lawson (2007), Lewicki and Hiam (2007) and many other studies either studied negotiation as a theoretical concept or provided practical guidance for negotiators.

2) Negotiation strategies

Strategies of various kinds, especially the "how to" type, are numerous in the negotiation literature. To mention a few, Karrass'(1970) "The Negotiating Game" and Pruitt (1983) "Strategic Choice in Negotiation" elaborated on negotiation preparation strategies from the American perspective; Adler, Brahm and Graham (1992) specifically, contrasted strategies in face-to-face negotiations in the U.S and in China. Cellich (1991) investigated negotiating strategies from the perspective of price. Cronin-Harris (2004) explicitly pointed out that planning is the most critical business negotiation strategy. Saner (2008) summed up the most frequently used strategies and tactics in international business negotiations.

3) Negotiation as conflicts and problem-solving

This sub-field of the study of negotiation looks at negotiation as a power display, hidden or open, for example, Bacharach and Lawler (1984) and Habeeb (1988), etc. Other studies in this sub-field regard negotiation as a conflict situation and therefore call for efforts in joint problem-solving, as in Sexton's (1996) "New models of negotiations, dispute resolution and joint problem solving," Strutton, and. Pelton's (1997) "Scaling the Great Wall: The Yin And Yang of Resolving Business Conflicts in China," the *Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* edited by Deutsch and Coleman (2000) , Ma's (2007) "Chinese Conflict Management Styles and Negotiation Behaviours – An Empirical Test," Volkema's (2011) "Understanding Initiation Behavior in Chinese Negotiations: An Examination of Distinctions across Three Regional Subcultures" and others all represent good endeavors in this field.

4) Negotiation and socio-cultural environments

This category has drawn attention in the negotiation research in many nations and cultures. It includes studies which relate negotiation to such factors as values, gender, politeness issues, styles, etc. Graham and Sano (1984), Graham (1985), Graham and Andrews (1987) and Graham et al. (1988) represent efforts in this regard, who examined how cultural elements affect negotiators. Hofstede's (2001) seminal study *Cultures Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* and Salacuse's (2003) *Making Global Deals: What Every Executive Should Know About Negotiating Abroad* are other major contributions to this category. Other studies such as Hawrysh and Zaichkowsky's (1991) study "Cultural Approaches to Negotiations: Understanding the Japanese", Sebenius (2002), Adair and Brett (2005) and Salacuse (2005), etc. all point out that culture can explicitly or implicitly affect international business negotiations. Sebenius and Qian's (2008) "Cultural notes on Chinese negotiating behavior" particularly pointed out that the "*guoqing*", i.e., the milieu in which the Chinese business culture evolves has considerable explanatory power in Chinese negotiating behaviors.

5) Negotiation and trust, ethic, and legal issues

Because of the paradoxical features of ethics, trust and legal issues in negotiations, researchers in various countries have given due attention to this sub-field. The following studies represent some of the attempts: Rammeloo's (2001) "Corporations in Private International Law: A European Perspective"; Lew, Mistelis and Kroll's (2003) "Comparative International Commercial Arbitration"; Ramburg's (2003) "Internet Marketplaces: The Law of Auctions and Exchanges Online", Malhotra's (2004) "Risky Business: Trust in Negotiations"; Fawcett, Harris, and Bridge's (2005) "International Sale of Goods in the Conflict of Laws" and Schafer, Fukukawa and Lee's (2007) "Values and the Perceived Importance of Ethics and Social Responsibility: The U.S. versus China" and many others.

6) Communication and negotiation

As the title implies, this category includes studies that approach negotiation as verbal and nonverbal communication, Keough (1992), Putnam and Holmer (1992) Gilsdorf (1997), Chu (1999), Heisey (2000), Vuorela (2005) and Lai, Li and Sycra (2006), etc. can represent this category. A note to add to this category is that meta-communication effects on business negotiations, it is believed, are also influenced by culture.

7) Regional and Organizational Negotiation

Business negotiation has also been studied with a regional focus. To mention a few works that are relevant to the present study: O'Keefe and O'Keefe's (1997) "Chinese and Western behavioural differences: understanding the gaps"; Woo's (1999) "Negotiating in

China: some issues for Western women", Li and Labig Jr.'s (2001) "Negotiating with China – Explorative Study of Relationship Building"; Buttery and Leung's (1998) research "The difference between Chinese and Western negotiations"; Fang's (1999, 2006) "Negotiation: the Chinese style"; Zhao's (2000) study "The Chinese Approach to International *Business* Negotiation", Graham and Lam's (2003) "The Chinese Negotiation"; Brahm's (2004) "Doing Business in China: The Sun Tzu Way" and Lassarre and Schütte's (2006) "Strategies for Asia Pacific: Meeting New Challenges ." etc.

Organizational negotiations have drawn researchers' attention because international/intercultural negotiations are organizational behaviors more often than not. Hofstede's (1991) seminal work "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind" is a convenient example. Other studies like Lax and Sebenius (1986), Schein (1999) and Graf et al. (2010) and Koeszegi et al. (2011) looked at how culture affects organizational negotiating behaviors.

8) Multilateral negotiation

Multilateral negotiation has been given special attention for the understandable reason that it differs from bilateral negotiation in considerable and important ways. Winham (1987), Keeney (1991), Zartman (1994) and Crump and Glendon (2003) have all made contributions to this field. Karakowsky and Miller (2006) even relate negotiator style and influence in multi-party negotiations to the role of gender.

9) Negotiation training and instruction studies

As Timura (2010) points out, researchers in this category focus on enabling students to engage in negotiation and conflict analysis by teaching them a set of core heuristics, to better understand interpersonal behavioral dynamics, and to learn certain interpersonal skills, and to practice negotiation and conflict analysis through the use of role plays and simulations. Legette's (1989) "*How to Improve Your Negotiation Skills*" and Page and Mukherjee (2007) "*Promoting Critical-Thinking Skills by Using Negotiation Exercises*" would be cases in point. Negotiation researchers like Demers (2002) explicitly pointed out that negotiating skills can be learned. Salacuse (2010) engages in reflections on how his own experience affected his teaching of international business negotiation. Sebenius (2010) discusses the possibilities of developing negotiation case studies and makes valuable suggestions about the teaching of negotiations.

10) Studies attempting to explain negotiation failures

This category is characterized by researchers' constant but limited attempts to explain negotiation failures. Some examples of this category are Shenkar and Ronen's (1987) study "The Cultural Context of Negotiations: The Implications of Chinese Interpersonal Norms", Gulbro and Herbig's (1994) study "The effect of external influences in the cross-cultural negotiation process" and their 1996 study "Negotiating successfully in

cross-cultural situations", Al-Gharndi's (1999) "Success and Failure in Saudi-American Negotiations: American Views", Miles' (2003) "Negotiating with the Chinese: Lessons from the Field" and Sheer and Chen's (2003) study "Successful Sino-Western Business Negotiation: Participants' Accounts of National and Professional Cultures, " among others. General characteristics of studies in this category are:

    a) the most frequently attributed causes of negotiation failures are cultural differences;

    b) such attempts are generally marked by Western scholars' perceived causes of negotiation failures.

To sum up the above categorization, research on cross-cultural/intercultural business negotiation has gained popularity worldwide. Scholars have studied business negotiations from both macro and micro perspectives with the intention of developing a better understanding of negotiations process per se and its meta-negotiation mechanisms. In spite of the fact that business negotiations have drawn scholarly and professional attention, few studies have had negotiators reflect upon their own behaviors in the negotiations they have experienced. While there are anecdotal reports and foreign negotiators' testimony of the hardship they have found in negotiations in China, literature surveyed revealed no empirical studies investigating Chinese negotiators' perceptions of their own negotiation failure. Thus this study has the potential to develop and refine negotiation theory in China.

This study asks the following questions:

1) What are the most important factors that affect the outcome of negotiations in the eyes of Chinese negotiators, especially what factors are likely to cause failure in negotiations?

2) These factors being pinpointed, are they equally important for Chinese negotiators?

3) Do male and female negotiators vary in their opinion as to which factors are the most influential in effecting outcomes?

The rationale for these questions is that from the previous literature we have seen that negotiations are a conscious or unconscious theory-governed practice. They are extremely complex psychological reactions and behaviors. Negotiations are so complicated that failed cases often deny simple attribution of cultural differences, regardless of strategy, problem/conflict-solving, or communication. Even in successful cases, simply stressing the fact that cultural differences have been paid due attention, and mutual respect has been shown by both parties, they still lack explanatory power. This is why the present researchers believe that the professionals' own testimonies are a good remedy for the inadequacy in the attribution of factors leading to success or failure in current negotiation studies.

Our reasoning in choosing experienced Chinese negotiators to reflect on their negotiation experiences (especially those with their Western counterparts) is that we want to compare their testimonies with the findings in the prevailing literature on Western-

Chinese negotiations. We particularly want to draw attention to the phenomenon that more and more Chinese women, with overseas studying and/or working experiences, have become or are becoming international business negotiators. With their unique contribution, we hope to find new perspectives on intercultural business negotiation failures. Our ultimate aim is, through comparison and contrast against the negotiation literature, new light can be thrown on the negotiation process benefiting professionals as well as researchers. Since understanding is the buzzword of the present world, we hope that our efforts can help to promote understanding of Chinese logic in international negotiation spheres, so as to demystify the "inscrutable" Chinese.

Methods

Participants

For the present study, using the so-called "snow-balling" method, we located in Beijing100 Chinese negotiators with ample international negotiation experience. We distributed 100 questionnaires from which 87 were returned, one with incomplete demographic information and one with an unfinished question, i.e., 85 complete questionnaires were returned. Of the 85 informants, 59 were males, and 26, females; all of the informants have bachelor's degrees or above; 20 were science majors, and 65 majored in business- and humanity-related subjects; 56 had overseas study and/or work experience, and 29 did not; 60 were in administrative positions, and 25 were not; 46 assessed their English at an advanced level, the rest believed that their English was at a level between intermediate and advanced. In the subsequent analysis, we would use 86 as the basis for our analysis. Of the 86 negotiators, 36 were further interviewed due to reasons of convenience and availability.

Instruments

The present survey consists of questionnaires and interviews. The questions in the questionnaires originated from an early unfinished study by the researchers. The questionnaires were in Chinese, and the results were reported in English.

For the interviews, the researchers first asked for demographic information before having the interviewees reflect upon their successful and unsuccessful negotiation experiences. 34 of the 36 interviews were conducted in Chinese. Two interviewees preferred to use English as the interview language.

Processes

First, the respondents were asked to answer a questionnaire consisting of the most frequently mentioned factors which the authors delineated from the relevant literature. More specifically, there were 16 frequently mentioned factors for unsuccessful business negotiations, and the respondents were asked to scale these influence factors from 1 to 4 (1= little influence; 2= some influence; 3= considerable amount of influence and 4=great

influence). The questionnaire answers were tallied and analyzed through SPSS by the researchers (for the questionnaire results see tables 1 and 2).

Then the 36 interviewees reflected on their most unforgettable negotiation experiences. In the interviews each Chinese negotiator was asked to recall at least one case of successful business negotiation and one of failure with their counterparts. The interviews were conducted and transcribed by the researchers' graduate students, and the interview transcripts were further analyzed through coding and categorizing by the researcher themselves. The data-collection and analysis process lasted for 18 months.

Results

The results of the survey are discussed in two subsections, i.e., questionnaire results and interview results.

A.   Questionnaire Results

TABLE 1: The top six influence factors on negotiation outcomes

Statistics

		Bottom line	No alternative plan	Not taking initiative	Being impatient	Inadequate info. of other party	Extraneous factors
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.15	3.01	3.16	2.99	3.27	3.02
Mode		3	3	3	3	4	3
Std. Deviation		.847	.874	.824	.694	.832	.840
Skewness		-.890	-.563	-.701	-.416	-.792	-.288
Std. Error of Skewness		.260	.260	.260	.260	.260	.260
Kurtosis		.363	-.379	-.153	.389	-.375	-.949
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.514	.514	.514	.514	.514	.514

TABLE 2: Other factors influencing negotiation outcomes

Statistics

		lang. barrier	nonverbal message	neg. religion	Face violation	Too aggressive	Not on equal footing	Being biased	Not giving other alternative	Other factors	Not with Other's style	Lack of flexibility
N	Valid	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	85	86	86
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mean		2.49	2.62	2.41	2.59	2.72	2.58	2.72	2.71	.81	2.85	2.83
Mode		2	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	0	3	3
Std. Deviation		1.015	.935	1.131	1.010	.877	.789	.890	.852	1.452	.861	.770
Skewness		.136	-.215	.087	-.155	-.169	-.275	.072	-.098	1.389	-.153	-.480
Std. Error of Skewness		.260	.260	.260	.260	.260	.260	.260	.260	.261	.260	.260
Kurtosis		-1.073	-.780	-1.384	-1.039	-.662	-.279	-.959	-.638	.198	-.827	.163
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.514	.514	.514	.514	.514	.514	.514	.514	.517	.514	.514

According to the respondents, the most frequently identified impact factors on the negotiation outcomes exert their influence in varying degrees (the bold-faced factors have ranked the top six): **not equipped with enough information about the other party (x=3.27); not taking the initiative in negotiations (x=3.16); revealing one's own bottom line too early (x=3.15); extraneous factors (x=3.02); no alternative plans or emergency measures (x=3.01); being impatient (x=2.99)**; not being familiar with the other party's strategies or styles (x=2.85); lack of flexibility (x=2.83); being biased towards the other party (x= 2.72); being too aggressive and not willing to compromise (x=2.72); failure to understand the other party's nonverbal messages (x=2.62); not paying attention to the other party's facial expression (x=2.59); not placing the other party on an equal footing (x=2.58); language barrier (x=2.49); neglecting the other party's religion or taboos (x=2.41), and other factors (x=0.81).

TABLE 3: Gender differences in opinion

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Language barrier	1	60	2.47	1.016	.131
	2	25	2.56	1.044	.209
Negative reaction to religion	1	60	2.52	1.142	.147
	2	25	2.20	1.080	.216
Non-verbal. message	1	60	2.70	.926	.120
	2	25	2.44	.961	.192
Bottom line	1	60	3.13	.873	.113
	2	25	3.16	.800	.160
Being biased	1	60	2.70	.908	.117
	2	25	2.72	.843	.169
No alternate plan	1	60	3.03	.843	.109
	2	25	2.92	.954	.191
Not taking initiative	1	60	3.17	.827	.107
	2	25	3.12	.833	.167
Being patient	1	60	2.98	.701	.090
	2	25	2.96	.676	.135
Inadequate info	1	60	3.25	.836	.108
	2	25	3.28	.843	.169
Face violation	1	60	2.70	.944	.122
	2	25	2.40	1.118	.224
Too aggressive	1	60	2.72	.865	.112
	2	25	2.80	.866	.173
Not on equal footing	1	60	2.65	.755	.097
	2	25	2.36	.810	.162
Not familiar with other style	1	60	2.98	.854	.110
	2	25	2.52	.823	.165
Lack flexibility	1	60	2.78	.715	.092
	2	25	2.88	.881	.176
Not giving other alternative	1	60	2.63	.823	.106
	2	25	2.92	.909	.182
Extraneous factors	1	60	2.97	.863	.111
	2	25	3.12	.781	.156
Other factors	1	60	.78	1.439	.186
	2	24	.75	1.391	.284

TABLE 4: Male and Female differences in factor attribution

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
lang .barrier	Equal variances assumed	.036	.849	-.383	83	.703	-.093	.244	-.578	.392
	Equal variances not assumed			-.378	43.907	.707	-.093	.247	-.590	.404
neg.religion	Equal variances assumed	.909	.343	1.183	83	.240	.317	.268	-.216	.849
	Equal variances not assumed			1.211	47.393	.232	.317	.262	-.209	.843
nonverb.message	Equal variances assumed	.198	.657	1.167	83	.247	.260	.223	-.183	.703
	Equal variances not assumed			1.149	43.520	.257	.260	.226	-.196	.716
bottomline	Equal variances assumed	.211	.647	-.131	83	.896	-.027	.203	-.430	.377
	Equal variances not assumed			-.136	48.818	.892	-.027	.196	-.420	.367
beingbiased	Equal variances assumed	.496	.483	-.094	83	.925	-.020	.212	-.441	.401
	Equal variances not assumed			-.097	48.228	.923	-.020	.205	-.433	.393
noalterplan	Equal variances assumed	1.002	.320	.543	83	.588	.113	.209	-.302	.528
	Equal variances not assumed			.516	40.421	.609	.113	.220	-.330	.557
nottakinginitiative	Equal variances assumed	.079	.779	.237	83	.814	.047	.197	-.346	.439
	Equal variances not assumed			.236	44.701	.815	.047	.198	-.352	.445
beimpatient	Equal variances assumed	.325	.570	.141	83	.888	.023	.165	-.305	.352
	Equal variances not assumed			.143	46.533	.887	.023	.163	-.304	.351
inadeqinfo	Equal variances assumed	.113	.738	-.150	83	.881	-.030	.199	-.427	.367
	Equal variances not assumed			-.150	44.675	.882	-.030	.200	-.433	.373
faceviolation	Equal variances assumed	2.654	.107	1.263	83	.210	.300	.237	-.172	.772
	Equal variances not assumed			1.178	38.983	.246	.300	.255	-.215	.815
tooaggressive	Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	-.404	83	.687	-.083	.206	-.493	.326
	Equal variances not assumed			-.404	44.959	.688	-.083	.206	-.498	.332
notonequalfooting	Equal variances assumed	.249	.619	1.579	83	.118	.290	.184	-.075	.655
	Equal variances not assumed			1.533	42.262	.133	.290	.189	-.092	.672
notfamotherstyle	Equal variances assumed	.135	.714	2.304	83	.024	.463	.201	.063	.863
	Equal variances not assumed			2.340	46.552	.024	.463	.198	.065	.862

lackflexibility	Equal variances assumed	.851	.359	-.529	83	.598	-.097	.183	-.460	.266
	Equal variances not assumed			-.486	37.823	.630	-.097	.199	-.500	.306
notgivingotheralternative	Equal variances assumed	.197	.658	-1.419	83	.160	-.287	.202	-.688	.115
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.361	41.217	.181	-.287	.211	-.712	.139
extranfactors	Equal variances assumed	1.547	.217	-.767	83	.445	-.153	.200	-.551	.244
	Equal variances not assumed			-.799	49.422	.428	-.153	.192	-.539	.232
otherfactors	Equal variances assumed	.066	.798	.097	82	.923	.033	.344	-.652	.718
	Equal variances not assumed			.098	43.782	.922	.033	.339	-.651	.717

Item by item comparison in Tables 3 and 4 show that male and female negotiators' only differ significantly in their opinion on "**not being familiar with the other party's strategies or styles (p=.024)**". No significant difference is found in any other items. This result can be interpreted as that there are basically no differences in terms of the analysis for negotiation failures between men and women. Gender is not the concern here.

B. Interview results

The interviews present interesting but somewhat different results from those of the questionnaires. The most important points can be summed up as follows:

1) Four of the 36 interviewees first attempted to define what negotiation is recalling their negotiation experiences. The first interviewee remarked: "Negotiation can take different forms, but in its nature, it is the process of participating parties trying to win the maximum possible interests for their own party under the frame of egoism with the application of negotiating tactics." The second interviewee just laughed upon hearing the interviewer's intentions and pointed out that it is difficult to judge whether a negotiation is successful or not, simply because successful negotiations can refer to the process as well as the outcome. The third claimed that a positive attitude from both parties is what will lead a negotiation to a good outcome. The fourth person was of the opinion that negotiation failures occur in those instances when the two parties see the situation as arguing sessions rather than cooperative problem-solving processes.

2) Almost without exception, the interviewees, regardless of their years of negotiation experience, took great delight in talking about their successful negotiation experiences, in which they went to considerable lengths to describe how the negotiations appear to be going in an unfavorable direction and then they "rescued" them from near-failure. The most frequently mentioned tactics for successful business negotiations were: active listening, including anticipating what the other party wants (n=16); compromise on price, delivery deadlines or payment terms; and, more often than not, (n=21) a win-win mindset (n= 11). Another finding is worth mentioning, i.e., some cases were near-successes (n=14) but ended up in failure because of one or two details that went wrong at the end.

3) Other most frequently attributed factors to successful negotiations are good communication abilities (n=17), especially good proficiency levels in English (n=17), proper business protocols and etiquettes (n=13), and quality products and/or services (n=11). What draws the researchers' attention is the meta-negotiation aspects, i.e., long-term thinking and a developing view of looking at China and Chinese companies (n=10), and most important of all, sincerity of cooperation from both sides (n=11).

4) Recommendation for successful business negotiators included (1) have professional qualifications and expertise, i.e., understanding the importance of written records of negotiations (n=8); (2) being trustworthy (n=7); c) show respect for others (n=13); (4) understand the importance of punctuality in showing up for negotiations per se and in

making deliveries (n=7); and (5) keep their promises (n= 12). However, the respondents agreed that even in successful business negotiation situations, not every negotiator possessed all the above-mentioned qualities.

5) 13 of the 36 interviewees mentioned how not paying enough attention to cultural influences or neglecting the other parties' cultures would lead to negotiation failures. However, there were two interviewees who pointed out that in this era of globalization, cultural differences are becoming more and more insignificant.

6) Nine of the 36 interviews mentioned that the negotiations they participated in ended up in failure because of the over-studied 'face' notion from the Chinese party. Those negotiations were unsuccessful either because the other party failed completely or partially to honor the Chinese 'face.' In such circumstances, communication seems to be at different wave lengths, i.e., what one party wants is beyond the understanding of the other party. Related to this, but a somewhat different 'Chinese characteristic' – being indirect is another factor believed to contribute to negotiation failures.

7) There were seven interviewees who mentioned the issue of trust and ethics in business negotiations. In their opinion, the negotiations failed either because the Chinese party were suspicious of the other parties' trustworthiness or vise versa. Two of them believed that it is difficult to observe ethical rules and have trust in others when it comes to price issues. One interviewee cited one tactic from the "*The Art of War*" by comparing negotiations to a war situation, in which the justification was "there is never too much deception in war." Most interestingly, there was mention of the use of "threats" in negotiations (n=2), which, in this negotiator's opinion, is more likely to lead to failure rather than success.

8) Six respondents pointed out that not being familiar with local laws or regulations were the direct cause of the failed negotiations. An example cited was   a Chinese company which had experienced several negotiation failures in Sudan because of their unfamiliarity with the local laws.

9) Two of the 36 interviews mentioned that the reason why the negotiations they had experienced did not proceed as they had wished was that the other party could not understand the Chinese reciprocity principle, i.e., their own party had made concessions previously, but their counterparts failed to understand the significance, thus were not able to reciprocate with their won concessions. One of the two respondents made the observation that (U.S.) Americans understand a little bit of reciprocity, but Europeans do not understand it at all.

10) There were two instances in which the interviewees explicitly attributed negotiation failures to interpretation or translation problems. They made it clear that in addition to business expertise, a good command of English is essential in international business negotiations.

11) There were four instances in which negotiations had nearly succeeded but failed due to protocol and etiquette problems. Interestingly, two of these were the same, i.e., placing the U.S. national flag at the left corner of the desk instead of its due position

at the right (Since in the Chinese understanding, a national flag being placed in the left corner of the desk signifies that this represented country is considered more important than its counterpart placed in the right corner of the same desk). The other two examples were presenting the 'wrong' gifts to people in other cultures, e.g. Chinese negotiators presented a painting of cranes to the French business counterparts, and Americans presenting green headwear to their Chinese negotiation partners.

12) Inflexibility, especially regarding payment terms and conditions, was another direct cause for failures in four interviewees' personal experience.

13) Three interviewees suspected that corporate cultural differences may also lead to negotiation failures. Another equally attributed cause was the positioning and expectation differences held by one negotiation party regarding their counterparts, e.g. negotiators from a Chinese state-owned enterprises erroneously believed that they had a better leverage in the negotiation and lost a million-dollar worth of business in the end.

14) There were two respondents who pointed out that means of communication, i.e., face to face or e-communication makes a significant difference. For example, if the tele-conferencing negotiations they had participated in had taken place face-to-face, they might have achieved a different result.

15) Finally, there were five instances in which the interviewees (all top level management personnel) believed that in order for negotiations to succeed, they must do more than argue at the negotiation table. But felt that it is difficult to attribute any particular reason to a failed negotiation, since it is the combination of inadequate preparation, international and/or national environment, products/services per se, and many other subjective and objective reasons.

16) Other reflections mentioned by one of the interviewees were not included in the above result summary, yet they are still useful: being too pushy, not paying enough attention to other's nonverbal/body language, short-term thinking, etc.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research enriches the existing negotiation literature in the following ways:

1) Though business negotiations are highly theory-governed practice, it is clear from the survey that it is very difficult to put negotiation theory (which the majority of the informants have learned in universities) into practice. The difficulties seem to be both subjective and objective.

2) Strategies and tactics in negotiations work hand-in-hand in actual negotiations, and they resist separation from one another; yet when strategies go wrong, the tactics have little power in changing the negotiation outcomes.

3) The interview data reveals that when the two parties start negotiations with a joint

problem- or conflict-solving mindset, the negotiations are more likely to succeed than fail.

4) The socio-cultural environment of business negotiations cannot be given too much attention since every negotiation takes place in its own unique environment. Related to this point are negotiation protocols and etiquette, since they are culture-specific more often than not. Though there was occasional reference to gender in the presently available literature, gender does not seem to play a role in the present study.

5) Negotiations per se are communication. Good communication skills, including a good proficiency level in English; and good expertise in one's own business field are the prerequisites for negotiation successes.

6) Almost all the literature dealing with (un)successful Sino-Western negotiations mentions that a good relationship is necessary for Western negotiators to conduct successful negotiations with their Chinese counterpart. This is not necessarily done explicitly, since "*guanxi*" can be established by respecting the other negotiation party.

7) The trickiest of all is the issue of trust and ethics: on the one hand, Chinese negotiators long for doing business with trustworthy counterparts, on the other, they also believe that "there is never too much deception in war," as the ancient "*Art of War*" pointed out. As researchers, we can only believe that there is a fair degree of conflict between the two.

Analysis of the questionnaires and interviews points to the fact that business negotiations are more complex than they appear to be. Negotiation occurs in a large system in which its mechanism is far more complicated than we think, and which requires the coordination of a variety of factors and parameters in order to succeed. When negotiations are successful, everything goes in the right direction, which verifies the English saying – Nothing succeeds like success; once they are unsuccessful, they can go wrong at any stage. There can be different explanations and attribution of different causes. An analogy in Chinese can well describe its ins and outs: All the happy families are alike, but each unhappy family has its own misfortunes.

The tentative conclusion of this study is that cross-cultural business negotiation is a system, in which factors leading to its success co-exist and interact upon each other. Successful cross-cultural business negotiations have as prerequisite the well-functioning of the system. In other words, they require a sum of understanding of culture, business, negotiation mechanics and beyond.

The present study has also found that negotiators attribute causes of negotiation failures to different factors, with some being more often referred to than others, i.e., factors leading to negotiation failures are not equally important. This attribution of factors appears to be case and participant specific.

The interviewees' attribution of the causes of negotiation failures has the following pedagogical implications: In a business negotiation situation, how much is communication? For negotiators from non-native language cultures: what role does language play in it? For business English instruction: how much of our course design should be business related, and how much should be English? Finally, how much and to

what extent should we strengthen negotiation instruction?

The limitations of the present research are that the sample size is relatively small; and the interviews are self-reports, which are likely to be unreliable.

Future studies can take the research further by enlarging the sample size and increasing the items for comparison.

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Nuclear Power after Fukushima

The Swedish Case

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The Fukushima disaster in March 2011 presented both Tokyo Electric Power Company and the Japanese authorities with a crisis, but it even constituted a potential crisis in all other countries with nuclear reactors. It led to a crisis for producers and/or authorities in many countries, but in Sweden, the public continued to have a high level of trust in nuclear power. This paper looks at the communication from different stakeholders, mainly the industry and the authorities, in order to explain why there never was a crisis for Swedish nuclear power. The conclusion draws upon the notion of rhetorical arena, and the socio-political context as key factors in the crisis communication.

When the IAEA upgraded the disaster in the Japanese nuclear power plant of Fukushima to a full 7 on the INES-scale, placing it alongside Tjernobyl as the worst accident ever, this affected countries around the globe. Apart from the fear of radioactive contamination, the public began questioning the safety of domestic nuclear power production. In Germany, the Government announced on 30 May 2011 that all nuclear power plants were to shut down by 2022 (Spiegel 2011), and while no other country took to such drastic measures, new inspections and safety measures were announced. Most governments, as well as the producers, felt that there was a strong risk of a public loss of trust in nuclear power in general, which could lead to a subsequent political crisis as well as a crisis for the operators.

In Sweden, however, nothing much happened. A new round of investigations concerning the safety of power plants during natural disasters was initiated (on a European level), but the public's general relations to nuclear power were not altered, and there was no apparent loss of trust in the operators.

In this paper, I will examine how the government institutions and industry communicated post-Fukushima to try and locate possible factors in this surprisingly stable level of trust. The analysis will include press releases, media coverage, and internal communication in the operating companies. Questions raised at the end will concern the analysis of communication in a complex situation and the possible synergy of communication among different stakeholders.

The Earthquake and Tsunami

At 2:46 PM on Friday 11 March 2011, an earthquake erupted off the coast of Hohshu in Japan, at a depth of approximately 32 km. The epicentre was located some 70 km off the coast, and the earthquake was registered as a 9.0 on the Richter scale, making it the most powerful known earthquake ever to have hit Japan, and one of the five most powerful earthquakes in the world since modern record-keeping began in 1900. The earthquake triggered powerful tsunami waves

that reached heights of up to 40.5 metres in Miyako in Tohoku's Iwate Prefecture, and which, in the Sendai area, travelled up to 10 km inland.

At 3:27 PM, the first tsunami hit the coast where the Fukushima nuclear power plant was located. Approximately 20 minutes later, a wave 14 m high crashed over the protective wall and flooded the power plant. All in all, seven tsunami waves hit the coast.

The earthquake triggered the security system, shutting down the plant as it was supposed to. But the force of the following tsunami was far stronger than what had been predicted when constructing the protective wall along the coast. The waves washed over the wall, flooding the plant and causing a failure in the cooling system. The shutdown reactors were thus left without the necessary cooling of the core, and this lead to a critical rise in temperature, explosions, and a partial melt down. A total melt down was evaded, but the scenario evoked worldwide by this threat, was that of Chernobyl and the serious effects on humans and ecology in a number of countries.

Communication wise, two aspects of the event are worth highlighting, even if this paper does not deal with the communicative mistakes made by the plant's managers and owners, and the Japanese authorities (see e.g. Yilmaz 2011 and Tucker 2011). First of all, there was continuous and world-wide television coverage of the events, with footage being run over and over again showing the explosions and fires in the plant. And secondly, the development of the communication gave a very strong impression that the managers did not have any control over what was happening, and that they were conscious of this and were trying to hide this fact. The managers denied problems and assured the public that safety was maintained, only to be forced later on to admit that they did not have control, and that the situation was growing worse by the hour. Lack of control and lack of openness and sincerity in the communication strongly questioned the competence of the company, Tepco, and the managerial skills of nuclear power producers in general.

A Crisis for Tepco, for Japan, and for Nuclear Power

In Japan, the Fukushima event soon became a crisis for several agents. First of all, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, Tepco, who ran the plants at Fukushima were faced with a classic crisis scenario. The flooding of the plants, the breakdown of the electric system, the failure of the cooling system, and the melt down of the cores were all events which would seriously damage the future operation of the company and cause substantial economic loss. But the development of the crisis in combination with the communication failures of the company aggravated the situation and put the company in an extremely difficult situation. The trust in the company's ability to safely run a nuclear power plant evaporated, as did the trust in the honesty of their communication. Furthermore, the economic losses increased to an unforeseen level, as the contamination spread in the surrounding area.

The earthquake and tsunami already presented Japan as a nation with a crisis situation, with massive destruction, loss of lives, and the need to find housing for a large number of inhabitants. The radiation from the damaged power plants added to this crisis, but it also presented a second crisis through the criticism that the government was badly prepared for the event of a large scale nuclear disaster. The problems of preparation, but also of organization of the actions taken in relation to the melt down, presented both the government and the local authorities with another crisis, including a crisis of communication.

Lastly, the events lead to a rapidly diminishing goodwill towards nuclear power in general in Japan, as the problems of Topco indicated that other plants and other producers may face the same difficulties were they to be exposed to earthquakes, tsunamis, or other natural

forces. This lead to a quick shut down of most of the operating reactors, a stop which is still operative one year after the tsunami.

So, within the Japanese society, the events produced severe crisis for both commercial actors and government bodies, on a local and national level. It was a very complex crisis, with effects reaching all parts of society, not just temporarily but for years to come.

Globalization: Nuclear Power's Role as a Global Issue

One thing which the reactions to the Fukushima event made clear was the effects of globalization in a crisis situation. There was no way this could have been limited to a crisis for Japan only; as soon as footage of the flooded, burning reactors started being broadcast, the crisis was a global one. At least potentially, any country with nuclear power production was facing the fears, doubts, and accusations raised by the Fukushima case.

The environmentalists have, of course, claimed this for decades, that the dangers are inherent in any kind of nuclear production, but even the melt down in Chernobyl did not evoke the same kind of global anxiety as did Fukushima. A number of reasons may lie behind this increased awareness, but two seem more central than others.

The first is the fact that this happened in a modern, Western-oriented country with whom most Westerners can identify. Chernobyl was situated in a Communist country, which probably affected the general level of trust in the way things were run. The country was looked upon as "sacking behind", and the safety and management culture was considered sub-standard. In other words, it was hard to convince people that the same kind of accident could happen in modern, Western reactors, with superior management and safety. "It can't happen here", was the general conclusion, and other countries – especially to the North of Ukraine, such as Sweden – were left with the problem of dealing with the effects of radiation.

In contrast to this, Japan is considered a modern country, with generally high standards both when it comes to safety and management. Thus, the question which was quickly brushed aside with Chernobyl, "Could this happen here?", was not as easily dismissed in the case of Fukushima. The cultural proximity affected the assessment of risks.

The second reason is the spreading of information and especially footage through the internet. As soon as something happens, media and amateurs will be there with cameras and cell phones, uploading images on their websites, giving instant and worldwide distribution.

What Kinds of Crises?

Outside of Japan, the Fukushima events could, as we have seen, turn into a crisis for two groups of actors. On the one hand, the companies involved in nuclear power production, and on the other hand governments and other governmental bodies in countries where nuclear power plants are operational or under planning or construction. The ones in relation to whom this would turn into a crisis, were in both cases the general public, the population, in each country, and whether or not it did turn into a crisis – and which kind of crisis – depended on the picture of the Fukushima event in the population. In other words, how the public perceived the Japanese crisis had a profound effect on how they related this to actors in their own country. Bluntly put, criticism of Tepco could trigger a crisis for the domestic nuclear power producers; criticism of the Japanese government could trigger a crisis for the domestic government agencies dealing with nuclear issues, and the general situation could create a crisis for nuclear power as such, hitting both producers and authorities, with effects for local communities, suppliers, etc.

In order to get an overview of the possible effects on agents in other countries, I have summarized the accusations in tables 1 and 2 below.

TABLE 1: Accusations against Tepco and their relevance for other producers

Accusations against Tepco	Possible crisis issues for other producers
Constructions not safe	Are the constructions really tested against all possible natural disasters, are the safety systems sufficient, are there sufficient back-up systems should one system fail?
The "worst case scenario" prepared for was far from the worst possible scenario	The planning of worst cases should take all historical and scientific evidence into consideration and then add a margin
Uncertainty as to consequences	There should be solid and realistic estimations of the consequences of different accidents, both regarding the chain of events within the plant and the effects on the outside world
Lying about the seriousness of the situation and the worst case scenarios throughout the development of the situation	The communication should not try to calm the population by lying about the worst possible scenarios only to have to correct themselves at a later stage
Bad crisis preparation	The crew and management should have a thorough training of what to do in a crisis situation

TABLE 2: Accusations against Japanese authorities and their relevance for authorities in other countries

Accusations against the Japanese government and local authorities	Possible crisis issues for authorities in other countries
Insufficient control	Is the level of continuous control high enough to prevent events developing into crises?
Insufficient crisis planning and organization	Is the planning of what to do in case of a worst case scenario updated, complete, sufficient and realistic?
Insufficient training	Have the employees at all levels been trained for a worst case scenario, does everyone know her/his place in the crisis organization?
Insufficient, incorrect and slow communication	Are the channels and routines for communication to the public in a worst case scenario updated and sufficient; can the authorities get the correct information to the relevant citizens fast enough?

Behind these crisis issues lie two fundamental questions from the public:

     1) Could this happen here in our country?
     2) What would happen if it happened here?

with a third possible question, which in itself does not constitute an issue for the Swedish industry, but may be of importance to the authorities:

     3) Will the accident in Japan affect us directly?

The answers given by the involved organizations to these three questions, together with the attitudes of the organizations and their spokespersons, decided the success or failure of their crisis communication. (See also Peter Sandman's account in Tucker 2011.)

Communication in Sweden during and after Fukushima

When looking at the public communication regarding nuclear power in Sweden during and after the Fukushima accident, three groups of actors are interesting:

- the nuclear industry
- government bodies involved
- the environmental, no-nukes movement.

Historically, these are the three important actors in the Swedish debate since the early 1980s (Vigsø 2010). The "ideal state" here is one with a pro-nukes position (the industry), a no-nukes position (the greens), and a neutral position (the government and state institutions) dedicated to providing facts and information for politicians on which to form their points of view.

Communication from the nuclear industry

When discussing the public communication activities from the nuclear industry, there are a number of organisations which could act as senders. However, very few of these actually take part in the public discussions. The dominating role is taken by Vattenfall, owned by the Swedish state and majority stockholder in e.g. Forsmark nuclear power plant (see Vigsø & von Stedingk Wigren 2010). Through their size and importance they stand out as the voice of the Swedish nuclear industry. The research and development organisation Elforsk, owned by Svensk Energi (Swedenergy, owned by the providers of electric power) and Svenska Kraftnät (Swedish National Grid, owned by the state) provide some of the facts for statements made after Fukushima, but otherwise, most comments from the industry were given as answers to questions from journalists. In these cases, the industry was represented by managers from some of the nuclear power plants.

When the industry was called upon to comment on the events, it was mostly to answer the questions: What is happening?, What are the potential consequences?, and: Could this happen in Sweden? They provided technical information about the processes going on in the reactors, e.g. why the cooling was so essential, and even gave a technical explanation of why a similar situation could not arise in the Swedish plants. Apart from this, there was very little direct communication from the industry. A few press releases from Swedenergy address the Fukushima crisis. One from 16 March (Svensk Energi 2011a) bears the headline "European nuclear industry rallies to help Japan overcome the effects of the disaster", and is actually built on the Foratom press release. Here, the industry offers its condolences, expresses its compassion with the victims, and recognizes the anxiety felt by citizens of the EU, while maintaining that all European nuclear plants are safe, and warning for any hasty policy decisions. Other press releases deal with the European stress tests brought about by the Fukushima disaster, and these tests are welcomed by the industry as a means of helping the industry to maintain a high level of safety. Even when the test results show that the plants do not fulfill all the demands in relation to withstanding earthquakes and the simultaneous malfunction of several reactors, this is reported in a press release (Svensk Energi 2011b).

One interesting piece of communication is the internal paper Kärnpunkten, for employees of the Oskarshamn nuclear plant. Here, among news of what is happening locally and interviews with employees, there are two articles related to Fukushima. One (Österberg 2011) deals with "Crises in the wake of the disaster", and sums up the events in Japan. The author concludes that the accident will have "a great influence on the development of the nuclear industry", but at the same time "the contamination effects on the surroundings must be described as limited". "In relation to the scope of the reactor breakdown, the consequences for the surroundings must be seen as manageable and through continuous restrictions, even long term effects can be

prevented." This calming tone is even found in the article on the stress tests ("How do you stress a nuclear power plant?", Johannesson 2011). The stress tests do not imply any physical measures, the project manager explains, they only need to present an analysis of how robust the plant is. At the end of the article, the reporter wonders why the project was given the name "Kent", and the manager explains: " Well, you know how the OKG [Oskarshamn power plant] is… as usual, it was the calendar which guided us. On the day we initiated the project, the official name of the day was Kent", and he laughs.

Without going into further detailed analysis of the different texts and comments from the industry, it is clear that the general strategy comprises the following main points:

- a recognition of the seriousness of the situation;
- an expression of compassion with the victims;
- a scientific approach to the events and their causes;
- a technical description of the differences between Japan and Sweden, both with regard to the possibilities of natural disasters and the construction of the power plants, making a similar chain of events impossible in Sweden;
- a positive approach to the demand for tests to assure the safety of the plants;
- a reluctance to go into details regarding the effects of the accident in Fukishima or describing a worst case scenario.

These traits seem to be present whether the communication is directed at the general public, journalists, or employees within the nuclear industry.

Communication from government bodies involved

The central governmental institution within the field of nuclear power is The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (Strålsäkerhetsmyndigheten, SSM). On their homepage (www.ssm.se), this is how they describe their task:

> The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority is an authority under the Ministry of the Environment with national responsibility within the areas of nuclear safety, radiation protection and nuclear non-proliferation. The Authority works proactively and preventively in order to protect people and the environment from the undesirable effects of radiation, now and in the future.

During and after the events in Japan, the SSM was by far the most visible official voice. From 11 March through to 30 March, they issued 50 press releases, with up to as much as five on the same day. The press releases can be grouped into some basic categories:

- Updates on the situation in Japan, including SSM's evaluation;
- Technical explanations, e.g. of the INES-scale, or the need for cooling of reactors;
- Advice to Swedes both in Japan and in Sweden;
- Descriptions of the tasks of the SSM.

The updates are all factual, passing on confirmed information of what is happening: the radiation level, the fire, weather forecasts, etc. The authority's own evaluation of the implications of the current state of things is always very matter-of-fact like and without speculations on any worst case scenario.

The technical explanations seem to be issued due to questions asked to the SSM, either by the public or by journalists, and they are addressing specific points as directly and short as possible.

The advice to Swedes in Japan, Swedes planning to travel to Japan, or Swedes in Sweden, are very clear and concise: evacuate if you are within a distance of 80 km from the plant, avoid unnecessary travels to Japan, and don't start taking iodine in Sweden. The SSM works together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when it comes to advice to Swedes. Some of the press releases refer to the recommendations from the Ministry, some pass on the SSM's recommendations for the Ministry.

The last category contains short information about the longer opening hours of the telephone hot-line, and of how to follow the SSM on Twitter and Facebook. But a few days into the disaster, the following press release is issued:

> **Responsibility: radiation safety**
> Published 16 March 2011 5:00 PM
>
> The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority monitors the Swedish nuclear power plants as well as all other activities involving nuclear techniques.
>
> The task of the authority is to control and set up demands for those carrying out nuclear activities in order to secure the fulfillment of the safety and radiation protection demands.
>
> The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority is a part of the Ministry of Environment and work by order of the Government. Questions regarding the future use of nuclear power or not are dealt with on the political level – the responsibility of the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority is to set up demands for the radiation safety, not to take a position for or against nuclear power.

It is easy to imagine this as a sort of response to questions or comments from the public about Fukushima as an argument against Swedish nuclear power, and even as an attempt to keep the public from asking the SSM to take part. With this statement, the SSM wants to proclaim its status as a purely scientific authority, maintaining the highest possible level of radiation safety for Swedes at home and abroad, given the political decisions of the Swedish Parliament and Government.

Apart from press releases and interviews in the media, the SSM also published a special issue of their public magazine Strålsäkert ("Radiation Safe"), devoted to Japan. This was published 6 months after the disaster and contains articles about Japan ("Fukushima 6 months later", "The future for Fukushima"), and about Sweden. The editorial states that the accident has an important influence on the safety work in Sweden, and the following article deals with the stress tests to be conducted. These tests are described as a way of learning from Fukushima, but there is even a reassurance that this kind of work is already being done by Swedish nuclear plants. What are new in the demands for tests are the kind of unanticipated events to be taken into account: "The nuclear power plants are already constructed to withstand improbable events, but now it is a question of studying what would happen in even worse events. e.g. stronger earthquakes and larger floods than what has previously been thought possible."

One article asks the crucial question: "Can it happen in Sweden?" Here, the author describes what happened in Japan, and although we never have as strong earthquakes or as large tsunamis as in Japan, even the Swedish power plants have to be prepared for natural factors such as strong hail, hard frost, and heavy rain. But: "The most important difference between Swedish and Japanese boiling water reactors is the fact that the Swedish reactors are equipped with a valve

which can release the pressure within the reactor, letting the gasses pass through a filter." This way, "only 0.1 percent of the radioactive substances in the reactor would be released". Apart from the fact that this percentage does not mean much to a non-expert, it sounds reassuring, and this also goes for the article explaining how this filter works, and even the article on how small the amounts of radioactive substances from Japan are which can be measured in Sweden. There is even an article describing how the SSM were on duty 24-7 for three weeks during the crisis:

> Both media and the public turned to the SSM to get more information, and the Authority's experts were seen in almost every national news broadcast and paper. At the same time, the SSM gave advice to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other authorities such as the National Food Agency and the Swedish Customs.

So, while addressing the concerns of the public and using scientific arguments to calm people's fears, the SSM is using the situation to strengthen their image as a dedicated organization, with both the scientific knowledge and the will to fulfill their task and serve both the state and its citizens. In other words, the crisis situation presents an opportunity for image-boosting as well.

Communication from the environmental, no-nukes movement.

For the opponents of nuclear power, mostly organized through NGO's, the accident in Fukushima, and the reactions in other countries, ought to present a "golden opportunity" to once and for all prove the dangers of nuclear power, and the problems of managing a crisis situation. Furthermore, the accident happened in an industrialized country known for its technical innovations in other fields, which ought to give the arguments against nuclear power more force, compared to e.g. the disaster in Chernobyl. One could thus expect a communication focusing on the fact that not even Japan could avoid a disaster, nor deal with the consequences afterwards.

This was, indeed, the line followed by the anti-nuclear organisations, as they pointed to all the problems faced by Japan and Tepco in preventing and dealing with the accident, and of course the massive effects this would have on the eco-system for decades to come. The fact that Germany decided to shut down all nuclear power plants, was used as yet another proof of nuclear power's loss of credibility as a viable energy source for the future.

But most of this communication was done on a small scale, through blogs, webpages, and press releases. No major campaign was launched to try and use the events in Japan as an argument against Sweden's nuclear power policy. One year after Fukushima, Greenpeace launched a campaign, "What will you do if the alarm sounds?", in areas around the Swedish plants and the areas possibly affected by a leakage in the Finnish plant of Pyhäjoki. The object was to put the spotlight on the government plans for action in an emergency, and as a spokesperson put it: "If it could happen in a country as rich and developed as Japan, where they guaranteed it couldn't happen, it could happen here too" (Lindberg 2012).

But there were no mass demonstrations on the scale seen in e.g. Germany and France following the Fukushima accident, and no political initiatives were launched by the Green party in Parliament.

The Effects of Fukushima on Public Opinion in Sweden

Since the 1980s, the SOM Institute at the University of Gothenburg has conducted polls on a wide variety of subjects, including nuclear power. A short summary of their findings is, that from 1999 to 2009, the percentage of the population in favour of diminishing or totally abolishing nuclear power has fallen from 50 to 31 percent, and the corresponding percentage of those who

want to maintain the present level of nuclear power or increase it has risen from 26 to 51 percent (Hedberg and Holmberg, 2010, p. 2) – with a significant difference between the sexes, as men are generally more positive towards nuclear power than women. (In 2009, 66 percent of the men wanted to maintain or increase the level, while only 37 percent of the women did, Hedberg and Holmberg, 2010, p. 3) And as could be expected, voters who voted for Right wing parties are in general more favourable than Left wing voters, which fit in nicely with the current government's opening up for a cancellation of earlier decisions to shut down plants.

When it comes to the population's assessment of risks, the Swedes are generally convinced that the risk of an accident in a Swedish nuclear plant is quite low. The average assessment has remained quite constant since 1990 at around 4 on a ten-grade scale, with 1 being "very low risk" and 10 being "very high risk" (Hedberg and Holmberg, 2009a, p. 2). The percentage of the population with "high or quite high" confidence and trust in the nuclear power industry shows considerably more variation over time (Hedberg and Holmberg, 2009b, p. 2), with 36 percent as the lowest (1986) and 58 percent as the highest (1990 and 2004). In 2008 the number was 46 percent and probably rising, which means that half the population is confident that the nuclear industry has the competence needed, and that the risk level thus is quite low.

And at the same time, nuclear power as an issue has dropped on the citizens' agenda for what is important to Sweden as a society: In 1990, 11 percent named energy/nuclear power as one of the top three issues, but since then the number has dropped to a steady 1-2 percent (Holmberg and Weibull, 2008, p. 24). The overall opinion about nuclear power can be seen in Fig. 1 in the Appendix.

So, what effect did the Fukushima accident have on the Swedes' general opinion regarding nuclear power? Very little, it turns out. There was a short, but very limited movement toward a less positive approach to nuclear power, as the percentage of people thinking that abolishing nuclear power rose from 29 to 33%. But this change was quite small, and what is even more interesting, it disappeared quite quickly. Come the end of May 2011, it was "business as usual" in the population. (See fig. 2 in the Appendix.).

So, the Swedish population is in general quite positive towards nuclear power and the nuclear power industry, and remains so even during and after the worst nuclear accident to take place after Chernobyl, and there is no reason to believe that the Swedes have changed their attitude regarding the importance of nuclear power on the political agenda: it remains a rather low priority question. In other words, the attitude of Swedes regarding nuclear power is quite stable and only changes in the long perspective.

The Relation between Opinions and Communication

How is this relevant to a study of the communication during the Fukushima crisis? Three hypotheses are possible, as far as I can see:

Hypothesis 1: The opinions and attitudes in the Swedish population make a certain kind of communication possible.

Hypothesis 2: The opinions and attitudes in the Swedish population are the result of a certain kind of communication.

Hypothesis 3: The opinions and attitudes in the Swedish population are the result of a certain kind of communication, which in turn strengthens the existing opinions and attitudes.

In the conclusion, I shall discuss these three hypotheses in relation to the analysis of the communication.

Conclusion: Well Performed Crisis Communication?

So, how can the communication in Sweden during and after the Fukushima disaster be summed up, and what are the implications from a crisis communication point of view?

When looking at the communication from the nuclear industry, it is striking how they keep a low profile without evading the subject. They express compassion for the victims, and concern for the issue of safety even in Swedish plants. They welcome the European programme for stress tests as a means to continue and strengthen the continuous safety work within nuclear power production. At the same time, they distinguish themselves from the Japanese case through an explanation of the differences between the geological and weather conditions in Japan and Sweden, and between the technical construction of the reactors. They describe the events in Fukushima and point to how the Swedish plants are constructed in such a way as to avoid the overheating of the core and subsequent melt down. This differentiation comes across as the most important message to Swedes, framing the industry's positive stance towards stress testing as "extra precautions", and the general approach as one of humility ("there is always something to be learned").

One thing which is striking, is the complete absence of any descriptions of or speculations about "worst case scenarios" (something which Peter Sandman strongly criticized Tepco for leaving out, Tucker 2011). In fact, there is very little about what the Fukushima disaster will mean for Japan or Sweden in a longer perspective. The descriptions are all either of past events or of the present state of things, establishing a divide between observable facts and non-scientific guesswork.

It is also interesting to note that there were no attempts at defending nuclear power as such against accusations from environmentalists and others. Apparently, the nuclear industry in Sweden felt no need to go out with statistical evidence or economic arguments to counter the demands for a shutdown of Swedish nuclear power. This could be because the industry felt that this would damage their overall ethos, as the time was not right to do anything which might seem to diminish the scale of the Japanese disaster. But it even seems a wise decision when considering how positive the Swedes were and are to nuclear power, and how little effect Fukushima had on this. There simply was no need to start aggressively defending nuclear power.

The accident took place in Japan, and the crisis communication there involved two major actors, the nuclear industry and the authorities. Much has been said and written about their shortcomings, but the events had effects around the world. Seen from a Swedish perspective, the possible crisis situation arising from the Fukushima case was one of distrust for the nuclear power industry's ability to safely continue their business, and for the authorities' ability to handle the effects of a natural disaster. This would lead to a general mistrust of nuclear power, a situation wanted by neither the Government nor the industry. In other words, these actors share a common interest in preventing the Japanese crisis from turning into a Swedish crisis. Did this in any way affect the crisis communication by the authorities and by the industry? Without succumbing to conspiracy theories, one can observe a common approach to the communication, especially with the avoidance of any worst case scenarios and speculations, the focus on knowledge and facts, while at the same time stressing the seriousness of the situation and the compassion for the victims and the people of Japan.

Compassionate, worried, but serious and dedicated to scientific facts – this was the picture which formed of both the industry and the authorities. This even showed in the

unconditional refusal of the possibility of a similar situation arising in Sweden. Thus, the industry and the authorities worked on a joint cause, without compromising their independence. They were able to do this because of the generally positive attitudes towards nuclear power in the Swedish population, while through their communication maintaining and strengthening this attitude – and avoiding a crisis of trust.

The main antagonist of the nuclear industry, the environmental organizations, did not use the situation to promote their negative attitude in any significant way, and the industry on the other hand thus felt no need to strongly defend nuclear power as a future source of energy in Sweden. In short, nothing much happened and the general attitude remained one of acceptance.

Without going into details, it is hard not to compare the situation in Sweden with that of Germany. Here, the general attitude towards the nuclear industry was far more negative to begin with, and the protest raised by the accident in Fukushima was massive. The government felt the pressure mount, as even a company like Siemens chose to quit the nuclear industry (BBC 2011), and in order to maintain the public's trust in the Government and the authorities, chose to abolish nuclear power completely within a ten year perspective.

The reactions in Sweden lie closer to those in the US, as described in The New York Times (Cooke 2011) as "surprisingly low-key", although in the US there was already a "whittling down" of the plans for more reactors making the Fukushima accident more of a reaffirmation of the soundness of this decision.

One way of trying to grasp the complexity of the situation, is through the use of the notion of "rhetorical arena" (Johansen & Frandsen 2007). With the events in Fukushima, a rhetorical arena opened up in each and every country around the world with nuclear power production. The earthquake, tsunami, fire, meltdown, and communication problems together opened a field of potentiality, where at least national counterparts of the stakeholders facing a crisis in Japan could be expected to participate. But exactly which stakeholders presented themselves, which stakes they held, and the strategic positioning of themselves in relation to (the communication by) other stakeholders, depended on the specific context of the country in question. In Germany, the government chose to follow the wide spread public criticism of nuclear power as such and announce the shutdown of all plants, in order to maintain the public's trust in the government. In Sweden, the industry and the authorities pulled in the same direction, apparently without explicit coordination, and used the existing attitudes in the population to avoid a crisis and maintain a high level of trust. In Germany, the environmentalists and no-nukes organizations used the situation to (successfully) further their stakes, while in Sweden; these stakeholders did not attempt to exploit the situation for their own goals. Thus, the strategies of the stakeholders were different, as the contexts differed, and on a textual and rhetorical level, the communication by all stakeholders also took very different paths.

Was the crisis communication effective? It depends on by what standards you measure it. In Germany, the government succeeded in avoiding a (political) crisis for themselves by "sacrificing" the nuclear industry; in Sweden, the nuclear industry and the authorities avoided a crisis for nuclear power. The appraisal of what the downsides to this were will be left for discussion.

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Appendix:
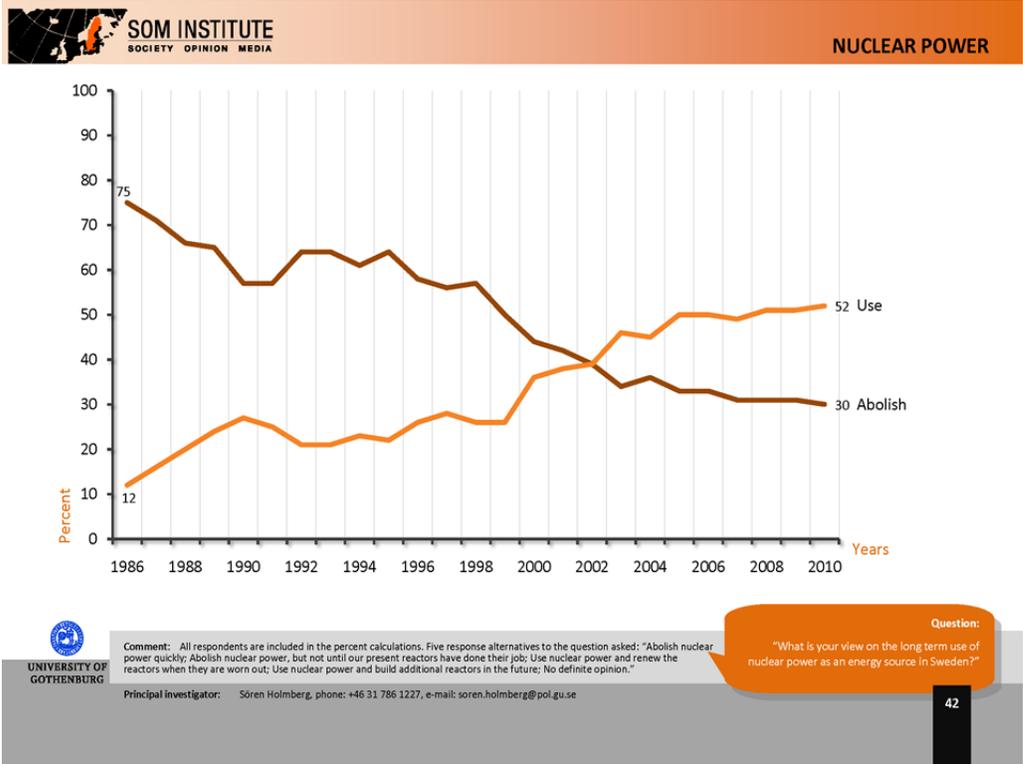
FIGURE 1: Swedes' attitude towards nuclear power 1986-2010 (Oscarsson 2011)

Pre-Post Fukushima (March 11, 2011)
"Sweden should abolish nuclear power"

	Sept 2010	March 18-2011	May 2011
Very good	29	33	32
Rather good	21	20	20
Neither good nor bad	13	15	12
Rather bad	15	15	19
Very bad	21	17	18
	100	100	100
N	1 220	1 220	1 220
Mean (1-5)	2,79	2,63	2,70

www.mod.gu.se

FIGURE 2: Changes in opinion during and after Fukushima (Oscarsson 2011)

Organizational Blogging

An Explorative Case Study of a Corporate Weblog from an Employees' Perspective

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The purpose of this paper is to address and discuss implications of blog usage in a corporate communication context from an employees' perspective by analyzing the local context and the underlying motivations of corporate blogging as they are being discursively constructed by a group of organizational bloggers. The paper presents findings from a case study of a government agency's corporate blogging activity, traced through focus group interviews with the organizational bloggers. Based on an empirical investigation of the organizational bloggers using situational analysis and thematic network analysis, central contextual elements and implications are unfolded and discussed, providing a documented, nuanced and deep insight and understanding into blog usage in a corporate context from the perspective of the employee bloggers. Insights and further understanding about blogging from inside an organization is as critical to our understanding of blogging and social media in a corporate context, as it is to our understanding of transparent and participatory organizational culture. The findings are useful for managers to get insight into the implications of corporate blogging, i.e. the challenges and resources, barriers and opportunities, which employees experience when acting as bloggers, as well as when acting on other transparent Web 2.0 mediated communications platforms for corporate purposes.

Keywords: Web 2.0; Social media; Corporate blogging; Organizational blogging; Corporate communication; Discourse analysis.

Paper type: Case study

In this paper, the phenomenon of blogging is investigated in a concrete organizational setting, namely the Danish Patent and Trademark Office's weblog, the Intellectual Property blog, called the IP-blog[i] .The government agency started their corporate weblog in October 2005 with around 20 employee bloggers. The strategic purpose of the blog sprung out of a branding effort as part of an increase in public organizations' digital communication in Denmark. Employees from a broad spectrum of departments within the organization were selected as bloggers, and they are expected to define, structure and manage how they write on the blog.

At the time when the IP-blog emerged, the field of blogging was dominated by practitioners and consultancy-based literature with a predominant message that companies had to adapt to and implement the blog and other social media forms in their communication if they wanted to be prepared and able to participate in the user-involving environment represented first by blogs, and later by other Web 2.0 technologies. The companies were promised a change in business' way of communicating with the publics, *The Cluetrain Manifesto* (Levine, Locke, Searls, & Weinberger, 2001) being one of the strongest impetus for the trend. As Puschmann (2010) critically notes in his work on corporate blogging as an emerging genre of computer-mediated communication, Cluetrain echoes the advice to change your tone from one that pronounces to one that invites participation and to cede some control, and is based on the

impression that only a communicative style that emphasizes parity and equality can succeed. The overall mantra expressed a radical shift in the relationship between corporations and consumers from *markets as targets* to *markets as conversation* (Kline & Burstein, 2005; Levine et al., 2001; Scoble & Israel, 2006). The popularity and promises of blogs back then were centered on the 'tools for conversation' aspect. Journalists and business consultants, Kline and Burstein (2005), argue that the reason blogs embed themselves into our new cultural DNA is that we are living in a unique moment in time when the human urges to converse, communicate, argue publicly, learn collaboratively, share experiences, and archive collective knowledge have suddenly been married with incredibly powerful, fast, ubiquitous technologies, such as the blog. The citizen-expert, the citizen-journalist, and the informed amateur in many realms of knowledge and human endeavor are all gaining prominence as a result of the blogging phenomenon (Kline & Burstein, 2005: p. xiv).

These reactions to the boom in digital interpersonal communication via the Internet all seem to have the message in common that corporate actors should emulate the socio-communicative behavior of their customers to gain trust and be perceived as competent partners and not manipulators. To this, Puschmann makes the argument that the issue is not seen primarily as ethical but as behavioral: communicate differently and you will be perceived differently, appears to be the tenet (Puschmann, 2010: p. 87). This reasoning sheds an important and necessary critical light on the promises and hyperbole propagated by the Cluetrainers, and shows how it is referring more to a change in communicative style (human voice vs. corporate monotone) than change in behavior (replacing the motivation to maximize profits with something more benign). In this sense, established discourse genres of corporate communication, such as the mission statement or investor relations report, are cast in a negative light to emphasize how 'out of touch' corporations are with the loss of influence and control of access to information that is brought about by the rise of Web 2.0 technologies:

> The inherent assumption in public-facing corporate blogging is that the crisis postulated by Cluetrain and reflected in the loss of trust in established corporate communicators and genres can be overcome by adapting to a new environment and practices. Using an external blog to address a wide variety of stakeholders (potential and existing customers, potential employees, public officials, interest groups) means being on par with the perceived democratic nature of the blogosphere; however, it also opens the door to a number of new challenges not present prior to the rise of blogs. (Puschmann, 2010: p. 87)

In agreement with Puschmann's critique, which finds the conclusion of the Cluetrainers to be somewhat undocumented, this paper identifies these challenges along with other central implications on the basis of an explorative investigation of an external blog from the internal bloggers' perspective. While a certain body of research exists on bloggers as social actors and community builders (Miller & Shepherd, 2005), bloggers as agenda-setters on the political scene (Hopkins & Matheson, 2005; Klastrup & Pedersen, 2006), bloggers as sources for news media (Messner & Distasio, 2008; Metzgar, 2007), bloggers as opinion leaders (Bucher, 2002; Wright and Hinson, 2009), role use and effects of blogging in public relations (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008; Porter, Sweetser, & Chung, 2009; Porter, Trammell, Chung & Eunseong, 2007; Yang & Lim, 2009), organizational blogs and relational strategies and outcomes (Kelleher & Miller, 2006; Cho & Huh, 2010), as well as blogging in crisis situations (Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007; Thelwall & Stuart, 2007; Valentini & Romenti, 2011), a similar amount of attention has not been given to research on the actual blog usage situation from the inside of an organization (Efimova, 2009). These insights into the underlying motives and behaviours reported from an internal blog environment are critical to our understanding of blogging in a corporate context, as

well as to our understanding of participatory organizational culture. Identifying the contextual elements and the resources and limitations that companies are bound to encounter when engaging in blogging is an important step towards this understanding.

Taking the point of departure in an explorative, qualitative study based on a social constructivist foundation, focusing on the construction of positions and views on the application of the blog for external communicative purposes in a public authority – namely the Danish Patent and Trademark Office – the locally shaped contextual elements, usage and implications of this form of communication are addressed and discussed at a macro organizational level and micro conversational level based on the sense making of the employees. Hence, the overall aim of this paper is to address blogging from two different perspectives:

- The *strategic usage* of blogging in a corporate setting from a corporate communication perspective;
- And, the *discursively constructed usage* of blogging on the basis of blogging employees' sense making of their own blog activity, and the implications thereof.

The following statements describe how I approach this:

- I have investigated an emerging online communication tool with a strategic purpose within a corporate communication context.
- My investigation is concerned with an analysis of the communicative situation in which reflections and perceptions of the primary contextual parameters that influence bloggers in the decisions they make as bloggers are identified, and the bloggers' reflections and views on the usage and implications of blogging as regards resources and limitations.
- The object of my study is not language but those who produce it. My approach to language is communication in use, and I consider the blog as socially constructed by its users.

The first section of this paper offers a brief review of the various definitions and uses of blogs in organizational and corporate settings. The review generates an overview of some of the central writings about, and empirical investigations of, blogging in corporate contexts and presents relevant aspects of corporate communications in relation to blogging. In the following section, the methodological decisions and steps taken in the design of the case study and data gathering process are presented. Next, the data analysis is presented and the locally shaped contextual elements, the usage and implications in the form of possibilities and limitations of the blog as reflected on by employee bloggers are addressed and discussed. In the final part of the paper, I conclude on the empirical findings, the practical implications and future research.

Blogging in an Organizational Context

Weblogs are some of the first examples of the so-called Web 2.0 technologies and social media. In contrast to Web 1.0, which was about defining and creating destinations for web users, Web 2.0 is about people and content. According to O'Reilly, Web 2.0 is:

> the network as platform, spanning all connected devices, […] delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remising by others, creating network effects

through an 'architecture of participation' and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences. (O'Reilly: 2005, p. 13)

'Rich user experiences' are not only the result of social networking *per se,* but especially of user generated content (Von Kortzfleisch et al., 2007). In the corporate environment, Web 2.0 users are mainly employees who voluntarily add comments on corporate blogs, add their knowledge to corporate wikis, distribute their search results with the help of social bookmarking systems, or add information about their expertise areas to their social networking profiles (Kortzfleisch et al., 2007) [ii]

Defining the blog

The first studies of blogging primarily established criteria for the categorization of blogs according to their form and content in a genre perspective (Blood, 2002; Herring et al., 2004), or measured the influence of blogs on politics via specific audiences (Drezner & Farrell, 2004, cited in Puschmann, 2010: p. 24). Puschmann argues that blogs 'in general' are not well-suited for a classification in terms of genre, because no single discourse community can be named that produces them, no single purpose is associated with their production and no fixed stylistic conventions have yet emerged for them, but we are still able to identify them via their presentation and structure (Puschmann, 2010, p. 25). I agree with Puschmann that giving blogs an image of what constitutes a 'good' or 'typical' instantiation of a specific genre is problematic since the style and content of a blog entry is determined to a large extent by the purposes the blogger associates with the post. In accordance with this view, Efimova (2009) points to the difficulty of defining weblogs as a consequence of their authors having different goals, uses, and writing styles, with only one thing in common: format (Efimova, 2009: p. 2). This hands-on definition from a blogger reads well into Puschmann's comparison of the personal blog with the corporate blog:

> A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world. Your blog is whatever you want it to be. (Hoff-Clausen, 2008: pp. 138-139)

In his comparison between the personal and the corporate blog, Puschmann concludes that the subjective non-threatening and non-suasive attributes associated with personal blogging are deliberately sought by corporate bloggers in an effort to counter a growing negative perception of the corporate public-facing communication as deceptive, manipulative and impersonal, as referred to earlier (Puschmann, 2010: p. 21). On the basis of the long and ever-changing definition of a weblog on Wikipedia, Puschmann pinpoints the relevant struggle when it comes to defining blogs of whether to define them primarily in terms of technology (a web site), structure (entries, reverse chronological order; Herring et al., 2004), authorship (usually maintained by an individual), content (descriptions of events, commentary or news on particular subject or opinion), interactivity (the ability of readers to leave comments), or genre (personal diary). In light of all these uses and different angles for defining the weblog, Wikipedia has opted for an amalgam of all aspects (Puschmann, 2010: p. 13), similar to the informal, hands-on definition above. Turning to the usage of a blog for definitions in their work with the organizational use of blogging, Baxter, Connolly and Stansfield (2010), on the basis of Lee, Hwang and Lee (2006), identify five types of blogs: employee blogs, group blogs, executive blogs (e.g., CEO blogs), promotional blogs, and newsletter blogs. Employee blogs are often associated with staff members' blogging externally on the behalf of their company so as to maintain a favorable image

for the company. Group blogs are mostly used for project-related purposes of both an internal and external nature. Executive or CEO blogs are run by company executives to put forward company ideas and engage with members of the public through feedback; and, promotional blogs are used specifically for advertising products while newsletter blogs deal with issues relating to company information (Baxter et al., 2010). What is interesting about the case study organization presented in this paper is that on their blog all these uses are embedded and represented (with exception of the CEO blog). The Danish Patent and Trademark Office's blog is a team authored blog, its purpose is both image creation through branding as well as providing news, information sharing, and promoting the agency's expertise and courses in patent counseling, among other bottom-up purposes. In light of these apparent difficulties in defining the weblog, Puschmann's simple working definition of a corporate blog attracts and fits the purpose of this study: 'A (primarily textual) blog used in an institutional context to further organizational goals' (Puschmann, 2010: p. 15).

To sum up, in the case study presented in this paper, the blog is considered a discursively and narratively constructed open 'room' within a corporate setting, in which the sense making and context of this room is what leads us to a higher degree of understanding of the phenomenon.

Aspects of blogging and corporate communication

Organizations are networks of people who communicate with each other. In all organizations communications flow vertically and horizontally, internally and externally, formally and informally, linking employees internally to each other, to various layers of management, and to the many external resource-holders of the organization (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007: p. 13). The Danish Patent and Trademark Office's blog has proven to embrace all of these layers of the organization's communication, and hence is a relevant example of the complexity of communicating externally with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, as well as increasing transparency internally. This paper takes on the view of corporate communication to include internal communication, management communication, organizational communication, and market communications, since the overall strategy of the IP-blog follows van Riel and Fombrun's broad definition of corporate communication as the total communication activity generated by a company to achieve its planned objectives (from Jackson, 1987 cited in van Riel & Fombrun, 2007: p. 25). The blog is strategically aimed at all these communicative activities at one time.

A very important element becomes central in this aspect, i.e., transparency. With the advent of new communication technologies, like the weblog and other Internet applications, organizations partly driven by these technologies, like the Danish Patent and Trademark Office in their increased digital communications efforts, are expected to contribute to transparency themselves by sharing relevant information with their surroundings. Transparency, thus, is an essential dimension of contemporary organizations' understanding of themselves and their communication strategies (Christensen, 2002: p. 163). Whereas the manager of corporate communication seeks to conceptualize the organization as a totality of interconnected messages, the corporate culture endeavor is focused on myths, rituals and stories articulated and managed in order to integrate the organization's members around one shared reality. According to Christensen, the endeavors of unity and cohesion are easier to attain if the 'shared' dimensions of the organization are not articulated too explicitly. Christensen argues how ambiguity can be ironically productive because it allows the coexistence of several perspectives within one organizational unity, and the intensification in communication associated with projects of transparency leads to the exposure of pluralism, to a multiplicity of voices (Christensen, 2002: pp. 164-165):

> While careful self-examinations and self-evaluations can be extremely valuable and generate important insight about internal processes, it would be erroneous to assume that such exercises make organizations transparent to themselves as one whole entity […] The notion of a whole or unity, thus, is simply one local representation among other possible local representations. (Christensen, 2002: p. 165)

The analysis of this paper unfolds this internal process of a highly transparent communication effort, the IP-blog, in which a variety of these 'local' representatives are present – from the engineers and the marketing people to the legal consultants – where all members of the blog community bring their messages and stories to the blog. A multifaceted, ambiguous communication universe, in contrast to the holistic idea of unity in corporate communications strategy, is revealed and negotiations between employee bloggers of its usage are unfolded, considering the boundaries of blogs to be socially constructed. This view of communication goes further than the application of the container metaphor utilized in orthodox corporate communication theory. Corporate communication then is not viewed as a means for transporting information from one place to another, but as a process in which the company itself is constructed. Indeed, the company then can be defined as 'a social collective' produced, reproduced, and transformed through the ongoing, interdependent, and goal-oriented communication practices of its members (Mumby & Claire, 1997, cited in Hübner, 2007: p. 20). In this sense, corporate communication is best understood through the corporate communication discourses that are constitutive for the organization:

> Corporate communication needs to be analyzed in a practical environment, which embraces actors, structures and activities in order to reveal the full interplay between these constituents in strategic, i.e., communicational practice. (Hübner, 2007: p. 24)

The IP-blog is an example of this and the case study analysis, which will be presented in section four, responds to these questions by showing and discussing the several 'positions' identified in the analysis of the IP-bloggers, who represent different stances on how the blog should be used, helping us understand the local shapes and forms organizational blog-communication takes in a specific interactional context. Naturally, a complete investigation would also include the external blog participants and an analysis of the blog text to embrace what Hübner refers to as the communicational practice. However, to undertake these analytical steps is considered a natural next phase of this study.

The Case Study of the Danish Patent and Trademark Office's Blog

The data used in this paper originate from an empirical case study of the Danish Patent and Trademark Office's weblog[iii], the IP-blog. The Danish Patent and Trademark Office (DKPTO) is part of the Danish Ministry of Business and Growth and holds the authority to issue patent and design rights and register trademarks in Denmark. The DKPTO employs about 200 people and is a hierarchically structured organization. What makes the agency different from other state governed authorities is that it is both a government agency, which is state financed and the official authority speaking on behalf of the Minister of Business and Growth in the areas of patent and design rights, and at the same time it is a market-oriented company with a commercial interest, selling its services and expertise to external users and, in that sense, is managed according to commercial market-principles similar to those of a private company. This duality plays a significant part in the reasons for starting the blog as part of a branding process and also has consequences for the usage and the counter discourses on the blog, as will be shown and

discussed in section four of the paper, where the data analysis is unfolded. DKPTO entered the blogosphere in 2005, when blogs were an almost unknown phenomenon in a Danish organizational context, and hence, hold the title as corporate blog-pioneers and the first government agency in Denmark to engage in blogging. For this explorative study, the case of DKPTO was considered relevant since it provides access to organizational bloggers' longitudinal experience with the medium, providing a nuanced and deep understanding of the phenomenon, primarily from an employees' perspective. Around 35 bloggers are active on the IP-blog, and I have been in contact with 24 of them during the three-year study.

The methodological approach is qualitative and the study is intensive rather than extensive. It involves interpretation as the main analytic activity. I am concerned with empirical work rather than large-scale theory development. Positioning in this analysis is the discursive production of selves on the blog. In accordance with the purpose of the paper, the usage and implications (i.e., limitations and resources) involved in the highly contextual diversity of the blog-setting are traced through focus group interviews of 19 of the organizational bloggers, divided in four focus groups of 4-6 respondents each. The focus groups constitute the primary source of data. The recruitment criteria for the focus groups are practical experience with blogging, as well as my wish to achieve a considerable coverage of the employees involved in blogging activities. The focus group interviews have been transcribed.

These focus groups were supplemented by secondary data from archive studies of the written weblog, strategic documents concerning the blog as well as semi-structured explorative individual interviews conducted in the beginning of the study. The approach is inductive, and the choice of methods are grounded in an empirical phenomenological approach and 'snow ball' effect, each providing new findings and data that lead to new angles and further findings. Hence, the focus groups were the last data collection that I conducted two years into the study, having done individual interviews and continuous observation of the blog writings. This approach led to focus groups that were highly organized regarding setting, but explorative in content and inductively giving room to the participants' interpretations, views and opinions on the blog usage, which gave rise to many reflections and internal discussions, and the emergence of patterns and themes. Focusing on the internal blog participants, the analytical process takes on an interpretative approach based on the DKPTO-bloggers' perceptions and sense making of their blog usage. What is constituted in the focus groups is focus group interaction *about* the everyday practice, and this practice (talking about the blog usage) is interpreted on the basis of the underlying motives and articulations of uses. The results reflect what the IP-bloggers make of communication when practiced in their own way, when understood through their own terms and through their own explanations. How is the blog-communication conducted, conceived and evaluated among the organizational bloggers in DKPTO? Data analysis of these motivations in the form of themes is conducted through the use of discourse analysis:

> Discourse theory is the reflective understanding of the means which have already demonstrated their value in practice by raising them to the level of explicit consciousness. (Howarth & Torfing, 2004: p. 317)

Discourse research in this sense offers routes into the study of meanings, a way of investigating the back-and-forth dialogues which constitute social action, along with the patterns of signification and representation which constitute culture (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). Overall, discourse analysis has to do with a close study of *language in use* and *patterns*.

Thematic network analysis

Thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) is the primary method of analysis of the focus group data. Thematic network analysis (TNA) is a method of identifying, organizing and structuring themes, a step-by-step guide, which is practical and useful for this kind of investigation where hundreds of codes (themes) emerge from the rich user experiences and narratives of the IP-bloggers. Thematic analyses and thematic networks are equally applicable in analyses with a focus on commonalities, differences or contradictions, and it is up to the researcher to identify themes in a manner that is appropriate to their specific theoretical interests (Attride-Stirling, 2001: p. 395). Thematic analysis is a relatively straightforward form of qualitative analysis, which does not require the same detailed theoretical and technical knowledge as approaches like content analysis. However, rich description and interpretation are crucial for the analysis to succeed: e.g., it is of high importance to provide adequate examples from the data. In this context, a theme represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 82). Thus, my approach to the concept of theme is when something important about the data in relation to the research purpose (addressing the local context and implications of organizational blogging from the employee's perspective) is captured. Like Attride-Stirling, who has developed the qualitative method, I am interested in the themes that are common through all the conducted focus groups; therefore, the more common are given precedence. This criterion for selection is not intended to attribute greater overall explanatory value to themes on a quantitative bases, it simply makes it possible to focus attention on the common homogenous popular themes, which is the specific interest of the study (Attride-Stirling, 2001: p. 395). With this empirically driven approach, and as a *bricoleur* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), I have chosen the best tool for the job, that being TNA, and the main criteria for this type of analysis are connection, usefulness and transparency. To supplement the TNA, situational analysis (Clarke, 2005), which embraces a broad set of contextual elements at a macro level, is used in a consideration that the understanding of local contextual elements of the blog usage and its implications is crucial. The situational analysis (SA) supplements the TNA allowing the themes that are discursively constructed in the focus groups to create categorization of the predominant themes of the communicative purposes, usage and implications of blogging as experienced by the employees. To sum up the design of the study, both SA and TNA are applied to the reflexive texts (focus group transcripts). SA is used for identifying contextual organizational elements – the things on the blog referring to the local macro level (e.g., stakeholder perceptions, departmental structure, target audience) – and TNA offers the intertextuality in the identification of the discursive themes in the focus group texts at a micro level.

The combination of the two methods provides the opportunity of first establishing a discursive context in the understanding of the blog-practice as highly situated locally, establishing the context and description of the predominant situational elements that constitute the IP-blog, and then conducting a categorization of the organizational bloggers' construction of themes in relation to their blog practice regarding usage and implications. From a deconstruction of the focus groups, four thematic networks are constructed containing the different levels of decontextualized themes. The thematic networks resemble a categorization of the main themes, as expressed in the form of opinions and views of the internal bloggers, in global themes, organizing themes and basic themes, not forming a hierarchy but a network.

The Perceived Usage, Implications and Discursive Positions of the IP-bloggers

There is no single motivation for blogging, but different groups of users, within the same organization, and often the same department, bring very different conceptualizations of the practice to the table. The *contextually bounded motivations* are varied and depend crucially on the target audience, communicative goals and on how the individual conceptualizes blogging. In accordance with the reluctance to narrowly define the corporate blog, I will not label the types of blogging on the IP-blog into categories as topic-blogging or ego-blogging (Puschmann, 2010), but instead focus on the main usages and implications by extracting the central discursive themes and locating different discursive positions taken on the blog. From a corporate communication perspective, it is interesting that in spite of a strategic document containing general guidelines, and a disclaimer to protect the employee bloggers from being personally attacked on the blog, no coordinated plan or strategy has been followed in the almost seven years of blogging in the Danish Patent and Trademark Office. When confronting the blog participants with the strategy, very few are aware of its existence, and the responsible blog coordinator informs us that people are briefly introduced to it when they start blogging, but other than that it is intentionally well hidden away, and no rules or training are being implemented. Hence, the 'open' communication technology represented by the blog leaves open a discussion among the employees of the blog's autonomous usage, with the focus groups representing such an open discussion forum. It becomes clear from the analysis that the difficulties of merging an organic blog movement from a bottom-up approach with a structured communications hierarchy managed top-down is clearly confusing and frustrating for several bloggers, giving rise to discussions of what kind of blog-content is most apt. The analysis also shows that these disagreements are highly related to locally contextual elements such as the departmental structures and the work tasks of the bloggers, which vary greatly. The bloggers have created internal blog communities within the organization dependent on what departments they are affiliated with. Other investigations show how conflicts can emerge from disputes between employee bloggers and management over what is appropriate blogging content (Lee, Hwang, & Lee, 2006). In the case of DKPTO, the employee bloggers are the ones representing counter discourses on the appropriate blog content, whereas the CEO of the agency seems to share the mantra of the Cluetrainers, as mentioned in the introduction to this paper, which suggests 'the more blogging the better'. Like one slightly irritated employee commented during a focus group: 'Everything has to go on that blog'. In this context, a discussion of control versus autonomy in blogging is manifested on the IP-blog since the bloggers engage in constant processes of negotiation and need to strike a balance between control and autonomy. Some argue that the wide and 'loose' frames, which the employee bloggers are supposed to blog under, are damaging to the image of the organization, while others consider the personal freedom as highly motivating.

Three predominant situational factors are present on the IP-blog: *trust*, *delegated responsibility* and *freedom*. At first sight, these attributes could seem to have a positive ring to them when considering the corporate context as described in section two of the paper. However, the trust, delegated responsibility and freedom come with certain constraints and barriers. For some corporate bloggers, these situational factors are a giving part of their organisational life, whereas others find it difficult to manage and handle, and they tend to put constraints on themselves. As a result of that strategic ambiguity with explosive internal negative feedback, the organizational members enact a culture in which self-direction, for some, functions as a constraint rather than a freedom (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001: p. 112).

Having addressed some of the main local, contextual and structural elements influencing the blog behavior and motivations, I now turn to the identification of the usage and implications

of the blog constructed by the IP-bloggers. For that purpose, I inductively establish four thematic networks, which reflect the most central aspects of the application of the IP-blog. Besides the two thematic networks on the usage of the IP-blog, I have developed two networks on the primary implications of blogging. I refer to these as the limitations and resources of the blog:

- The blog as information channel (pin board vs. agenda creator)
- The blog as communication channel (versatile universe vs. comments and dialogue)
- Limitations of the blog (self censorship and organizational barriers)
- The blog as a resource (possibilities and signal value).

As seen from the overarching themes identified, the IP-bloggers use the blog both as a one-way channel of information, and a two-way channel of communication. On the basis of these networks, I isolate a distinction in the general approach to the application of blogs between a more *reactive* and *sender-oriented* position and a more *proactive* and *receiver-oriented* position. Concerning the implications of the blog, a distinction between focusing upon the limitations of the blog and focusing upon the blog as a resource is visible from the focus group interviews.

To elaborate on these primary usages and implications that the thematic networks revealed, discursive positions, which are taken on the blog, are identified and summed up in Figure 1:

Primary Discursive Positiones and Motives of the IP-Bloggers			
The Official	**The Debater**	**The Engineer**	**The Passionate**
Reactive usage	Marketing tool	Variation in work	Proactive usage
Pin board	Transparency and visibility are important elements	'Breathing space'	Strategic usage
Official messages (before the blog they were sent by letter)	Multifaceted and varied usage give high signal value	Entertainment value (e.g. a weekly contest on guessing a patent)	Set an agenda
Documentation	Do not feel limitations	Information- and knowledge sharing	Move a discussion in another direction
Primary motivation: Reach goals (set out by management)	Wants an open debate, also the critical one		Impact and nuance the public debate on areas of professional interest
Writing in the traditional authority manner and style	Deals with criticism and discussions openly		Channel for expert knowledge
Official corporate culture			Resource in the daily work
Not interested in feedback			Knowledge creation tool
'Keep out of trouble' (better not to engage in debate, than to have it get out of control)			Personal information archive
Time consumer (guilty conscience about not writing)			Time saver
			Visibility of competences

FIGURE 1: Overview of the discursive positions and the motives of the IP-bloggers

Each position has at least one prototypical representative among the participants in the interviews, but many participants realize more than one position.

Among the many *implications* of blogging that this case study has revealed are the barriers to blogging that the organizational bloggers experience. The thematic network analysis of their motivations show that there are what I frame as organizational limitations, such as the work structure of the department, time and resource limitations, and the constant evaluation by the blogger of what is allowed to be said publicly, and what is not. In many cases this leads to self-censorship among the organizational bloggers which is a widespread consequence of being a public authority, and in many cases trace back to the official 'government agency' culture. However, it also has to do with the individual's motivation in relation to their work functions. The analysis shows that the extrinsically motivated bloggers, the ones that are only blogging because the boss has told them to, are less passionate bloggers than the intrinsically motivated bloggers who have created a passion for the blog and use it proactively to create an agenda on e.g. EU-regulated matters that are difficult to explain to the users elsewhere. There are empirical findings of organizational bloggers that started out with dominant extrinsically motivated blog-behavior (e.g., the manager told them to blog), but who, over time, became an intrinsically motivated blogger (considering the blog as creating value and being an effective tool in communication with stakeholders and as a resource in their professional work).

The most common use of the blog within the Danish Patent and Trademark Office is as a reference tool and a pin board, and the predominant discursive position is the official blogger (cf. figure 1). Others regard the blog as a diary-like document that brings stories to life that are clearly in the periphery of official communication to key stakeholders, and hence difficult to categorize according to the traditional communication tools in the company. Through the focus group interviews, an internal disagreement on whether or not the polyphonic character of the blog is to be considered a resource or a risk is showing and results in *counter discourses*.

I highlight the two most prominent of these counter discourses being *the enthusiastic* and *the skeptical.* The enthusiastic argues that the organization has much to gain from being seen as open and transparent (mainly represented by *the debater*). The skeptical is more concerned with the image of the organization when laying out all kinds of information – some of it bordering on 'banalities' and perhaps not being serious enough – and who wish to control the blog content as much as possible, being primarily concerned with how the agency is being perceived by the external audience (represented by *the official*). Some internal bloggers, the skeptical ones, fear that the blog portrays the organization as un-holistic and fragmented, and hence they seek to control the messages and content in order for DKPTO to maintain what they perceive as the image of a serious organization.

Despite the many counter discourses and disagreements on the blog usage and the differences in perceived implications, the employee bloggers across different positions share five perceived advantages, strengths and value-creating elements of the blog, compared to traditional communications forms. These are:

- Easier access to external users
- Increase in visibility of the individual employee and their competences
- Potential informality in writing style
- Giving a human face to the organization
- Easy and uncomplicated information and knowledge sharing (linking being a highly valued tool in this connection).

Regarding the first finding, the *access level* is lower and the communication is more direct. The bloggers agree that the blog is a very direct way of communicating, especially compared to other communication forms in the organization. The transparent nature of the blog

has mainly led to an increase in visibility of the individual employee, and has not to the same degree resulted in the creation of more relations and networks, although some bloggers confuse the increased visibility with network-creation. The conclusion is that the blog itself does not create networks, but can be a facilitator and supplement to the creation of networks in other relations (e.g. at conferences or when talking to the clients on the phone).

Besides these perceived advantages of the IP-blog, the analysis also problematizes the predominant focus on interactivity and dialogue as a repeated positive motivation for bloggers. The relational aspect that both practitioners and researchers highlight as influential features of the Web 2.0 communications is not nearly as dominant in the usage of the IP-blog. For instance, not all employee bloggers want the dialogue, but consider other uses of the blog more important, the dialogical aspect being just a (sometimes unwanted) side effect. The IP-blog has many readers (around 8-9,000 a month), and for several bloggers it is enough to know that the external audience reads the blog. They do not need them to comment, as it is not part of the culture. This shows that the general premise for using a blog is not necessarily interactive and the comments from external participants are in many cases less than fruitful for the internal blog user. One blogger comments that 'these people [the ones commenting on the posts] are not someone I wish to engage in any kind of relation or network with'. He continues: 'Handling the external comments is one of the biggest challenges of being a blogger'. Furthermore, the study problematizes the company's usage of a blog because there are several barriers, and those barriers are highly dependent on the organizational culture and the internal communication environment among other things. The focus groups present examples of bloggers who have changed their blog behavior from an informal, 'entertaining' approach to a more official and serious approach because of the internal critics (the skeptical counter discourse). Although Cluetrainers and Web 2.0 evangelists stress the fact that companies need to let go of the traditional approach to communication when they enter the blogosphere, my investigation shows that this proves to be difficult in practice, because when they do, they might be met with a highly critical audience, externally and internally as well, and the individual blogger can have difficulties addressing this negative feedback, which for some is considered a demotivating factor.

To finalize the paper, combining the usage and implications with the positions, the study proposes *four dominant social implications of organizational blogging* in the form of distinct discursive behaviors:

- Self-restriction behavior in expression
- Interaction-oriented behavior
- Information-sharing behavior
- Knowledge-expert disseminating behavior.

Implications for communication practice

Having given voices to an internal corporate blog community, managers who have or are planning to establish a corporate blog should focus on the employees as bloggers, allocating time and resources to prepare and listen continuously to what motivates them and make sure they are comfortable with their role as a blogger. In the allocation of time and resources, an internal 'safety net' or discussion forum is crucial for the employee bloggers to have the possibility to discuss and find solutions to the sometimes rather difficult task of blogging. This forum can have the purpose of encouraging and motivating the bloggers to share stories and experiences on the blog, and to motivate them to read and post messages (for instance, knowing that their colleagues actually follow and read what they are saying). And, at the same time, the forum should make

room for and address internal disagreement. Regarding the blog strategy, flexibility is needed to embrace the changing environment of the blog. On one side, giving the employees the freedom to blog is considered a clear advantage; on the other side, some bloggers find it difficult to manage that freedom. Addressing these issues is of high relevance, not only for blogging practice, but also for all kinds of open-source technology that is being implemented in organizations and which include transparency and interactional elements that the individual employees have to manage and deal with.

Conclusion

Based on a review of blogging in a corporate context related to corporate communication practice and the presentation of a qualitative case study on a group of employees' blog usage, this paper has approached blogging within an organization with an external communicative purpose, i.e., corporate blogging. The strategic usage of blogging in a corporate setting from a corporate communication perspective is approached and discussed, as well as key issues such as the effects of the boom in digital interpersonal communication. Corporate blogging opens the door to a new set of challenges for the corporate communication function. Transparency is addressed as one of the central elements following the new communication technologies, the corporate blog being a representative example hereof. Drawing on these key issues, the first part of the paper establishes a need to analyze a practical environment to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of implementing a highly transparent communications tool like the weblog in a corporate context. In the empirical analysis following, I explore the employees' underlying reflections on motives and behavior on the blog. Through the construction of four thematic networks, I categorize the dominant themes as experienced and discursively constructed by the employee bloggers on the Danish Patent and Trademark Office's IP-blog. The results show that the IP-bloggers use the blog both as a one-way channel of information, and a two-way channel of communication. Besides the two thematic networks on the usage of the IP-blog, I have developed two networks based on the primary implications of blogging, as expressed by the employee bloggers. In my interpretation, these implications can overall be categorized as a view on the blog's limitations and resources. The employee bloggers experience barriers in the form of self-censorship and organizational barriers. The resources are typically focused on the possibilities that the IP-blog bring, such as an easy and direct way of communicating. There are, however, a great deal of discursive contrasts that appear when the bloggers discuss the implications and usage of the blog. What is considered an advantage by one blogger might very well be a disadvantage by another blogger. To highlight these differences, four discursive positions that exemplify the thematic networks of usage and implications are presented: the official, the debater, the engineer, and the passionate blogger. The analysis indicates that, despite of a streamline corporate communication effort in the classic public communication of a government agency, the blog includes a variety of not very homogenous blog content due to its format and broad spectrum of individual writers. This manifold content and heterogeneous blog usage is embraced by management but is confusing many employees, in some cases making them feel insecure and demotivated in relation to the blog. The analysis sheds a light on the multifaceted meanings, differences and similarities, and the paradoxes and counter discourses of organizational blogging when unfolded from the inside of an organization, in this case the Danish Patent and Trademark Office, and a group of 19 bloggers within the organization.

The research *of the implications of corporate blogging from an employees' perspective through a qualitative, in-depth, investigation, contributes to* a nuanced and documented perspective on the blog-usage and its implications in an organizational setting. Moreover, the

investigation contributes to *the development of further understanding of the resources and challenges, respectively, that* bloggers inside an organization, who blog for official external purposes, are faced with. Furthermore, the analysis contributes with insights into how it is for the employees to manage being a blogger (in the good and the bad), The employees' reflections on the organizational blog allow the organization to (re)define their strategy of transparency and their boundaries between 'inside' and 'outside', between openness and closure.

Research limitations and future research

I consider the people behind blogging as the primary interest, and interviews as the main data resource, analyzing the underlying motives and the participants' interpretation of their practice. The study does not include a systematic empirical analysis of blogs themselves. Such an analysis would be highly relevant to get a more complete insight into the social practice of blogging. In connection to this, adding an external stakeholder's perspective on the blog communication and its implications through an analysis of the external contributions to blogging (e.g., qualitative interviews of selected external stakeholders reading and participation on the company's blog) would be a relevant next step with the analysis from an internal perspective at hand. Furthermore, the paper reflects on the blog usage in one specific organization and does not examine the blog usage within multiple organizations, which would also be a relevant future research area.

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Notes

[i] The 'IP' in the title of the blog should not be mistaken for the abbreviation of Internet Protocol, but refers to the main domain of the Danish Patent and Trademark Office, Intellectual Property (Rights).

[ii] For further definition on the differences between Web 2.0 and social media, see Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011.

[iii] The Danish Patent and Trademark Office's weblog can be found at: http://ip-bloggen.dkpto.dk/default.asp.

Organizational Disruption and Corporate Communication Leaders Intervening as a Coach

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Corporate communication leaders in contemporary organizations face unexpected episodes of disruption stemming from interpersonal conflict between persons who work in their unit. Most conflict episodes don't appear to be so serious that they require the intervention and expense of formal dispute resolution procedures. Consequently a leader must attempt to coach each of the parties individually in an effort to manage the ongoing situation. Leaders should be trained to conduct conflict coaching. This essay overviews the employment of a one-on-one coaching model that focuses on the essential dimensions that are relevant in each conflict coaching intervention. A group of thirty one human resource managers, who took a seminar on this topic with the author, were surveyed to determine the relevancy of the model, the efficacy of the concepts, and the ease of launching the approach. Several case studies, drawn from actual cases, are employed to illustrate concepts and applications.

Corporate communication leaders in contemporary organizations face unexpected episodes of disruption stemming from interpersonal conflict between persons who work in their unit. Disruption is an apt symbol to represent the impact of conflict on most organizations. All organizations will report that they have periodic "trouble," "distraction," "commotion," "disturbance," or perhaps organizational "disorder" "interruption," or "interference" that impacts the organization's mission. These are all common synonyms for "disruption" and seem to be listed in an order that demonstrates a continuum from what disruptions might normally be expected to occur in human relations, escalating to what becomes a serious concern for management. Conflict can take many forms and it is conflicts the terms describe. "Conflicts are part of human consciousness in all aspects of life" (Aula & Siira, 2010, 125). It is inevitable that some conflict will occur. "To work in an organization is to be in conflict. To take advantage of joint work requires conflict management" (Tjosvold, 2008, 19). It has been estimated that it consumes 20 percent of employees' time (Song, Dyer and Thieme, 2006)

An organization has to be willing to invest in human awareness and improvement. Conflict management is not a simplistic process of specifying right and wrong and making an edict that all members must adhere to the right path. This prescriptive "distributive justice" philosophy underlies the method specified in many employee handbooks and corporate policy manuals. But disruptive disagreements can take on multiple forms and rarely correspond to the notion of "conflict resolution" that is a common label for organizational programs. Individuals generally carry a substantial residue of old conflicts with them into their future interactions. This author's preferred term is "conflict management." Disputes are made manageable, never completely resolved. There are complex features beyond the immediate task issues; history of the conflict participant that has established values and expectations, their personal and professional identity, the emotion in the situation, the power dynamics, and their ability to vision a better situation. The precursors to conflict are in the minds of participants and can be infinite and difficult to anticipate. Research on the antecedents to conflict indicates that changing demands such as increase productivity, incorporate new and diverse personnel following mergers, trim the workforce, and meet difficult deadlines; all contribute to a climate of stress and increased conflict

between organization members. However, evolving conflict resolution systems in organizations attempt to anticipate common sorts of structural struggles over resources, and issues that reflect policy. Lipsky and Seeber (2006) note these as "proactive, strategic" approaches. But these approaches are often inadequate in dealing with some types of disruptive struggles between organization members. The leader often does not have the option of proposing formal third party involvement, such as mediation, because frequently the parties to the dispute don't agree to participate and/or the resources to conduct the mediation are not available.

Ultimately the first point of contact in any disruptive struggle is the leader who the parties are responsible to. Executive leaders are valued first as individuals who bring superior qualities to a position and secondly for the ability to work with and influence a team. Consistent exceptional performance is the key to success. Executives are responsible for bringing an appropriate set of attributes, values and behaviors to their accomplishment of difficult tasks. It is often the leader's responsibility to effectively deal with the counterproductive interaction of the parties to ongoing disputes. The metaphorical phrase "the leader as coach" has become popular in some organizational culture settings. Coaching is an established feature of performance development in many American corporations. The need for a leader to be a competent coach is evident. The ideal leader coach has extensive communication coaching and performance evaluation experience coupled with a substantial ability to motivate and foster attitude adjustment. Leaders are expected to be coaches, and they should be trained to conduct conflict coaching. This essay overviews the employment of a one-on-one coaching model that focuses on the essential dimensions that are relevant in almost every conflict coaching intervention.

The CCCM Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model

Within the setting of the CCCM a coach and a disputant communicate face to face, in a confidential setting in order to develop a deeper understanding of the conflict and to consider interaction strategies and interaction skills.

> The Comprehensive Conflict Coaching model (CCCM) (Brinkert, 2006; Jones & Brinkert, (2008) is comprehensive in that it integrates conflict communication research and theory from multiple disciplines and can be applied to a wide range of conflict situations. This model is built on systems and social constructionist (Gergen, 1999) foundations. It emphasizes the communication aspect of conflict (Folger & Jones, 1994), especially the way in which narratives are used to structure meaning and action (Kellett & Dalton, 2001). The CCCM is meant to be adaptable for coach, client, and context. It is designed to combine coach facilitation and expertise (Brinkert, 2009, 67).

This model is intended to be flexible and adaptable for coach, client, and context. It does require coach facilitation, knowledge of the model and expertise in some key communication skills. The coach must be both an accurate and active listener. The active listener is capable of employing open –ended questions in order to support the coachee and the multiple features of context, constraints and freedom. The relation of identity to emotion and power is examined as these perspectives are intertwined. Power is considered as a feature of relationships, roles, goals, and how it is negotiated with others.

The CCCM includes a pre-coaching conversation, the administration of the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument, four typically sequential stages, and a parallel process (Jones & Brinkert, 2008). The initial phase of the CCCM process is to have a conversation between coach and client in which the process phases are described and basic ground rules are set forth and agreement to by both parties. Then the process begins with *Stage 1: Discovering the Story* in

which the client articulates their initial story and the coach listens very carefully to consider the narrative coherence and fidelity. Subsequently the coach suggests that the client expand the story with more detail, and as a consequence a discussion ensues to refine and test the story.

Stage 2: Exploring Three Perspectives explores the story with the coachee with the perspectives of identity, emotion and power. These perspectives are significant in a variety of discipline's conflict research literature and practice. They are elements found in all conflict interactions. Emotion is explored with the distinctions of cognitive, physiological and expressive emotion and the impact of emotion on conflict. Identity is examined with the concept of "face," and how the coachee's identity is relevant to an understanding of the dispute. Power's relationship to identity and emotion is essential to understand. The key assumptions about power is that it is always relational, and is influenced and enacted through organization, social, and cultural structures, and is to some extent negotiable.

Stage 3: Crafting the Best Story is an opportunity to vision the future, free of the current difficulties in order to develop a positive vision of what the situation can become. The approach of this stage embraces both visioning and the basic positive approach of Appreciative Inquiry to assist the coachee to develop concepts about ways to understand and possibly take action in their perceived conflict situation. This element is important because trust, respect, and a resultant lack of defensiveness and openness are essential for this process to be successful. As the founders of the process indicate:

> The coach should never advocate one particular perspective or course of action for the client, as the client must maintain fundamental control and responsibility. In addition, the CCCM is intended to complement existing organizational dispute systems. Despite its potentially wide applicability, it is certainly not the right process for every conflict situation (Brinkert, 2009, 68).

This stage includes the coach taking a more active role in eliciting critical refinement of the future story; but it is still largely the creation of the person.

Stage 4: Enacting the Best Story considers what is possible to do to "live the best story in interaction with others." This changes the focus from "what is" to "what can be." In this process the coachee may discover areas of skill improvement that are desirable or necessary in order to enact the future story. Major routes or methods for living the new story might include how to listen actively and appreciate understanding of others, including the use of conflict styles. The Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument results are usually accessible because of the use of it at the beginning of the coaching. How various persons in the conflict employ behavioral conflict styles can be very important, as are the ability to employ a range of successful communication skills, including the ability to confront, confirm, comprehend, and negotiate, and to adapt to the communication styles of others from different cultural backgrounds. These communication skills are a focus because the "parallel process" is comprised of constant feedback, reflection, assessment, goal setting, and learning transfer. This process lays the basis for continued coaching where necessary.

Cases drawn from Executive Coaching Experience

Executive coaching seeks to provide assistance to an executive leader to both better understand themselves within the professional environment they are in, and assist them to vision

improvements. "The popularity of executive coaching is most likely driven by the twin forces of turbulent organizational environments and the heightened criticality of effective leadership" (Bassi, Cheney, and Lewis, 1998, p. 53). Over many years of executive coaching the author has come to realize that what I am really doing is "conflict coaching." Often the motivation for an executive getting a coach is that they are experiencing, fomenting or maintaining a disruptive experience with one or more others in their organization. It seems obvious to agree with the notion and believe that the proficient coach must know how to promote change based on sound theory and methods (Caudron, 1996, Gabriel, 1996).

Personal reflection on many of this executive coach's executive coaching assignments may illustrate how key elements of the CCCM could assist in establishing a coaching focus that is efficient and provides some significant insights for the coachee. Each of four cases are included here in very concise form. The cases are intended to briefly illustrate how the CCCM can bring form to the deliberations. Although the author was the coach in each situation, it can be speculated the coachee's immediate superior could have assisted the individual if that leader's portfolio and skills included doing some conflict coaching capability.

Case 1 - Alan

Alan was a 40 year old executive, in charge of software acquisition and software rollout for large investment bank. He had been in the current position for a year.
Narrative: The obvious issue was pushback from managers of more than 500 regional and local offices objecting to the rollout and application of new purchasing software. The task of the executive was to convince the managers that the advantages of adopting the new software outweighed their objections. Alan's superiors did not understand why it was taking so long to get a nationwide rollout of the newly selected software that was intended to streamline the purchasing process and make it more efficient than the old system where each manager had to sign off on all purchases, no matter how small.

Identity: a varied career spanning fifteen years at various positions in three investment organizations. His favorite postings were overseas in Hong Kong and Singapore. He also liked working in Boston better than working on Wall Street. He was an African American male who was quite proud of his professional accomplishments. Alan was promoted regularly. He often wondered if his African American race had an impact on the way others in the very white banking environment viewed him. He did not want to be thought of as an "affirmative action" token executive. Alan had a variety of interests, distinct from the interests of many of his peers who report to the same Director. They liked pro football and Alan liked opera for example.

Emotion: Alan experienced a number of frustrations that he worked to hide from his peers. He was frustrated with the project which he thought should be viewed as forthright, reasonable and practical based on the factual elements of the new software. Alan had frustration with his direct reports who sometimes seemed distant. Alan was frustrated with his boss, who he saw as a member of the good old boy society in the firm, and he hadn't found a way to develop a better relationship with him.

Power: Alan supposedly had a talented and a solid team, but guessed that some doubted his ability to represent their interests. He had questions about how much power his Director was willing to give him to modify his projects to fit the situation. Alan thought this was evident in how he was treated in regular meetings with the Director and his several direct reports, where he

seemed to be left out of the banter and periphery conversations. He didn't think he was in an equal position of power with this peer group.

New narrative: The first element of conflict coaching was to prompt Alan to meet the project problem directly and change the narrative. He had to get himself and his team to empathize with the local and regional managers who were rejecting the new software and to address the illogical, emotional reasons they were doing so. The new narrative included: involving his team's insight into the problem, establishing a new rhetorical approach, and a new timeline for the rollout. This new narrative dealt with his leadership of the issue, and provided a method of bonding more directly with the team. In terms of Alan's new personal narrative it was important in helping him to focus on positive accomplishments, and the positive challenges of the task at hand. Alan began accepting the sense that he would never have a close personal relationship with his Director, and this caused him to begin to vision ways of conducting himself in interactions with his boss that demonstrated his interest in new ways. In fact he found that a commonality of being Notre Dame alums was a shared bond.

Case 2 - Roger

This is the case of Roger a 50 year old paraplegic executive in charge of a unit that handles a range of mutual fund projects for a large investment bank

Narrative: The issue was satisfying his new younger boss who wanted to be sure that they were wringing every ounce of productivity out of the unit and increasing the quality of the unit's performance. Roger suspected that his boss (Joseph) was more interested in looking like a future CEO than on some of the issues he constantly nitpicked. It seemed that Joseph was the sort of overassertive type of leader who relished his position power. Roger was constantly fearful of how his identity impacted the situation and wondered if Joseph had plans to fire him. Conversely Joseph was concerned that Roger worked such long hours and so hard, that he was going to burn out, and wanted him to take a vacation break to decompress and reflect. Roger had resisted the vacation and relished the sense that he was a tireless worker.

Identity: Roger had a long and very successful career with the banking organization. People liked and trusted him. He was proud of his reputation as fair and honest, as someone who could be trusted. He was generally known as a workaholic. He did not want his disability status to impact his professional identity.

Emotion: Roger had strong feelings regarding his disability and constant concern that it would be seen as a sign of weakness. He believed that for someone in his leadership position the strength of leadership was shown through performance and results.

Power: Roger's power came from his reputation as someone who was diligent, careful, yet understood when problems arose. His power with his direct reports came from the sense of trust that had been established.

New narrative: In a sense the task was to build upon what seemed to the coach to be a generally positive narrative, and to help Roger think through the various elements of his personal narrative. A focus became building his pride in his accomplishments and his rise to the position he was in leading a very large and important group in the bank. Roger's desired narrative had always been

to have people overlook his disability. It became apparent that fear of what his identity was, and fear of being seen as not energetic enough, needed to be pushed to the periphery and he needed to learn to emphasize the positives of his daily work life, of which there were many.

In this case coach and client built a narrative that fits most executive level positions, i.e., that job security often comes from making your boss look good and so instead of constantly being in fear of Joseph, he began to listen more carefully to Joseph to sense what was really in Joseph's forcefulness and assertiveness in wielding his power.

Case 3 - Susan

Susan is a 36 year old VP in a very large investment bank where she is in charge of a unit that provides customer service and support to the firm's high wealth clients.

Narrative: Susan asked for an executive coach, as a perk of her position, to work through some potential conflict issues of importance to her. Susan had a record of more than a decade of increasingly responsible service to the investment bank. She was confident of her competence and the performance of her unit. Susan described her concerns as those of her personal identity with her boss and the managers who directly report to her. She wanted to be considered a strong leader, as good as any man in the firm. She had some difficulty understanding the perspectives of some of her direct report supervisors. They were all in their mid to late 20's and seem to see the unit's working environment, the firm culture, and appropriate interaction patterns differently than she did. She wanted to be taken seriously as she is responsible for the development of these young managers.

Identity: Identity is a very important issue for her. She is quite sensitive to any comment or slight that might indicate she is being dealt with differently because she is a woman. Susan is also sensitive to being thought of as old and out of touch.

Emotion: Susan experienced strong emotion around the personal identity issue. She remembers an occasion, years ago, when she teared up in front of her current Director. She did not feel it is appropriate to demonstrate such emotion.
Power: Susan believes that power is based on perception as well as performance. She detests the perception that women are not as focused on task as men and that women should not be promoted as readily as men.

New narrative: The coach and client focused on what should be the appropriate narrative of her professional life. There were concerns with how her status as a married mother of two small children should be communicated. She feared it would be seen as an impediment, so we focused on the positives of family life that enable a broader empathy for mistakes and the learning of humane professionalism. The coaching focused significantly on having Susan refine the narrative of her identity. For example she felt that to be seen as strong, she had to compete in the unit softball game at their annual retreat. She was frustrated in not being able to be as successful in the game as her younger direct reports who treated her like an "old lady." We envisioned more satisfying methods of responding to a situation such as this.

Case 4 --David

David is a 37 year old VP, Director of Diversity, in a large investment bank.

Narrative: David held two positions while I served as his executive coach. He was an executive in human resources who was initially recruited to the investment bank as the Director of Recruitment. He later was moved to the position of Director of Diversity. David was somewhat unsure of why he was moved from the recruitment position to the diversity position. He found the diversity position a bit perplexing because it was ill defined and he did not have a clear sense of power and authority within the organization. In his position as Director of Diversity he found that new initiatives required convincing a range of constituencies about the appropriateness of the initiative. As a result many issues he wanted to confront were delayed. David was acutely aware of seeming like a poster boy for diversity. He did not appreciate this as in his previous positions he had always felt that the color of his skin made no difference.

Identity: David was accustomed to being in a position of authority. He was a former Army officer who had experience running a large package express facility at one of the nation's busiest airports. He was an African American, who had supervised a lot of minorities in his position with the package express company. He was very aware that he was essentially under a spotlight at the investment back because he was an African American, and it was widely realized that more minorities needed to be brought into the firm to take executive positions. He felt that he should see his role as that of advocate for a stronger inclusion of minorities at the firm.

Emotion: David was not a person who comfortably demonstrated emotion or found it easy to talk about emotion. It was essential in the coaching process to get David to explore how he felt about the professional journey he had made. He felt a strong sense of pride being in the position he was in.

Power: In other positions in his professional life, David had always felt secure in his position power to provide authority for elements of direction and decision making. Now he was in a position where his power needed to derive respect from the people he dealt with, and the mission he was pursuing. This power was more dependent upon his advocacy ability.

New narrative: Much of the narrative refinement focused on the issue of who David felt he was in the position he was in. We were working with uncertainty reduction, yet defining new perspectives constantly. David suspected that the narrative of how the firm saw him and his role, and how he saw himself and his role, were different. He needed to define his identity in a manner that was satisfying to him, and he was largely capable of doing that. In the process he learned more flexibility and the skill of listening more closely to the reactions of many people in many parts of the firm. He slowly began to develop colleagues' broad sense of respect for his ideas, decisions and actions within the firm.

Human Resource Managers Reactions to CCCM

In October of 2011 the author conducted a full day of training on conflict coaching for SHRM accreditation credit for human resource professionals. 31 HR professionals from a wide range of types of organizations attended. They learned the CCCM Comprehensive Conflict Coaching model. Following the training they were surveyed to gather their reactions to the subject matter of the training. Four basic subjective questions were asked: 1) What is your basic reaction? How valuable is this conflict management approach? 2) How does this approach to conflict resolution compare to the system your organization employs? 3) How might this approach be employed in your organization? The last portion of the training seminar also included these issues and their questions and discussion.

The written responses to the initial question indicated that the trainees found the CCCM model to hold substantial value for them personally and was a promising approach. They reacted: "it focuses upon the key elements that are present in all conflicts," and "it's an approach that is clear and understandable." "Most of the conflicts that are a problem are relation conflicts and this helps us understand them." They also felt that the inclusion of the Thomas Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument was a big plus. "The conflict styles approach should appeal to a lot of people."

The second question asked for a comparison to the conflict systems in place in their organization. HR managers consistently felt it was a more "personal" or "person" oriented approach that added to ADR (alternative dispute resolution) options. It appears that they were referring to the sense that the CCCM dealt with interpersonal issues to a greater degree than their existing systems which tended to deal with structural issues and task issues. Existing systems in most organizations focused on legally defined concerns, appropriate protections for employees, and methods of dealing with distributive justice in situations of discord. "This system (CCCM) has the chance to change the people involved." This could be interpreted to mean that this is a "transformative" conflict process not unlike the approach practiced by devotees to the "transformative mediation" approach. This transformative approach stands in clear divergence from the "distributive" approach of many legally defined or legally mandated approaches, such as court appointed mediation (Bush and Folger, 2005). The key distinction of CCCM is that it can be employed as an informal process, practiced as the two parties to the examination of the conflict decide to approach the situation they are focusing on. The CCCM model prompts an examination of several aspects through the familiar conscious recognition of narratives.

The third question focused on the practicality of the approach. The HR managers acknowledged that this approach was distinct from mediation. "It allows us to use mediation principles without having to get multiple approvals to hold a formal mediation." Often the formal process, mandated by organizational policies, appears to be too time consuming and expensive. Conflict coaching, since it springs from executive coaching practice, is much easier for an HR manager to justify and fund. The participants in the SHRM seminar were very curious about various ways in which the CCCM model had been employed in different settings. To them a strong appeal was that it could be taught to supervisors and they could be expected to employ it when necessary. Some pondered an important issue that relates to the training of managers as conflict coaches, "How well do they need to be trained to understand the model in order to do good and not harm?"

Conclusion

The experience discussed in this essay illustrates positive experiences with the application and training of the CCCM, the Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model. Readers who want a clear and comprehensive understanding of the model should refer to the Jones and Brinkert (2008) text that is listed in the reference section. My coaching and training experience, which extends far beyond the experiences discussed here, demonstrates that the model seems to be expedient because it is a flexible model that can be used as one on one mediation, as a conscious approach to conflict coaching, as an informal schematic for an executive coach to apply, or as a formal or informal tool for leaders who often deal with difficult supervision issues. The author has worked to facilitate the application of the model in all of these situations and has found in each case some elements of stage 2 of the model are powerfully relevant to some situations and not to others. Thus it seems that the model provides a sort of toolbox for the coach, yet has a consistent schema built around the nature and concepts of narrative framing. The personal narrative focus of this experience corresponds to Wallenfelsz and Hample's (2010) findings that persons often "take

conflict personally" and may productively "use imagined interactions to work through a conflict situation." It also prompts a sense that there are important links between conflict management research and practice, as Roloff (2009) explains based on his extensive experience and research.

There are some caveats to be considered with the application of the model. As the HR managers indicated there are concerns with how to roll out the function of model. Utilization requires that CCCM synchronizes with existing systems in place in organizations and organization cultures. There may well be some corporate cultures where application of this transformative model of conflict resolution is unlikely to succeed. The model almost certainly holds probability of success only when the coach has the requisite facilitation and listening skill. Those elements, while essential, are given slight explanation in this essay. The parallel process that takes place in the CCCM inhers the need for a facilitative coach to have personal qualities of empathy, ethical concern for the other and the process, the communication skills of active objective listening, and ability to pose open-ended questions that stimulate joint deliberation. A desired result of CCCM training is the coach's learning of communication research and theory-related perspectives that may assist the client in their introspection.

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Pre-crisis Intelligence to Mitigate Corporate Risk

A U.S. Study at Georgetown University

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Risk management is a continuous function in the corporate C-suite, recognizing that risk is created or attracted by change, innovation and competitive initiatives that drive business momentum. The purpose of this research project is to test a regime and method by which corporate communicators can enhance their role and value in risk/crisis management. Approach was through online" listening station" systems monitoring of social media/stakeholder communication and qualitative analysis. Findings indicate an orderly means of corporate communicator professional grasp of risk/crisis potential useful in corporate risk mitigation. Keywords: crisis, risk, prodromes, social media, leadership, mediation, communication, C-suite

Problem Statement

While the ability for corporate management to predict *specific* outcome is arguably the most problematic accountability of the C-suite -- sages such as Yogi Berra warn that it is dangerous to predict anything, especially the future -- effort to forecast *probable* outcome is common in business leadership. Virtually every decision, whether in the C-suite, in operations or at the level of sales and marketing, benefits from an analysis of *probable* response conditions—market and competitive research, for example—with the objective of maximizing support and minimizing risk or rejection.

Risk management is a continuous function in the corporate C-suite, recognizing that risk is created or attracted by change, innovation and competitive initiatives that drive business momentum. Risk calculations, risk avoidance and protective moves such as high cash-to-revenue accumulation are management's way of recognizing that it is impossible for organizations to consistently predict specific outcomes or disruptive events (Collins, 2011) or the discovery of a contentious Black Swan (Taleb, 2010).

Communication professional not a 'risk champion'

The chain of business momentum (which the authors characterize as a strategic taxonomy: change> risk> crisis> response) is one in which communication plays an ongoing central role, and corporate communication professionals can and should be a strengthening partner, enabling management decisions alongside others in risk management. This is not commonly recognized, however. An *Industry Week* article described an ideal " holistic and disciplined risk governance and risk management system" with "risk champions" for each major functional area of the business, including sales, marketing, operations, HR, IT, legal/regulatory and the financial departments. The chief communication officer was not mentioned among the "champions" representing functional areas and, as a cross-functional team, debating the top (*e.g.,* 10 or 12) critical risks across the entire organization, reporting to the CEO and board.

Crisis management counsel to management ranges from advice on planning documents to crisis drills or role-playing, almost always to prepare for logical vulnerabilities (or risks and crises actualized by others). Limiting some communication counseling is the fear in leadership of the company's "over-communicating" which could unnecessarily trigger stakeholder concerns by talking about matters that were not previously evident. (Dezenhall, 2008).

A Harvard Business Essentials book on crisis management (Harvard Business School, 2004) provides company leaders with a self-analysis set of "warning signs of potential trouble" questions suggesting vulnerability in essential business basics —release of new products, launch of new services, instituting a new process, dependency on a few major customers, litigation, rapid growth, poor credit rating, inadequate cash reserves and so forth (the list has 30 yes/no questions). There is no reference to, or inclusion of corporate communication as an agent of gathering warning signs, nor whether the company could usefully establish a system for listening to stakeholder opinions that signal "potential trouble."

Research Purpose

As a primary enabler of leadership in the corporate C-suite, the chief communication officer (CCO) has three accountabilities: (1) expert performance in engaging the company and its leaders productively with stakeholders; (2) protection of the company's reputation, brand and its shared-value deal with stakeholders, as critical factors in achieving the business mission; and (3) finding means of predicting probable outcome of management moves and stakeholder communication.

These accountabilities—to perform, to protect and to predict—are the focus of this paper, with emphasis on the CCO's contribution to predicting probable outcomes of the changing, frequently challenging social media "roller coaster ride" (Argenti, 2009) related to leadership decisions, and providing leadership with information useful to reduce the company's stakeholder-rooted, cyberspace-borne crisis vulnerabilities.

As faculty and students in crisis communication graduate studies at Georgetown University, we are addressing, with intention to find a practical route to avoid, the fallacy of corporate exclusive reliance on traditional risk analysis which concentrates on past crises (Mitroff, 2009) and effectively excludes corporate communication, while relying on the "PR" function for public awareness of exposed risk exploited to crisis. The prevailing C-suite role, at worst, is crisis response preparedness (e.g., prepare crisis communication plan). The purpose of the Georgetown University crisis communication research project is to test methodology and result of pre-crisis intelligence gained from ongoing stakeholder engagement, conducted within practical parameters—large, leading companies in day-to-day real-timeframes—such as might be practiced by CCOs in today's corporate contexts. A larger, aspirational purpose is that research and analysis like this would help lift CCO value in the C-suite with the additional accountability of a risk champion.

Methodology

Pre-crisis intelligence research project

This paper draws on research conducted with graduate students in three course sessions led by the adjunct-faculty authors, to examine the possible mitigation of company crisis risks, achieved through early sensing of prodromes available in open-source, interactive media. Research objectives (focused on stakeholder engagement as well as C-suite crisis-risk management

counsel) were centered on the practicality and reliability of scan-based modeling as predictive of business risk and crises.

In the pre-crisis intelligence research project (hereafter referred to as PIP), students were assigned to companies selected by faculty from *Fortune* magazine's annual ranking of leading companies, sorted by five industry groups. Research—establishing online listening stations and monitoring social media, as well as selected traditional media—was to be conducted over three, 30-day periods, with a 3-5 page paper submitted to faculty for review and guidance at the end of each period. Student researchers were required in each paper to (a) explain the PIP purpose and the procedure used to detect, log and categorize symptoms (pre-crisis developments) in the assigned PIP category; (b) analyze the findings of scans over the previous 30 days, to detect any trend line of symptoms related to the company; and (c) apply tentative findings to predict a possible/probable crisis outcome if the trend line continued. Researchers/students were directed to point to developing outcomes that could be addressed by crisis communications strategies, but it was not the purpose of this research project to recommend such strategies.

Research guidance outline

Risk was defined at project initiation as an uncertainty or event that can potentially create a crisis, catastrophe, or other undesirable effect for a company. PIP project (PIP) research guidance was presented to students in class. The following, slightly modified for journal clarity, is the current (Spring 2012) outline for student researchers. (Faculty was assisted by students who had participated in the Georgetown crisis communication class, and whose professional work includes online research.)

Prepare for PIP Research Project: Outline

Think of Best-Outcome Requirements
- What is your purpose?
- What do key terms (*e.g.,* "pre-crisis" and "prodromes") mean?
- What//who are your personal and professional resources?
- What are your target industry and company characteristics?
- Research—read all information, ask faculty guidance—on the industry and specific companies
- Think about the type of "data"(information that informs, builds a narrative, focuses on strengths, vulnerabilities) you will collect
- Think about baseline
- Understanding "normal" or current conditions in the target, in media reporting around a specific topic will help you to set a general baseline
- Think through research source bias: regional, cultural, situational awareness

Create Listening Station
o *See guide; use search engines to scan open source media*
- Google
- Google Insights – track public perception and curiosity, what people know, what they associate with a company
- Google News
- Google Alerts
- Nutshell Mail
- Periodicals
- Delicious (online bookmarking)
- Lexus Nexus (targeted search engine)
- Factiva (targeted search engine – Dow Jones)

Monitor Social Media Monitoring (*aim:* track, understand stakeholder perceptions)
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Blogs
- Flickr
- SMS-Text
- E-mail

Use RSS Feeds
- Filtrbox
- Google Reader
- Understand Your Sources
- Traditional versus non-traditional media
- Source bias (e.g., political, narrow advocacy)
- Measure source popularity
- Count links to a URL (*e.g,* Yahoo Site Explorer)

Select Scope and Keywords
- Create keyword search strings for a "risk based" search model
- Known and unknown "threats"
- Known and unknown "positives"
- Relevant "brands"
- Industry names, colloquial, formal
- Competitors of the specific company
- Signs versus symptoms of a crisis

Try Different Approaches
- Broad versus focused
- More, or less, technical approaches
- Stemming
- Language restrictions

Set Frequency for Collecting Input/Data
- Daily
- Week days only
- Any critical days or dates (*e.g.,* surrounding annual meeting and earnings announcement dates)

Determine Relevancy of Input/Data
- Title scan, determine relevancy from title
- Read whole media report
- Print and take notes, manually keep track of relevancy
- Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?

Determine Reliability of Input/Data
- Test results by searching multiple search engines – see if one provides opposing information
- Think about the source itself – how much do you know about the specific source?

Categorize
- Group by theme, affected parties
- External factors, internal factors

- Stakeholders, internal, external, and any other distinguishing category
- Review the results to build the crisis taxonomy
- Revisit, conduct more research on returns that presented new ideas

Analyze
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Data visualization
- View relevant hits on timelines; this helps to place the event into context
- Recognize "emerging themes or media trends"
- Tag clouds and mash-ups – "topic" prevalence viewed by size
- Spatial analysis – geography, maps, Google platforms

Recognize challenges and limitations
- Identifying and tracking different variables [indicators] – known and unknown
- Limited by methods: sources, keywords, etc.
- Limited by open source information
- Finding "local" information is tricky – determine scope, consider physical, cultural bias

Look for Supportive Data
- How do you verify what you're finding?
- Range of different sources to help validate and "sell" your results to management
- Social intelligence – understand your data
- Information overload…finding the "needle in the haystack"
- Sustainability, privacy Issues

Project Tentative [crisis] Outcome
- Present findings
- Catalogue (*e.g.,* "prodromal crisis reports")
- Create daily or weekly media summaries – monitor frequently and review consistently!
- Look for indicators of "a crisis" within the relevant returns

- Look for indirect indicators of "a crisis" – an increase in volume within a specific category may trigger further inquiry

Prepare 30-Day Report

- Follow PIP guidance
- Presentation quality

- Immediately re-enter research (2nd and 3rd)
- Following faculty feedback, refine, corrections, additions, deletions

Students share results, tips to improve research

PIP became an ongoing means of engaging students in their overall study of corporate crisis communication, with frequent interaction with faculty as advisers. In each class during the semester, along with instruction and corporate guest lectures, faculty devoted some time to research problems, findings, ideas and questions. Student researchers continuously helped faculty and fellow students improve project implementation. Before and after almost every class, students in informal groups compared notes and exchanged guidance. This was encouraged through a dedicated site for each class (known, for example in 2012, as CrisisCommunication2012.posterous.com) where students and faculty post questions, preliminary findings and tips on research. Here is an entry from Spring 2012, from a student after learning that another student had difficulty creating a listening station:

> How I created my listening station using Google Reader:
>
> First, I created a new email address for it, because it's a lot of information to go into your regular Gmail. Then go to www.google.com/reader.</P< a>> When you go into Google Reader, in the upper left-hand corner "hit the "subscribe" button, create a search term (for example, I did "pharmaceutical" -- make sure you use quotes), and then hit enter to do the search.
>
> When you see the search results, click on the blue link at the top that says "Return to feed discovery." Then, there are all kinds of search variables set up. If you go to the bottom to "Track Keywords and searches," put the same search term in, and choose between Google News and Twitter search. So you'd basically put in "pharmaceutical" twice - once to track Google News, and once to track Twitter.
>
> It's a bit cumbersome, but I've been able to set up about 20 search terms so far, and I'm sure could create many more!

Students also provided feedback to faculty on research method shortcomings. For example, a criticism of the original research project guidelines is that students were asked to identify trends. A student wrote on the class blog that trends were all but impossible in the absence of a readily apparent baseline. The student, gathering information on a health-related company matter, wrote:

> Generally, indicators of a crisis will not jump out from media reports, and therefore it is critical to have a foundation of baseline indicators to be able to recognize and statistically support identification of crisis indicators. If we are analyzing a 30-day period of media, baselines of 1-2 weeks are rarely helpful, and leave no means for statistical comparison. This is why I chose to incorporate Google Flu Trends and Epidemiological Data from outside sources to support the hunch that "something is not right" with a current influenza season.

Findings

Communicator expertise can enable leadership risk mitigation

In our public relations/communications graduate studies at Georgetown University, we presume that predictive accountability is essential for the communication professional, as part of C-suite leadership performance and protection of brand, reputation and stakeholder engagement. Our graduate students are probing ways in which corporate communicators can improve their value as counsels to management, including service as risk champions. Now, in the third year of crisis communication classes, in which more than 50 students have participated, certain recognitions are becoming clear.

1. Corporate communicators can improve internally-focused risk analysis and overcome top management detachment from stakeholder opinion by creating a reliable listening-station system, using social media technology (Brogan, Smith, 2010) to discern stakeholder reactions, opinions and other feedback that can enable management of product and business practice acceptance, corporate reputation and competitive advantage.

2. Corporate communicators can uniquely participate in C-suite leadership as risk champions with new and needed emphasis on stakeholder perceptions in the pre-crisis stage (Fink, 2002) –bringing to bear an improved perception detection mechanism (going beyond Mitroff, 2001), harvesting timely prodromes and positive perceptions from current, growing streams of social media (the digital universe that is now the preeminent thought-leading territory of corporate communications; see Argenti, 2009).

3. Corporate communicators can give the company advantages, both subtle and highly significant, in interpreting tone, context, content and cultural factors that are not scientifically factored into some customary risk research. Risk perception of dramatic events typically is influenced by emotions such as anger and fear. Recent research (Anagondahalli, 2012) shows how differently communication about the affiliation and motives of the perceived "crisis" perpetrator are received, based on the cultural identity of the communicating partners, and how anger and fear differ among stakeholder groups.

Practical application to existing risk management

Through online listening stations, corporate communicators can collect and examine warning signs on levels of risk and indications that a crisis may occur in the chosen company (Fearn-Banks, 2009). Such monitoring and analyses can yield information/data from the specific fields of stakeholder interest; this can be compared with internally-generated risk knowledge and relative risk rankings (which may not customarily be updated frequently). This added input can, in addition to guiding corporate relations and communication decisions, enable company leadership to consider actions that adjust risk-laden contributors, avoid extremes of undesirable probable outcomes, and avert or mitigate the arrival of crisis disruption.

Conclusion

While it is true that accepted methods that inform a generalized sense of impending danger can help management prepare for crisis onslaught—as Fink (2002) explains, "Sailors at sea who spot the ominous prodromes of fast-gathering storm clouds off in the horizon have no power to stop the acute storm. Knowing what is about to happen gives them the opportunity to batten down the hatches and prepare for the inevitable impact"—active, frequent perception-gathering, conducted by expert communication professionals, is more likely to detect clouds that are smaller and can be dissipated or steered past.

Corporate momentum in achieving missions relies on carefully conceived and communicated directions from corporate leaders that enable everyone in the organization to participate and become accountable (DePree, 1989). Since all forms of successful leadership require effective communication (Barrett, 2006), we believe that the rate and value of achieving mission momentum in the public corporation involves two questions: how effectively do those accountable utilize online capabilities to anticipate and deal with crisis at the earliest practicable time?; and how well do the professional communicators counselors serve and become part of the corporate leadership in "massaging danger into opportunity" (Argenti, Barnes, 2009)?

Norman R. Augustine, a former CEO of Lockheed Martin who later chaired the American Red Cross, has written extensively about crisis management. His entry in the Harvard Business Review anthology originally published in 1995 concludes, "The bottom line of my experience with crises can be summarized in just seven words: Tell the truth and tell it fast." That remains valid counsel to corporate leadership in the throes of a crisis. However, a cybersphere-conscious, crisis-avoidance update might more usefully advise: Find ways to systematically listen to the truth as it is perceived by stakeholders and deal with it fast and continually.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: PIP Paper from Georgetown research program (edited to protect actual company)

STUDENT PIP RESEARCH REPORT

Pre-Crisis Intelligence Project: ABC Global Agriculture (ABCAg) (Pseudonym to protect company identification)

First 45-day Listening-Station Report and Analysis

Pre-crisis intelligence gathering, a listening-post project, is a tool designed to uncover red flags or "prodromes" that may develop into a potential crisis. Because crisis is unpredictable and compounded in the food industry by external forces like natural disaster, economic and political influences, this tool by no means should be expected to pinpoint and predict the time and date of a crisis. Rather its strength is in analyzing symptoms to decide proactively upon a course of action as a part of a communications strategy to protect the company, its leadership and overarching business goals.

ABC Global Agriculture (ABCAg) is a global player in agribusiness, headquartered in the US, but with approximately 80, 000 employees across more than 40 countries. ABCAg has experienced just as many good runs in reputation as bad. The company recently dealt with a large food contamination recall. Recent financial performance has caused analysts to question the company's direction, leadership and strength (Blas, 2012) ABCAg's major competitor is Archer Daniels Midland (AMD). Although ADM recently has also experienced less than desirable achievements on the balance sheet, and has been accused along with ABCAg of human rights abuses, discrimination and deforestation, ADM is lauded "the world's most admired food production company" 2009-2011 by Forbes. (News ADM, 2011)   For this project, research and monitoring of ABCAg over the past 45 days occurred using the following methods. Traditional search resources included LexisNexis, Google Alerts, Hoovers, general internet and direct website of companies, organizations and publications. Additionally, less traditional sources like blogs and social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Glassdoor and YouTube were included. The initial keywords used included ABCAg, ABCAg employees, food and beverage industry, food safety, food poisoning, ecoli, salmonella, FDA, USDA. After one week, keywords were refined to include ABCAg jobs, ABCAg layoffs, ABCAg litigation, ABCAg executives, ABCAg earnings, plant closings, agribusiness, OSHA, ABCAg PAC, Center for Consumer Freedom, and American Meat Institute.

By including refined keywords with Google Alerts, it became easier to identify red flags or prodromes by excluding the "noise" of excessive and less relevant information. In other words, this created a more finely tuned "listening" process. Finely tuned listening is important because it allows communications teams the ability to categorize areas of interest. For example, general searches on LexisNexis yielded over 900 records, Google to 1.24 million records. Using daily and weekly Google Alerts created more narrow categories and better monitoring, which keyed in on the most interesting and potentially impactful items. For example refining to "ABCAg earnings" alerts yielded 61 records, "ABCAg layoffs" yielded 10, "ABCAg employees" yielded 66, "ABCAg executives yielded 22, etc.

Categories in this project's analysis are narrowed and focused to financial concerns/CEO, employee concerns, plant concerns/closing and food poisoning/accidents. Listening within these categories revealed red flags like product recall, plant closings, plant improvements, union action, potential strikes, layoffs, employee uncertainty, and earnings reports concerns. All of these are worthy of closer listening and could be the pre-cursors to a crisis. This information is valuable because communications teams can leverage this insight to prevent, prepare and diffuse a potential crisis. A presumption of listening-station research such as this is to help keep the corporate communications team from fallacies of making assumptions of what it knows, what it does not know and what it may never be able to determine.

In the first 30-day round of our research, it became clear that the recently released earnings report and employee concerns are linked red flags of considerable interest and thus chosen for further analysis. ABCAg's numbers tell a story. They also relate back to employee and marketplace perceptions that may lead to reputation risk. ABCAg's most recent earning report released on Jan 10, 2012 is remarkable in that it reveals the company posted its worst quarter in just over a decade. (Blas, 2012) (ABCAg Financial Information, 2012)

The company down played the poor performance by explaining agribusiness is cyclical and that there are existing economic and political conditions the industry is dealing with as a whole. However, at the same time it spoke of a great need "to change certain aspects of our culture." (Hughlett, 2012) ABCAg hints to bigger changes on the horizon, by dropping clues on reducing cost and process with leadership comments like, "more of a change in how we work" and "instead of talking 20 different people to make a decision ... maybe eight people are OK." (Hughlett, 2012) This usually is understood as looming job cuts, changes, closures and employee engagement issues.

The majority of media coverage and industry analysis focuses speculation on the financial health of ABCAg and has begun to pick up speed on taking a critical position on the company's ability to meet earnings, continued poor margins, drops in profitability and possible additional job cuts. The media also spiked on its interpretation when ABCAg recently pooled together $1 Billion in credit with perhaps as many as seven banks as a part of an "ongoing debt management program." (Nicholas, 2012) The regional newspapers where ABCAg's is headquartered ran a series of articles on layoffs, financials, potential changes at ABCAg and the impact on current employees. The Tribune reported, "One ABCAg employee who asked not to be identified said he witnessed a lot of 'crying in the cubicles' at his office." (Hughlett, 2012)

Similarly, skepticism and decrease in confidence is popping up across social media and other peer-to-peer sites. In fact, ABCAg employees have begun to voice opinions and concerns on these sites calling for better management, leadership to forego bonus compensation and emotional impact of job cut announcements, etc. Employees overwhelming share ABCAg has been a great company to work for but that it might have temporarily lost its way. (Career Bliss Reviews, 2012) (Glassdoor Reviews, 2012) Employees who have doubts about the health of a company, job security and future growth can signal a powerful red flag. Firstly, employees are ABCAg's biggest brand ambassadors. Secondly, employees are the key stakeholders in a crisis and have huge influence on how well a company moves through the crisis and its ability to recover. Other stakeholders such as customers, vendors, business partners and the board matter but if you do not have the employees behind you, you have a very long road ahead.

There is limited access to internal communications regarding ABCAg's plan to reduce costs, simplify process and improve performance. However, it is reasonable to presuppose that the company has opportunity to better engage and communicate with its employees on this matter. By including employees in the plan, this increases the chance of preventing an internal crisis, which could manifest in the form of aggressive union action, regional or global strikes, and

plant or work slow-downs. It may also reduce the exchange of misinformation, bad sentiment and protect against shortcuts and lack of focus, which could lead to absenteeism, injury or food contamination, etc. Taking sincere efforts to include employees and support the 2-way exchange of information could reduce negative employee communication on the internet and in the workplace. This in turn may catch the attention of media and external critics and change the tone of reporting and commentary. More positive buzz may then trickle across to analysts, who are important in restoring confidence through financial forecasting and ratings.   If   employee concerns continue to grow surrounding the financial health of the company, and the uncertainty of change, this could be a potentially difficult and long internal crisis for ABCAg. If the support from inside the base is not strong it will be challenging for ABCAg to successfully move its message, vision and goals forward externally to the marketplace and other stakeholders like partners, unions, customers and suppliers.   It is also clear that ABCAg can create greater opportunity by better engaging the public. It does not appear that ABCAg has a well thought out social media strategy. It lacks a real exchange of information. The activity primarily consists of the company sending out random and irregular bits of information on Twitter, to almost no information on Facebook. Monitoring, evaluating, engaging in conversations, exchanging and receiving information are powerful ways to gain clues where a company is doing well and where it can do better. This would allow ABCAg to better bridge and align with its internal and external stakeholders, which in turn potentially should aid in avoiding or diffusing a crisis.

   In conclusion, ABCAg should consider a communications strategy to prevent or diffuse an internal crisis surrounding employee concerns and the company's recent performance. See Append 1 and 2. Recommendations to address the prodromes or red flags are included in Append 3 and are in no particular order of importance. By monitoring or "listening" to external/internal communications, flow of information, employee sentiment, frequency and tone of media coverage, industry trends/news, as well as financial reports and forecasting, communications teams will be better prepared to identify, address and diffuse a potential crisis as well as contain and recover in post-crisis. It is important during the listening process to be monitoring various channels of communication that include multiple perspectives. Limiting the process by monitoring only traditional sources of information may exclude potentially important red flags and contribute to decision-making based on assumptions. Including independent, new and social media in the listening process as well as watchdog groups can aid in evaluating expectation, perception and false beliefs, which often act as catalysts for an explosive or protracted crisis. This project's analysis also suggests that an area of opportunity for ABCAg will be to not merely listen for red flags but also engage in an exchange of information through active, 2-way communication internally and externally. This will further strengthen the company's ability to recognize pre-crisis red flags.

(Works Cited—more than 50 online and traditional media sources—have been deleted from this paper by Faculty, to protect the studied corporation identity.)

Predominate Prodromes for ABCAg

Google Prodromes Jan 2012-Feb 2012

■ Financial Concern/CEO 42%

■ Employee Concern 30%

■ Plant Closing 21%
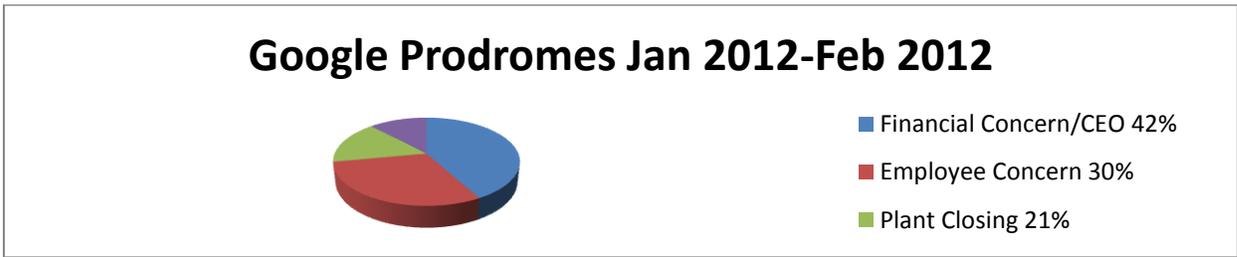
Prevalence Prodromes Jan – Feb 2012

Legend: Jan 15-21, Jan 22-28, Jan 29-Feb 4, Feb 5-11, Feb 12-18, Feb 19-25

Categories: Financial Concerns/CEO, Employee Concerns, Plant Concerns/Closing, Food Poisoning/Accidents
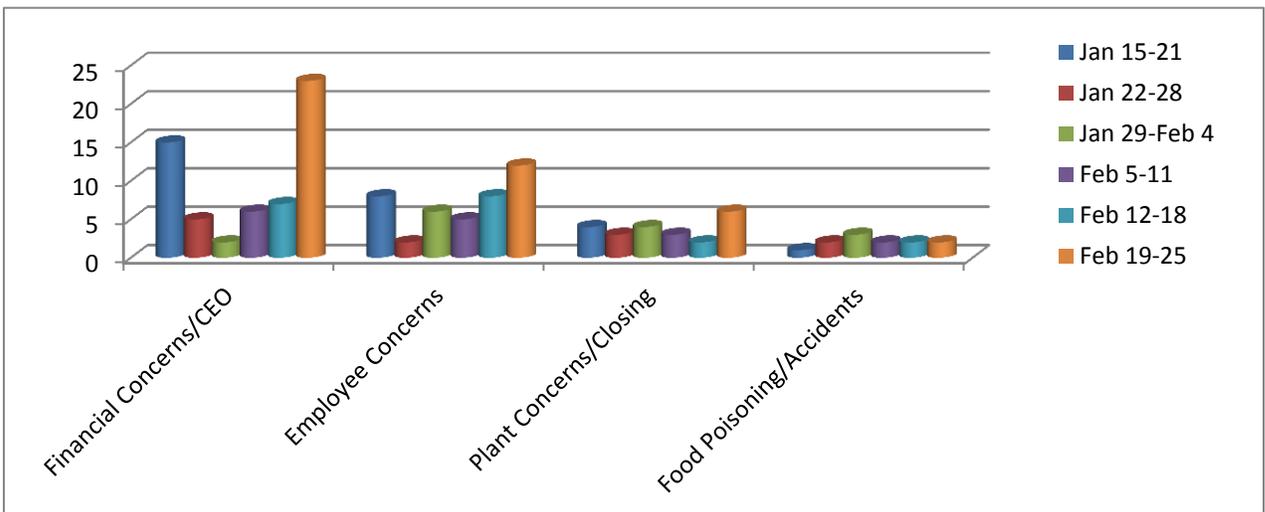
Address Prodromes
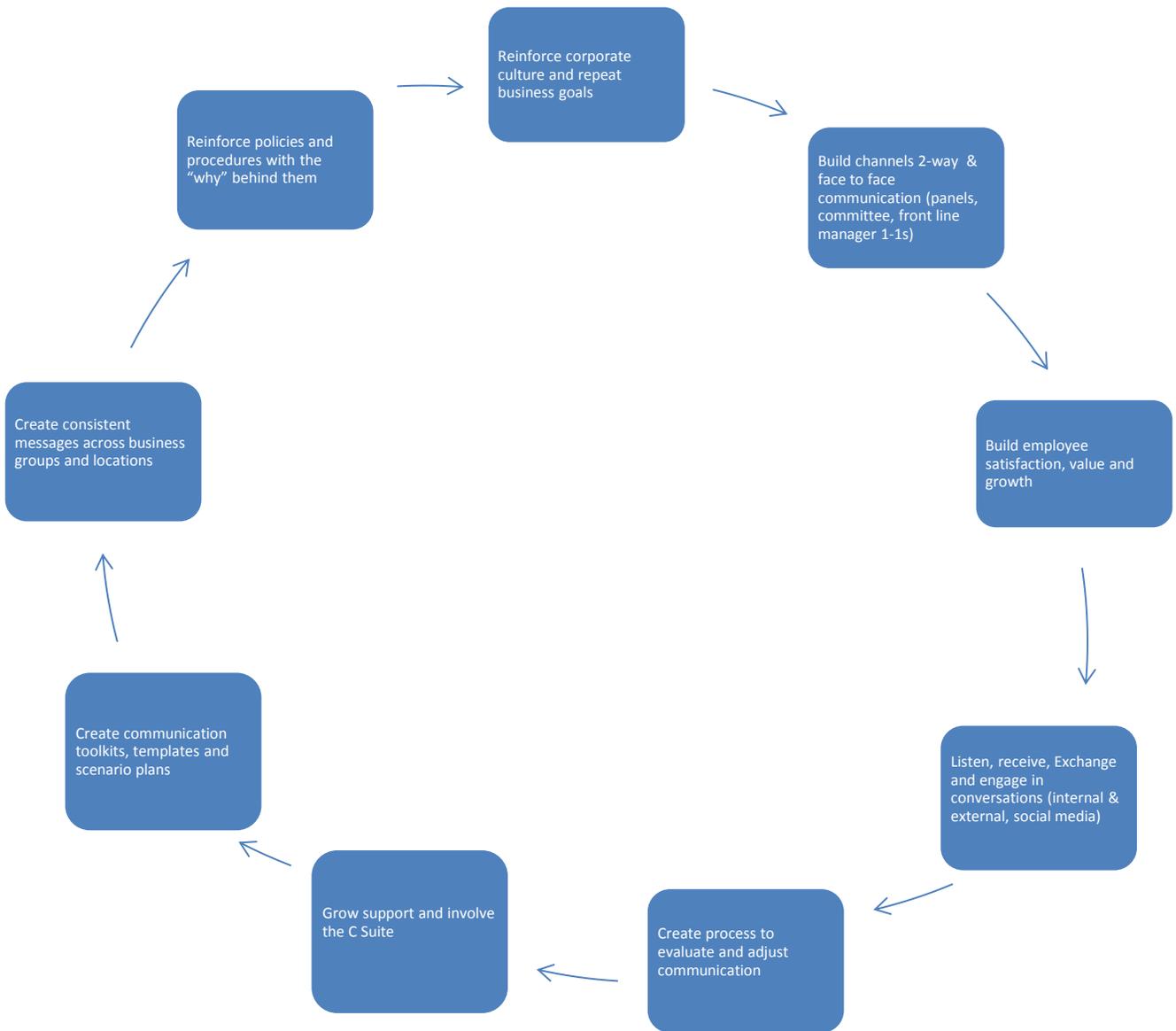
Appendix 2: List of prodromes provided to students in Georgetown research project

COMMON TYPES OF CRISES:
POSSIBLE RED FLAGS

Acquisition
Age discrimination
Alcohol abuse
Bankruptcy
Boycott
Bribery
Chemical spill or leak
Computer failure
Computer hacking
Congressional investigation/hearing
Consumer complaints
Consumer illness/death linked to product/service
Data loss/theft
Disgruntled employees
Drug abuse
Drug trafficking
Earthquake
Embezzlement
Executive officer illness/death/mishap
Executives leaving to go to a competitor company
Explosion
Fatality in operations
Fire
Flood
Hacking
Hurricane
Kickbacks
Kidnapping

Lawsuits/litigation
Layoffs (massive)
Merger
Murder
Negative legislation
Oil spill
Plant closing
Political actions that disadvantage company
Product/research failure
Product contamination/ failure/recall/complaints
Protest demonstrations
Racial issues
Rumors that persist, negative to company
Sexual discrimination/ harassment
Shortage of raw materials, minerals, ingredients
Strikes
Takeovers
Tax problems
Tornado
Toxic waste
Transportation accident
Transportation failure
Workplace violence

SOURCES: *Crisis Communications,* Kathleen Fearn-Banks; *Crisis Management,* Steven Fink; *The Crisis Counselor,* Jeffrey R. Caponigro

Adapted for Georgetown University, masters class in Crisis Communications, Harrison, Muhlberg (2009)

Repairing an Organization's Image in times of Crises

What Strategies to Use When?

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The image repair theory has been described as the "dominant paradigm for examining corporate communication in times of crises" (Dardis & Haigh, 2009, p. 101). While the theory, which posits five major strategies and 14 sub-strategies, has been applied extensively, a fundamental question remains: What strategies should be used when? Through meta-analysis of the image repair studies, we examine the persuasiveness/effectiveness in the use of different strategies. This study addresses the call by Haigh and Brubaker (2010) to conduct more studies to understand the use of strategies across different crisis types with a view to providing a template to equip practitioners on what strategies to use during crises.

A crisis can affect an organization's "good name" (Fearn-Banks, 2002, p. 2). As crises, defined as unpredictable events that threaten the expectancies of stakeholders and impact the organizations' performance (Coombs, 2012), are occurring with greater frequency and with increasing complexity (Mitroff, 2005), organizations' vulnerability to crises are also increasing (Stocker, 1997). One of the objectives of crisis management is to maintain an organization's image (Coombs, 1995; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). The other objectives include lessening the negative outcomes on the organization and to protect stakeholders (Coombs, 2010; Stocker, 1997). Crisis management should thus seek to restore organizational normalcy and influence public perception. The strategies used should be "designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization" (p. 2), argued Fearn-Banks (2002). A good corporate image is thus important to organizations (Benoit & Pang, 2008).

During crises, the image, face, and reputation of the organization are often threatened, argued Benoit and Pang (2008) when,

1. An offensive act has occurred;
2. The accused is responsible for the act.

These are times when organizational responses are called for. When face is threatened, face work must be performed (Benoit & Brinson, 1994). Since communication is a goal-directed activity (Benoit, 1995), response strategies help maintain a healthy self-image. Organizations are called to offer explanations, defenses, justifications, rationalizations, apologies, and excuses when one is called to account for allegations of misdeeds, negligence, or failure.

The image repair theory, which is an extension of apologia (Coombs, Holladay, Frandsen, & Johansen, 2010), asserts that an organization's credibility depends on its image to a very large extent. Threats to this image often necessitate massive efforts to repair it (Benoit & Brinson, 1999). The image repair theory, which is part of the rhetorical stream in crisis research

(Coombs, 2008), provides message options for organizations to use in times of crises. Since the first book on image repair was published in 1995, Benoit and his colleagues have applied the theory to analyze how organizations (see Benoit & Brinson, 1994; Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Benoit & Pang 2008; Cowden & Sellnow, 2002), prominent individuals (see Benoit, 1997; Benoit & Brinson, 1999), and politicians (see Benoit 2004), nations and governments (see Cai, Lee & Pang, 2009; Low, Varughese, & Pang, 2011; Zhang & Benoit, 2004) repaired their images, amongst the huge stable of studies. These studies have been published in communication journals as well as non-communication journals. It has been described as the "dominant paradigm for examining corporate communication in times of crises" (Dardis & Haigh, 2009, p. 101).

Coombs (2008), however, described image repair theory's focus and application on case studies as "problematic" because the studies shed "precious little light on how stakeholders react to crises" (p. 1056). Current studies are more descriptive and retrospectively sense-making and short on prescription, prediction and drawing inferences (Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Dardis & Haigh, 2009). Image repair studies texts, but in times of crisis, context is equally important, like prior reputation (Coombs, 2008; Lyon & Cameron, 2004); organization-stakeholder relationships (Coombs, 2008; Haigh & Brubaker, 2010); crisis type (Coombs, 2008); source credibility (Haigh & Brubaker, 2010); crisis situation and stage of crisis (Benoit, 1997), the channels of communication (Caldiero, Taylor, & Ungureanu, 2009) and timing of response (Pang, Lwin, Ho, Cheng, Lau, & Malik, 2012). Coombs (2008) also argued that such applications of image repair theory using case studies do not yield meaningful results.

Yet, for all its limitations, the effectiveness of rhetorical responses cannot be undermined. For instance, the response of apology has been found to be the most effective crisis strategy (Kim, Avergy, & Lariscy, 2009) even though Coombs and Holladay (2008) countered that it has been over-promoted as 'the" response (p. 252). Choi and Lin (2009) argued sympathy and compensation are equally effective responses. Apologies accompanied by affirmative statements such as those accepting responsibility (Pace, Fediuk, & Botero, 2010) and corrective action (Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002) help organizations atone for the transgression.

Rhetorical exigencies in times of crises

Additionally, three phenomena during crises underline the criticality and continuing relevance of rhetorical responses. First, there is the triggering of information vacuum (Pang, 2010). In a crisis, an information vacuum is immediately generated in the media (Coombs, 2007; Heath, 2006). Information vacuum (Kauffman, 2005, p. 266), also known as "information void" (Coombs, 2007, p. 129) or "reporting vacuum" (Heath, 2006, p. 247) is created by the crisis and as a result of the crisis: People want to know what happens when bad things happen – and people need to know what happens after bad things happen. This insatiable thirst for information is driven not just by primary stakeholders who "have grown up with inquiring minds fed by an abundance of communication tools" (Fearn-Banks, 2001, p. 479). More prominently, it is driven by the media that demand for "*immediate* (italics in text) information and answers during a crisis (Marra, 2004, p. 311). It becomes a vicious cycle: The media are hot at the heels of the news, and stakeholders regard the media as their "primary" source of information (Coombs, 2007, p. 129), which in turn fuel the media to meet this demand. Little wonder that Garnett and Kouzmin (2007) described crises as "media events" (p. 175). In describing how organizations should always respond promptly in a crisis, crisis scholars have alluded to the need to fill this vacuum (Coombs, 2007). Otherwise, the vacuum, which has an immense but undiscerning appetite to swallow every conceivable nugget of information, would be consumed by less credible, accurate, and useful information – to the detriment of the organization. Marra (2004), citing a practitioner, captured it

best, "In the absence of information, misinformation becomes news" (p. 312). Bradford and Garrett (1995) suggested that practitioners should focus on *how* to respond instead of deciding on whether or not to respond to the accusations of unethical behaviour in the first place. When practitioners remain silent, stakeholders are likely to attribute culpability and lower their perceived image of the organization. Silence, or failure to fill the vacuum, reflects "uncertainty and passivity, the exact opposite" of what an organization should be conveying in times of crises (Coombs, 2007, p. 129). Silence suggests the organization is "not in control", and silence allows others to "take control" (p. 129). Silence or no-comment answers signal to the media that there might be guilt and there is something to hide (Richards, 1998). Thus, a crisis creates a "rhetorical exigency" for the organization to enact control in the "face of uncertainty" so as to assure and win stakeholders' confidence (Heath, 2004, p. 167).

Pang (2010) suggested two ways to do so. First, set the agenda by telling one's own side of the story. One enacts control by communicating and constructing one's version of the crisis that is "factually accurate, coherent, and probable account for the event and its proper resolution" (Heath, 2004, p. 168). Heath (2006) argued that crisis presents the organization with the "strategic opportunity" to provide information to stakeholders (p. 246), and one way to do so is by "telling of a story" (Heath, 2004, p. 169) as crisis response is a narrative (Heath, 2006). Secondly, build the agenda by framing one's own story. Kiosis and Wu (2008) argued that practitioners can help to "filter and frame messages" (p. 72) that appear in the media and influence public opinion. Framing is based on the idea that the way an issue is portrayed in the news can affect audience's understanding of it (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Entman (1993) argued that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived realty and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). Hallahan (1999) suggested that practitioners can operate as "frame strategists, who strive to determine how situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues and responsibility should be posed to achieve favorable objectives, all of which necessitate rhetorical responses.

The second phenomenon relates to image vacuum (Noraizah & Pang, 2012). A good corporate image and reputation, which are used interchangeably in image repair, are widely-accepted as an important corporate asset (Benoit & Pang, 2008). The literature alludes to the effects of corporate image on business sustainability and competitive advantage (see Cheverton, 2006; Cornelissen, 2011) business legitimacy (Cornelissen, 2011; Massey, 2004) and consumer buying behaviour (see Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998). Given the long-standing history and well-established status of corporate image, it is therefore intriguing that some organizations may exist without one. Bernstein (1984 & 1989) alluded to the notion of a corporate void; a situation in which the organization image is neither good nor bad, but that it has no image whatsoever. Walker (2010) too suggested the possibility of an organization not having a corporate image. A corporate image vacuum can arise under two circumstances. The first is the lack of conscious effort in creating, cultivating and communicating the corporate image. The second is when an organization either refuses or is unable to fill the corporate void. To counter that, Noraizah and Pang (2012) recommended an active cultivation, management, matching of organizational image, all of which necessitate rhetorical responses.

The third phenomenon relates to the advantage of pre-empting the potential negative impact of the crisis by sounding it out first. This pertains to the concept of stealing thunder, which means admitting one's weaknesses and faults before that become public. Arpan and Pompper (2003) argued that for an organization to steal thunder, "it must break the news about its own crisis, rather than waiting to respond to inquiries from the media or other key publics" (p. 295). This has several advantages. One, it increases credibility for the organization with the journalists

who regard this as a welcome change from the usual stonewalling of information. Two, the organization is in a position to change the meaning of the crisis, thus lessening the severity of the crisis and leading the impact to be downplayed. It is a "proactive self-disclosure strategy" (Wigley, 2011, p. 51) that propels the organization to initiate conversation with the stakeholders and the media. Wigley (2011) found that the source who stole thunder received considerably less news coverage than the source that did not. The stories reported were also more positively framed. Journalists were less likely to follow up on stories when organizations broke them first (Ondrus, 1998, cited in Wigley, 2011). For stealing thunder to take place, it necessitates rhetorical responses.

Based on the above discussion, if rhetorical responses are critical, this study is significant on four fronts. First, it addresses the call by Haigh and Brubaker (2010) to conduct more studies to understand the use of strategies across different crisis types. Haigh and Brubaker's (2010) testing of strategies had been narrowly applied to a product recall crisis, thus could not be generalized across crisis types. This study therefore extends the examination of the use of strategies across crisis types. Second, beyond crisis type and prior relationship, the reality in a crisis is that words can hurt. Sheldon and Sallot's (2009) study examined how the 45-word racist remarks uttered by then Mississippi Senator Trent Lott in 2002 sparked a crisis. The authors argued for the use of "appropriate response strategies" to ensure image and reputation are restored. Third, beyond individual strategies, Sheldon and Sallot (2009) called for the examination of interactions among response strategies, i.e. which strategies work well together, and which do not. This study aims to do that. Four, despite being an established theory, besides application of theory, little attempt has been made to extend the theory. This paper aims to do so by distilling principles from the strategies, examining their relevance, and uncovering ways in which the theory can be built further.

Literature Review

What strategies can be used: What is said?

The image repair theory is divided into five major typologies (Benoit & Pang, 2008).

Denial has two variants: simple denial or shifting the blame to another party. The purpose of the latter strategy is to position the accuser as victim.

Evasion of responsibility. The second major typology is evasion of responsibility. The first variant is provocation; where a nation reacts by responding it was egged on to do so. The second is defeasibility, when a nation argues its case on the basis of lack of information and control. The third is accident, where the 'accused' states that the accident happened unintentionally. Last is good intention, where a nation argues that the offensive act was done with good intentions.

Reducing offensiveness. The third major typology is reducing offensiveness. One can do so by bolstering, which seeks to highlight one's positive traits. Minimization strategies can also be used to reduce the severity of the situation. Differentiation strategies seek to reduce offensiveness by suggesting that the act was less offensive than perceived. Transcendence strategies seek to place the situation at a higher level, with more important concerns. Attacking the accuser seeks to reduce the credibility of the accusations. Compensation strategy is where those responsible decide to offer something of value to the victims.

Corrective action. The fourth major typology is corrective action, which aims to reassure stakeholders that such crisis situations would not reoccur.

Mortification. The final major typology is mortification, when one admits its mistake and seeks forgiveness.

How the strategies are used: How it is said?

Hearit and Borden (2006) proposed an Apologetic Ethics Framework model to assess how a true, or "ethically ideal" (p. 69) apology, should be conducted. There are two components to this model: the manner of apology and the apology's content. Even though this framework was focussed on the utterance of apology, it is instructive for how the other strategies are spoken.

Manner of apology. The authors argued 'apologies' should comprise six elements. First, truthfulness referring to a full "disclosure of useful information and not omit key facts (p. 64). Though this allows some leeway to "strategically name" (p. 64) the wrongdoings, this must relate to facts and reality of the case. Second, the transgressor must communicate sincere expressions of regret. Three criteria are used to measure sincerity: has the apologist demonstrated "good-faith effort to achieve reconciliation"? (p. 66); second, even as the apologist promised the error would not occur again, did the apologist communicate it; and third, did the apologist demonstrate "true desire to reconcile" or was the apologist just trying to "escape from the media glare"? (p. 66). Third, apology must be timely. In fact, it should be articulated as soon as an organization recognizes its transgression. If an apology is only articulated after stakeholders continually called for it, the strength of the apology would be diminished and the apologist would be perceived as "not want or to resist reconciliation, and thus have a tin ear" (p. 66). On the contrary, if apologies are too swift, they may be seen as the apologist being too earnest to "get it over with quickly" (p. 67). Ultimately, timing is of paramount importance. Fourth, apologies must be voluntary. They should not be seen as articulated out of compulsion, coercion, or damage control. Instead, a sincere utterance, matched by a remorseful tone, would be well-accepted by stakeholders. Fifth, apologies must address all stakeholders including anyone affected and offended by the apologist, not just specific stakeholders. Finally, apologies must be appropriate in context. This concerns the site, location and medium of communication selected to communicate the apology.

Content of apology. The manner in which the apology is conducted would be compromised if the content of the apology was insufficient. Thus, what is said is equally important to how the apology is said. Essentially, Hearit and Borden's (2006) conceptualization of apology emphasizes the apologist's effort to atone for the transgression. Thus, apologies must explicitly acknowledge wrongdoing, making "no bones about the fact that an offence has been committed" (p. 67) and without pointing fingers at others, dissociating or distancing from the transgression. The apologist must express regret—conveying dismay at causing harm. Further, the apologist must identify with injured stakeholders by demonstrating empathy for the way in which stakeholders have been hurt and making attempts to comprehend "the depth and effect of the offense in a way that honors the experience of those who have been wronged" (p. 70). Additionally, the content of the apology must ask for forgiveness. This shows the apologist genuinely values its stakeholders' opinions even though the prospects for forgiveness may be slim. Once they ask for forgiveness, the apologist must seek reconciliation; pleading with stakeholders to restore the relationship as much as possible to its previous level before the offence occurred. Further, the apologist must fully disclose information related to the offense. They must also provide explanations that address

legitimate expectations of the stakeholders. This element "simply encourages the apologist to organize the apology within a framework that is meaningful to the injured parties" (p. 72). Yet it is not enough to merely apologize, the content of the apology must also provide assurances that the offense will not be committed again and demonstrate a commitment to voluntarily provide appropriate compensation for those affected.

Frandsen and Johansen (2010) described Hearit and Borden's (2006) framework as a "more practically oriented model which puts forward a normative standard for ethically correct crisis communication..." (p. 353). Thus, this study posits the following research questions:

RQ1: What strategies are appropriate to be used in the given circumstances? What strategies work well together, what strategies do not?
RQ2: How persuasive are these strategies?
RQ3: What other strategies can be built into image repair theory?

Method

This study is conducted by meta-analysis of literature on image repair. The meta-analysis method is useful to combine different data in various studies of one topic, in this case, of insights from one theory, into one comprehensive study (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Since this is an exploratory study, meta-analyzing the comprehensive studies using image repair as its theoretical lens would yield further understanding of its development and identify future areas of research. Coombs and Schmidt (2000) argued that using "a series of case studies would allow the researcher to find patterns" (p. 164) of strategies. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) asserted that in-depth study of cases were time-tested means of evaluating business practices. Stake (1995) argued that case studies enabled researchers to understand the embedded-ness and interactions these processes had with their larger contexts. Case studies, in the context of organizational studies, are in-depth studies of people, processes, and protocol (Stacks, 2002). The essence of case study is, thus, to "illuminate a set of decisions, why they were taken and how they were implemented, and to what result," argued Yin (2003, p. 12).

Data Collection

It was important to study as many case studies as possible. A comprehensive collection of image repair literature was accessed and compiled. These ranged from as early as 1994 to 2012. The studies were published in a variety of journals, including *Communication Studies*, *Communication Reports*, *Communication Quarterly*, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *Business Communication Quarterly*, *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Communication*, and *Journal of Communication Management*, amongst others. These studies were conducted by Benoit in collaboration with his colleagues, as well as other researchers like Liu (2007), King (2006), Kauffman (2008), Cowden and Sellnow (2002), Caldiero, Taylor and Ungureanu (2009), Hearit and Brown (2004), amongst others, and applied to a variety of crises involving celebrities and political figures, corporate fraud, international conflict, religious bodies, and across cultures. In all, 43 articles were examined.

Data Analysis

Analyzing context and strategies. Journal articles with image repair strategies used as a framework provided ready resource into the insights of the thinking and strategies of the organizations at that time. This study, then, examined the "contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 1993, p. 59). Each case was analyzed for their intrinsic value (Stake, 1998), in detail and in their unique contexts.

The next stage is to draw inferences, to go beyond the descriptive and to distil principles for them to be more prescriptive.

Findings and Discussion

The findings from the meta-analysis are organized according to Pang's (2006) categorization of response strategies along an advocacy-accommodative continuum. Pang (2006) posited that some strategies such as denial and evading responsibility belonged more to advocacy in nature, while others like mortification were more accommodative. Yet, there were others that were in the middle range between advocacy and accommodation, such as reducing offensiveness strategies. The strategies at the advocacy end seek to protect the organization whereas the strategies at the accommodative end seek to address the stakeholders' concerns. In addition, it is plausible for organizations to adopt mixed strategies or stances in responding to their stakeholders. Benoit and Hirson (2001) argued that image repair strategies should be "collectively as well as individually appropriate" (p. 290).

Research question one examined what strategies were appropriate to be used in the given circumstances and what strategies work well together, what strategies do not? The second research question examined how persuasive these strategies were. These questions would be examined conjointly. To answer them in a coherent manner, the questions would be examined by first categorizing the nature of the accusation, the tools used, exemplar of the rhetoric used, and the persuasiveness. To enable easier reading, the strategies used would be in bold.

Advocacy Strategies: Denial and Evasion of Responsibility

Nature of accusation. These were most commonly used in an accident and/or challenge crisis type and when the accused is under heavy criticism and there is a need to address this criticism but avoid taking responsibility for it. President Bush used this, for example, in defending himself against Democratic contenders, who repeatedly criticized him for US' economic problems and the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq after its invasion. The defensive strategy was also employed by Merrill Lynch when it was accused of recommending sale of poor-performing stocks to individual investors.

Channels of communication. Television interview (Benoit, 2006) or press releases.

Exemplar of rhetoric. In response to the economic accusations, Bush used **defeasibility**: "I think that's important for the people who watch the expenditure side of the equation to understand we're at war. And any time you commit your troops into harm's way, they must have the best equipment, the best training, the best possible pay. We owe it to their loved ones" (Benoit, 2006, p. 298). In response to allegations of unethical practises, Merrill Lynch used **denial**: "There is no basis for the allegations made today by the New York Attorney General. His conclusions are just

plain wrong. We are outraged that we were not given the opportunity to contest these allegations in court." (p. 462).

Persuasiveness. King (2006) argued that characteristics associated with the wrongdoing will "influence the type of response strategy" (p.135) the organization engages in; hence allegations of a serious wrongdoing will elicit a defensive response strategy. A defensive response strategy attempts to "eliminate and doubts about the legitimacy of the organization" (p. 135), and to protect its image, provided the allegations are false (King, 2006), such as when Brown and Williamson responded to allegations of "organizational misconduct and inappropriate behavior by senior officials" (p. 132). Similarly, Benoit and Brinson (1999) found that in these situations, **denial** is essential to the accused. Hindman (2005) suggested that **shifting the blame** and **defeasibility** can distance the organization from the wayward act, for example, when *The New York Times* tried to "separate itself from a wayward journalist" who had plagiarized and fabricated information (p. 239). Benoit (2006) found the strategy of **defeasibility** used by President Bush a "risky strategy for the incumbent" (p. 303). **Defeasibility**, if accepted by the audience, "exonerates the accused from blame, but does not portray him or her as in charge of the situation…" (p.299). It appears there is a trade-off between responsibility and competence.

Middle Range Strategies (Evading responsibility)

Nature of accusation. The strategy of reducing offensiveness is most commonly used in an accident and/or challenge crisis type, the crisis context being a product-harm situation. Dardis and Haigh (2008) found that "this strategy seems to be well suited for instances of "middle ground" crises in which organizational responsibility is not automatically obvious and in which organizations are relatively low-profile" (p. 112). Blaney and Benoit (1997) suggested that when one cannot deny having said or done something but had to address the accusation, **transcendence** is appropriate.

Channels of communication. Press releases (Dardis & Haigh, 2008) which are disseminated in news reports (Haigh & Brubaker, 2010).

Exemplar of rhetoric. Quotes from a press release concerning product recall in experimental study: "Consumers have not reported problems. Most of the water has already been pulled from distribution channels. We are making the recall known to consumers as well as vendors to promote open lines of communication with consumers. This is only the 2nd product recall in our 40-year history. We are dedicated to making quality products" (Haigh & Brubaker, 2010, p. 459).

Persuasiveness: Dardis and Haigh (2008) found the strategy of reducing offensiveness "allows the company to deflect threats to its credibility on one hand, while affording the company the chance to strategically minimize perceptions of the severity of the situation on the other hand" (p. 141). In addition, the experimental study found reducing offensiveness the most effective among other image repair strategies in terms of restoring positive attitudes towards organization, reputation, corporate ability, corporate credibility and corporate positioning. Similarly Haigh and Brubaker (2010) found it most effective in protecting the trust and commitment dimensions of organization public relations and most effective in protecting the image, reputation, and credibility dimensions of corporate social responsibility. Blaney and Benoit (1997) argued that **transcendence** could be an especially apt strategy for those who defend theological doctrines.

Accommodative Strategies (Corrective Action and Mortification)

Nature of accusation. The strategy of **mortification** was most commonly used in a preventable crisis, where the organization misdeed is apparent, and due to management misconduct, such as when the Roman Catholic Church "sparked the biggest crisis in history of the American Catholic Church" (Kauffman, 2008, p. 258) in its sexual abuse charges, and knowledge of that misdeed was known by management; Archbishop Bernard Law had known of the abuse, but "he reassigned Geoghan, to different parishes, where Geoghan continued to abuse minors" (p. 258).

Channels of communication. Press conference (Kauffman, 2008).

Exemplar of rhetoric. In response to the sex abuse cases by Catholic priests in Boston, Archbishop Bernard Law apologized: "With all my heart, I wish to apologize once again for the harm done to the victims of sexual abuse by priests" (Kauffman, 2008, p. 260).

Persuasiveness. Benoit (1997) suggested that "when one commits an offensive act, it is often best to employ **mortification**" (p. 263) and that "**mortification** can help to repair a damaged reputation" (p. 264). Kauffman (2008) found the strategy of **mortification** used by Archbishop Bernard Law persuasive in such crisis situations as the papers gave positive coverage and described the apology as "extraordinary, dramatic, contrite and sincere" (p. 261). Brinson and Benoit (1999) found that the use of both **corrective action** and **mortification** strategies "was effective in reconstructing Texaco's positive image" (p. 504) after allegations of racism towards its African American employees. Benoit (1988) argued that the strategy of **mortification** quells attacks from accusers because "when an apology is seen as sincere by the audience further condemnation can only be seen as revenge" (p. 190).

However, Benoit (1997) warned that "**mortification** means admitting guilt, which may help the company's image but impair its ability to win lawsuit" (p. 265). Blaney, Benoit and Brazeal (2002) suggested that **corrective action** "must be perceived as correcting the problem" (p.389).

Mixed strategies 1: Accommodative-Middle Range Strategies

Nature of accusation. The mixed strategy of using a combination of accommodative and middle range strategies was most commonly used in three types of crisis: 1) a preventable crisis, where the organization management misdeed is apparent, such as when allegations surfaced within the Christian and Missionary Alliance that over 30 children had suffered abuse at the hands of staff, 2) in an accidental crisis, where a technical error results in a defect or potentially harmful product, as in the example of Dow Corning being accused of manufacturing unsafe silicone breast implants, or 3) in a challenge crisis type, where the organization is confronted with claims by discontented stakeholders, such as in the case of Phillip Morris defending its image "as a respectable, responsible, and legitimate company" (Metzler, 2001, p. 367) in the tobacco industry, which is being questioned for its trustworthiness to "act in a manner that doesn't cause undo harm to public health" (p. 371).

Brinson and Benoit (1996) found this to be appropriate when "there is clear evidence of wrongdoing and blame cannot be shifted elsewhere" (p. 39). However, Benoit and Henson (2008) also found this could be used in a natural disaster crisis, and when culpability could not be directly attributed to the government involved, as in the example of Hurricane Katrina in the US. Furthermore, in the circumstances where there were threats of widespread media attention, like in

the abovementioned cases, this strategy was appropriate (Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Courtright & Hearit, 2002).

Channels of communication: Press releases (Brinson & Benoit, 1996), press conferences (Drumheller & Benoit, 2004), television advertisements and organization website (Metzler, 2001), and personal communication to the victims in the form of letters and a retreat (Courtright & Hearit, 2002).

Exemplar of rhetoric. Dow Corning (Brinson & Benoit, 1996), in response to allegations that their products were unsafe, **bolstered** their image: "Our overriding responsibility is to the women using silicone mammary implants made by Dow Corning" (p. 37), and employed **mortification**: "We have made errors. But if we haven't done it right up to now, we are sure going to try to do it now" (p. 36).

Persuasiveness. Brinson and Benoit (1996) found that the combination of **mortification, corrective action** and **bolstering**, "worked well together despite the company continuing to insist that their product is safe" (p. 39). It was also found that "dropping the defensive tone and assumption of responsibility improved its image" (p. 39). Drumheller and Benoit (2004) further argued that it is a useful tool for conveying sincerity. In addition to accepting responsibility, **compensation** and **corrective action** would also help to deal with victims, because the stakeholders expect it (Courtright & Hearit, 2002). Furthermore, Courtright and Hearit (2002) asserted that in the Christian and Missionary Alliance sex abuse case, **compensation** appears as a form of "proportional humiliation designed to deal with the consequences of guilt" (p. 355). Metzler (2001) found that **corrective action** lends support **to bolstering** and **transcendence** tactics, and that without it, the **bolstering and transcendence** tactics "seem clearly designed to divert attention away from tobacco issues and lead the audience down a garden path of good deeds" (p. 378). Therefore accommodative strategies support certain middle range strategies.

However, Metzler (2001) cautioned that the organization needs to "commit to real change through **corrective action**" (p. 378), especially when the audience is "not that gullible" to accept readily the "misdirection of attention" (p. 378).

Mixed strategies 2: Defensive - Middle Range Strategies

Nature of accusation. The mixed strategy of using a combination of defensive and middle range strategies was commonly used in a challenge crisis type where the organization is confronted by stakeholders with claims of organizational misconduct, in response to the allegations of wrongdoing. For example, in the case of Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company defending itself against accusations of "inappropriate behavior by senior officials in their manufacturing of tobacco products" (p. 132). Caution should be used in employing a defensive strategy when allegations are true, as it "risks damage to the image and reputation of the organization" (King, 2006, p. 135).

Channels of communication. Press conferences (Benoit, 2006; Benoit & Mill, 1998; Benoit & Wells, 1998; Zhang & Benoit, 2009)), public testimony (Benoit & Mill, 1998), public address (Benoit & Brinson, 1999), TV interviews (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994; Benoit & Nill, 1998b; Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004), news articles, letters to newspapers, speech, TV interviews and a book publication (Benoit & Nill, 1998a), advertisements (Benoit & Wells, 1998; Zhang & Benoit, 2004), and press statements (Brinson & Benoit, 1996).

Exemplar of rhetoric. In response to the allegation that Mrs. Clinton had received preferential treatment in profitable investment advice: "There's really no evidence of that." (Benoit & Wells, 1998, p. 27). Saudi Arabia denied that it supports terrorism: "There is no proof [that Saudi money went to the Taliban]." (Zhang & Benoit, 2004, p. 164), and argued why it did not support the U.S. plan to attack Iraq: "Our view is that… it [to attack Iraq] would not serve America's interests, or the interests of the region." (Zhang & Benoit, 2004, p. 165).

Persuasiveness. Benoit and Nill (1998b) found that **bolstering** can reinforce **denial** provided the **bolstering** is consistent with the **denial**. This was further asserted by Benoit and Brinson (1999), that **bolstering** "strengthened the **denial** through displaying the Royal Family's heartfelt emotions, selfless motives, and gratitude" (p. 151) when the Queen was faced with claims that she failed to acknowledge her subjects' grief over Princess Diana's death. Benoit and Nill (1998a) also found that the use of third-party defence, as a form of **bolstering**, in addition to self-defence, helped to increase the persuasiveness of the image restoration strategy. The authors argued that film director Oliver Stone's defence of his sources in his documentary, *JFK*, "appeared somewhat more objective and more persuasive than if he were defending himself directly" (p. 137). This was also found viable in political communication (Benoit & Well, 1998) as it gave "more objectivity than is possible with self-defence" (p. 34). Similarly, Benoit and Hanczor (1994) argued that the development of Tonya Harding's defence against accusations of her involvement in the deliberate injury of a rival was generally weak, when "virtually all of Harding's defence rested only on her words" (p. 426).

However, when an organization faces growing evidence that the allegations are anything but false, continued **denial** would diminish the credibility of the organization (Brinson & Benoit, 1996). Benoit (2006) found further evidence of the ineffectiveness in using **denial** in this circumstance when "most probably did not believe [Saddam] Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction when [President] Bush invaded Iraq" yet Bush refused to admit his mistake (p. 142). The lack of **mortification** and any real admission of wrongdoing and remorse would be "egregious mistakes" (Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004, p. 103). Zhang and Benoit (2009) also found that the defensive strategies used in image repair efforts were unsuccessful when there was "much self-contradiction" (p. 244) when challenges were raised to an organization's statement of **denials**, such as in China's Former Health Minister Zhang Wenkang's weak discourse in repairing the image of the Chinese during the SARS epidemic. In adopting a strategy of **denial**, evidence that is contrary to the allegations should be given to increase the persuasiveness of the **denial**, instead of using middle-range strategies such as **defeasibility**. Zhang and Benoit (2004) found that a response was noticeably weaker when "no evidence supported the claim that funding (from Saudi Arabia) had not supported the Palestinian suicide bombers", and pleading **defeasibility** would "help only a little" (p. 166), rendering the combination of strategies partially effective.

Mixed strategies 3: Defensive - Accommodative Strategies

Nature of accusation. The mixed strategy of using a combination of defensive and accommodative strategies was most commonly found in challenge and preventable crises, for instance, when New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer accused investment firm Merrill Lynch of "recommending the purchase of poorly performing stocks to individual investors which enabled Merrill Lynch to win or retain lucrative investment banking fees for those same companies" (Hearit & Brown, 2004, p. 460). Hearit and Brown (2004) argued that such a response was "paradigmatic of the problem inherent in modern apologetic speech, in that, when

presented with clear evidence of wrongdoings the [accused] initially responded with a denial and counter-attack; and once it become clear that the allegations would not go away, it then completed a settlement with its accusers in which it offered a weak statement of regret followed by a payment of a large fine" (p. 460).

Channels of communication. News accounts (Hearit & Brown, 2004), brochures in response to the attacks (Benoit & Hirson, 2001) and advertising campaigns (Hearit & Brown, 2004).

Exemplar of rhetoric. Merrill Lynch's response to allegations of fraud: "There is no basis for the allegations made today by the New York Attorney General. His conclusions are just plain wrong. We are outraged that we were not given the opportunity to contest these allegations in court… The allegations reveal a fundamental lack of understanding of how securities research works within overall capital-raising process." (Hearit & Brown, 2004, p. 462). Subsequently, Merrill Lynch took a more conciliatory approach: "The emails that have come to light are very distressing and disappointing to us. They fall far short of our professional standards and some are inconsistent with our policies." (p. 463). CEO Komansky promised that the firm would "take meaningful and significant actions to restore investor confidence" (p. 463).

Persuasiveness. Benoit and Hirson (2001) argued that combining **denial** with **corrective action**, for instance in the Tobacco Institute's response to the *Doonesbury* cartoons' repeated attacks against the tobacco industry was a mistake: "If the industry's denial is to be believed, then there would be no point in implementing corrective action… The fact that the industry changed its marketing practices is evidence that those marketing practices were wrong" (p. 270). Similarly, previous literature (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Benoit & McHale, 1999; Blaney, Benoit & Brazeal, 2002) suggests that accommodative strategies (**mortification** and **correction action**) were undermined by the use of defensive strategies (**denial** and **shifting the blame**). Hearit and Brown (2004) suggested that the reason for the late and weak apology by Merrill Lynch could be concerns about liability from admission. The authors also posit "due to liability concerns, in its current form in contemporary apologetic speech, the acknowledgement of wrongdoings lies not in the apology but in the compensation" (p. 465). Benoit and Hirson (2001) also argued that **denial** and **corrective action** could be used effectively if the organization successfully **shifts the blame** to plausible or persuasive scapegoats, for instance when Tylenol shifted the blame for contaminated capsules to a madman (Benoit & Lindsey, 1987).

Mixed strategies 4: Defensive - Middle range – Accommodative Strategies

Nature of accusation. The combination of defensive, middle range and accommodative strategies is commonly found in accidents and preventable type crises where organizations or individuals are under heavy criticism and repeated attacks for their misdeeds from 1) the media and the public (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Brinson & Benoit, 1999; Hindman, 2005; Liu, 2007), for instance, when the New York Times attacked US Airways' safety record after the crash of one of its aircraft, and when actor Hugh Grant faced scrutiny after he was arrested for lewd behavior with a prostitute, 2) from authorities (Blaney, Benoit & Brazeal, 2002; Brazael, 2008), as in the case when a federal investigation blamed Firestone for tread separation in its tires that caused over 100 deaths, or 3) from individuals (Benoit & McHale, 1999), such as when Kenneth Starr was attacked for his investigation into President Clinton's impeachable offenses.

Channels of communication. News releases (Brinson & Benoit, 1999; Hindman, 2005), video address (Benoit, 1997; Benoit & McHale, 1999; Brinson & Benoit, 1999) and newspaper advertisements (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997) press conferences (Brazael, 2008; Liu, 2007) and press statements.

Exemplar of rhetoric. When Hugh Grant was arrested for lewd behaviour with a prostitute, he appeared on five talk shows to defend his image (Benoit, 1997). He **admitted his misdeed**: "People gave me tons of ideas … you know, that I was under pressure, I was over-tired, or I was lonely, or I fell down the stairs when I was a child or whatever. But … I think that would be bollocks to hide behind something like that … you know in life pretty much what's a good thing to do and what's a bad thing, and I did a bad thing, and there you have it." (p.257), **bolstered** his image by showing concern for his girlfriend: "The thing is that I'm not the one who really deserves the sympathy; it really is my girlfriend and people like that" (p. 258), and **denied** some accusations: "I don't frequent topless bars… my brother did take me once, but that's the only time I've ever" (p. 259) and attack his accusers: "To get me to come out of the house… called an ambulance to the house. And I guess they wanted their pictures but there could have been someone dying in the street who needed the ambulance". (p. 259).

Persuasiveness. Hindman (2005) argued that while defensive strategies were useful in distancing the organization from the wayward behaviour it could raise questions about how it happened in the first place. Therefore the combination of middle range and accommodative strategies (**bolstering, transcendence, corrective action** and **mortification**), which was used by the New York Times to separate itself from a wayward journalist and pledging to "change its culture" (Hindman, 2005, p. 235), would make an organization's response more persuasive by signalling the possibility of real change, suggesting that the violation was an anomaly rather than a failure in the fundamentals of the organization. Similarly Brinson and Benoit (1999) labelled this form of **shifting the blame** "separation" (p. 504) and which argues that "the company is innocent of wrongdoing and identifies a target of blame" that is "part of the entity that is claiming innocence (p.505). Such a strategy benefits from the use of **bolstering**, **corrective action** and **mortification**, which protects and emphasizes the remaining good part of the organization.

Benoit (1997) found that the use of **denial** by Hugh Grant "was useful in limiting the scope of charges" and "that the fact that **denial** was limited to certain accusations may have made it sound truthful" (p. 262). He also argued that in such situations, **denial** would have been ineffective without using **mortification**. However, on the flip side, the combination of defensive, middle range and accommodative strategies could also undermine the overall persuasiveness of these strategies. Liu (2007) found that the pairing of **evasion of responsibility** and **mortification** in President Bush's post-Katrina speeches about the inadequate federal response was contradictory and unpersuasive especially when the organization was responsible for accusations and the public expects the organization to take responsibility. Brazeal (2008) found that the strategy of **mortification** without **corrective action**, paired with **attacking the accuser** and **bolstering**, as used by Terrell Owens after he sabotaged his own image during his contract dispute with the Philadelphia Eagles, would destroy any goodwill earned by the accommodative strategy.

Benoit and Henson (2008) argued that **defeasibility** and **bolstering** do not work well with **corrective action**, even though "corrective action is often a desirable choice for image repair" (p. 44) because giving excuses for offensive actions "emphasizes the [accused's] inability to cope with problems" (p. 44). This is especially when the organization or government faces heavy

criticism from the public and the media for "a sluggish initial response" (p. 41) in the wake of a natural disaster.

From the above discussion, what we can surmise are:

1) Defensive strategies are more appropriate when the accused is under heavy criticism and culpability is not obvious or can be redirected. Comparatively accommodative strategies are more appropriate when the organization's misdeed is apparent and blame cannot be shifted elsewhere.

2) The middle range strategy of reducing offensiveness was more effective in protecting the current reputation/trust/commitment of the organization among all other strategies in "middle ground" crisis in which organizational responsibility is not automatically obvious and in which organizations are relatively low-profile. However, in deciding the persuasiveness of image repair strategy and the reason for its appropriateness, there are several factors which an organization should consider.

3) Use of whatever means of channels of communication available as long as the message gets out.

Finesse

In some instances, the organization's image repair efforts suffered not because of the choice of strategy but rather due to how it was implemented. For instance, when an organization issues defensive statements (**denial, evasion of responsibility**), these statements should not be based on lies or inaccurate data (Zhang & Benoit, 2009). Similarly, continued insistence on **denial** when evidence to the contrary continues to surface would greatly reduce the organization's credibility (Brinson & Benoit, 1996).

When **attacking the accuser**, it is important to choose the right target. For instance, attacking the authorities (Brinson & Benoit, 1996) while under investigation made the organization look irresponsible. Comparatively, when **attacking the accuser** is not perceived as an attempt to dismiss one's accusation but to protect other innocent parties, such as when Hugh Grant attacked the media for harassing his girlfriend and family (Benoit, 1997), it seems to perform better.

When **shifting the blame**, it is also pertinent to choose the right target. **Shifting the blame** to someone within the organization draws criticism to the management (Hindman, 2005) while blaming the victims only draws more anger towards the organization (Benoit & Hirson, 2001). When an organization's misdeed is obvious and undisputable, it is important for the organization to show evidence of fixing the problem.

Middle range strategies (**bolstering, transcendence, minimization, differentiation**) can be seen as "misdirection of attention" (Metzler, 2001, p.378) especially when the audience are critical of the organization. In addition, these strategies could be more persuasive when delivered by neutral third-parties rather than the organization itself (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997).

Corrective action should also be perceived as fixing the problem rather than just the symptoms (Blaney, Benoit & Brazeal, 2002) and therefore steps towards correction should be outlined (Hearit & Brown, 2004) and commitment to real change should be demonstrated. (Hindman, 2008).

Consistency

Strategies should be consistently applied across the crisis timeline for an organization's response to be taken as credible. Therefore organizations should avoid corporate doublespeak, i.e.

strategies that convey a contradictory stand from the organization should not be used together, such as the paring of **denial** and **corrective action** and/or **mortification** (Low, Varughese & Pang, 2011) as it diminishes any effectual goodwill earned and presents rhetorical inconsistency which draws flak for further challenges to the organization's culpability (Cowden & Sellnow, 2002; Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Benoit & Hirson, 2001; Blaney, Benoit & Brazeal, 2002).

Drumheller and Benoit (2004) called for the importance in consistency in strategies used, not just in their combinations. Therefore, organizations should first carefully evaluate the appropriateness of certain strategies in supporting the organizational stance (ranging from accommodative to defensive) and commit to them throughout the crisis. When the wrong set of strategies is used on the onset, subsequent image repair efforts would have a harder time garnering goodwill from its stakeholders (Yvonne, Jeni & Pang, 2011). Likewise, when the right set of strategies is used on the onset, but the organization fails to be consistent in managing that stance, persuasiveness of the initial set of strategies would be undermined (Blaney, Benoit & Brazeal, 2002; Brazeal, 2008). Inconsistency betrays the lack of certainty and/or honesty of the organization when it comes to communicating their stance towards their stakeholders.

History

In a crisis, organizations and individuals cannot isolate themselves from their prior reputation and relational history with their stakeholders. Therefore, strategies used should be consistent with the stakeholders' impressions of the organization/individual. Benoit (1997) found that when middle range strategies, such as **bolstering**, leverage on previous positive impressions of the accused the instances of bolstering were more compelling.

Conversely, organizations with an unfavourable image would begin at a serious disadvantage. Such negative impressions could surround entire industries in some cases, such as the Tobacco industry. When stakeholders do not trust the organization to start with, credibility of the strategies communicated would be threatened, which necessitates further deliberation towards the selection and development of image repair strategies. Therefore, "organizations, groups, and individuals must thoroughly understand the nature of their public image before they try to repair it" (Benoit & Hirson, 2001, p. 290). The paper further argues that organizations should be committed to real change if prior image/reputation does not support choice of strategy used and demonstrate it adequately in their communication efforts (Hindman, 2005).

Emotions

Whatever strategies are used, it is critical to first address the emotions of the stakeholders. A qualified rhetoric-mixed stance of assuring stakeholders has been found to be more useful than promising them immediate rectification (Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2010). Understanding emotional upheavals of stakeholders is argued to be the next frontier of crisis research (Jin & Pang, 2010).

Building on image repair theory

Research question three examined what other strategies can be built into image repair theory. The question remains if the strategies in image repair theory are relevant and sufficient to assuage increasingly demanding stakeholders impatient for immediate results and resolution of the crisis. If image repair can be construed as good defence mechanism, its shortcoming may lie in its inability to provide sufficient cover offensively. Particularly, beyond apologizing, are the

strategies of corrective action and compensation enough? More elucidation needs to be enacted on how the organization is going to move forward.

If Brand's (2012) argument that the strategies for success in crisis communication include addressing safety concerns and renewal, then two possible strategies should be included. First, drawing on insights from Jin, Pang, and Cameron (2006/2007), one possible strategy that can be included is the strategy of co-operation. Co-operation takes place beyond promising to correct the problem and offering compensation. Its motivation is reconciliatory. Jin, Pang, and Cameron (2006) defined co-operation as "making overtures to reach out to the other party with the goal of resolving the problem" (p. 92).

Another possible strategy is drawn from insights from renewal, that is, the commitment to change – for the betterment of stakeholders. Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2007) defined renewal as "a fresh sense of purpose and direction an organization discovers after it emerges from a crisis" (p. 177). Ulmer and Sellnow (2002) argued that renewal involves a "rebuilding of confidence" (p. 362). Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2007) argued renewal can take place on three levels: Commitment to stakeholders; commitment to correcting the problem that caused the crisis; commitment to core values. Commitment to change takes place even before the three levels of renewal take place.

Conclusion and Limitation

This study has examined the image repair strategies and their persuasiveness. It has also examined how the theory can be extended further, namely incorporating two other strategies in co-operation and commitment to change.

Beyond that, the bigger question remains how to enhance the rigor of the theory across cultural contexts. Increasingly, scholars in Asia are questioning the relevance of applying Western-centric communication theories for research studies in Asia, arguing for the adoption of a de-Westernised, cultural specific approach (Wang, 2011). Wang (2011) had earlier posited that Euro-centrism is emerging as one of the primary factors leading to a serious imbalance in knowledge production, particularly in the arena of communication studies. The concept of 'de-Westernisation' goes beyond the simplistic definition of removing elements that are Western but rather it is to enrich the value of Western methods and theories (Wang, 2011; Wang & Kuo, 2010, p.154).

Therefore, as Wang & Kuo (2010) suggest, Western-centric biases and problems in communication studies must first be indigenised to take into account cultural specific influences in terms of the historical, social, cultural and sub-cultural context. However, Wang & Kuo (2010) cautioned against "complete fragmentation of the field", instead advocating for a "pluri-universality" (Wang & Kuo, 2010, p.161) approach. One of the reasons for doing so is that there is a "growing tendency of transcultural adaptation as a result of modernisation and globalisation" (Wang & Kuo, 2010, p. 156).

Huang, Lin, and Su (2005), for instance, applied the strategies to Asian contexts and found that while most strategies are applicable, they detected the strategy of diversion not present in Western contexts. Diversion includes strategies that seek to "put the issue 'to rest' or distract public or media attention by creating a different issue or temporarily ease public anger by showing regards (while not apologizing)" (Huang, Lin, Su, 2005, p. 235). The sub-strategies are showing regards/sympathy, building a new agenda, and differentiating.

As an exploratory paper, this paper has sought to extend our current understanding in the use of strategies. One limitation is that it remains conceptual and lacks empirical foundations. Further tests need to be carried out to exhaustively examine the rigor of the strategies. Ultimately,

the key question this study seeks to answer is the one posed by Benoit (1997): When faced with a crisis, what can an organization say?

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Resistance to Change in Process Management

The Petrobras Case

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This paper is based on an exploratory case study on the implementation of a Business Process Management (BPM) project within the Corporate Communications area of Petrobras (Petróleo Brasileiro S.A)., which is headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The main goal was to identify the causes and manifestations of resistance to the implementation of BPM projects and share findings that may be useful to other organizations in similar situations.

Keywords: Organizational change, Resistance to change, Process management.

The purpose of this paper is to observe, document, and analyze manifestations of resistance to projects aimed at implementing Business Process Management (BPM). To achieve this, we surveyed the opinions and perceptions of Petrobras'ss Corporate Communications professionals. The theoretical backing of the study will be based on the following practices:

- A literature-based presentation of process management concepts and features;
- Description, based on a review of literature, of the concept of resistance to change, its manifestations and root causes;
- Semi-structured interviews with members of the area who were involved in (or affected by) the implementation of the project. These were reviewed specifically with regards to process management and resistance to change concepts.

Methodology Used in this Study

We collected the data through semi-structured interviews with 15 participants, including managers and non-managers, in the process management project. We did this in order to garner in-depth information about the individual and situational variables, studied in the literature, that may be related to resistance to change. The findings were enriched through the author's participant observation.

The interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes and all the subjects authorized recording for use by the author for academic purposes only. Anonymity, by choice, was also respected in order to avoid distortions in the information provided by respondents.

The contents were transcribed—the language used by the interviewees was preserved—and grouped, according to their central message and other aspects (even those that were not in the script, or related to the topic that was being researched). The transcripts were read, analyzed and summarized, per behavior category, in order to allow for comparison and synthesis of the information.

About Petrobras

Profile of the Organization

Petrobras(Petróleo Brasileiro S.A.) is a Brazilian publicly-traded federal energy company, established in 1953. Incorporated as a joint-stock company, the majority shareholder of which is the Brazilian Government, its shares are traded on the New York (NYSE), Madrid, Buenos Aires, and São Paulo (Bovespa) Stock Exchanges (Petrobras). It is Brazil's largest company, accounting for 10% of the country`s GDP in 2009 (O Estado de São Paulo newspaper, 2010; Petrobras´ 2009 Sustainability Report).

The company operates in an integrated fashion in several energy segments: exploration and production, refining, and trade and transportation of oil and natural gas, petrochemicals, oil product distribution, electricity, biofuels, and other sources of renewable energy. The company is acknowledged worldwide as a technological reference in deepwater oil and gas exploration andproduction, in the pre-salt geological stratum, and in the development of biofuels.

Petrobras's mission is to "operate in a safe and profitable manner in Brazil and abroad, with social and environmental responsibility, providing products and services that meet clients' needs and contribute to the development of Brazil and of the countries in which it operates". Petrobras's Vision for 2020 is to be "one of the five largest integrated energy companies and the preferred choice among its stakeholders".

With a presence in 30 countries and on five continents, Petrobras is the world's eighth largest company (Ernest & Young, 2009) and the third largest energy company (PFC Energy Ranking, 2011) — both in terms of market value.

In 2011, Petrobras was ranked, for the fifth consecutive year, as the company with the best reputation in Brazil, according to Global RepTrak™ Pulse, a study carried out annually by the Reputation Institute (RI). Petrobras is also recognized for its role in social and environmental responsibility, and since 2006 it has been listed on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and on Bovespa's Corporate Sustainability Index (CSI).

Organizational culture

Petrobras has built a solid, cohesive organizational culture during its nearly 60 years of existence—there is a "way of being Petrobras," which includes values and beliefs shared by the workforce (employees and contractors). The company "has become part of the collective imagination as a solid organization, with vitality and one that fosters "Brazilian Pride," thanks to its history, its achievements, and its ability to overcome challenges, and it is associated with a corporate attitude that expresses and reinforces this "pride" as an element of professional and social differentiation" (Carvalho, 2007).

The Corporate Communications Process Management Implementation Project

Resistance to BPM processes

Implementing process management demands deep reflection by the entire organization with regard to correlated activities. This new way of thinking and acting through the process logic, however, usually meets with resistance because it causes an uncomfortable feeling of loss of power and control, which, in turn, leads to threats, fear, insecurity, and anxiety.

Resistance to the project in question was not only due to the natural human reaction to change; it was the result of other factors as well. We noticed that there was involvement, but also heterogeneous resistance, both individually and collectively, regardless of position. This showed that, somehow, change was not welcome, or else its benefits were not immediately realized.

Company context

In 2006, Petrobras's Corporate Communications area underwent a profound organizational restructuring process to get ready for the new dimension set forth under the company's strategic vision. These changes included the creation of new teams and management roles.

It was necessary to improve the communications processes, slash costs, streamline tasks, increase service quality and, especially, better understand the contribution Petrobras's Corporate Communications area made to the company's corporate goals, as well as to enhance the synergy between the department's various departments. It was hoped this would increase the generation of value for the company's stakeholders and, thus, create a competitive edge for Petrobras.

To meet these needs, we prepared a project to deploy process management within the Corporate Communications area. The department's Planning and Management team was in charge of developing, coordinating, and implementing the process.

Theoretical context

According to Hammer (1996 in Gonçalves, 2000b), organizations are changing the way they operate, focusing on organizing and carrying out functions that allow for structures in which resources and activity flows follow the process logic. Thus, the impacts of the variables involved, those that shape the organizational environment and influence the way people think and act, will be analyzed, as proposed by Hernandez and Caldas (2001).

Literature Review and Theoretical Fundamentals

Business process management

Process management is not new to the business environment, but the various ways of approaching it over the years have changed (Smith & Finger, 2003 in Sobreira , 2006). Thus, one can say that BPM is the outcome of the evolution of various management approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Business Process Reengineering (BPR), Six Sigma, etc. (Hammer, 1996; Zairi & Sinclair 1995, in Hung, 2006).

Given the rich semantics of the word "process," the various sources that make reference to it in the literature are shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1: Definitions of Process

Definition of Process	Bibliographic Source
Set of activities, functions, tasks, milestones, and interrelated, interactive, and logical sequential steps that turn inputs into outputs at any given time and that produce some result.	ISO 9000:2000, 2000; IDEF0 1993; Rummler & Brache, 1995; Ramaswamy, 1996; Davenport, 1994; PMI, 2006; Harrington, 1991; Moreira, 1994; Roberts, 1995; Fried, 1995.
Adds value to the inputs by transforming or using them to produce something new, which—in and of itself—will mean a result of significant value to the customer.	Galloway, 1994; Hammer & Champ, 1994; Johansson; et al, 1993; Bogan; English, 1994; Cross et. al., 1995.
Defines the basic form of organization of the people and other company resources, in addition to the organization-specific skills.	Dreyfuss 1996, in Gonçalves, 2000a; Keen, 1997, in Gonçalves 2000a.

The definitions above are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. Thus, in this study, process is defined as a sequence of logically interconnected activities and tasks that transform inputs into outputs through the use of human, motivational, and technological resources aimed at adding value for customers.

Critical success factors and risks in BPM implementations

There are certain essential conditions, called Critical Success Factors (CSF), that are needed in order for the implementation of BPM to succeed (Maranhão, 2004; Laurindo, 2008). Rosemann (2009) warns that "many projects fail in adopting BPM simply due to a lack of a deeper understanding of the basic concepts of BPM," and also because of a lack of sensitivity, awareness, and enlightenment among those involved in the process with regard to the benefits of this type of project. Table 2 shows how the successful implementation of BPM is closely related to aspects of Alignment, Organizational Culture, Communications, Change, Support, and Leadership (Sordi, 2005; Rosemann, 2009; Maranhão, 2004; Laurindo, 2008; Hammer & Stanton, 1999).

TABLE 2: Critical success factors and associated risks in process management

Critical Success Factors	Description	Bibliographic Reference
Alignment with the business strategy	It is imperative that the Business Strategy be clear, well defined, and communicated to the stakeholders and that there be harmony and continuous alignment between process management implementation and the business strategy.	Maranhão, 2004; Laurindo, 2008.
Understanding the organizational culture	People need to be involved, engaged, to feel they are active participants in the implementation process, and to know exactly what will happen.	Maranhão, 2004; Laurindo, 2008; Rosemann, 2009.
Global view - focus on the customer	Having a global and comprehensive view of the business facilitates the understanding of the impacts and of the contributions of the activities to achieve the focus and create value for the customer.	Maranhão, 2004; Laurindo, 2008; Hammer & Stanton, 1999.

Sponsorship and support from senior management	There is consensus in the relevant literature that was studied: senior management sponsorship facilitates project development and adds value to it through the support and encouragement provided.	Beer, 2002; Maranhão, 2004; Laurindo, 2008.
Effective, transparent communications	It is important that the communications be transparent and intense throughout the project so that there is a common understanding of the key benefits afforded by process management.	Sordi, 2005.
Change management	Creating a Change Management program with support for process management implementation with details on the efforts and resources needed to make sure people will be engaged and involved helps overcome resistances, power struggles, and inter-departmental competitiveness.	Sordi, 2005; Rosemann, 2009.
Active leadership	Leaders act as catalysts for change and serve as an example for the organization by being able to reduce and calm down forces opposed to change.	Sordi, 2005.

BPM Project Implementation Phases

Preparation is one of the most important phases, since it is during this phase that the senior management's support is secured and the support base is formed in order for the entire project to be developed safely (Pellerin, 2008). In preparing the project, a determination is made of what the organization aims to achieve, its aspirations, and the organization's strategy is reassessed (Ketting et al, 1997). In addition, the critical success factors are assessed in this phase and, as a result of these assessments, the company's current status is diagnosed, at least in terms of its processes (Laurindo, 2008; Rosemann, 2009).

Assessment precedes process management implementation and is characterized by the understanding and acknowledgment of the current process status, also known as the "as is" and the future process proposal, i.e., the "to be". In this phase, data is collected and the critical processes identified and analyzed (Oliveira, 2006). Furthermore, the process hierarchy is determined, the processes that must be redesigned are identified, and the existing information systems analyzed (Pellerin, 2008).

Implementation is where the implementation plan starts being developed (Kettinger et al., 1997; Pellerin, 2008), with the identification of gaps and improvement opportunities, new process designs and the streamlining of preexisting processes, creation and development of performance indicators, assessment of technical alternatives, definition of IT requirements (Information Technology), development, acquisition, IT application implementation, and, finally, testing and final adjustments (Pellerin, 2008).

Continuous Improvement is the phase that project monitoring, process performance monitoring and assessment and, possibly, project closing take place (Pellerin, 2008).

Resistance to Change

Conceptualization of resistance

Table 3 shows some of the sources that refer to themes associated with resistance:

TABLE 3: Definitions of resistance to change

"Resistance to Change" concept	References
A natural process that occurs as the result of an organizational intervention that alerts the existing status quo and lasts until there is evidence that the "new" has been assimilated.	Zander, 1950; Coghlan, 1993; Cordeiro, 2007; Pereira, 1999; Motta, 1998 in Moura 2002.
Something evil that is obstructing the organizational change efforts and must be overcome.	Hernandez e Caldas, 2001; 2008; Kurtz & Duncan, 1998.
Collective phenomenon, a result of the tendency that an individual or particular group will oppose the social forces that aim to lead the system to a new balance.	Lewin 1947 in Hernandez e Caldas, 2001; Robbins, 2002b.
Positive force that acts as a natural defense mechanism within organizations, testing, adapting, and sometimes bringing management decisions to a standstill.	Perren, 1996.

BPM Implementation Methodology at Petrobras' CC

The project involved all key Corporate Communications managers, both sectoral and regional, and coordinators. To collect the information, we used the Joint Application Design(JAD) meeting technique, which is applied in situations where sector data has to be consolidated in order to get the big picture. The information was documented immediately and shown to everyone, so as to stimulate debate in the search for consensus.

Once the area's Value Chain had been defined, its macroprocess was unfolded into interrelated processes. Value Chain is understood as the set of macroprocesses the company develops to design and deliver products and/or services, carrying out the mission and strategic objectives to get a competitive edge (Sinpep, 2009). In this case, the Value Chain is composed of the main macroprocesses used in services provided by the area.

Objectives

The project aimed to document and formalize the Communication processes and activities, and identify critical issues, opportunities for improvement, and the skills necessary for the purpose of training.

Subsequently, the mapping would serve to manage processes based on the monitoring of performance and deviations, and to integrate activities within the same unit, or among one or more organizational units.

It also sought to obtain greater clarity regarding the roles of various managers to better define the allocation of resources, especially those with greater alignment to the company's business objectives, and to assign less weight to those that were not properly aligned. This clarification would allow the Corporate Communications area to contribute more effectively to business results and to be better prepared to meet the needs of stakeholders—foreign and domestic—in the contemporary context of rapid change..

It was hoped that the project would generate the following benefits: increased activity visibility, greater involvement of the teams in activities and services, development of processes governance, and greater retention of knowledge regarding the processes.

Implementation

The management responsible for implementing the BPM had support from a multifunctional team and an outside consultant in the process of gathering information, in addition to support from Petrobras's IT department, which provided two systems analysts to monitor and guide the whole project. The project was sponsored by the entire senior management.

Challenges and risks

Throughout the project, a few risks to its success were identified. They are featured in Table 4, along with the steps taken to mitigate them.

TABLE 4: Project risks

Risk	Impact	Contingency
Availability of Petrobras Resources	HIGH	Management support and careful planning of the meeting and interview agenda.
Breach of schedule	HIGH	Monitor the schedule daily, anticipating potential issues.
Increase in project scope	HIGH	Monitor the scope (weekly), addressing additional demands for isolated treatment by the Communications area together with IT.
Delays due to the minimum infrastructure for the project not being provided	HIGH	Schedule room for the duration of the project and prepare the IT infrastructure (computers, ARIS software installed, flip chart), before the project starts.
Delay in output acceptance	MEDIUM	Quality control and construction of drafts together with the Management and Planning area
Inconsistent modeling	LOW	Use the ARIS PETROBRAS methodology and perform quality and monitoring and support reviews of the Planning and Management Office

Results - Positive Project Aspects Based on the Interviews

General perception

Resistance to change was heterogeneous; it was not limited to the individual level, but surfaced collectively as well. Resistance to change occurred at different organization levels, regardless position. The results showed the importance of identifying and understanding the factors that reduce and/or alleviate the effects of resistance to change, such as clear and objective communications, encouragement to engage, getting involved, motivation and participation, managerial sponsorship, and senior management support.

Another aspect that was noticed concerned Critical Success Factors (CSF) in BPM implementations: alignment with the business strategy; the understanding of the organizational culture; the existence of sponsorship; support from senior management; and managing change.

Overall, the project was perceived as comprehensive and innovative, as an important challenge, and as a new, much needed way of thinking and working.

A challenging, highly complex project due to the construction of a Value Chain within a Communications area that had no process tradition or culture.

[...] This project was extremely innovative as a subject rarely discussed and difficult to understand within the Communications Department.

[...] for the future, this is extremely essential, one day I will not be here [...] and those who come here to work will at least know how the process is and, theoretically, how to work.

[...] A new way to think, a much more organic way that has much more to do with our own activity because we are very centralized due to the type of structure that we have, the activities we have, it facilitates this integration [...].

[...] this project is important because it offers opportunities to Corporate Communications. Some management projects imprison and freeze creative thought [...] but this vision, that processes plaster, is changing.

Participation and involvement

In general, the most positive aspect of the participation was engagement and the awareness of the importance of BPM. A certain degree of expectation with regard to the project's outcomes was also seen.

[...] I'm contributing to something that will really make a difference and be quite a progress for the area and for management [...] this is the greatest motivation we can have.

I actually saw people very tuned in, aiming to contribute and to have it actually mirror their activities, and that it be the best mirror of the reality of the activities [...].

Adding Value

The greatest contribution made by the project was that it opened up space for reflection on the processes involved. Until then, it was noticeable that nobody questioned the validity of what was being done. The project showed its relevance by enabling the construction of the department's value chain, giving visibility to its key macroprocesses and by helping managers realize the importance of defining the Corporate Communications' "reason for being."

It allowed for a gain and is being used as input for other projects, such as cost optimization by processes and project management itself.

I see that the outcome of the project was very positive. People began to understand what it is and started seeing it in a more structured manner.

Results - Critical Aspects of the Project Based on the Interviews

Interviewees were asked to report what were, from their point of view, the critical or negative aspects of the project. The summary is listed below.

Cultural impact

The interviews revealed the impact on the department's culture, which had no tradition of thinking according to guidelines established by processes, standards, and rules. Nonetheless, the interviewees were willing to change in order to achieve better results

[...] it is not part of the Corporate Communications culture, which is much looser and we suffer a little from this stance because when the time comes to plan and organize, to negotiate with other company areas, you do not have a discourse that validates you in a method everyone is working under.

The Corporate Communication area is not used to such management and process monitoring; it is not part of the culture of most professionals as yet.

Complexity and impact

The implementation of process management impacts, in many ways, the organization's management and how people work (HAMMER, 1996). The Corporate Communications Department felt these changes:

It was a project marked by resistance to change due to it having been the first time that the integration between the various Corporate Communications managements was tested.

I see the Corporate Communications staff very engaged in communicating [...] the mentality of communications is not open to this.

Initial resistance

Perhaps because this was a new project for the members, it was noticed that its objectives were not fully assimilated and that it was perceived in a distorted manner, at times being called "boring", "tedious," "difficult," and "destabilizing". After the project had been better assimilated, this attitude changed.

[...] it is a necessary evil that really comes for the good! This is a good, important thing, which is exactly to clarify, organize, and to make us question ourselves. [...].

[...] but it is quite annoying, what do you do here [...] how do you do it here? But this is boring, mapping a process is boring, it is annoying (sic)!

[...] there are those who do not believe in it, period [...] and this will always happen. But I believe being able to continue and give back so people will understand what it is for, so on and so forth, is positive...

The influence of the functional vision

The influence of the dominant functional vision —present and internalized in the area's culture— was significant:

This process work requires that those involved think outside of their boxes, their formal activities at the company, and their departments [...]

[...] Each department defends its own fiefdom.

People still have a posture such as: "I do this, I have my little thing, this is my space, I'll handle it".

Because when you talk about management, you are talking about the power structure, and then there is that natural human thing of how I see myself in this new power system that there is.

Antagonisms

Analysis of the interviews shows that resistance surfaced both individually and collectively (Watson 1969; Tajfel, 1982; Goffman, 1968).

> [...] I did not see a reaction of resistance with a majority trend [...] when they got to know the thing better, they got involved and found it interesting [...].
> [...] so I think that in terms of resistance it was very heterogeneous and, again, I think everything is a clear reflection of people's individual characteristics.

> At the company and in Corporate Communications specifically, I would say that resistance is always very individual, but it becomes a group thing because it aggregates.

> Resistance is not something that comes from a particular leadership and makes this whole group resist, but rather it arises because a group of resistant people clump together.

Managerial interference

In a few cases, managerial interference in the work being done by the contracted consultancy firm had a negative impact on project outcomes.

> [...] and if the manager is not seeing himself represented in the (value) chain, it may be that something is really wrong, but he, as the professional he should be, should accept the diagnosis.

> And some managers were concerned that their activities be included in it somehow. So it is not simply process management, people want to see themselves in the process.

The profile of the segment

The interviews also showed that both the communications department profile and the profile of the professionals who comprise it were the cause of the manifestations of resistance:

> Of course, a communications specialist is and always will be more resistant than an Administrator or engineer, who is already familiar with the subject. And a communications professional does not really know what this is.

> People often failed to attend meetings, people would not go, they would say they were not important, that it was boring, that they do not like to participate in this type of work and that they thought it was a waste of time.

> After a while, people started showing signs of paralysis to the project and would no longer respond to the calls for the meetings [...].

> When I asked the people on my team who had been mapping the process how things were going, they would say: "Gee, we were the only ones that showed up...The other department didn't go [...].

Involvement, participation, and engagement

The interviewees' accounts showed the need to get people involved and to make them effectively participate in the proposed changes. Moreover, they suggest that resistance be overcome gradually, always through consensus, negotiation, and dialogue, and never in an authoritative manner. This means that it is essential to get all those who will somehow be impacted by the change involved, regardless of their hierarchical level.

I think the word engagement is important, and you need to have it because the entire project implies change; people have to be aware of what it will generate.

I think people resist change, but when the change was not theirs!

But resistance is a reflection that there was a lack of engagement and this is when people are not seeing the benefits after the obstacles, what the profit is, what the gain is.

There is a sense of belonging, the project is not mine, the project is theirs and they are sapping my strength to work, this is yet another demand, one more thing to do.

Impacts on the "status quo"

Individuals and groups involved in the project also responded to the change because they felt threatened. (Motta, 1998; Judson, 1980; Robbins, 2002):

I have learned to deal with the difficulties in my daily life; then you come and bring me something new, something I am not aware of and haven't the slightest notion of what it is and you say it will destabilize this thing I have taken a long time to finish and maintain...of course I will resist, because it takes me out of my comfortable situation.

It is natural that they have and value their stability, since they have been there quietly doing their job for five (5), 10 (ten), 15 (fifteen), 20 (twenty) years, no matter how long...but I have already developed my "modus operandi" and I'm stable and in a process of stability.

Clarity of the proposal

The lack of understanding among those who weree impacted by the change creates uncertainty and a distorted perception of the process (Hitt, 2007).

Initially, I identified resistance to change due to a misunderstanding of what a process culture is among the people.

When I do not understand that change can lead me to greater comfort and that it will positively impact my daily life...I will resist, and this is natural.

Sense of disbelief

A certain amount of "disbelief, disappointment, discouragement" was recurrent in the accounts:

[...] but as you see, when things do not progress, there is frustration; people start taking part in the activities kind of feeling that... Is there really something in it for them?

But perhaps that disbelief thing, 'Oh they are doing this, you get involved and then things do not change, or the thing does not progress and ends up not being implemented, stops and nothing happens'.

The issue of support and sponsorship

It was clear that the project lacked greater managerial support, according to some testimonies:

Sponsorship by the management was notified, but I don't know to what extent it was absorbed and understood.

Going two more managerial levels up, people did not notice that this was something desired by the senior management [...].

Project duration

The project was considered as too extended, as shown by the statements below:

> [...] the project took longer than expected [...].

> [...] the project lasted too long [...].

Mapping of the current situation ("as is")

People did not understand that they should state exactly what they did (their activities) in the process. In practice, what happened was that people already added improvement ideas at that moment *("should be")*. A few interviews showed this:

> [...] the final product was a combination of the "as is" mapping and what we wanted it to actually be (should be).

> [...] and also because they always said that there would be a second step to organize the processes, but the product of the mapping was neither a picture of the reality nor of what should be [...].

Communication

Communication is a fundamental aspect, and it needs to be efficient, transparent, and intense throughout the project (Sordi, 2005). However, according to the interviewees' accounts, project communications were perceived negatively:

> [...] project communications may not have been as efficient as they should have been.

> One of the major problems of resistance to change is the [...] top down issue, one in which you simply announce "we are going to change" [...].

> What do I stand to gain later? Not the selfish gain, but I'm making all this effort and, hey, what will improve?! How will you be later? How will it improve? Where will we win and where can we lose?

Project "Modus operandi"

Slowness, difficulty, and disruption throughout the project led to burnout among participants:

> [...] you are doing something and it stops, it goes through a validation process and then another one, then it comes back, sometimes things progress, sometimes everything stops again for any number of reasons and then it moves again [...].

> When I asked the people on my team who had been mapping the process how things were going, they would say: Gee only we showed up ... The other department didn't go... The other group didn't go...

Project deliveries (outcomes)

Project results were not communicated effectively, and this was one of the project's errors. The highlights below show this trend:

> I think we mapped it, but this did not lead to a concrete result... There was not an ideal result... Where is the result?! Because "picture by picture," we are still in the same universe...!

> The bad thing was that it was there at that moment and then nothing was returned to the group! The group participated, built...but then what??! How is this work now?! What is it for?! What is it helping us with?

Many companies struggle to implement process management and to integrate jobs and activities that have historically been treated separately (Laurindo, 2008). This idea is confirmed by the following interviewees' accounts:

> [...] and I think that two bad things happened: joining processes that were little related and separating processes that were related. A clear example was that of advertising.
> The steps that we (Department A) take to prepare, the processes and the activities [...] involved in creating a communication campaign for the internal audience (employees and contractors) are very similar to the steps taken by (Department B) in the processes used to carry out advertising campaigns for external audiences (customers and consumers).

Active leadership

The excerpts below illustrate the importance the participants attributed to havingan active leadership, which served as an example to the organization by being able to reduce and diffuse the actions of the forces opposed to change (Sordi, 2005).

> [...] identify who is ready in the Corporate Communications area, those who have some degree of knowledge about management.

> [...] identify the representatives who will really contribute to the implementation of management and will not undermine and create resistance.

Interviewee suggestions

Some authors argue that resistance to change can be useful and even desirable to the organization, in that it can function as a warning that something is wrong, requiring deeper analysis of the situation. (Ferreira et al., 1997; Nogueira, 1991). There is a strong perception that management decisions were not integrated, did not have common goals, and were poorly aligned with the strategy:

> The communications decisions are being made in isolation [...] there is a lack of integration at the time management decisions are made.

> [...] we have a very large, established competence in communications, but we lack education, training, and understanding to deal with management issues and processes.

Conclusions

Upon completion of the management project implementation plan, it is important to look for early signs of possible resistance to change.

At this time, there is a need for greater involvement, engagement, and awareness by effective managers— especially, in their role as agents of change.

Companies need to take into account the fact that process management causes changes in the organization's behavior. It marks a transition from a management that previously worked by means of a functional structure to one based on the process logic. This changenearly always—for various reasons—, requires time to solidify.

Despite the rationality of the methodology used to implement process management, there is the unpredictable human factor. It is essential to try to integrate the "human issue" with the rational aspects advocated by the process management methodology.

Organizations need to be aware that implementing process management can cause some instability in the workplace and impact on the established power structures.

This study was undertaken with the aim of offering significant contribution to the processes of assessing and preventing resistance in such projects. It is hoped that the ideas contained herein may become a useful benchmark for other corporations.

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A Retrospective on Reputation and Safeguarding "The Public Interest" During Crises

Lessons Learned from Johnson & Johnson

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Until recently, Johnson & Johnson (J & J) had a stellar reputation among its own industry competitors, the larger corporate world, and its various publics, with consumers first and foremost among them. The spate of recalls beginning in 2008 fueled speculation among consumers, regulators, government investigators, and others as to whether that reputation had been tarnished. At the very least, this recent turn of events for J & J has perplexed many observers, who are wondering what accounts for this perceived shift in behaviors. As a global company, it earned the trust of consumers worldwide when it responded to a string of deaths from Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide in the early and mid-1980s. Yet J & J's (and CEO William Weldon's) handling of the current crisis, stemming from the above recalls, lawsuits over allegedly toxic hip implants, and other matters, appears to be the polar opposite of how James Burke, its CEO in the 1980s, handled the Tylenol poisonings. The swiftness, forthrightness, and overriding concern for public welfare that characterized J & J's responses to the original Tylenol and copycat crimes became benchmarks for corporate communication during times of crisis. So why the glaring discrepancy between J & J, a la 1980s and the contemporary genesis of the company, between which lie less than 30 years?.

Although the cyanide deaths and their aftermath in 1982, and the copycat crimes several years later could have brought financial ruin to the company, its public relations, which prioritized the need for accurate information, transparency, and proactive measures to protect public safety, and elicited good media relations, averted this outcome. The same cannot be said of the more than 20 recent recalls of , over-the-counter medications manufactured by McNeil Laboratories, J & J's pharmaceutical division, which have engendered public outrage, prompted a House of Representatives investigation.

In addition, globally, numerous lawsuits involving hip replacements manufactured by De Puy, also a J & J division, received coverage in the mainstream press and elsewhere. In New Zealand, the implants allegedly leached toxic chemicals into recipients' bodies. Other allegations point to J & J as funneling kickbacks to pharmaceutical suppliers for nursing homes for stocking those homes' pharmacies with J & J products. Further, J & J allegedly hired an outside contractor to strip stores of over-the-counter medications (a "phantom" recall of them before the FDA could mandate a formal recall).

The House investigative committee mentioned above called William Weldon, J & J's CEO, to testify about J & J's actions. It doesn't end there, though. On Nov. 1, 2011 a boycott of J & J's Baby Shampoo was launched by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, which represents environmental and health organizations in the U.S. and abroad. The coalition claimed that the shampoo contains two carcinogens (Johnson, 2011). Responses to reports of this reflected emerging concerns about J & J's reputation going forward. Silverman (2011) cited blogger Pearl's comments: "Weldon drove a stake through the heart of the J&J Credo years ago. Why should this latest issue surprise anyone? Load up the board with your cronies and drive the company into the ground. It's a shame to see what has become of a once great company."

The totality of negative comments, when combined with the lawsuits, boycotts, and public testimony from the FDA and others, including J & J's CEO, intensify speculation as to whether J & J's reputation is really "on the line" and the public interest is a vestige of the past. Do the challenges for J & J of the last four

years and the averse public reaction to the company, mean that its reputation is on the decline? Can the company rally and retain its global footing?

*This paper will explore how J & J's has engaged in corporate communication during the three decades since the first Tylenol crisis. It will examine the company's public relations track record and its relationship with the media. The retrospective will cover crisis communication during the 1980s, when J & J voluntarily recalled potentially-tainted products, at enormous expense, was fully transparent, and acted in "the public interest," beginning with public relations that preceded the Tylenol episodes and in the interim period between the crises. What, if anything, has changed in J & J's public relations, and why? What other factors might account for its alleged behaviors and possible impact on the company's reputation? In tracing the company's public relations history perhaps factors related to leadership changes, overriding financial concerns, or senior management decisions, may prove to have a significant impact on the company's corporate communications choices. *

The seemingly dramatic changes in a company that has set standards for so many others may present a set of lessons for corporate communication practitioners. For global companies have to deal with savvy publics who have a range of social media at their disposal. These publics can communicate their grievances and can get back at them with a vengeance when they perceive corporate misdeed. This case study and retrospective raises questions for public relations that hopefully practitioners can begin to answer. Perhaps this study will generate more dialogue among practitioners about accepted norms and the safeguarding reputation by adhering consistently to critical CSR benchmarks, thus retaining public trust.

Save Our Seafarers

How the Shipping Industry Is Using a Corporate Communication Campaign to Combat Piracy

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This study examined how the global shipping industry used a corporate communication campaign to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden near Somalia. The website for the campaign, www.saveourseafarers.com, and related social media pages were assessed to determine whether they were communicating effectively with targeted publics. Website assessment criteria was developed by combining the dominant website assessment approach in public relations with website assessment approaches used in health communication, risk communication, and related fields. An assessment of the main website revealed that it excelled at providing information in an easy to understand manner. However, it faltered at encouraging debate among visitors to the website. Assessment of the social media pages revealed that new criteria need to be developed for assessing whether social media websites are communicating effectively with publics. Older criteria for assessing websites pose challenges when used to assess newer social media websites.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden near Somalia is a major problem. Somalia based pirates currently hold about 150 individuals kidnapped from ships and the annual cost of piracy to the global economy is estimated to be between $7 to $12 billion (Ploch et al., 2011). The lack of a coordinated, transnational effort to tackle the problem has led to a stalemate in combating piracy. Among nations affected by piracy, there exist differences regarding whether to use military force to combat the problem, whether to provide guns to civilian sailors so they can defend themselves, and how to prosecute captured pirates (Ploch et al., 2011). Somalia, plagued by civil conflict and terrorism, lacks a strong government that can spearhead anti-piracy efforts. The result of this state of affairs is that pirates roam relatively unimpeded in the Gulf of Aden.

As piracy incidents continue to plague the region, key players in the shipping industry have begun to carry out a public relations campaign aimed at enhancing awareness of the issue. The campaign, called SOS Save our Seafarers, is organized by the International Chamber of Shipping, the Baltic and International Maritime Council, the International Shipping Federation, Intercargo, Intertanko, and the International Transport Workers' Federation (SOS Save Our Seafarers, 2012).

The campaign's goal is to encourage people who live in nations with a significant stake in the shipping industry to push their governments to address four critical issues related to piracy. First, the campaign is urging people to encourage their governments to shift anti-piracy efforts toward what are known as mother ships. These are large vessels that pirates use as bases to launch attacks. Well-equipped mother ships enable pirates to travel into deep waters and spend months at sea (Leach, 2011). Organizers of the SOS Save our Seafarers campaign argue that if nations concentrated on capturing mother ships, piracy would be significantly curtailed.

A second issue the campaign is concerned about is enhancing naval capabilities against pirates. The campaign is encouraging people to ask their governments to increase naval presence in the affected region, give navies power to arrest pirates, and transform laws so that it is easier to prosecute pirates. Currently, international law is still very unclear on how to punish pirates. A problematic question that often arises is under what legal system to prosecute pirates and how to

deal with convicted pirates. Pirates in the Gulf of Aden, who exist in a legal limbo due to the fact that they come from a failed state, are tough to prosecute because they are not residents of the nations in which they are being prosecuted and the crimes they are accused of often occur in international waters. The current structure of international law makes it hard for one nation to prosecute a citizen of another nation for crimes committed in international waters (Ploch et al, 2011). This state of affairs benefits pirates and the shipping industry would like to see a change.

A third issue the campaign is concerned about is piracy financing. The campaign is urging people to convince their governments to work harder at identifying those who finance and benefit from piracy. Although armed men on small boats ambushing ships are what many people associate with modern piracy, the important players in piracy aren't on the boats. Instead, the main beneficiaries from piracy are businesspersons, government officials, and organized criminals (in many cases, based in Europe, Asia, and other locations far from Somalia) that fund pirates. The pirates themselves only get a small cut from piracy activities. Instead, it is these shadowy figures that receive the million dollar ransoms for captured sailors and ships (Geopolicity, 2011). The shipping industry argues that these financiers are the primary problem and more effort should be made to prosecute them.

A key part of the SOS Save our Seafarers campaign is the website www.saveourseafarers.com that communicates the campaign's message. This paper describes a study that assessed the website to determine whether it provides useful information to targeted publics. The paper is organized as follows. The literature review section explains (a) the common approaches used to assess whether websites are effectively communicating information and (b) the website assessment used in this study. The method section explains how www.saveourseafarers.com was assessed. The final section presents findings and discusses conclusions that can be drawn.

Literature Review

In the field of public relations, the question of how an organization's website can be used to communicate information effectively has been examined extensively. Most research on this issue has followed the recommendations made by Kent and Taylor (1998) who argued that an organization's website that seeks to effectively communicate with publics should aim at achieving five principles. The first principle is that a website should enable publics to ask the organization questions and the organization should have an opportunity, through the website, to respond to questions (a dialogic loop). The second principle is that a website should contain information useful to all publics of the organization. Useful information is that which is not aimed at squashing debate or simply winning over the website users. Rather, it should be information that allows meaningful debate between the organization and website users.

A third principle is that a website should contain elements that make website users want to return to the website (generation of return visits). Elements that can encourage return include timely information that is updated frequently and interactive question sessions with experts within the organization. A fourth principle is that a website should be easy to navigate and arranged in a manner that is easy to understand (ease of interface). A fifth principle is that the website should not direct users to other external websites but should instead focus on having the visitor spend time on the organization's website (conserve visitors).

The issue of how an organization's website can be used to communicate information effectively has also received significant attention in the fields of health communication, crisis communication, and risk communication. In these areas, websites have become an integral part of campaigns that seek to raise awareness regarding important issues such as preparing for a

disaster and avoiding contagious diseases. As people become increasingly reliant on the web, organizations seeking to enhance awareness regarding important topics are placing more information online. As more information is placed online, a concern that has emerged is whether these websites are useful to their intended audiences. Several experts have noted that numerous awareness campaigns have shown that making more information available online does not automatically result in better-informed publics (Hawkins & Rowel, 2007). These scholars, concerned with improving the quality of awareness campaign websites, have developed criteria to assess usefulness of websites.

The criteria they have developed, which can be labeled the traditional approach for assessing website effectiveness, is largely borrowed from what was, in the past, used to assess printed health information such as brochures. Scholars using the traditional approach for assessing website effectiveness focus on determining whether websites (1) contain content that can easily be read by most people, (2) appropriate arrangement such as navigation or typography, (3) culturally appropriate images that reflect the diversity of the audience, (4) information for people who do not speak the language of the majority, and (5) information in alternative formats for those with limited internet access (Hawkins & Rowel, 2007).

Scholars in public relations studies have mainly used Kent and Taylor's (1998) recommendations to assess websites. In other fields, the traditional approach has been the dominant website assessment tool. Kent and Taylor's approach focuses on several elements (ensuring a website provides a means for feedback, designing a site so it encourages repeat visits) that are missing in the traditional approach. Hence, the traditional approach, which is narrower in focus, is strengthened when it is combined with Kent and Taylor's broader approach. At the same time, the traditional approach has specific elements (e.g., information in alternative formats for those with limited internet access) that can enrich the Kent and Taylor approach. To examine whether www.saveourseafarers.com was effectively communicating with publics, this study combined the two approaches. The goal, by combining the two approaches, was to create a more comprehensive way of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the www.saveourseafarers.com.

Method

Qualitative content analysis was used to assess www.saveourseafarers.com. To conduct the content analysis, a list of items to examine was created based on the principles identified by Kent and Taylor as well as the criteria traditionally used to assess websites. The analysis period was between November 1, 2011 and March 11, 2012. Each week, the researcher visited www.saveourseafarers.com as well as the YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook pages associated with the website. During each visit, eight major things were examined:

First, the researcher examined whether the website and related social media pages contained a dialogic loop (e.g., publics were able to ask questions and the campaign organizers could answer questions). To determine whether a dialogic loop existed, the website was examined to see whether it was allowing users to pose and receive answers to questions. In addition, the Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook pages were examined to determine whether they were being used to engage website users in a conversation.

A second thing that was examined during each website visit was whether the website (and the related social media pages) acknowledged and discussed alternative approaches to addressing the problem of piracy. Specifically, the researcher examined whether the website and social media pages acknowledged the criticism, by Percy and Shortland (2011), of the law enforcement approach to combating piracy (the approach advocated by

www.saveourseafarers.com). Percy and Shortland's research, which has been featured in mainstream publications like the Financial Times, has stirred debate in the anti-piracy community. The two argue that the measures that the shipping industry is calling for in the www.saveourseafarers.com campaign (e.g., strengthening naval presence, making it easier to prosecute pirates, arming civilian sailors, targeting piracy financiers) are doomed to fail.

Percy and Shortland argue that piracy in the Somalia region can't be easily curbed even if the stringent measures advocated in the saveourseafarers.com campaign were implemented. They argue that key players in the piracy problem (shipping companies, insurance companies, pirates, communities in which pirates live in, naval forces) all have a stake in ensuring that the status quo remains. For shipping companies, stringent security measures would result in more costs. Shipping is an industry in which speed is vital. Introducing extensive naval convoys would result in a slow-down in operations that would cost companies money. Placing armed guards on commercial ships would also introduce new costs and also present a variety of costly legal issues (it can liken to arming bank tellers). Many shipping companies, hence, would rather simply buy insurance, take the risk of navigating the treacherous waters, and pay off ransoms if captured (Percy & Shortland, 2011).

For insurance companies, the current state of affairs is also beneficial. Piracy is a low probability event. Only a small percentage of the thousands of ships that pass through the Gulf of Aden are captured. Even though insurance companies pay ransom and other costs when vessels are captured, the money insurance companies earn by charging shipping companies high piracy premiums is much greater than the money lost to pirates. The threat of piracy earns insurance companies more money than if piracy was eliminated (Percy & Shortland, 2011).

Navies of affected nations also benefit from the current state of affairs. In recent years, land forces have overshadowed naval forces since most of the major wars fought in the past 20 years (e.g., the Gulf Wars, Afghanistan) have mainly been land wars. The piracy problem has allowed navies to demonstrate their relevance and delay calls to reduce expensive naval fleets that often simply float around doing little. In addition, many navies are reluctant to go beyond the current nature of operations in which they primarily patrol and in rare cases, engage pirates in command. To successfully address piracy, navies will have to push their operations closer to land and in some cases, engage in land-combat with pirates (hence increasing the chance of casualties). This is something few navies want to do and most would rather stick to controlling piracy (deterring it through patrols) rather than actively confronting pirates using combat (Percy & Shortland, 2011).

Communities in which pirates are based are also unlikely to support a change in the status quo. Piracy has pumped millions into parts of Somalia thus increasing wages, providing capital for development, and creating jobs. For some Somalis who benefit from the actions of pirates, pushing for an end to piracy appears harmful and hence efforts to eradicate it completely would be met with strong resistance. Pirates also have no incentive to stop their activities. Engaging in piracy, although risky, is in many cases less risky than day-to-day life in ordinary Somalia. For some pirates, being captured is actually a positive thing because it means escape from Somalia. Each time the researcher visited the saveourseafarers.com and related social media pages, these pages were examined to see whether contrary views regarding piracy like Percy and Shortland were addressed.

A third thing that was examined during each website visit was whether the website and related social media pages contained elements that make website users want to return to the website (generation of return visits). For example, the researcher looked for updated stories and interactive question sessions with people knowledgeable about piracy. A fourth thing that was examined is whether the website was arranged in a manner that was easy to navigate. To

accomplish this, the researcher utilized Cumbrowski's (2008) guidelines for assessing navigation which recommend examining how fast the website loads, whether a map of the website is available, how many clicks it takes to reach content, and other criteria. A sixth thing that was examined during each website visit was conservation of visitors (ensuring that visitors stay on the website and are not sent elsewhere). This was accomplished by looking at how many external links there were on the website and related social media pages.

A seventh thing that was examined was whether the website and related social media pages contained content that can easily be read by most people, appropriate typography, and information in alternative formats for those with limited Internet access. To accomplish this, the researcher used the Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (wave.webaim.org), a tool that checks whether a website complies with Section 508 (US government regulations regarding website accessibility for people with disabilities) and Web Content Accessibly Guidelines (developed by key Internet governance bodies to make the web friendly to those with disabilities) (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). The eighth thing that was examined was whether the website and related social media pages contained information in other languages beside English.

Findings

Dialogic loop

The website www.saveourseafares.com was found to lack dialogic loop features. Even though email and phone numbers were provided, evidence that the campaign organizers actually answered questions (e.g., a facts section with frequently asked questions and answers) was absent. The majority of the website was dedicated to explaining the campaign, providing the latest news on piracy, showcasing a story of a sailor who experienced piracy, and providing website visitors with tools for communicating with their governments. The related social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) exhibited some limited dialogic loop features. By nature, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are structured in a manner that allows members of the audience to easily pose questions and the campaign organizers to answer them. A review of the campaign's social media sites, however, reveals limited dialogic loop features. The campaign organizers did engage with website users in conversation on Twitter and Facebook. This was however limited to merely liking comments made by Facebook users or re-tweeting comments by Twitter followers. Absent on the Twitter and Facebook pages were attempts to answer questions raised by users. The social media pages were primarily used to broadcast campaign information and highlight external information that supported the campaign. Little emphasis was placed on engaging in dialogue with users.

Generation of return visits

The saveourseafarers.com website, Facebook page, and Twitter excelled at ensuring that website users wanted to return to the websites. The campaign's main website had an extensive news section that was updated almost daily to showcase news regarding piracy. The news featured was taken from leading journalistic sources from around the world (e.g., radio stations, television stations) as well as the websites of governments, non-profit organizations, and others that write about piracy. The news was presented in full and without commentary. Internet users hence could use the saveourseafarers.com website as a good source to learn about piracy issues on a daily basis. The Facebook and Twitter pages also exhibited generativeness. They were updated

daily and linked to piracy news from around the world. Unlike the main website, the news on the two social media pages was often accompanied with brief commentary advocating the Save Our Sea Farers cause. The YouTube page, in contrast, was not frequently updated and was not conducive to repeat visits.

Ease of navigation

To assess ease of navigation, Cumbroski (2008) criteria for assessing navigation were utilized. The assessment revealed that the website contained the major items that Cumbroski stated need to be achieved on an easy to navigate site. On the website, all links were marked with anchor text that explained where they lead. In addition, the campaign organizers ensured that one did not have to click many items to obtain information. Most important information was available with one click and did not require going through multiple screens. The website lacked a flash or java splash screen or navigation feature than would make navigation difficult for users. The website was also very responsive and took about .1 seconds to load. Other positive features of the website were as follows: items that could be clicked changed color making it easy to identify what could be clicked, there was a purpose statement on each page explaining the information present, there were no dead ends, and there was a text-based search box for finding information. Overall, the website excelled at navigation features. The social media pages also excelled at navigation features and this was unsurprising as Google (owner of YouTube), Facebook, and Twitter have spent millions ensuring the navigation on their page is effective.

Conservation of visitors

To assess ease of conservation of visitors (ensuring that visitors stay on a website and are not sent elsewhere), the number of external links on saveourseafarers.com was examined. This revealed that the website was good at conservation of visitors. All the website pages except for the news page did contain external links. The pages explaining the campaign and the pages providing steps a website user can take were organized in a manner that did not require visits to external pages. The social media pages, in contrast, did not exhibit this element. They contained various links to external pages. This aspect, however, was likely due to the nature of social media websites which encourage sharing and linking. Hence, this can't be seen a weakness as the presence of hyperlinks to various external sites is encouraged on platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

Content that can easily be read by most people, appropriate typography, and information in alternative formats for those with limited Internet access: To assess the accessibility of the website to people with disabilities, people with low literacy levels, and other special needs populations, the website was analyzed using the Wave Accessibility tool. This analysis revealed several things. In regards to typography and readability for people with low literacy levels, the website did not have any problems. The website was written in a manner easily understandable and the typography met the guidelines for acceptability. The analysis however did reveal 15 problems that illustrated that the website would be difficult to use for people with sight and hearing impairments who utilized special browsers that necessitate that proper formatting. This means that if these individuals were to visit the website, they would encounter some difficulty accessing the information. What was also revealed was that the website lacks information sources for those with limited Internet access. A phone number was provided but it was a UK based number meaning that to obtain information via phone would necessitate a long distance call. A physical place where one can obtain information (e.g., an office of the campaign organizers) or special physical events where information is distributed were not provided.

The social media pages did not exhibit problems with providing information in an understandable format, appropriate typography, or accessible format. This can be attributed to the fact that large social media websites have taken steps to ensure they are accessible. A problem, however, was presented (similar to the main website) in that information was not available to those with limited Internet access. Toll free numbers and other ways of obtaining information were not provided on the social media websites.

Information in other languages beside English

The websites and related social media pages did not provide information in other languages aside English. The main website has an automated translate button but this failed to translate when utilized. The social media pages were also only in English.

Discussion of alternative approaches to addressing the problem of piracy

The main website failed to acknowledge other perspectives toward the piracy issue. A review revealed that contradictory views were not acknowledged and instead, only the law enforcement approach to combating piracy was presented. The Twitter and Facebook pages did acknowledge contrasting views but it was often done in a manner to discredit them. The Twitter page, for example, often took a strong, dismissive tone against other key groups in the piracy fight. This same tone could be seen on the Facebook page. The perspective that was provided is that there is only one legitimate solution to the piracy problem and the others were not realistic. There were no attempts at discussing the issue with users and when alternative views presented, it was on rare occasions and with no acknowledgement of the validity of the arguments contrarians may have. In summary, the website did not admit that alternative perspectives regarding piracy exist while the social media pages focused on stifling these alternative views in a manner that did not encourage debate.

Discussion

The findings show that combining Kent and Taylor's approach for assessing websites with approaches from outside the field of public relations provides a useful framework for assessing traditional websites. Using these tools highlighted the strengths and weaknesses with the saveourseafarers.com website. The website excelled at providing up-to-date news but was weak at answering questions or engaging users in constructive debate. While the website excelled at providing easy to understand information, it failed at providing information to non-English speakers and people with disabilities.

A more critical element the findings demonstrate is the need to develop an updated framework for assessing the usefulness of social media websites. The approaches that were developed to assess the usefulness of traditional websites need to be updated to reflect the nature of social media websites. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter excel at navigation, layout, and ease of use (criteria that when designing traditional websites is critical but that social media website excel at). Criteria like ensuring a user stays at one website are confusing when applied to social media websites which thrive on getting people to visit multiple pages across the Internet. Communicators need updated criteria to ensure that they are communicating effectively with publics using social media. A body of knowledge that has been empirically tested exists regarding traditional websites. What is needed is for communication scholars to do the same for social media websites.

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Social Behavior Engages Motivation 3.0

How Attributes of Social Media Are Changing Corporate Performance Systems and Re-inventing Trust.

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Social Behavior has neuroscience professionals studying brain patterns to draw emotional correlations with activities including shopping, alcohol, romance, and more. Studies have mobilized big-brand marketing to universally reallocate media dollars to Social Media.

Lessons learned from consumer behaviors are helping corporations capitalize on employee behaviors in self-motivated, peer-driven participation. For example, "Farmville" has permeated Facebook, where participants build farms, collect points to achieve farm animals and objects, and share points to help friends. Marketing leaders are taking a hard look at how they can go beyond the free platform to sell products. From a scientific perspective, we are witness to the largest and most measurable instance of combined intrinsic/extrinsic motivation of self-driven recognition and engagement.

Like motivation behaviors seen in Farmville, corporate recognition, rewards, and incentive programs are the unsung pioneers of 'social points' activity. Those mechanisms, described editorially as Motivation 3.0, are adopted as 'next-gen' principles towards re-building trust, stimulating participation, and actually changing employee behaviors.

Only a decade ago, it was a dream to have computers in every household. Today, not only are there computers, but there is a global community willing to participate in collaborative online activities. Indeed, the sheer volume of people 'engaging' in Social Behavior has neuroscience professionals studying brain patterns that they might draw correlations in accordance with other emotional responses from activities including shopping, alcohol, romance, and more. These studies have mobilized big-brand marketing to universally reallocate traditional media dollars to Social Media platforms.

Subsequently, lessons learned from consumer behaviors are helping corporate employee-engagement experts to capitalize on the momentum in self-motivated, peer-driven participation. You may have heard about the online game "Farmville" that has permeated Facebook, where adults, teens, and children almost compulsively build their farms, collect points to achieve farm animals and objects, and share points and items to help their friends to build. The game offers its 60-70 million participants a creative outlet and free form of entertainment, engagement, and self-expression. It is so wildly popular, in fact, that marketing leaders are taking a hard look to see how they can go beyond the free platform to sell product and brand. From a scientific perspective, we are witness to the largest and most measurable instance of combined intrinsic/extrinsic motivation of self-driven recognition and engagement... an unprecedented example in behavioral economics.

Like motivation behaviors seen in Farmville, corporate recognition, rewards, and incentive programs for employees are actually the unsung pioneers of 'social points' activity. Those behaviors and mechanisms, described editorially as Motivation 3.0, have been adopted as 'next-gen' engagement principles towards re-building trust into corporate culture, stimulating high participation, and actually changing employee behaviors. As you read through the following

paper, you will see a correlation between Social Media trends and the best-in-class solutions to affect changes that are meaningful for both employees and employer.

The Trust Factor of Social Behavior

The staggering fact is that 2,267,233,742 people are now online. That's almost a third of the world's population and it's grown at 130% since August 2010. (Internet World Stats, 2012)

The rate of adoption for web use has now reached a point in general consumer acceptance that allows corporations to say with certainty, "Yes, our employees are online and participating in web-based engagements, even if they do not routinely do so at work."

Given that the ages of people participating in Social Media are the same age as a typical employee population, it stands to reason that the skills and aptitudes are easily adopted in an internal engagement. Pingdom (2010) recently released compilations from Google Data which indicates:

- The average Social Network user is 37 years old.
- LinkedIn, with its business focus, has an average user age of 44.
- The average Twitter user is 39 years old.
- The average Facebook user is 38 years old.
- The average MySpace user is 31 years old.

As the ages listed are strong consumers, the above data is even more significant to marketers when considered in context with consumer trust data from Nielsen:

- 90% of consumers trust peer recommendations (Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey, 2009)

Trust, often missing from corporate culture over the past couple of years, has emerged as a peer-based consumer attribute that has shown statistical significance in Social Media, as can be seen in data presented in a Chadwick Martin Bailey study (2010). This is an area that must be capitalized upon to reinvigorate corporate trust from the inside out. Imagine, if you will, that employees can participate in a rewards and recognition system that builds appreciation and trust, while contributing to performance, brand values, and profitability. The impact on employee morale would be contagious.
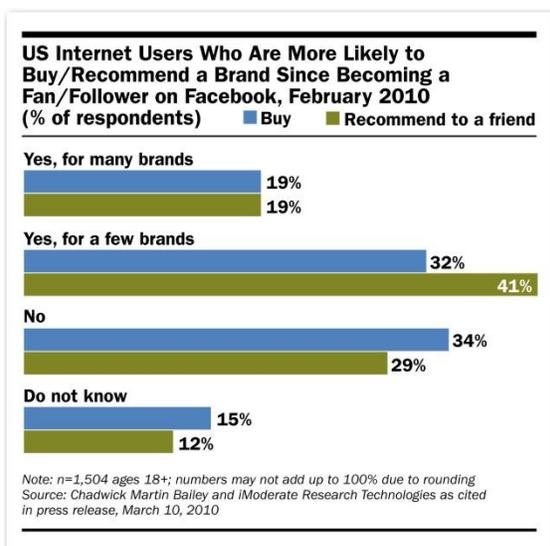
Consumers are making decisions based on information they learn from their networks and use that knowledge to take action and influence others. Where historically, a conversation might occur between a couple of people over the phone or at a gathering, Social Media environments are allowing large groups

US Internet Users Who Are More Likely to Buy/Recommend a Brand Since Becoming a Fan/Follower on Facebook, February 2010
(% of respondents) ■ Buy ■ Recommend to a friend

Yes, for many brands
Buy: 19%
Recommend to a friend: 19%

Yes, for a few brands
Buy: 32%
Recommend to a friend: 41%

No
Buy: 34%
Recommend to a friend: 29%

Do not know
Buy: 15%
Recommend to a friend: 12%

Note: n=1,504 ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Chadwick Martin Bailey and iModerate Research Technologies as cited in press release, March 10, 2010

of people to hear, participate in, and share conversations: positive and negative. It is an unpaid endorsement when a brand receives the Facebook 'Like' or thumbs up from a fan, and that the fan can publically indicate this endorsement (and sometimes emotional commitment, whereby falling into the coveted marketing space defined as 'True Loyalty' or even better, 'Cult Loyalty').

The trend towards engaging Social Media participation as part of work environment is noted in an article on CFO.com, "The Cost of Social Media Phobia" (McCann, July 2, 2010) where he cites Forrester's recent study of the value of participation, "To assess the business value attainable through such forums as blogs, wikis, discussion boards, and innovation platforms, the CIO practice at Forrester Research recently surveyed 303 information-technology staffers who use Social Media in the course of servicing their organizations. Seventy-two percent of the respondents said Social Media has a positive impact on productivity in the front office, 70% said it makes IT operations more productive, and 61% said it makes the back office more productive." Although this particular study was relevant specifically to the IT staff, their view encompassed the effectiveness in other departments. The potential to harness the power of both consumer and employee participation in social context may well be the most critical shift in the sphere of employee engagement to have appeared in decades!

Stimulating High Participation

> If Facebook were a physical nation, it would now be the third-most populous on Earth.
> (The Economist, 2010)

To date, people's involvement in Social Media has included a self-motivated desire to communicate, create, discover, and be recognized. Online achievements (the development of like-minded networks, niche topics, and thought leadership) which, at first blush, may have been deemed trivial from one perspective, have resulted in self-perpetuating, Word-of-Mouth (WOM) marketing receiving global attention. What started as a self-motivated engagement by users in Social Media has emerged as the largest brand battlefield since the invention of TV advertising. For marketers, engaging people online is about influencing them now, and in the future, and having them influence their friends. It starts with creating something that people want to associate with — a group to be part of — that they're willing to stand up for, vouch for, represent, and recommend to others. This 'something' can be the company for which they work, or the guiding values on which it is built, or behavioral patterns (which are statistically significant in performance, productivity and profitability). The strength of this type of online commitment has already changed the patterns of non-profit marketing forever, with examples like Susan G Komen for the Cure raising awareness and funds for breast cancer patients and research, which encourages hundreds of thousands of people to participate in volunteering, fund raising, and prayer for loved ones…to Nutella with > 14 billion fans "Liking" this chocolate hazelnut spread just because they can! (Facebook, 2012)

Likewise we see the power of fans to send a message to organizations with which they feel a connection, as demonstrated by the huge backlash of people *withdrawing* their support of Susan G Komen for the Cure over the organization's withdrawal of funds from Planned Parenthood.

Many of the attributes of Social Media participation have markedly similar characteristics with "The Five Disciplines of Organizational Learning" as published in *The Dance of Change* (Senge, et. al. 1999) over a decade ago. Notions of 'Personal Mastery', 'Mental Models', 'Shared Vision', 'Team Learning', and 'Systems Thinking' have been captured in the dialogue and behaviors of group engagement online. These are being demonstrated without orchestrated

instruction by people willingly using their own free time to participate in the use of free tools such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, YouTube, Plaxo, and more.

Changing Behaviors for Good

> Together, we had built a business that combined profits, passion, and purpose. And we knew that it wasn't just about building a business. It was about building a lifestyle that was about delivering happiness to everyone, including ourselves." (Hsieh, 2010)

The mantra for excellence in business is embodied in the behaviors of company and employees in articulating and communicating brand messages that are meaningful and rewarding to employees, partners, and customers. From Social Media, we have learned that people derive meaning that is emotionally charged when they engage on their own terms. When the correlation between corporate and individual values is enhanced through communication and performance metrics, the participation can be measured for incremental behavioral changes. These changes are representative of both a shared and individual purpose. By leveraging the power of online systems, corporations provide a familiar Social environment, similar to those in which people have already chosen to engage during their own time.

Previous rewards and recognition solutions focused primarily on cash incentives, which can 'move the bar' temporarily for a company, but which are often criticized as quickly becoming an expected part of compensation and lacking emotional significance. When points-based systems first emerged, the new tools added dimension to employee recognition for knowledge, behavior, and results, as awarded by managers and/or peers. Today's solutions have, once again, integrated societal interests that include wellness and innovation, and identify other motivators including the need to 'collect' or 'contribute'.

> When the reward is the activity itself – deepening learning, delighting customers, doing one's best – there are no shortcuts. The only route to the destination is the high road."
> (Pink, 2011)

The employee motivation industry, centered in a rich history of HR and communications strategy, procedures, and theories, is experiencing a dramatic shift that has been somewhat elusive to date. Leading examples of making strategy a part of everyone's job, has provided the positioning:

> The key reason people care about performance management is because they want to execute their strategies. Strategy execution and results are the primary benefit of managing performance." (Aziza, Fitts, 2008)

We can see that, today, the structure of recognition and rewards solutions has to be such that continuous change nurtures interest according to societal trends. It must enable the thoughtful consideration of brand values as inherent to the initiative, and it must allow for contribution, participation, thought leadership, and rewards participation across all silos or types of work.

Recommendations

As more data points to the continued and ongoing success of incentive, rewards and recognition programs that are tailored to the interests of the employee audience, we can radically improve on outdated programs that were based on a 'carrot on a stick' mentality. Today's systems are more

sophisticated solutions that consider overall corporate goals and values, as well as the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that drive individual and group performance. In fact, the language of motivation is growing to keep pace with Social Behaviors, encompassing people's needs for contribution to safety, innovation, and charity, as well as their need to collect accolades, points, recommendations, and thanks. In addition to achieving or unlocking rewards, collection of points 'for the sake of collecting' is demonstrated in Social Behaviors. This consideration of audience wants, needs, and inspiration has leapt beyond Pavlovian enticement, reward, and punishment to actually studying behavioral characteristics of audience market segmentation and engaging on their terms. What has emerged, once again, is recognition of brand values as inherent goals for an individual, and critical components to brand success.

Companies are missing the big picture these days when it comes to employee engagement. And if they don't widen the lens soon, firms could find themselves crippled in their efforts to claw out from the recession, abandoned by their best workers once hiring picks up and left behind in an emerging business era of greater transparency, interactivity and social responsibility…What's needed is a fundamental renewal of the relationship between firm and worker—a connection currently marred by mistrust and anxiety at many companies. (Frauenheim, 2009)

From a recent Global Workforce Study of 20,000 employees from corporations with over 200 employees, organizations that manager their brand and image well and ensure their external and internal brands are well aligned are more likely to inspire engagement in their people. Key takeaways from the Study were the recommendations for:

- rapid adoption and use of social networking to connect professional staff across borders and functions,
- recognition that program delivery and communications can borrow techniques of mass customization from the worlds of advertising and consumer marketing to build unique messaging strategies and tactics for different employee groups,
- workforce segmentation to enhance engagement, shape employee behavior and improve organization performance. (Towers Watson, 2010)

A McKinsey Quarterly report shows that corporations are using Web 2.0 to increase employee satisfaction. The 3% of companies described as 'fully networked enterprises' derived high levels of benefits from Web 2.0's use, involving employees, customers, and business partners, according to the survey. Respondents at these organizations reported higher levels of employee benefits than 'internally networked organizations' did and higher levels of customer and partner benefits than did 'externally networked organizations'. In applying Web 2.0 technologies, fully networked enterprises "have moved much further along the learning curve than other organizations have. The integration of Web 2.0 into day-to-day activities is high, executives say, and they report that these technologies are promoting higher levels of collaboration by helping to break down organizational barriers that impede information flows." (Bughin, Chui, 2010)

You can bring the power of Social Behaviors to your employees by offering intrinsic/extrinsic motivation rewards and recognition programs. Peer-to-Peer awards allow people to recognize each other. Team-based activities can promote relationship-building and trust. Wellness programs demonstrate that employees' health challenges are important to the company. Open 'suggestion programs' can accelerate innovation by creating a meritocracy.

The actions you choose in rewards and recognition programs, combined with the words and value messages that you choose to incorporate, can create some of the most meaningful and

measurable programs ever. Expectations for outcomes should include things such as increased productivity, increased performance, increased satisfaction, increased innovation, increased wellness, safety, education, and reduced churn of employees. These goals should permeate your corporate culture for continued impact.

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Social Media Challenges and Opportunities for Corporate Communication in Southeast Asia

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This paper examines how corporate communication professionals in Southeast Asia utilize social media strategies as they increasingly engage in online communication with various stakeholders. The research builds on previous studies of trust and distrust in corporate communication (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Tsetsura & Luoma-aho, 2010) to conceptualize how everyday social media practices can aid or hurt corporate communication. This research also contributes to a growing literature on the Internet's influence on sociability (Peng & Zhu, 2010) in the context of corporate communication. A survey, conducted among 120 corporate communication practitioners who work in the region and use social media strategies, revealed several major challenges professionals face in everyday communication with top management and clients. Building on the survey results, this paper discusses why the growing power of online media in Southeast Asia is often questioned by corporate management as a legitimate strategy.

Spot the Difference

The Dynamics of Political Communication in a Weak Democracy

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Purpose: In this paper, I propose to examine the challenges of the dilemma and unique communication constraints of political communication consultants in a developing democracy, where ballot wholesaling and retailing, violence and coercion rather than majority support most often determine electoral victory.

Approach: This paper explores factors that create variation between political communication management methods and streetwise strategies with the purpose of advancing the scope of existing studies and practices as applicable in a weak democratic environment.

Findings: By examining the peculiar field experience from a practitioner perspective, this paper shows the limitations of the concepts and theories of persuasion and behavioral change as drivers of political communication and election victory.

Research Implications: The outcomes of this exploratory paper will open up new areas of studies in the field of political communication and enhance the capacity of communication consultants in executing political campaigns, especially in developing democracies.

Practical Applications: Understanding the peculiarities practitioners must deal with in developing democracies will equip professionals with the expertise required to successfully execute political campaigns.

Keywords: Political communication, Ballot wholesaling and retailing, Persuasion, Behavioral change.

In this paper, I explore the peculiarities of the political environment of developing democracies, using the author's personal political campaign consulting experience in Nigeria to illustrate the constraints communication consultants face in executing political campaigns. The paper demonstrates that votes winning, election winning, and majority support do not always have the same meaning. I posit that vote winning (vote purchase), election winning (coercion and violence), and majority support (voters education and persuasion), represent dynamics of political communication in a weak democracy. Staying true to ethical standards and achieving the objectives of candidate-client require bookwise and streetwise strategies.

A Study of How Online Social Networking Influences People's Involvement in Humanitarian Work

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This study examines how online social networking sites (SNSs) influence people in getting involved in humanitarian work. Surveying 195 members of SNSs, the study found that they had received an increasing number of messages urging them to get involved in humanitarian work. SNS members had a positive attitude toward being approached through SNSs for humanitarian work. Also, the research found a correlation between being active on SNSs and the likelihood that people would get involved in humanitarian work through online calls for donations or help. These findings can be useful for PR practitioners and communication officers working in the humanitarian field.

The emergence of social networking sites (SNSs) as part of the recently created Web 2.0 over the past decade has provided new platforms for communication, allowing rapid information dissemination. From a business standpoint, SNSs enable companies and organizations to communicate en mass with their customers and clients in a cost-effective way (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2010). This advantage is ideal for nonprofit organizations relying on relationships with donors as well as maintaining strong ties with different parties. With interactive features that allow for two-way communication in real time, SNSs offer charitable entities the opportunity to foster relationship growth, engaging stakeholders in a cost effective way (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Seo, Kim, & Yang, 2009; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). The use of SNSs have been increasingly common among people, groups and corporations throughout many sectors.

The purpose of this study is to examine how connection through online SNSs influences the decisions of people to become involved with humanitarian work such as donating or volunteering. Extensive communication research has investigated nonprofit organizations' use of SNSs for public relations purposes (Curtis et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2009). However, little is known about how online users react to being targeted through SNSs. Additionally, it is unknown whether this new way of advocating for causes is effective or not. This study will fill this gap. Results of this research may have real world implications, providing practical knowledge of how to tailor humanitarian campaigns aimed at online users through SNSs.

Literature Review

Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with

whom they share a connection, and (3) view, and traverse their list of connections with those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 210).

Since the introduction of the first SNS in 1997, hundreds of these sites have been launched to connect online users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008).

Although most SNSs are relatively young, the number of users of these sites has grown rapidly. According to the Pew Research Center (2011), 66 percent of Americans are now members of sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, or LinkedIn. Facebook launched in 2004. By December of 2011, Facebook reported that its online active members worldwide had reached 800 million with an average user being connected to 80 community pages, groups, or events (Facebook, 2011). Twitter has seen a rapid increase in its number of users with eight percent of Americans using the service (Pew Research Center, 2010a).

As an explanation for this surge, Pew Research Center (2011) reported that the majority of people use their SNS accounts to stay in touch with their friends, family members, colleagues or school mates rather than looking for new relationships. In other words, the connections through SNSs are mostly based on the members' offline contacts. Regardless of the reasons, SNSs have seen an impressive expansion during the past years.

The adoption of SNSs for public relations in general has also increased among public relations professionals. When surveyed, public relations practitioners said that SNSs had allowed them to reach a broader audience. In addition, SNSs also helped organizations increase the frequency of communication with involved parties (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). On average, public relations professionals adopted six different social media tools for their work (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008).

There is evidence that social media's network capabilities reduce the cost of advocacy. It brings people together with similar values and common traits. This helps increase the potential for greater economy and increases the effectiveness of a campaign through connectedness (Clark & Themudo, 2003).

Humanitarian Work and Social Networking Sites

SNSs have created a direct channel for organizations to promote communication with their stakeholders. Empirical research reveals how the non-profit sector is increasingly using SNSs for public relations purposes. A classic example is the study on non-profit organizations' adoption of social media, Curtis, et al., (2010). It found that 54.5% of non-profit public relations practitioners use SNSs to reach out to their stakeholders. According to Lovejoy et al. (2010) 73 out of 100 non-profit organizations are active tweeters. Park, Rodgers, and Stemmle (2011) reported that in the field of health, nonprofit organizations are more active on SNSs than their governmental fellows.

Past research reported effective use of SNSs in non-profit or humanitarian work for information dissemination (Ralph, Berglas, Schwartz, & Brindis, 2011). Uhrig, Bann, Williams and Evans (2010) pointed out that SNSs ushered in a big shift in social marketing interventions. SNSs members are more receptive in absorbing information on health through online discussions. According to Yates and Paquette (2010), SNSs, and other social media tools play an important role in both government and nongovernment relief efforts in the Haiti earthquake in 2010. Economically, SNSs provide resource crunched humanitarian groups, ability to connect with concerned parties for free.

As part of their public relations work, humanitarian groups can also educate the public about their services through SNSs. While advertising through the mass media does not allow for interaction, SNSs may facilitate two-way communication between humanitarian groups and their targeted audiences. The adoption of SNSs has proven useful for these groups to keep their

stakeholders informed, especially in times of crises (C. Huang, 2011; C. M. Huang, Chan, & Hyder, 2010; Quincey & Kostkova, 2010; White, Plotnick, Kushma, & Hiltz, 2009).

Humanitarian groups often rely on financial donations from different sources. For them, cultivating and maintaining relationships with donors are foundational aspects for humanitarian work (Hovey, 2010; Lovejoy et al., 2010). Scholars pointed out that information delivered through interpersonal channels often has a strong effect on getting individuals involved in volunteer work or charitable donations (Wilson, 2000). It is clear that, as digital platforms usually help retain pre-existing relationships, SNSs resemble off-line social networks in building and strengthening ties between peers. Scholars argue that, from an advertising perspective, SNSs provide a favorable environment for interpersonal or word-of-mouth communication to take place (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). In addition, because many of the projects in nonprofit sectors are transnational, SNSs transcend national boundaries, enabling across-the-globe mobilization at minimal cost (Seo et al., 2009). These functions have served the public relations purposes of non-profit organizations as well as charitable groups (Wright & Hinson, 2009).

Most studies focusing on SNSs and humanitarian work have often been done from the perspective of public relations professionals. What is not well understood is how the targeted audiences of these campaigns experience these phenomena.

RQ1: How often do members of social networking sites receive messages calling for support of humanitarian work? Where do these messages come from? Do SNSs' members observe an increase in the number of these messages?

Technically, the way SNSs' members are connected differs depending on which SNSs they are members of. However, SNSs' members have some control over their own account e.g. who they want to follow, be-friend, or which groups they want to join. Also, because SNSs member accounts are privately owned, members may view direct solicitation through their accounts differently.

RQ2: What kinds of responses (e.g. negative, positive) do members of social networking sites have when receiving the messages calling them to supports humanitarian work?

Studies focusing on the association between members of SNSs and participation in activism as well as humanitarian work have found mixed results. Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2009) found a relationship between intensified Facebook use and young people's civic engagement and political participation. Farrow and Yuan (2011) discovered that alumni's active participation in Facebook groups predicts network ties (emotional closeness and frequent communication), which result in a stronger likelihood in charitable giving to educational institutions.

Some of the social networking sites are facilitating people's eagerness to engage in humanitarian cause. One of the classical initiatives was Tweet Festival, an event that was launched in 2009 that focuses on raising money to provide potable water for people in developing nations. The event focused on generating funds and providing a platform for discussion among like-minded people who want to contribute to solving the problems of potable water in developing nations. People from 175 countries participated in discussions on the scheduled dates and also donated. People used their skills to contribute to a solution without ever leaving their homes or offices. Tweet Festival collected $1 million in only a few weeks (Leahul, 2009).

There is evidence that audiences prefer to get involved in humanitarian work digitally. The latest study from Pew Research Center (2011) revealed that some 12 percent of Americans

between 18 and 39 had made donations through the Internet or mobile phone. However, not all new media users are keen on providing support to humanitarian work online. A study shows 60 percent of new media users supported a cause previously through different channels. Nevertheless, only 27 percent of respondents made a financial contribution through a social network, and only 4 percent supported a cause through SNSs like Twitter. It shows a sizeable population of Americans not being much interested in financially supporting nonprofit organizations. The fact is that 34 percent of respondents are new media users and use it two or more times in a week. Even 27% is a large figure keeping in mind the huge number of Internet users (Cone Marketing, 2009). Reaching this large audience is clearly important for marketing of any form for business purposes or for humanitarian causes. SNSs closely resemble other interpersonal channels of communication. Thus, SNSs can increase the chance of getting people involved in humanitarian work.

H1: *Active members of social networking sites are more likely to get involved in humanitarian work if they receive messages from people they are connected with through social networking sites.*

Method

This study uses an online survey as its major method of data collection. A practical constraint in the data collection process was: there was not a complete list of all SNSs' members, so it was impossible to select a sample randomly. The research employed a non-probabilistic method using snowball sampling. After being approved by IRB, the survey was administered online through esurveypro.com. Links to the survey were first posted on the authors' Facebook and Twitter. The posting also included a call for participation in the survey. Some SNS members, who are in the friend-list of the authors also helped repost the survey to recruit participants. All online users who are 18 years or older were eligible to participate in the survey. The survey questionnaire was open online for four weeks. The data was transferred to SPSS or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for analysis.

Two hundred forty-six responses were collected. However, 51 respondents skipped too many questions or quit before finishing the survey, resulting in a total of 195 responses. Findings of this study may not apply to the population at large for the fact that its sampling method did not equip it with the representativeness of American SNSs' members. Previous research on SNS members often used college students as participants. This study, on the other hand, seeks to investigate SNS members in the general public. Its uniqueness, as exploratory is expected to contribute to the literature.

Twenty-three questions were used to generate the data. For the frequency of solicitations through SNSs, the survey asked respondents to provide the number of times per week, per month, and per year they received messages calling them to volunteer for or contribute to humanitarian work. A close-ended question asking subjects to provide the details on the sources these messages were sent from: "people in my Facebook friendlist," "people I follow on Twitter," "people I connect with on MySpace," "humanitarian organizations/charitable groups that I connect with," or "other." In addition, a five-point Likert scale asked respondents to rate whether they had seen an increasing number of messages calling for humanitarian supports sent to them through SNSs with one (1) being strongly disagree and five (5) being strongly agree.

To assess attitudes toward being approached through SNSs, three variables using a five-point Likert scale were used for analysis. Answers to the questions of whether respondents would be more likely to read or trust the messages sent to them through people on their friend lists, or

the ones they are connected with, and whether they would prefer to receive these messages through SNSs or other ways. A reliability test was performed on these variables to find out their internal consistency of each variable to the group before they were combined into an index. The attitudinal items were found reliable with the alpha coefficient (α) of .80. In order to measure respondents' likelihood to get involved in humanitarian work, the study used a five-point scale (from1 = disagree to 5 = agree) asking the respondents to rate whether "they feel they should do something to support the humanitarian work" when receiving humanitarian advocacy messages from their SNS peers. The activeness of a SNS member depends on how much time they spend logging on their SNS accounts in a typical day. The survey also included questions on respondents' demographics such as age, education, gender, and income.

Findings

The sample size was 195. Of those 65% were women. The mean average was 34 years (SD = 11.6). Most respondents had a college level of education (95.4%). Eight of them had obtained a high school degree (4.1%). One of the respondents (.5%) dropped out after junior high. Respondents' incomes varied. Nine respondents did not respond to the question of income. The highest income earner made as much as US$281,000 annually. The average income was US$41,778.97 (SD = 38,975.53). Descriptive data show deviations from the general population in the U.S., which was part of the problems with the convenient sampling method.

Respondents reported spending an average of 31.88 hours a week (SD = 19.36) online. All respondents were members of at least one online SNS. Facebook was the most popular among the respondents with 99 percent) of them are members of Facebook. Twitter was the second most popular with 46.13 percent respondents being active tweeters. One subject reported being member of six SNSs. The average number of times respondents logged on to their SNSs daily was 6.85 (SD = 6.74). The amount of time they spent on their SNSs was 3.01 hours per day on an average (SD = 3.71). Most respondents joined their SNSs after 2004. Some of them were new members of online SNSs.

RQ1 asked about how often members of SNSs receive messages asking them to donate or get involved in humanitarian work. Descriptive data showed that, of the 195 respondents, 165 respondents (84.62%) said they had received these messages through their SNS accounts. In terms of frequency, four respondents reported to have received messages inviting them to get involved in humanitarian work every day. Seventy-one of them said these messages were sent on a weekly basis, with four revealing that they had received about four messages every week. Sixty-six respondents stated that they had been approached through SNSs monthly. The mean number of messages a respondent received a year was 66.05 (SD = 80.13) (See Table 1).

TABLE 1: Reported frequency of receiving messages through SNSs

Frequency	Daily (N=165)	Weekly Once to several times a week (N=165)	Monthly Once to less than 4 times a month (N=165)	Less than monthly (N=165)	Mean (No. of times per year) and SD (N=165)
Number of Respondents	4 (2.4%)	71 (43%)	66 (40%)	24 (14.6%)	66.05 (SD = 80.13)

Facebook was the most popular source for these messages. Some 158 out of 165 respondents (95.8%) said they had received these messages from people in their friend lists. Eighty-two of them (49.7%) were directly approached by the humanitarian organizations.

Twenty-nine (17.6%) said the messages also came from people they followed on Twitter.

RQ2 is concerned with subjects' responses to messages calling for them to provide support to humanitarian work through their SNSs. This shows respondents have an overall positive attitude toward receiving messages calling them to donate or get involved in humanitarian work, especially when these messages come from people in their friends list.

H1 states that people who are active members of social networking sites are more likely to get involved in humanitarian work if they receive messages from people in their friend list.

The authors performed a Pearson correlation test on these two variables. Results demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between the two, $r(193) = .29$, $p < .001$. The findings suggest that the more respondents spent on their SNSs, the more likely they were to get involved in humanitarian work if the messages come from people in their friendlist.

Discussion and Conclusion

The chief focus of this study is to investigate what kinds responses members of SNSs have when they receive messages calling them to donate or get involved in humanitarian work. Findings show that member of SNSs reported they received a considerably large number of messages advocating for humanitarian work. Members of SNSs also reported having seen increasing number of messages sent to them through their accounts. Findings are in line with previous research on the use of SNSs in public relations work in general (Wright & Hinson, 2009) and for non-profit organizations in particular (Curtis, et al., 2010; Waters, et al., 2009). The increasing use of SNSs by non-profit organizations may have resulted in a surge of messages reaching larger audiences who are members of SNSs. Interestingly, Facebook stood out to be the most popular source where its members get most of their messages. Twitter members also reported receiving a considerable number of messages advocating for humanitarian work through this SNS. Facebook and Twitter have seen increase in the numbers of their new members.

Most respondents did not have problems being approached through SNSs for humanitarian causes. In fact, respondents' attitude toward receiving messages calling them to get involved in humanitarian work was rather positive. This can be explained as trust, and communication being two important factors to engage people in humanitarian work. People are more receptive to persuasive messages when sent from friends.

Respondents clearly stated that they would prefer to receive these messages through their SNSs instead of other ways such as email or phone. Active members of SNSs, however, would more likely to get involved (donating, participating in voluntary activities) in humanitarian work if they received advocacy messages from people in their friends list. Advocacy messages for humanitarian work reach members of SNSs in a similar way because they are sent to the audiences in the same way. In this case, respondents revealed that they would be more likely to read and trust more if the messages were sent to them from their friends. Active members of SNSs would be more likely to interact more with their friends online, and therefore building a better sense of trust with people networked in their friendlist.

Studying the effects of online advocacy through SNSs on audiences who are members of those SNSs has received limited coverage, although the rapid expansion of these SNSs has drawn significant attention from researchers and non-profit public relations practitioners. In that sense, this research is expected to fill that void by examining the responses members of SNSs have when being approached through their accounts for the advocacy of humanitarian work.

This study found that members of SNSs have seen more messages being sent to individual SNS accounts as part of advocacy campaigns for humanitarian work. In addition, SNS members usually have a positive attitude toward being approached through their accounts. These

findings could be useful for non-profit organizations and people who work in humanitarian areas to expand and conduct advocacy campaigns. For example, as shown in this research, the fact that online users preferred to receive solicitations for humanitarian work through their SNS accounts over phone or emails implies that humanitarian groups need to alter their public relations strategies to suit the preference of their targeted audiences.

It also suggests that being in contact with active SNS members would benefit public relations campaigns. However, technical aspects of these SNSs should be considered in order to approach SNS members. For example, with Facebook the creation of groups or events for members to like or subscribe would be an effective way.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has several limitations that need to be addressed due to the available time and limited scope of the study. First, the convenient sampling did not equip the research with generalizable results. Second, the number of participants was too small to be scaled down to the general population of SNS members. This would have helped offset the problem of the convenient sampling. Third, the study could have included a qualitative part to explore the issue from an individual standpoint. However, these limitations open opportunities for future research. To a great extent, this study is exploratory and has detected the relationships between SNS connection and involvement in humanitarian work.

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Taking Plain Language Seriously? "That's a Really Big Ask".

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This paper presents the recommendations resulting from a research project that investigated the extent to which a large Australian local government organization has been able to implement plain language in their correspondence with their customers. Our qualitative-research approach included collecting customer correspondence sent out by the organization over a one-week period in February 2011; a survey of staff within the organization, along with follow-up interviews with those who volunteered to be interviewed; and a series of focus-group discussions with customers of the organization. The customers rated the writing samples on a scale of 1–10; the samples averaged 4.73 out of 10, indicating that the principles of plain language are not well understood nor practised by staff within the organization. Other findings revealed that the organization has relied on an ineffective writing-training model and that much of the writing is done by inappropriate staff. We suggest ways in which the organization might alter their current hiring and writing practices to enhance the quality of their correspondence and their relationship with their customers.

Keywords: Organizational writing practices, Plain language, Training.

Paper Type: Research paper

The research project, which we conducted through 2011, was funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage Grants Scheme (which funds industry-academy projects) and the partner organization. We presented correspondence that was collected over a one-week period for discussion and rating by focus group participants representing the organization's customers (Khan & Manderson, 1992; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Their rating was centered on how closely the letters conformed to the definition of plain language that we had provided to them: "a document that gives its intended audience the best possible chance of understanding it the first time they read it''. We audiotaped the discussions, created full transcripts, then conducted a thematic analysis of the transcripts (Hargie & Tourish, 2000; Krippendorf, 1980; Owen, 1984). The participants rated the letters at an average of 4.73/10—a far from satisfactory result.

We then interviewed the staff in the organization who had volunteered to be interviewed in response to our preliminary survey. Our analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that staff had firm beliefs about why the problems existed and sensible suggestions, which we concurred with, for overcoming the problems and thereby enhancing the quality of correspondence. Staff believe that much of the writing is done by inappropriate people. Our other findings were that

- the organization has relied on an ineffective model for the writing training
- the principles of plain language are not well understood nor practised within the organization.

The Writing Is Done by Inappropriate People

The writing in the case organization, which receives an average of 3,713 items of correspondence from the public per month, is written in the first instance mainly by either technical or administrative staff, who are not necessarily trained nor skilled in writing. This has many flow-on impacts:

- many of those staff begrudge the time they spend writing, especially when they feel they have to sacrifice their 'core' work to do it;
- they take longer to produce writing at the same standard as a trained writer, thus wasting the organization's resources; and
- they can tend to produce jargonistic, wordy, or otherwise low-quality writing.

The latter factor necessitates extra editing, which takes up more time and resources and frustrates authors. This in turn can lead concerned managers to micromanage or focus more heavily on writing, which sends a message to staff that the problem is caused by their incompetence, and breeds resentment about the writing process. Heavy editing by many parties leaves less time to thoroughly investigate the original issue, leaving investigators stressed and customers short-changed. Heavy editing can also introduce errors or change the meaning of a document, which can have serious consequences for the organization and its customers. Previous research has established that this undervaluing of writing skills is fairly common in Australian workplaces. In a 2002 paper, Petelin noted that "there is a widespread absence of savvy hiring practices in the Australian corporate sector, whereby potential appointments are given writing-editing tests that determine whether they have the potential to handle the kind of writing that they will be doing if they are hired." This oversight, Petelin found, mainly occurs because many managers "do not appreciate the rhetorical and linguistic sophistication required to write well" (pp. 173-74).

Many of the interviewees suggested that having trained writers producing the correspondence would alleviate some of the problems:

> So, in an ideal world, how would you see correspondence operating?
>
> You would just have a correspondence officer for every branch, and that would be their role. I think they've tried that in the past.
>
> Do you know what happened?
>
> I think it's a weird balance between getting accurate technical information, so then the corro person would be bugging the technical people a lot. But I still think that would work better than it works now.
> [Interview 3]

Because, at that time, we were unable to pursue this issue to question the connection between the subject-matter expert and the trained writer, we have suggested that this form part of the follow-up research in the organization. As the next interviewee pointed out, expecting many employees in an organization of 7,000–8,000 to produce rhetorically sophisticated writing is what one of the other interviewees called 'a big ask'.

> **So, if Council hired you as an external contractor and said, 'Make our writing processes in this organization as efficient and effective as possible,' what changes would you recommend, if any?**

I'm more inclined, I think, to have the officer produce just the facts, if they can be in dot-point fashion, and if somebody else wants to construct the nice, fluffy letter around that, they can. I think there are different skill sets. To expect everybody to be, you know, an expert writer I think is a little naïve, because you're not going to get that across an organization with 7,000 to 8,000 staff. You are always going to find that there are certain people that aren't skilled very well in areas. So, I think if we're going to improve quality, I think it's better to have somebody just, as I say, producing dot points, and then the skilled person producing the letter—who can always go back as a check to the person who produces the facts—they could say, 'Does this represent what you know the facts to be?' And you can confirm that, and then that could be sent.
[Interview 4]

Yet another interviewee suggested that having trained writers deal with the correspondence would be more efficient and effective.

I think probably a better way of doing things is probably to have a lot of your correspondence done by one person. Traditionally, we're from an engineering background and some of our guys are field based. They've come from the field. So their forte isn't with this. I'm not being rude; I'm just being honest; their skillsets are not in the typing and documentation, and that sort of thing. I've just been through recruitment and selection, and you see it in their resumes and that sort of stuff. And that's why I say it would be better if we had a correspondence officer, and we could either do the dot points, or whatever it may be, and they can type it up. Or you could even sit and talk to them. And that way you are then getting a consistent format, and it would be more efficient.
[Interview 8]

Clearly, many of the staff had agonised over the problem of using untrained writers to respond to the public's requests and complaints.

I think the answer is probably a higher level of trained people that are dealing with the correspondence. I feel as though we spend a lot of time with [training] the technical officers writing the correspondence, where if we had people that were correspondence-based but had a little bit more training around the key things that are raised in correspondence, a lot of those issues could be addressed by the technical officer just writing down the key points and the person actually converting that into the response. That I think would be a much better, more efficient way of dealing with it… and then you're not tying up the technical officer's time constantly. And you can have a dedicated person doing the correspondence in a team.

So having designated correspondence officers for more branches?

Yeah, as opposed to having the technical officers write all the responses. I think that would probably be more productive in terms of efficiency of office time.
[Interview 29]

A couple of the interviewees recalled that the solution that was being proposed by so many was already in at least one area of the organization.
In some areas you can send our response to the correspondence person and then they'll type it up. I know that's the case at [one area]—at [our area] it's a bit different. We pretty much have to write the letter as it is.

So [at the other area] they have someone who does all the writing?

Yep. And all the formatting. So they grab it and put it all in and simplify it a little bit, and then we get to proofread that or while it goes to the manager, and if the manager's not happy, it will come back to you and you have to change it.

So which system do you think works best?

I like it when I can take our technical information to one officer, they type it up, and then it goes to the manager, and off it goes. If there's more needed, then they come back to us, rather than us writing that letter to the style guide and everything. For our role, we've got to know the trees. But now we've now got to know computers, we've now got to know how to write a letter to the councillor, and it's like—we have people here that already do that. [Interview 32]

As at least one of the interviewees notes, this approach has been in place in some parts of the organization in the past; in some, it was successful and was retained, and in others, it was abandoned. Interestingly, one of the areas in which it was abandoned is the transport and traffic area, whose correspondence scored the lowest ratings in the focus groups, and whose employees were the most vocal about their dissatisfaction with the writing process. In our report to the case organization, we have suggested that an audit be carried out across the whole organization to examine the current practices.

The problems highlighted above could be addressed by having designated, trained writer-editors strategically located across the organization, whose core purpose is to produce the writing where necessary, they could seek information either in person or by telephone from the technical staff, or from technical documents that have already been produced (site inspection reports, for example).

The case organization may assume that hiring trained writers will be an expensive exercise, but, based on our current market research, the average salary of a qualified workplace writer is between $70,000 and $80,000 per annum, which falls in the organization's band 5–6 category. The average salary of a civil engineer—many of whom were among the interviewees and who claimed to spend a majority of their time writing correspondence—is $146,000 per annum.

The reclaimed time of these technical employees would represent a significant cost saving, but it would not be the only one. If qualified writers were entrusted with the writing process, the organization could reduce the number of links in the editing chain, which would save significant time, potentially offsetting any costs incurred in redesigning the workflow. It is worth noting that not all of these positions would necessarily require new appointments to be made from outside the organization; several of our interviewees were trained and qualified writers, and would need no more than a revised position description.

The Training Has Been Ineffective

Correspondence writing training in the case organization is, in theory at least, compulsory for all employees at band five level or above. However, a significant number of our interviewees were at this band level or higher and had never attended training, despite having worked at the case organization for many years.

Training is certainly one of the most common strategies for improving workplace communication; indeed, communication training is among the most prevalent content areas in employee training (McEwen, 1997). On the surface, training is often seen as the most cost-effective method, because, once a program is designed, it can be delivered on an ongoing basis without much modification to (potentially) large groups of staff. To date, the organization has

relied mainly on training as a way to increase the use of plain language in its documents, but the workshop model of the training has not followed best practice. The principal mode of training has been the Quality Customer Focus Correspondence course, which is a 1.5-day training course for staff in correspondence writing, held two or three times per year, and the Quality Customer Focus Editing course, which is a half-day condensed version of the Quality Customer Focus Correspondence course, aimed at executive staff who primarily edit others' work. We deal with the inadequacies of this 'show-and-tell', workshop model below. Other initiatives include:

- the 'Quality Customer Focus Style Guide', which specifically addresses plain language use in correspondence writing;
- the Customer Correspondence Team, a sub-group of the organization's Contact Centre, which is responsible for acknowledging and responding to the organization's simple external enquiries, as well as coordinating the responses to complex external enquiries; and
- a criteria checklist, entitled 'The 4Cs', which must be completed before any external correspondence is posted.

The 4Cs checklist has clearly been constructed to guide writers, and includes a selection of the characteristics desired by plain language advocates, but the samples of correspondence that we presented to our focus-group participants had not all been stringently subjected to the criteria:

1. Contact name or project hotline or contact-centre hotline number on which to 'log a job'.
2. Comments in the contents management system (CMX) of the organization relevant to the issue under consideration.
3. Comments in the local media or in current council business relating to work that may be in progress relevant to the issue under consideration.
4. Customer focused. Does the response
   a. Provide a solution or an alternative?
   b. Answer all the questions?
   c. Use friendly, conversational language?
   d. Use simple words?
   e. Avoid technical or legalistic jargon?
   f. Explain the key points clearly with minimal words?
   g. Take ownership of the customer's needs?
   h. Tell the customer what the organization 'can do' rather than what it 'can't do'?

As well as these organization-wide initiatives, several branches within the organization hold their own in-house writing training courses, and often nominate their correspondence staff to provide one-on-one training to other employees involved in writing. Individual managers also send particular staff on various external writing training courses on an ad-hoc basis. At one point, the mayor's office also offered one-on-one fortnightly group sessions to certain branches that received a high volume of correspondence. None of these initiatives exemplify 'best practice'.

Organizational writing is complex and requires a great deal of skill that cannot be taught in the workshop model that the case organization largely relies on. Corporate writers face a wide array of writing tasks that rely on their:

- sensitivity to their purpose, readers, and context
- understanding of how readers read, comprehend, and act upon documents

- ability to research, structure, and sequence information
- understanding of how words, sentences, and paragraphs work
- working knowledge of conventions and formats used in their organization
- ability to adhere to their organization's conventions and style
- skill in using problem-solving strategies to generate ideas, and to write and to refine their writing for their readers
- critical and analytical skills for reviewing their writing (and the writing of others)
- ability to take advantage of available tools and templates
- ability to visually illustrate concepts with graphs and tables
- recognition that there is no one correct writing process to follow when preparing documents
- recognition that there is no specific, best writing style
- knowing what they know about writing
- accepting that producing good writing is hard and takes a long time, and
- ability to work in teams on collaborative projects.

The quality of the writing produced depends on an employee's:

- attitude to, and previous experience of, writing
- interest in, and knowledge of, the subject that they are writing about
- understanding of the writing task, based on the quality of the briefing provided, and
- deadlines, time, and space to write without interruption.

Problems with the workplace writing situation can include:

- unrealistic timelines/deadlines
- complex content and contexts
- personal and telephone interruptions
- juggling priorities, and
- power relations. (Petelin, 2001)

Suchan (2006) laments the fact that "organizations squander yearly hundreds of millions of dollars on quick-fix communication training programs that produce limited, if any, improvement in the effectiveness of their communication" (p. 7). Petelin (2002) also notes with regret the tendency of organizations to hire 'kwik-fix' consultants for a short workshop who "lack a background in communication theory and have only a minimal understanding of the structural, linguistic and document-design principles that are the basis of flawless documents" (p. 175). The workshops provided to staff in the case organization could not possibly cover all the skills required in the list above and train staff to deal with the myriad exigencies that arise in the corporate communication context.

As Paré (2002) explains, any 'quick literacy fix[es]' effected by a consultant usually come undone soon after their departure (p. 70). Here, he discusses his experiences with his own consulting work:

> Nothing changed as a result of my work. Participants would leave my sessions determined to apply the lessons learned, but [...] back in their offices, the crush of cases, the force of habit and institutional history, and the seemingly inexorable activity of social work practice pushed new ideas into the background. Weeks later, I would discover that the plans [...] that were hatched during a workshop had quietly died (p. 65).

Our case organization is no different:

> It's all good and well to say we need plain language training. And there might be sufficient motivation to do the course, but to keep it up is the challenge.
> [Interview 12]

> Council has got an initiative which is [a course] called 'Writing for Customers,' which is trying to get all the staff who do the writing to use Plain English—but it's tough. I mean, it's not really that easy. […] It seems like after that course, that's it. I mean, there is no auditing, there is no further follow-up action, which could be improved.

> **Did you find it useful?**

> The three-hour course...it's a bit like teaching. When I say 'teaching', it's a bit like lecturing. It's a person who's on a stand and talking about 'you should do this, you should do that', and they tell you all these principles. You should make it easy for people to understand, you should...but that's not really helping.
> [Interview 23]

In our employee survey, of those who had attended the organization's in-house training courses, 62 per cent said they had found them effective or extremely effective in learning to write for their job, leaving 17 per cent who found the courses not particularly effective or extremely ineffective, and 21 per cent who recorded a 'neutral' level of agreement. These results are not overwhelmingly negative (although they are not overwhelmingly positive, either). And, while writing training programs often receive positive feedback from staff who attend, the research often only garners feedback on how good a time the attendees had (such as 'good lunch' or 'entertaining trainer'). The subjective judgment of the employees cannot be taken as authoritative evidence that their writing has been improved by the workshops. Having writing experts or expert managers analyse pre- and post-writing samples would be the only way that the efficacy of the workshops could be proven. And this does not happen. In one study, Nijman found that 90% of employees who attended a report writing course said they would recommend the course to a colleague, and 90% of their supervisors said they would send their other employees on the same course, but only 34% of the attendees said they could see any effect on their writing, and 23% admitted they did not notice any effect at all (Nijman, cited in Janssen, 2001, pp. 112-113). Indeed, of the interviewees who commented positively on the writing training that they had done in the case organization, most of their comments related to the food or the ability of the trainer to engage the audience:

> There was a facilitator I had; she was great. She was really good.
> [Interview 28]

> I learnt a lot about changing tone to make sure that what you're getting across isn't intimidating or bureaucratic or things like that. And the lady was lovely.
> [Interview 37]

> Courses are good in that you get good lunches —it gets you to see how, maybe, to format things. But when you're writing something, it doesn't come out of a course. It's got to come out of life. You've got to be there, you know what I mean? You've got to actually go through it or be part of it.
> [Interview 21]

This survey evidence is supported by the limited available quantitative research on the impact of writing training. According to Kessels (cited in Janssen, 2001), only 10–20% of all in-company training efforts have a lasting effect on the employee's performance. In fact, this may be an optimistic figure; most studies indicate a transfer of no more than 10–12% (Broad & Newstrom, 1992).

In Janssen's research report (2001), this alarming statistic is not due to the quality of the training provided, but the fact that 'writing consultants—and the governmental organizations that hire these consultants—work with the wrong problem definitions' (p. 107). Rather than assuming that the problem is a deficiency of writing skills in the documents' authors, Janssen argues that organizations should recognise that a text 'is not a product by itself (as an essay at school often is): texts are used for specific purposes, have a specific function within a specific context, and should therefore be measured on a third level—the level of organizational processes and results' (p. 111). As previously mentioned, this has not happened in the case organization.

As Shuy (1999) states, "bureaucracies tend to assume that, once the problems that plague their writing are acknowledged and declared unacceptable, change will inevitably follow" (p. 99). However, even if the government employees were all able to learn the principles of good writing from training programs, the writing skills of individuals is still only one of the factors affecting the quality of the documents produced in an organization. Rothwell lists four factors that influence a worker's (and thus a writer's) performance: the organizational environment, the work environment, the work process, and the worker. Rothwell's theory is that the worker's performance is influenced by all of these other factors, and they should all be taken into account when trying to improve the way people do their work.

While the workshop model as offered by the case organization is a common approach, it is also demonstrably ineffective, as reflected in the rating of correspondence at 4.73/10. The training has certainly succeeded in raising employee *awareness* of plain language, which is undoubtedly an important first step, but awareness does not necessarily cause change. Writing training can be effective if it follows a coaching model, whereby participants' work is used to develop content-specific exemplars and participants are dealt with individually. An expert closely evaluates and edits their work, provides initial guidance in a one-on-one session, then follows up with 'refresher' sessions to enable them to sustain the momentum of their initial coaching. This is an expensive, but not unique approach, and one that we have suggested to the organization, along with our recommendation that they redirect some of the emphasis and resources dedicated to their established training sessions into other initiatives, such as using trained writer-editors and re-designing the workflow, which are more likely to effect a lasting and meaningful change.

The Approach to Plain Language

Our interviews revealed widespread inconsistencies on the part of employees in understanding and applying plain language. While, collectively, they were able to describe many of the characteristics of plain language, a significant proportion saw plain language as 'dumbed down' language—which is a common but unfortunate misjudgement—and many felt that using plain language was tantamount to talking down to or patronising their customers, using 'spin' or 'fluff' to win votes, or always saying 'yes' to a customer's request, even when it is unwarranted or impractical. Many also complained that those editing their work foisted inconsistent feedback on them that was based on individual, and sometimes idiosyncratic, stylistic preferences rather than on accepted principles.

Basing all standards and feedback on research-supported definitions of plain language—especially in key plain language champion areas such as the Lord Mayor's office—is the obvious

key to avoiding this issue. *Clarity* made an attempt in November 2010 to determine their definition of plain language. They ended up conceding that defining plain language requires a combination of formula-based, elements-focused, and outcomes-based approaches, though they considered the latter to be the most important. A substantial body of scholarly work is dedicated to plain language. Making better use of it would ease many of the tensions that our interviewees described.

The Amount of Writing That Has To Be Done

Many of the interviewees suggested, and we agree, that more could be done in the case organization to reduce the volume of writing that is required, to allow more time to do a better job on that which is necessary. Some believed that providing information proactively, either by regularly sending out fact sheets to their constituents, updating their website more regularly, and improving contact centre scripting (which contact centre consultants use when talking to customers on the phone) was the best way to do this:

> There's a lot of things that we can educate the public on that I personally think would reduce our calls. Every 12 months, or every 18 months, a little fact sheet could go out that says 'these are the sort of things that you still can ring council about; however, this kind of thing we don't get involved in…'
>
> **Kind of like what the ambulance service did with the 'would you ring the furniture removalist to move your TV two inches? No? Then don't call 000 unless it's an emergency' campaign?**
>
> That's right. Those sorts of things. I know that would cost money, and that's what we're trying to reduce. But it would save money in the long run. It would save those calls, and it would save time, which for us here, we're looking at saving time for certain things so that we can spend that time doing what we would consider more valuable work. So we're not reducing our workload as such; we've still got other stuff that we would rather do, we simply don't have the time to do it. If we can reduce this end of the workload we can shunt that to there.
> [Interview 13]
>
> The contact centre—a lot falls on their shoulders. Better scripting for the customer contact centre would be good. And giving the customers the information proactively so they don't then have to put it in writing, and it doesn't create more corro. And having updates on projects and things where they can easily find them. We're getting a lot of correspondence about traffic disruptions around the [name of project] tunnel. Now, that's a state government project. But because of the traffic disruptions, they're going down streets they probably normally wouldn't have gone down. So these people are complaining, and if the customer contact centre could just say, 'look I'm sorry, that's related to a state government project, you'll need to contact them' or something like that, that would stop that stuff being put through in writing as something for us to investigate.
> [Interview 18]
>
> Well, it can impact on the writing when people get frustrated because they have to keep answering the same questions. 'Why are people ringing and asking us for this, or emailing us asking us to respond to them on this, when they can go have a look at it on the internet?' So people get a bit frustrated. It makes us start looking at 'Why isn't this hitting the mark?' And we've already highlighted that ourselves and said, 'It's too hard to find this stuff, you

have to do too many clicks on the internet for the public to find the bit they're looking for.' So we've identified that ourselves—we need to actually fix up how you find stuff on our internet so we avoid people writing to us.

That would reduce the number of enquiries and give you more time to deal with the ones you've got.

Correct.
[Interview 39]

One interviewee suggested that better explaining the reasons for decisions would also achieve this goal, by reducing the number of follow-up responses:

We need to educate people. It's not a case of writing a letter and bloody saying 'yes, okay, we'll do that footpath' like we used to. It is about 'yes, we'll do the footpath,' but also showing that we understand, and telling them why: 'you said you wanted the footpath because of the shops. Yep, cool, we'll put the thing in because of the shops, but just so you know, the budget process is this.' And say it in such a way that it doesn't sound like such a huge daunting process, but so they won't be disappointed if it doesn't get done next year, and it is up to the councillor. So they don't write back.
[Interview 13]

Some also thought that unnecessary writing could be avoided by disengaging from problematic customers earlier, or at least spending less time on corresponding with them:

I really hate the idea that the customer is always right. […] If their ideas are just ridiculous, or if their points are just stupid, then we should basically be telling them that. You know— 'No, we will not build a brand new road for you. The end.' 'Cause what happens now is that there will be Mayoral [letters], for example, with crazy people—there are nuts out there— and they keep sending stuff back in. It keeps going on, keeps going on. Ridiculous.

There are procedures, aren't there? The disengagement process?
That takes a long time.

You think that should take place sooner?
I just think if you respond to someone and you've addressed their concerns—addressing someone's concerns doesn't mean you have to take on their concerns. That's it. We've answered you.
[Interview 3]

When emails or letters come through and they're very aggressive, and you know, just, 'Oh, you're all a bunch of so and sos, blah blah blah,' how much time does one officer have to spend replying to a person like that? Yes, it does need to be done, but I can tell you right now, if an email or letter comes through like that, the poor officer will probably have to redraft it four or five times so that everybody's satisfied with the response. If you put a dollar figure on that, what would the perception be of Council? If the public knew how much time—which equals money—is spent with back and forward, back and forward on letters… I don't think they would have a good perception of Council efficiency, if they knew that was behind the correspondence they received.
[Interview 43]

Conclusion

The case organization claims to support a culture that embraces, values, and delivers plain language, but the evidence from our research points to key challenges that the organization faces, and we have recommended the following practices that, if followed, will strengthen their claims and enhance their relationship with their customers:

- conduct a cross-organizational audit of departments' written materials to assess employees' writing competence and to consider whether some of the writing that gets done could be reduced
- hire new staff and use existing staff who are trained writers and avoid giving writing tasks to staff who are insensitive to the subtlety and complexity of language and thus to the rhetorical effect of their writing
- provide regular, serious, comprehensive coaching of specialised writing staff to enhance their self-efficacy, based on expert assistance and not based on the 'show-and-tell', 'quick-fix' model
- provide frequent refresher follow-up coaching to designated writers
- use writing quality as an important factor in performance appraisal
- introduce technical/subject-matter experts to the principles of plain language (with more than a superficial/skeletal explanation), so that, even if they are only providing dot points to the designated writers, they still understand the plain-language aim of the communication
- design helpful templates and a style sheet that all staff are familiar with and comfortable using
- conduct an annual cross-organizational performance audit of departments' written materials.

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The Study of Internal Crisis Communication

Towards an Integrative Framework

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Purpose *- Previous crisis communication research has primarily examined the external dimension of crisis communication. i.e. the crisis response strategies applied by organizations to protect and/or restore their image or reputation among external stakeholders in a crisis situation. The purpose of this paper is to set up an integrative framework for the study of internal crisis communication in private and public organizations.*

Design/methodology/approach *- The paper takes a theoretical approach reviewing the literature on crisis management and crisis communication and discussing the concept of internal stakeholder and the implications of a staged approach.*

Findings *- An integrative framework for the study of internal crisis communication is developed based on two assumptions: first, that internal crisis communication research must start with a detailed study of the relationship between an organization and its internal stakeholders (in this case: the employees) to clarify to what extent internal crisis communication differs from external crisis communication; and second, that internal crisis communication research can best be systematized applying a staged approach (precrisis stage, crisis event, postcrisis stage) as an heuristic method.*

Originality/value *- Apart from a few exceptions, the internal dimension of crises, crisis management, and crisis communication has, by and large, been unexplored.*

Keywords - *Corporate communications, Employees communications, Employees relations, Crisis communication, Integrative framework, Internal communication. Internal stakeholder*

Paper type *- Research paper*

The Varied Roles of Stakeholders Initiating Digital, Humor-based Employer Brand Communication

The Perspective of a Start-up Company

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The purpose of this study is to describe the varied roles of stakeholders in a humor-based employer branding process initiated by viral recruitment advertising. The nature of viral advertising in the particular context of digital recruitment advertising is rarely studied. The study's methodological approach involves qualitative content analysis with textual data. Data were gathered from discussion forums, blog writings and email contacts with stakeholders during 17 days viral spreading of recruiting advertisement. Our findings demonstrate certain roles that stakeholders can take during the viral advertising process and thus emphasize their role in humor-based employer branding. The findings also suggest that utilizing viral forms of humorous recruitment advertising is an unconventional but a powerful managerial branding tool. As such, the described approaches are especially suitable for start-up companies and creative high-tech industries in an early phase of their stakeholder dialogue.

Keywords: Employer branding, Viral recruitment advertising, Role of stakeholder, Humor

Paper type: Case study

Building brands in small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) differs from branding practices in large companies (Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008). Often, limited resources lead entrepreneurs to take unconventional approaches to brand building (c.f. Boyle, 2003). This study examines unconventional brand communication, focusing on humorous styles of communication initiated by viral recruitment advertising. Porter and Golan (2006) define viral advertising as *"unpaid peer-to-peer communication of provocative content originating from an identified sponsor using the Internet to persuade or influence an audience to pass along the content to others"*. Branding is the key function of viral advertisements (Porter and Golan, 2006; Golan and Zaidner, 2008) and viral advertising is a more personal form of advertising compared to traditional advertising (Porter and Golan, 2006).

Viral advertising is one phenomenon related to a networked economy that demands, increasingly, that companies are more interactive and cooperative in their approaches. The networked economy also challenges traditional branding approaches (see e.g., Mäläskä *et al.*, 2011a, Ritter and Gemunden, 2003; Håkansson and Snehota, 2006). For example, co-creation of brands between different stakeholders (see e.g., Jones, 2005; Hatch and Schultz, 2010; Christodoulides, 2009) has been suggested as one way of answering the needs of current markets. Traditionally, stakeholders have been viewed as branding targets rather than as partners in the co-creation of a brand (Gregory, 2007). This study extends emerging research on the stakeholder approach to branding (e.g. Gregory, 2007; Mäläskä *et al.*, 2011a) by examining the role of stakeholders in facilitating discussion and co-creating unconventional, humor-based employer brand messages in the context of viral recruitment advertising. Little research has so far been devoted to co-creation of an employer brand. This study considers how viral recruitment

advertising can be used as a special form of humor-based employer brand communication by focusing on the role of stakeholders in initiating the spreading of viral messages.

Changes to the media culture brought about by the Internet and related e-technologies have also changed branding tactics. These changes are described by Christodoulides (2009) in an article in which he asks: "Do we need a new theory of branding in an e-space?" He emphasizes consumer empowerment with a more interactive role and a loss of control on the part of brand managers. The new level of branding culminates, according to Christodoulides (2009) in blogs, widgets, viewer created advertisements, Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, and Second Life. He states also, in very basic terms, that post-internet branding is *"about facilitating conversations around the brand."* According to our study, post-internet employer branding is about facilitating conversations around the employer brand. In addition, this study will give an empirical example of the different roles of stakeholders initiating viral recruitment advertising processes. Moreover, this form of viral recruitment advertising increases awareness of the employer brand among different stakeholders, indicating to them the processes at work and the intention to engage them in dialogue.

This study discusses humorous corporate communication in digital postmodern media and, more specifically, in a viral recruitment advertising context. Although viral marketing has been described as one of the hottest marketing trends of the decade (see Ferguson, 2008), the stream of research in viral advertising is still in an early, flexible phase and humor is known to be one of the most prominent appealing methods in viral advertising (see Golan and Zaidner, 2008). Still, this study does not try to answer the question "what makes viral recruitment advertising viral?" by concentrating on the content of message, but instead takes a novel approach in seeking an answer to the research question: *How can we describe the role of different stakeholders in a humor-based employer branding (process) initiated by viral recruitment advertising?*

The paper is structured as follows: First, a theoretical overview of the research phenomenon is provided. Second, the methodology of the study is introduced and that is followed by a description of the empirical findings and discussion of them. Finally, the study outlines some managerial implications, its limitations and, of course, its conclusions.

Literature Review

Employer branding from a stakeholder perspective

The concept of employer branding describes a company's efforts to attract staff and retain its existing staff (e.g., Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Employer branding has many of the same stakeholder groups as other forms of branding (staff, customers, distributors, shareholders), but the central interest group of the employer brand is the current staff and potential employees (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). However, as recruitment advertising is traditionally targeted primarily at potential employees, this study seeks to point out that recruitment advertising used in a viral context may also generate relevant interest towards the company among different stakeholders. Consequently, this study aims to broaden the approach of employer branding not only targeted at potential employees but including other external stakeholders, as well. The study highlights the role of stakeholders not merely as targets, but also emphasizes their meaningful but underestimated role in employer brand communication initiated by viral recruitment advertising. Moreover, there is very little research devoted to the co-creation of the employer brand, although interesting ideas around the phenomenon have been outlined. For example, Aggerholm *et al.* (2010) combined employer-employee dialogue with co-creation and sustainable concepts.

This study examines the different role of stakeholders in facilitating discussion in the viral context and so continues emerging research on the stakeholder approach to branding (e.g., Gregory, 2007; Mäläskä *et al.*, 2011a). The question of different roles of stakeholders in the corporate branding process in SMEs seems to be gaining interest among researchers (see. e.g., Mäläskä *et al.*, 2011b). While the study of Mäläskä *et al.* (2011b) classifies external stakeholders according to their branding activities focusing on company-level actors, this study will focus on the role of stakeholders as actors on an individual level, and on the practice of generating a viral recruitment advertising campaign in a short period of time.

From strategic communication towards stakeholder dialogue in employer branding

In employer branding, recruitment messages are differentiated by organizations to attract the applicants that fit the organization's image of itself (Backhaus, 2004). It is suggested that providing accurate brand messages about the organization's culture, identity, and values to potential applicants is important to form a realistic promise that will be reflected by the employment experience (Foster *et al.,* 2010). This study adopts an approach to humor-based employer brand communication, which also will raise questions about the role of humor in the organization-applicant fit, promoting an accurate brand message, and making realistic promises about the company.

Because humor is a kind of play, traditionally it was considered "frivolous and unproductive" and stherefore as the opposite to work, making humor *at work* a kind of oxymoron (Morreall, 1991). Today, the business world has changed. According to Romero *et al.* (2008), humor is particularly relevant for modern workplaces where younger workers in particular value fun at work (see Romero *et al.*, 2008). Romero *et al.* (2008) raised such relevant questions as: Are younger or older workers more receptive to humor in work? Are particular industries (e.g. technology) or doing a particular type of work (e.g. creative work) more likely to benefit from using humor than others? These questions are relevant not only in the context of management and recruitment advertising, but also from the employer branding perspective.

Using humor to gain attention can be also a threat to the integrity of key brand information (Fugate, 1998). There are studies that relate how humor may even be harmful to companies with a serious or high-technology image (see McCullough and Taylor, 1993; Scott *et al.*, 1990 in Fugate, 1998). However, there seem to be no studies concerning possible threats in using humor as an employer branding tool. Extreme humor and sex appeal (highly emotional content) in television advertising has a risk of interfering with effective brand communication (Eckler and Bolls, 2011; Kellaris and Kline, 2007; Severn *et al*, 1991). However, Beard (2008) found that according to the UK Advertising Standards Authority (2002) less intrusive media including the Internet, magazines and cinema are considered less offensive than more intrusive media (e.g. outdoor advertising, direct mail and newspapers), perhaps allowing more freedom for advertising on the Internet.

Humor has been studied from the strategic communication perspective too. Vuorela (2005) has studied humor in the multicultural negotiation context and found that humor has a role as a strategic tool for business negotiators. More generally, humor at work is more often linked with and effectively used in internal organizational settings than across organizational boundaries indicating that humor is most often used between people who know each other (see Kurtzberg *et al.*, 2009; Vuorela, 2005). This is why the opportunity for using humor as a positive relationship-initiation device is very often missed (Kurtzberg *et al.*, 2009). In addition, Graham (1995) has studied the involvement of a sense of humor in the development of social relationships, providing

support for the notion of the facilitative nature of humor in the process of development of interpersonal relations.

Humor as a viral and social networking element in digital media

New advertising in the new forms of media has led start-ups and other companies lacking strong, established reputations to seek out unconventional forms of advertising and low-budget media to support their brand building efforts (Dahlen *et al*., 2009). Unconventionality may manifest itself in many forms in advertising, one being the use of powerful humor. Humor seems to be an effective element; to be universal and the most common advertising appeal for viral advertisements (Porter and Golan, 2006; Golan and Zaidner, 2008), yet there is still a lack of studies in the recruitment advertising context. As Boutlis (2000) says, "you need to be indirect, ironic and allusive to engage and entertain clued-up, intelligent consumers." Today, this is possibly true in the case of employers, as well, when digital media, and especially the Internet, has become a leading tool for recruiting and selecting employees (Cappelli, 2001; Backhaus, 2004).

Kurzberg *et al.* (2009) have looked at humor as a *relationship-building tool* in successful online negotiations. Traditionally, face-to-face negotiation has been superior when it comes to level of trust in online-negotiation (see e.g., Naquin and Paulson, 2003). Fraley and Aron (2004) have established the importance of shared humorous experiences in creating feelings of closeness between strangers, and thereby strengthened their impression that "humor plays a powerful, even seemingly magical, role in social interaction." Controversial studies exist about the relationship of humor and trust while some studies suggest that humor is related to higher levels of trust (see e.g., Swartz, 1996); other studies (e.g., Bressler and Balshine, 2006) assert that humorous people may be less trustworthy, maybe even less intelligent, but more socially adept. A very recent study, however, is able to show intelligence predicting ability to be humorous (Greengross and Miller, 2011). According to Kurtzberg *et al.* (2009), humor can be used as a strategic tool helping to build trust in online interaction, particularly when introduced at the very beginning of a new relationship.

Välikangas and Sevon (2010) give their own perspective on humor in management of an organization in the digital context. They discussed the idea of jesters in the virtual world context describing their art as the "separator between ideas and managers". According to Välikangas and Sevon (2010), "The role of the jester, as an avatar or as a physical person, implies the right and skill to make people see themselves and their actions more clearly." Our study wishes to reveal another facet of the jester when the manager of a company seems to adopt the jester role in communicating humorously with different stakeholders.

Methodology and Description of the Case Company

The empirical study is conducted using *qualitative content analysis* methods. This research technique has three different approaches; conventional, directed and summative content analysis. This study adopts the conventional content analysis approach, which is suitable when existing literature on research phenomena or theory is limited. The key elements in conventional content analysis are that categories are derived from data and defined during data analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

We use textual content analysis of viral recruitment advertising by one employer that has adopted an unconventional style of employer brand communication based on powerful humor. This unique style of communication is apparent in the company's viral recruitment advertising.

As such, the case company selected provides a good example of an employer utilizing humor-based employer brand communication through digital media.

The empirical part of this study will follow the *viral spreading of recruitment advertising* over 17 days following the digital publication of the original recruitment advertisement. The analysis aims to reveal the critical events through snapshots identifying the key *stakeholder groups* with the various *roles* that stakeholders played during this short-term viral process of co-creation of an employer brand. This study also analyzes the communication style of these *interactions* and discusses the role of humor in them. The analysis is on the individual actor level.

The data for the study comprise blog and social media forum inputs and e-mail discussions. The e-mails and blogs consisted of discussions generated by a humorous recruitment advertising campaign in the digital media. It should be noted that our data is based on material that the case company itself gathered. The material was provided by the case company's CEO in response to a direct request by the researcher. To increase the validity of the data, each informant that had participated in e-mail discussions or had written a blog was asked for permission to use their writing for the study's data. The informants were also sent an e-mail that explained the purpose of the study.

The focus of interpretation in this study was on snapshots of the viral spread of the recruitment advertisement among stakeholders. It also presents the early steps of creation of not only awareness but also a dialogue with different stakeholders. The analysis focused particularly on the roles of different stakeholders in the viral spread of the employer brand.

The case company is a small start-up company located in Northern Finland that was founded in August 2009 and which operates in the gaming industry with a focus on 3D virtual technology, edutainment games and games with game-based marketing solutions. The company has five employees (01/2010). The CEO is a young entrepreneur with a bright and witty personality evident in his public statements and vivid and informal communication style.

In January 2010, the company launched *a digital recruitment advertising campaign* to attract potential employees and to achieve more visibility for the company. In the recruitment campaign, the company used a digital recruitment advertisement with a unique communication style. The advertisement went viral – and spread through different social media channels (Twitter, Blogs, Facebook, discussion forums), generating discussion about the firm and resulting in contacts from media representatives and other stakeholders. This viral recruitment campaign went on to attract over a thousand applications (precise data is lacking) and about 750 applications for a game designer post.

Identifying the Roles of Stakeholders in the Viral Employer Brand Communication Process

Description of the spread process of the viral recruitment advertisements among stakeholders

The case company published the original recruitment advertisement in two well-known Finnish job-listing web sites. What happened over the 17 days following publication is described below, through snapshots that identifying the different roles that stakeholders seemed to adopt based on the actions they took during the process. The empirical findings are presented briefly in Table 1.

TABLE 1: The different roles, actions, and communication types of stakeholders in different digital channels in viral recruitment advertising process.

Role	Stakeholder group	Actions and tone	Communication type	Digital channel
'early mediator'	potential employee	mediating received ads.—republishing & facilitating discussion with positive commentary	one-to-many	humorous discussion forum
'facilitator'	potential employee	facilitating discussion with positive, critical or neutral commentary	one-to-many	humorous discussion forum
'global mediator'	potential employee	republishing & translating into English	one-to-many	individual blog
'interactive mediator'	potential business partner	making e-mail contact, republishing & facilitating discussion	interactive with company manager	e-mail contact + organizational blog
're-creative mediator'	media journalist	publishing article & positive commentary	interactive with manager + one-to-many	e-mail contact + digital/print
'supporter'	potential business partner	making e-mail contact, tone shift to shared jester behavior	interactive with company manager	e-mail contact
'creator'	company manager	creating original recruitment advertisement, communicating with stakeholders with multiple tones		

After one day: **Early Mediator**

Republishing recruitment advertisement with comments on a humorous Finnish discussion forum. The person is one of the most active members and contributors to a Finnish discussion forum. (944 registered users as at 2.3.2012). He/she *re-published* the original recruitment advertisement and made also positive comments on it also taking an active role in the viral spread of the advertisement and thus becoming part of the employer branding process. We call the role *'Early Mediator';* 'mediator' referring to the republishing of the original advertisement in a new environment and 'early' doing that quickly.

> The best job advertisement EVER! (I saw myself 100% working there) (early mediator)

In addition, we termed the action of this early mediator *positive commentary*, indicating the very positive tone towards employer and the humorous recruitment advertisement. According to his/her comment, the person is also a *potential employee*, and it seems that there would be total fit between the organization and employee.

After two days: **Facilitator**

Commenting on a Finnish humorous discussion forum in a different tone. Two days after the original recruitment advertisement was published, it was also published in a humorous Finnish discussion forum generating discussion for two days.

:DDD Just wondering if it is a real workplace? (1)

The first comment (numbers indicate their chronological order) being a question shows how using humor in recruitment advertising might reduce *trust* in a way that even the existence of a company was questioned, and emphasizing that recruitment advertisement should be understandable. However, there were several responses passing on knowledge to assure others that the company really did exist.

A real workplace. It is located just across the road from my house, but I do not know if this job advertisement is just a joke (3)
A real company [presents a web link to company's official information] (4)

There were several very *positive comments* with emoticons, many stating an intention to apply for the job.

Brilliant Ad :D (5), ":D"(7),
An application submitted (2)
Must surely put in the application! :) (6)
Sure the application should be submitted if the place is like that (10)

There were also comments with more *critical* views about the employer using such powerful humor in recruitment advertising. Comments also represent skepticism about how realistic the job description is. This may indicate that a potential applicant also thinks about how well he/she would fit in with such a humorous corporate culture.

It could be a nice place. Maybe just a little too much in this advertisement, and I would be scared if the firm was constantly like that. (8)

Someone even explains to others that the rationale behind the phenomena is viral marketing. This kind of commentary can be considered essentially *neutral in tone,* the comments do not seem as emotionally loaded as those positive comments.

This is called viral marketing. It is done either through a good/funny advertisement or an 'embarrassing mistake' so that it will spread in the net independently. Marketing costs: 0? And as you will see, it also works. :) (9)
Good advertising, indeed (11)

In this study we term this stakeholder role a '*facilitator*'*. This means general facilitation of discussions in for example a particular discussion forum about an employer and a company by commenting either in positive, critical or neutral tones*, which are described above. Facilitators seem to represent *potential employees* as a stakeholder group.

*After 7 days: **Global mediator***

Republishing of the recruitment advertisement translated into English by an individual blogger.
Seven days after the first release of the recruitment advertising, a Finnish blogger translated the text from Finnish to English and published it on his individual blog. (See Appendix for translation.) The role of the blogger was important in spreading the recruitment advertisement message and enabling the global spread of an originally Finnish recruitment advert. This is why

we name the blogger's role *'A global mediator'*. It is notable that the English version seems to overcome the cultural humor barriers because the company also received applications from abroad.

After 15 days: **Interactive mediator**

Personally contacting the company manager through a supportive e-mail and then publishing a short note with comments on an organizational blog. A representative of a Finnish advertising agency made *interactive personal e-mail contact* through the company's e-mail address introducing himself and giving positive feedback. He also got a response from a manager about the number of applications so far.

Personal e-mail contact with a positive tone:

> Cool!
> No, I'm not applying, but this application was the best in five years :)

After he published an overview of the success of the recruitment campaign in an organizational blog, he *mediated* the original recruitment advertisement spreading new information which was gathered through personal e-mail correspondence with the company's manager. We named this stakeholder role that of *interactive mediator*.

> How to recruit programmers?
> With a well-written normal advertisement [with a link of original recruitment]
> I asked how was it? Heard 400 applications in two weeks. Not bad.

After 16 days: **Re-creative mediator**

Personal e-mail contact with the company's manager in a friendly tone, asking for information and, in a re-creative way ,later publishing an article in print and digital media. The awareness in the media of the company's recruitment advertisement also increased. Here is an example of a Finnish media journalist's email, and the dialogue with the manager around writing an article for the digital and print media.

> I found a fun job posting to our website service for searching news...
> But...I would like to know whether you have received a lot of feedback and, if so, what kind? And, of course, how many applications have you received? - Journalist

The journalist demonstrates an interest in the company, asking many relevant questions, and this presents an opportunity for the manager to not only talk about this successful campaign but also to introduce the company and himself as a manager.

> The original idea about a different recruitment advertisement was born of my own passion for creating.
> I have over the years made literally hundreds of funny texts and articles and job applications. I have applied for jobs with a few funny submissions. Sometimes it worked, sometimes not: for example, in 2001, I made an application for the position of President of the Bank of Finland with an application which was totally nonsense, for some reason I

did not get even an interview call…What a loss to the economy of our country! At least the press conferences would have been funnier. - Manager

These statements by the manager also reveal his familiar side and his experience in using humor in different job adverts and applications. The humorous attitude also reveals an *anti-authoritarian attitude*, visible in the manager's earlier witty application (likely provocative in intent) for a very high level position. He also referred to the generally rather serious image of public communication in the banking industry. It has to be noted, that his application did attract some publicity in Finland even then.

> The company is a creative and fun company, and when you create a personal recruitment advertisement, so it also attracts the types which fit into our corporate culture. - Manager

This statement indicates that the company's manager has used humor purposely as an employer branding tactic. It seems also that the company's profile and identity center quite strongly around the manager which might be typical of a small start-up.

In the discussion with the journalist, the manager made it quite clear that he is aware of how to make a funny advertisement: placing funny elements of advertisements at the beginning to catch the reader's attention, achieving credibility with the serious part in the middle, and closing the final part with a joke.

At the end of the discussion, the journalist expresses how the recruitment advertisement cheered him and noted that the target group for the advertisement is broader than the potential employees.

> the advertisement [put me in a] happy mood, thanks for that. It is nice to share joy [with those] who are not applying for a job. - Journalist

When looking at the overall dialogue, the interaction was friendly, fluent and without drama. There seems, however, to be a certain distance between the participants. The journalist is asking quite short questions without using emoticons, whereas the manager expresses himself in long often humorous sentences, and is seemingly aware that the statements could later be published. It does not seem that there was a shared moment of humor.

According to our analysis, the journalist was acting as both a mediator and as a co-creator when she wrote the story which originated from the personal interaction with the manager of the company. So we call this stakeholder role a *re-creative mediator.*

*After 17 days: **Supporter***

A company represents an email contact with a positive tone and email discussion led to a shared humorous moment with the tone like a jester. Awareness increased among potential *business partners*, as well. Below is an example of a person with a managerial level position in company A, who contacted the case company's manager via email indicating a wish to meet.

> Subject: Congratulations for a very funny recruitment advertisement on the job-listing board.We thought that we would [invite you] to visit. I showed your advertisement to our Chief Financial Officer, who is sitting nearby, and he said that people with humor like that must be invited to visit. We will [show you around the building and introduce] the

people here and can talk in general. You never know what is invented and it is good to know people from all over. - Representative of the Company A

The introductory mail uses a rather informal communication style and also shows an interest in the manager on a personal level, referring to the individual's sense of humor. As a stakeholder, the manager who got in contact can also be regarded as a potential business partner. The statements indicate the general need for a broad social network for managers and companies, as an essential part of enabling and creating new relationships and business contacts. In this case, humor seems to be a very important element in making the first contact.

> Thanks for the "supportive" feedback :) Certainly your company is a familiar company for me, if I remember correctly, one of your ex-workers is working for our project also. Or not, dementia ...
> About 450 applications have been received…
> …I'm sitting on the train from [city A] to [city B], and I would have been happy to be there with a cup of coffee, if I could read. I mean, if I had read the message in time. Would you have any specific concept for cooperation or are you going to present to us those usual partner's modest achievements ...? - Manager

The overall tone of the manager's response was informal and loaded with different humorous expressions. The manager's talk, and especially the last sentence, could also be considered aslight-hearted 'jester behavior'. The manager makes an effort to make it clear that he understands the possible visit does not have a clear goal of real cooperation, just traditional company presentations, and he gently pokes fun at some shared finance partners, thus criticizing their role as partners.

> You saved my day and [that of] many of my colleagues… If you wish to check out a warning example about where a company may end up in global markets, contact me the next time you are considering visiting [the town]. We will offer you warm hand,[Finnish idiom representing moral support instead of money or anything more tangible] a cup of hot coffee and present our own operations…
> P.S Financial supporters a, b and c and partners are found also in our poor so-called networks. - Representative of the Company A

Company A's response shows how after receiving a humorous response, the form of discussion changed and took on the same humorous style of communication as the original advertisement had. This example clearly shows how the humorous moment is shared between counterparts. We name this tone of dialogue as jester-like interaction. It may even be called '*shared jester behavior*', indicating that the similar humorous style was present in messages of both counterparts. The stakeholder role is named **'*supporter'*** because the interaction occurred through a personal email discussion with a positive, shared tone without mediating the employer brand any further.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this study was to describe the different roles of stakeholders in a viral humor-based recruitment advertising process. The research question was: *How can we describe the role of different stakeholders in a humor-based employer branding (process) initiated by viral recruitment advertising?*

Conclusions from empirical findings

Figure 1 illustrates the viral spread of the humor-based employer brand with the different roles of stakeholders in digital channels. Our empirical findings showed that six different individual level roles of stakeholders can be identified in different digital (electronic) channels. According to our empirical data, viral recruitment advertising was mediated in the first phase by potential employees expressing the different roles of *early mediator*, *facilitator*, and *global mediator*. Later in the viral process other stakeholders took on the roles of *interactive mediator*, *re-creative mediator*, and *supporter*, representing more personal interaction with the manager of the company behind the recruitment advertisement.
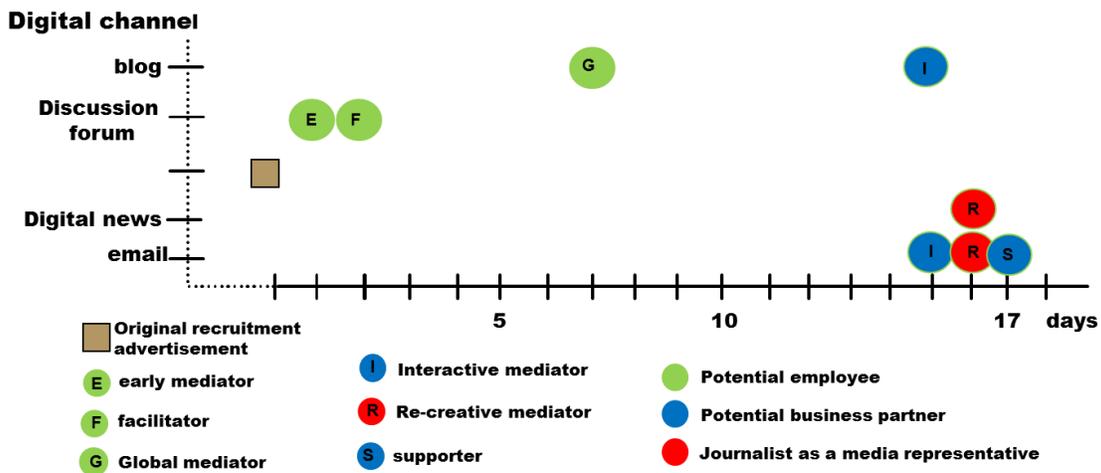

FIGURE 1: The role of stakeholders in viral recruitment advertising process in different digital channels.

Our empirical findings suggest that stakeholders can take different roles when mediating and spreading a viral humor-based employer brand. These roles are defined by specific actions and tones of communications. For example, a facilitator's role in facilitating discussion is defined through the different tones of positive, critical, and neutral variants.

Encouraged by the study of Välikangas and Sevon (2010), this study also described the tone of like that of a jesteras a specific style of interaction between two managers within a humorous discussion. Adopting the jester role enabled the managers to see themselves and their actions more clearly through the use of humor. Moreover, we used the term 'shared jester behavior' as a shared humorous moment between managers.

Theoretical contribution

By examining the role of different stakeholders in co-creating an unconventional, humor-based employer brand initiated by viral recruitment advertising, this study makes three main theoretical contributions. First, it extends the emerging research on the stakeholder approach to branding (e.g., Gregory, 2007; Mäläskä *et al.*, 2011a). Moreover, it contributes to the emerging research interest in different roles of stakeholders in the corporate branding process in SMEs (e.g., Mäläskä *et al.*, 2011b).

Second, this study introduces *post-internet employer branding* as something facilitating conversation around the employer brand encouraged by the definition of Christodoulides (2009) about post-internet branding. In addition, the study offers an empirical example of the different roles of stakeholders facilitating conversation and thus initiating the viral recruitment advertising process.

Finally, this study also contributes to the hot and emerging trend of viral advertising (see e.g., Ferguson *et al.*, 2008; Porter and Golan, 2006; Golan and Zaidner, 2008) by introducing the different roles of stakeholders in spreading a humor-based viral recruitment advertisement, and considers humor-based viral recruitment advertising as a specific form of employer branding.

Managerial implications

For managers, this study highlights how a small start-up company without an established reputation can utilize humor in viral recruitment advertising and thus helps managers to understand the potential of humor as a low-budget (see Dahlen, 2009) and powerful employer branding tool. Specifically, this study enables managers of SMEs to identify relevant stakeholders mediating the employer brand and to understand the meaning of the different roles of those stakeholders in the viral employer brand communication process.

This study also increases understanding related to *social media interaction.* In the future, it would be useful to understand more about *the people behind these roles* and what their specific motivations are when as stakeholders they act as mediators of viral recruitment advertising and a viral employer brand. Another interesting idea related to this is the role of brand communities in employer branding and, more specifically, the key question is, to what extent is a humor-based brand community a suitable vehicle for branding a humor-based employer brand? We could even claim that any humorous discussion forum can be seen as a brand community for an employer constructing its employer brand (communication) around the issue of humor.

Although our empirical data did not demonstrate the potential negative role of stakeholders in the viral spread of an employer brand, managers should be aware of that there can be such a role as a *'terminator';* a role involving making efforts to terminate the positive messages by promoting negative discussions about an employer or terminating the viral spread of advertising.

Limitations of the study and future directions

As with all studies, the present study has its limitations. Data was originally gathered and published by the case company presenting material about its successful recruitment advertising campaign and its consequences. Future studies might extend the data with qualitative interviews targeted at different stakeholders than those sketched here. In addition, more emphasis should be put on current employees as internal contributors to employer branding as well.

Humor has culture-bound elements (e.g. Rogerson-Revell, 2007) and Biswas *et al.* (1992) also share the common attitude, that *advertisements used in one country could not be standardized to be used in other country as such*. It is highly probable, that recruitment advertisements also have culturally specific features in terms of using humor. This study represents a Finnish and Northern European style of use of humor in viral recruitment advertising. In the future, it would be worth investigating such issues as culturally specific differences, although social media's global nature and uniform tendencies are curtailing these differences. Similar studies of other viral recruitment campaigns are needed to examine whether the roles of stakeholders described here are universal in a viral recruitment advertising process.

In future studies, it should be possible to examine what kind of industries, companies or even managers can best utilize humor-based employer branding tactics by harnessing the opportunities of digital media.

This study also offers many other interesting avenues for further research. Encouraged by the study of Fiedler and Kirchgeorg (2007) on the role concept in corporate branding, we wish to raise a further, albeit quite general, interesting question of whether humor is more appropriate for a generic branding strategy or better suits a stakeholder-specific strategy? Encouraged also by the study of Helm (2007), who compared stakeholders' perceptions of corporate reputation, further studies could focus on comparing stakeholders' perceptions of the reputation of a company as an employer and studying how a humor-based employer brand might change stakeholder-specific differences in these perceptions.

Finally, it is worth underlining that this study analyzed stakeholders that were potential business partners. It would be interesting to examine if their roles as assigned in this study are different when the situation involves appealing to actual business partners.

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Appendix

VIRAL RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT (translated by a Finnish blogger from original Finnish version of ad.)

Game designer / modern village idiot, Company Oy, A City. Company Ltd is a tired and grim game company from a city. Just purely out of self-criticism, we've set our goals to the stars. We accidentally won the "Business Idea ″- competition and got a couple of leading cutting-edge organization as clients. Next, we'll sail our leaking business idea across the stormy seas of the global gaming market. To achieve this objective, we are now looking for a couple of foolish dreamers and speakers of empty words. We offer the support of a spineless and tired organization, unimaginative bonuses (such as only slightly used single-use boat tickets), a computer with an internet connection so you have access to Facebook, where the working day is spent enjoyably, as well as coffee and so much sweetbread that you'll develop a gastric ulcer by the end of March. However, do not worry; the company's medicine cabinet has bandages. Our morning meetings may be anemic, but our team gatherings include sufficient amounts of alcohol in return. On Fridays, we leave work early, but we compensate for this by coming to the office later on Monday.

To the point! This company doesn't need any idle tweakers, but instead we are looking for persons with a great love for humour and creative insanity. Formed in August of 2009, Company Ltd is a rising star in the virtual-world market, and we currently employ 7 competent professionals, alongside with a dozen of subcontractors. We combine innovation, creativity and modern Internet- and 3D-technology with commercial know-how. Our business has been widely rewarded and observed to be fantastic indeed.

Do YOU want to commute to work every morning full of enthusiasm and a smile on your face, simply because you love your job? We're now looking for consummate "doers" and young rising stars hungry for success. For a person oh future promise, we offer interesting tasks and a chance for moving up the food chain. On top of all this, we offer you a bunch of comfortable and relaxed colleagues in the organizations that's vibrant and full of action!

Do you have a vivid imagination? Are you energetic and full of positively creative madness? You are a person who views the same world as everyone else, but you see different things. Your task is to conceive and develop games as well as act as a liaison between several game development projects. You don't necessarily need previous experience in game development, because the

important part is your personality and innovation skills, although knowledge of the game industry is certainly a great advantage. When it comes to past schooling, you could be anything between an educated colonic hydrotherapist to an astrobiologist, but education especially in the art of teaching may be helpful because edutainment games are an important part of the job content. The work may initially be part-time, so it is also suitable for a site contractor or a final phase student. For more information, contact CEO manager's name (email: manager's name (at) company.fi, phone: +xxx-xxxxxxx).

Now sit down, grab a fresh cup of coffee and think carefully what you want to be as a grown up. If you're still interested in Company Ltd's facilities, please convince us of your spiritual potential by sending an application + CV by e-mail to company (at) company.fi by January 29th or before a summer Wednesday at the latest. Also mention your desired salary amount.

The Virtual Construction of Kiva

A Relational Identity Perspective

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The non-profit sector is a growing industry developing new types of activities and organizations. Micro-lending, as a non-profit activity, is an alternative tool of alleviating poverty in developing countries. Kiva is the world's largest web-based platform for funding loans to small entrepreneurs. A significant number of volunteers, field partners, and lenders give voice to Kiva and contribute to its identity. The question is how to define and study the identity of organizations that are social and virtual. While traditional theories of corporate identity are unable to capture organizational fluidity, some scholars demonstrate that the identity of organisations is relational. The central questions are: What is the corporate identity of Kiva? How is it constructed? And by whom? Through an analysis of Kiva's identity construction on the web, the paper's purpose is to illustrate how societal constituents construct corporate identity as fluid, complex, and fragmented. The analytic focal point is a concrete debate faced by Kiva in 2009 ignited by the organization's decision to offer loans in the U.S. The analysis provides insights into the complexity embedded in corporate identity construction.

Keywords – Non-profit organisations, Organisational (and individual) identity, Virtual organisations, Societal constituents

The non-profit sector has gained ground within the last century and the number of non-profit organizations (NPOs) has grown steadily. In the U.S. alone, the number of NPOs has increased by 30% since 1999, counting aproximately1.6 million organizations by 2009 *(nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/profile1.php).* Up to 70% of the population in Western and developed countries make charitable donations on a regular basis and as many as 25% are engaged in volunteering activities (Robins, 2006, p. 13). NPOs are defined as ''private organisations serving a public purpose related to the good of the society'' (O'Neil, 1989, p. 2). Typically, an NPO is an organization that uses its surplus revenue to achieve its goals instead of distributing it as profit or dividends. The purposes of NPOs vary in their scopes and missions, but in the development sector the primary goal of an NPO is to enable and empower relatively powerless people (Lewis, 2003). Generally, an NPO's vision is related to creating the greatest possible amount of societal change (Hull & Lio, 2006, p. 58). Due to their social entrenchment, strong constituent relationships are important in and for NPOs. Strong identity relations and engagement are paramount since NPOs, contrary to for-profit organisations' overreaching focus on responsibility to shareholders, are responsible to their supporters and other stakeholders more or less equally (ibid., p. 57). The number of NPOs is growing, as are their different types of activities and scopes. One of the more recent activities is micro-lending.

Micro-lending, also known as peer-to-peer lending or social lending, has emerged as a way to involve more of the world's people in the global economy (Dokmo & Reed, 1999). It enables underprivileged entrepreneurs in developing countries to access capital in order to start up small-scale businesses in their local communities. Its growing popularity is attributed to an

increasing preoccupation with moral issues (Cova & Cova, 2002; Lipvetsky, 2005), but also to the sustainable and empowering rationale embedded in the concept, compared to traditional donation and charity models. Although the micro-lending sector is still in its infancy and is faced with problems of performance management and standardisation (Dokmo & Reed, 1999, p. 1), it is proposed as a good alternative to traditional charity and donation projects. Arguably, this pacifies recipients by offering donations. Micro-loans, on the other hand, encourage active participation by recipients who invest resources in providing for themselves and their families (ibid., p. 2). Moreover, by paying back their loans, underprivileged entrepreneurs gain dignity and independence. One important player in the micro-lending sector is Kiva. Founded in 2005, Kiva is a peer-to-peer NPO providing small loans to small entrepreneurs primarily in developing countries with the aim of alleviating poverty (cf. *www.kiva.org/about*). As an object of study, Kiva holds particular interest since it is a new kind of NPO whose sole purpose is to act as a lending facilitator. In addition, and perhaps more importantly for the argument presented in this paper, Kiva is a virtual organisation existing by virtue of digitally engaging multiple constituents across the globe. Kiva is thus a pioneer within the microcredit platforms that have emerged with the development of web 2.0, using online social networking tools to facilitate micro-lending (Gajjala *et al.*, 2011, p. 880). The identity of Kiva as an organisation is thus digitally suspended. As traditional theories of corporate identity (e.g. Balmer, 2001) are unable to capture the fluidity and dynamics of such an organisation, we turn to scholarship that suggests the identity of organisations to be relational and societal (e.g. Johansen, 2010; Handelman, 2006; Brown *et al.*, 2003). Here the identity of an organisation is constructed in and amongst its constituents, e.g. "empowered, engaged, culturally adept social actors who present to corporations a range of conflicting societal and economic interests" (Handelman, 2006, p. 107). With reference to relational and societal identity approaches, we seek to address central questions such as: What is the identity of Kiva? How is it constructed? And by whom? Through an analysis of Kiva's identity construction on the web, this paper aims to illustrate how societal constituents construct the identity of an organisation as fluid, complex, and fragmented. The analytic focal point is a concrete debate faced by Kiva in 2009, ignited by its decision to offer loans in the U.S. We argue that the analysis provides insight into the complexity embedded in an organisation's identity construction and points towards additional areas of exploration that need to be taken into account, primarily, the dual process by which organisations and individuals are mutually constitutive.

In light of the stated purpose, our paper is structured as follows. First, we sketch out a theoretical framework that highlights relational and virtual organisations. Second, we turn our attention to Kiva in order to show how its identity is constructed among societal constituents. In order to contextually frame our analysis, a specific issue has been selected as the focal point. The issue in question is Kiva's 2009 decision to broaden its scope by offering loans to U.S. entrepreneurs. Thirdly, we comment on and discuss our findings in relation to potential implications for conceptualising identity. We argue that our analysis points towards the futility of addressing an organisation's identity construction without also addressing the identity construction of its constituents. We conclude by tentatively highlighting future research paths.

The Relational and Virtual Organisation

In this section, we sketch out the theoretical perspective used for conceptualising Kiva as constructed within negotiations by and amongst societal constituents. First, we flesh out a few central tenets of a relational perspective on corporate and organisational identity. Secondly, we highlight important aspects of the virtual organisation, aspects argued to amplify identity

relationality. Together, the two bodies of scholarship form a model for understanding online organisations as suspended in social networks between various societal constituents.

The relational organisation

Identity is ascribed a boundary-spanning function between an organisation and its surroundings. It is said to create and maintain relationships with numerous constituency groups who (potentially) influence and/or are influenced by the organisation (Cornelissen, 2011). As an organisation enters into various constituent relations, the consistency of its identity may be brought into question as multiple relations invite the construction of multiple organisational selves. Presently, we explore corporate identity in light of relational identity perspectives introduced by disciplines interested in both individual and collective identity, namely, sociology, (social) psychology, and organisational studies.

To study identity within and around organisations is a complex endeavour that may potentially be addressed from multiple disciplinary perspectives. One factor contributing to its complexity is two different conceptualizations of identity, i.e. organisational identity rooted within organisation studies, and corporate identity rooted within marketing studies (Hatch & Schultz, 2000). The two identity concepts differ not only in their disciplinary origins, but also in their embedded assumptions about the nature of identity and self. The identity conceptualization found within corporate identity (e.g. Balmer & Grey, 2000; Balmer, 2001, Cornelissen, 2011) mirrors what Potter and Wetherell (1987) within social psychology refer to as "traditional images of the self" (p. 95). Such conceptualization rests on the key assumption that the self is an entity that can be described in definitive terms. It is assumed that the self has "one true nature or set of characteristics waiting to be discovered" (ibid.). This assumption suggests the existence of one authentic organizational self. While organisational identity studies also hold such essentialist assumptions and define organisational identity as central, distinctive, and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985), it simultaneously approaches identity from a social constructionist angle (e.g. Hatch & Schultz, 2000; 2002; Coupland & Brown, 2004).

By introducing social constructionist understandings into corporate identity studies, it can be argued that corporate identity–traditionally described as a coherent, consistent, and constant expression of the organisation's essence (Balmer & Grey, 2000; Balmer, 2001; Cornelissen, 2011)—may also be viewed as constructed, fluid, and multifaceted. The identity understanding applied in this paper is thus based on a relational approach to identity rooted within organisational identity studies as promoted (e.g. Hatch & Schultz, 2000, 2002; Coupland & Brown (2004)). The relational approach is founded within interactionist and social constructionist identity understandings from sociology and social psychology (i.e. Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1959; Gergen, 1985; Giddens, 1996; and Jenkins, 2004) where selves are constructed in and through relationships with others.

The idea that 'self' arises from interaction with the surrounding society is often traced to the work of social psychologist George H. Mead (e.g. Cerulo, 1997; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Jenkins, 2004). Mead reacted to notions of an abstract, enlightened, and transcendental self by constructing a view of identity as founded in everyday social interaction (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Self is understood as a process of ongoing and simultaneous synthesis of "(internal) self-definition", understood as a dialogue between the 'I' and the 'me', and "(external) definitions of oneself offered by others" in interaction (Jenkins, 2004, p. 40). Thus, it is possible to talk of selves rather than self as we enter into a series of different relationships with different people and thus become "one thing to one man and another thing to another" (Mead, 1934, p.142) stressing the social or relational dimension of identity. Later identity work within sociology has amplified

the relational ideas of self-rejecting any essence or core features as the unique property of self (Cerulo, 1997, p. 386). Goffman, for instance, views the self as a social product of the performances put on by individuals in social interactions, i.e. 'the presentation of self' and the public validation of such performances. Thus, a central theme is that identities are performed in conversations where the views of others determine how individuals present themselves (Goffman, 1959). Both Mead and Goffman view self as socially constituted or performatively enacted in place of an essential, true, or pre-social self. Such notions remain visible among present day sociologists, such as Richard Jenkins (2004, p. 3),who acknowledges both Mead and Goffman as primary inspirations and places emphasis on the idea that "we can be different things to different people and in different circumstances".

With emerging thoughts on postmodernity, reality as distinguishable from its representation is questioned, and even rejected. Consequently, to some (e.g. Baudrillard, 1983), the self is a mere image among many for conveying identity–while to others, it is still possible to talk of a socially constructed self as postmodernity multiplies and hybridises, but preserves, identities (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Belonging to the latter category is social psychologist Kenneth Gergen who maintains the reality or existence of self, albeit as a self that becomes saturated with meanings. Gergen's (2000) thesis is that social saturation, fuelled by technological developments, leads to a "fragmentation of self-conceptions" created by multiple, incoherent, and disconnected relationships (p. 139). In Gergen's relational view of identity, the traditional notion of an individual core or essence to which the self remains true–described by Potter and Wetherell (1987) as traditional images of self–is dispelled. Instead, identity is emergent, re-formed, and redirected as the notion of self is replaced by the notion of relatedness. Consequently, it makes more sense to speak of 'us', rather than of 'you' and 'I' (Gergen, 2000, p. 156). The relational view approaches "self-conception not as an individual's personal and private cognitive structure but as discourse about the self–the performance of languages available in the public sphere" (Gergen, 1994, p. 185). Self is viewed "as a narration rendered intelligible within ongoing relationships" (ibid.). Within such a narrative view on self, Gergen (1994, p. 202) argues that even though "it is common practice to view each person as possessing 'a life story', if selves are realised within social encounters there is good reason to believe that there is no one story to tell".

The relational identity perspective focuses on the construction of self. However, the question becomes what implications such an understanding holds for the conceptual development of the corporate identity construct. The main argument is that relational identity has much to offer by way of stressing the interdependent nature of organisation and environment already incorporated into organisational identity studies and as a key element when discussing stakeholder relations and management. Drawing on Harding's (2007) argument that organisations and employees are mutually constitutive, organisations and all (internal and external) stakeholders may be viewed as constituting one another similarly to Gergen's concept of relational or reciprocating identities (Gergen, 1994). The constructionist approach to which Gergen subscribes has already inspired organizational identity scholarship. Coupland and Brown (2004, p. 1325) thus argue that "organizational identities are constructed through processes of description, questioning, contestation and defence", and Heath (1994, p. 13) considers a company to be "the product of what people do and say as well as the thoughts and feelings they have about it". In other words: "As people communicate with one another they create the organization" (ibid., p. 21). Coming full-circle and returning to corporate identity, Handelman (2006, p. 108) places "corporations' identity construction efforts within the context of a highly active, socially charged web of societal actors", articulating a social space "in which companies and constituents co-exist". Consequently, a relational identity perspective implies that organisations and individuals engage in mutual identity constructing practices–each contributing to the identity of

the other. In terms of constructing selves, organisations and individuals are mutually constitutive: employee identities both influence and are influenced by the organisation(s) of which they consider themselves to be part (e.g. Stuart, 2002; Harding, 2007). Similarly, consumers construct identities with reference to those offered by organizations through their branding and marketing efforts (e.g. Firat &d Schultz, 1997; Fournier, 1998; Handelman, 2006). It is possible to argue that organizational identitiesare not only negotiated among internal stakeholders (i.e. employees), but also through relations with external stakeholders such as consumers, investors, the media, and the general public (Hatch & Schultz, 2000; Coupland & Brown, 2004). Moreover, when an organization has no official, unified corporate voice–or chooses not to use it–its identity may rest solely with its constituents.

The virtual organization

The relationality of individuals and organisations is fuelled and embellished by the digital age. Social saturation on a global scale follows from digitalisation. As argued by Gergen (2000, p. 62), "It is not only the immediate community that occupies our thoughts and feelings, but a constantly changing cast of characters spread across the globe". In the digital age, virtual organizations have emerged. A virtual organisation is organized in a collaborative network composed of cross-functional virtual work teams comprising groups of people working interdependently with a shared goal across space, time, and organizational boundaries by way of the latest information technology (Brunelle, 2008; Dubé & Paré, 2003). The virtual organization makes use of virtual information and communication technology (ICT) tools associated with social media and web 2.0, e.g. social networking sites, chat rooms, blogs, podcasts, and wikis.

From a commercial perspective, the virtual organisation is defined in terms of its web-based sales operations. Communication with consumers is done by ICT, and business transactions are carried out in the electronic marketplace (Brunelle, 2008, p. 44). One of the most prominent examples of this type of organisation is Amazon.com,a pioneer in the field. From an internal perspective, work in virtual organisations is not restricted to a specific location with conventional offices; hence, it is dispersed geographically to different locations connected to one another by the use of new information technology (ibid.). From a strategic perspective, the virtual organisation is characterised by the proximity of relationships among organisational partners and interest groups in the achievement of common or shared goals. Organisations operating globally can thus engage different types of partners situated at different locations around the globe. They are virtual in the sense that they do not have any actual physical existence. Their existence is based on the pooling of resources that belong to each of the partners (ibid.).

The virtual organisation thus has a loosely defined structure, varied members' background, fluid membership, and lack of joint work experience that may increase the physical distance between its members and influence how they identify each other (Dubé & Paré, 2003) and the organisation. Consequently, both individual and organisational identity constructions are put under pressure, as relations exist in a virtual, global space.

Relationality of a virtual organisation

A virtual organisation exists (primarily) in the digital environment as it is suspended between the different constituents who embed it with legitimacy and meaning. Consequently, virtual organisations amplify the relationality of organisational identity. As a virtual organisation has no fixed, physical or geographical boundary, its identity is born soly out of relations to individuals and to other organisations. The organisation is defined by partners, supporters, and the like; and,

the organisation, in turn, lends meaning to them. With no clear physical demarcation of organisational boundaries, i.e. no clear separation of the organisation from its constituents, the organisation exists qua its network. It supports Heath's argument that, "An organization does not speak or act, individuals speak for it. An organization has no essential substance or voice other than what is presented by its members" (1994, p. 22). In the following section, we address the relationality of a virtual NPO, demonstrating how key organisational constituents actively participate in the construction of an organisation online.

The Relationality of a Virtual Non-Profit Organisation: An Illustration

The theoretical framework suggests that collective (and individual) identity emerges from interaction, negotiation, and engagement practices and processes. In order to address what these processes and practices look like, we continue with an illustrative analysis of how the identity of a single NPO, i.e. Kiva, is constructed by and among its supporters and members. First, we introduce Kiva, its underlying business model, and core mission. Moreover, we introduce the organisation's decision to begin offering loans in the U.S. that frames our analysis. Secondly, we briefly present our data and method of analysis. Our data consists of comments offered by Kiva constituents in response to an online article regarding the new strategy and our analytic method is discursive. Thirdly, we apply the analytic method to selected comments in order to explore how the identity of Kiva is constructed. Our analysis is instrumental by nature as it allows us to explore a wider phenomenon (cf. Stake, 2005, p. 445). Consequently, we do not aim to completely and comprehensively map the many different facets of the organization's identity. Our interest lies in tentatively exploring the process and practice of identity construction while highlighting specific identity positions assigned to Kiva.

KIVA

Based in San Francisco, Kiva was founded in 2005 as the world's first virtual micro-lending organisation and has grown into the largest digital microloan facilitator. The goal of the organization is to enable and empower relatively powerless people (Lewis, 2003). The banner on the front page of the official website, which reads: "Empower people around the world with a $25 loan" *(www.kiva.org)*, clearly demonstrates this. The organisation furthermore writes: "We envision a world where all people—even in the most remote areas of the globe—hold the power to create opportunity for themselves and others" *(www.kiva.org/about)*. In the 'About Us' section of kiva.org, the first thing we see is a picture of the constituent groups behind the organization. These groups comprise volunteers, field partners, Kiva fellows, a team of employees, and the board. Volunteers who constitute the largest group of Kiva groups are office interns in charge of communication tasks (translation, editing, writing, blogging etc.). The Kiva field partners are the financial micro institutions (MFIs), providing loans to entrepreneurs in the local communities. Kiva fellows are volunteers who visit and assess the entrepreneurs in their local communities, establishing connections between these and the MFIs. Lenders are organized in teams and members of Kiva's digital community. Through the use of tools such as blogging and videos, KIVA creates "a global space for various local agencies and individuals to network and use the concept of microfinance" (Gajjala *et al.*, 2011, p. 886). Thus, Kiva represents a shift within micro-lending towards "the global visual and communicative spaces of the online social networking model popularised in 'web 2.0' Internet culture" where "relationship building is modeled on the lines of sites such as Facebook, Myspace and Etsy" (ibid, p. 883). Presenting Kiva from the perspective of the people behind the organisation, and the people serviced by it,

pinpoints a particular dimension of identity: the human diversity and drive behind the organisation that come into play when Kiva constituents discuss Kiva's challenges and opportunities in specific contexts in their digital communities.

Kiva's primary function is to bring lenders and borrowers together using digital portraits of entrepreneurs and their projects and digital options for lenders (referred to as members), in order to select entrepreneurs whom they wish to support with a loan. As Kiva is a facilitator, it does not charge any interest; the loans provided by Kiva members are passed on interest-free to the independent field partner servicing each loan. However, the interest charged by the field partners, disclosed on Kiva.org, is a frequent topic of debate. Some members of the Kiva community appear concerned that the field partners may be too focused on profit in micro-finance and that it will lead them towards larger and wealthier clients *(www.kiva.org/about/microfinance#whyDontMoreInstitutionsServePoor)*. Another issue of debate concerns the partnering of altruistic and financial goals. Such debate highlights a general discussion within micro-financing, concerning the balance between poverty alleviation and empowerment on the one hand, and economic viability and sustainability, on the other. Although the two objectives may not be mutually exclusive, they do, at times, compete with one another (Gajjala *et. al*, 2011). In addition, Kiva has to grapple with issues of transparency, e.g. in relation to the illusionary person-to-person connection established on Kiva.org and the actual impact created by the loans (Ogden, 2009).

Despite its philanthropic point of departure, the issues we mention here suggest that Kiva is not an undisputed organisation. In our analysis, we focus on a single issue that has allowed Kiva's constituents to challenge and debate 'what' or 'who' Kiva is. The issue in question is the 2009 decision to offer loans to U.S. enterprises. In light of the lasting impact of the financial crisis, small U.S. businesses were having difficulty finding funds. Consequently, Kiva decided to launch a pilot expansion of their activities. The expansion allows individuals to make loans to U.S. entrepreneurs on the online platform. As Kiva's president, Premal Shah states:

> Kiva's micro-loan model is extremely relevant to low-to-moderate income, U.S.-based entrepreneurs, especially given the current economic conditions which makes access to credit a very real problem. The Internet could become a significant source of community driven, low-cost capital for the everyday small business owner in the U.S., and Kiva.org is excited to expand its platform to the U.S. at a time when the need for such capital is greatest *(www.kiva.org/press/releases/release_20090610)*.

The decision generated debate about whether or not it was within the framework of the organization to facilitate loans to developed countries. Thus, it concerned Kiva's organisational core, its raison d'être. The debate became a site of identity construction as it flourished on numerous digital platforms across the "non-profit and social entrepreneurship blogosphere" (Ogden, 2009). According to Coupland and Brown (2004, p. 1341), the identity of an organisation is "constituted through conversations centred on identity issues". We argue that Kiva's decision to facilitate lending in U.S. is such an identity issue. Multiple voices participated in the debate, including those of lenders and volunteers. However, as Kiva has no official voice in digital space (cf. Heath, 1994), or at least, chooses not to use it, the voices of its societal constituents also become the voice of the organisation. These voices construct the organization "through processes of description, questioning, contestation and defence" (Coupland & Brown, 2004, p. 1325). Where Coupland and Brown (2004) address organisational identity as constructed in interaction between organisational 'insiders' and 'outsiders', we suggest that such distinction is less relevant where Kiva is concerned. Organisational insiders represent the organisation's voice, but Kiva apparently has no such voice.

Data collection and analytic approach

The point of departure for data collection and selection was public reactions to Kiva's decision to offer loans in the U.S. A key voice in the debate was the 'Unhappy Kiva Lenders' lending team (cf. pic. 1). The team was formed on Kiva.org in the aftermath of the decision. The team's founder wrote on the web page: "Poverty is defined as: 'the state of having little or no money and few or no material possessions'. Does that sound more like the situation for US Kiva borrowers or borrowers from the third world countries?" (Wallace, 2009) [i]

Picture 1: Unhappy Kiva Lenders (*http://www.kiva.org/team/unhappy_kiva_lenders/loan*s)

The 'Unhappy Kiva Lenders' became a crucial part of online discussions of Kiva – as well as Kiva lenders and borrowers – that followed. Consequently, we have taken these discussions as our starting point singling out one string of comments. The comments are responses to an article published on 'TechCrunch' – a website that offers technology news and analyses as well as profiles of start-up companies, products, and websites *(www.techcrunch.com)* – on July 3rd 2009 entitled "The Inevitable Anti-U.S. Backlash Has Started On Kiva" *(http://techcrunch.com/2009/07/03/the-inevitable-anti-us-backlash-has-started-on-kiva/).* The article addresses the backlash created by Kiva's decision to extend lending facilities to U.S. citizens including the "Unhappy Kiva Lenders". We selected these comments as a point of departure for our illustrative analysis as they can be argued to represent general sentiments expressed across the different platforms and forums where the discussion took place.

In line with Coupland and Brown (2004, p. 1326), we adapt a discourse analytic methodology argued to be well suited when it comes to "analysing the multiple identities that individuals and groups attribute to organizations, and which are often constructed in interaction". By analysing the weblog posts as sites where identities are constructed and negotiated emphasis is placed on identity in social interaction. Different posts are used by the blogger to position multiple actors including him or herself and the organisation in question. The idea of positioning is based on Davies & Harré's (1990) understanding of subject positioning as a process where identities are located in representational texts. Davies & Harré (1990, p. 46) argue:

> An individual emerges through the process of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. Accordingly, who one is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and other's lives.

Individuals may be constituted in one position or another, stand-in multiple positions, or perhaps negotiate new positions by refusing the ones that have previously been articulated (ibid., p. 53). It is argued that these different positioning possibilities may be transferred to collective identity and applied with the aim of understanding the relational construction of an organisation. A distinction is made between interactive positioning, where a person's utterance positions another, and reflexive positioning, where a person positions him or herself (ibid., p. 48). The analysis explores the interactive positioning of the organisation. According to Davies & Harré, positions are: "identified in part by extracting the autobiographical aspects of a conversation in which it becomes possible to find out how each conversant conceives of themselves and of the other participants by seeing what position they take up and in what story, and how they are then positioned" (ibid.) Thus, the weblog posts were subjected to two-step analysis. First, extracts explicitly referring to Kiva were identified in the comments subjected to analysis. Secondly, distinct positions and discourses present across the extracts were named.

KIVA as faithful, unfaithful, and in-between

In the following sub-section, significant textual and visual examples are extracted from comments found at TechCrunch. The examples are used to demonstrate the positions attributed to Kiva by lenders and other debate participants in response to the abovementioned loan extension. Based on the extracts, we propose that three distinct positions–and related discourses–can be identified: Kiva as *faithful*, *unfaithful,* and *in-between*.

At TechCrunch, several comments articulate and support the view of the 'Unhappy Kiva Lenders'. Examples 1 and 2 are extracts of these claims. They raise the point that lending to U.S. borrowers does not alleviate poverty because U.S. citizens are not living in true poverty when compared to people in developing countries:

> (1) US borrowers do not have to pay to send their kids to elementary school. They don't have to build their own house. They don't have to walk miles to get the bare minimum of medical care….if needed they can access FREE, generally high quality medical care. They have a system of laws and courts in place that work. They enjoy police and fire protection. They generally have access to inexpensive and dependable public transportation. They take for granted electricity, clean water, inspected food and indoor toilets.

> (2) Including borrowers from the USA has undermined the very core of what made [Kiva] so unique and special; small, impactful contributions to entrepreneurs in impoverished situations in developing countries.

More importantly for the present analytic aim, the examples articulate Kiva in a position as an organisation for whom the uniqueness lies in its contribution to helping impoverished people in developing countries. This position reflects a specific interpretation of its mission: lending in order to alleviate poverty (in poor countries). According to the 'unhappy Kiva lenders', and their sympathisers, this mission is overruled by opening to U.S. lending facilities, because U.S. citizens are not poor. The result of these articulations is the positioning of Kiva as *unfaithful to its own mission.*

At the discourse level, the unfaithful position draws on a mix of *ethics* and *branding* discourses. Kiva's mission is based on a moral paradigm in the sense that it embeds a social understanding according to which empowered people have a duty to help those who are disempowered, thus empowering them as well. Betraying this mission means acting unethically (as suggested in examples 1 and 2). This position is clearly demonstrated by a picture inserted in the abovementioned article, depicting U.S. borrowers as wealthy tourists enjoying the view from a rickshaw pulled by boy of impoverished appearance, who represents Kiva borrowers from the developing countries (pic. 2). This symbolic exposition greatly exaggerates the question in order to make readers more sensitive to the message.
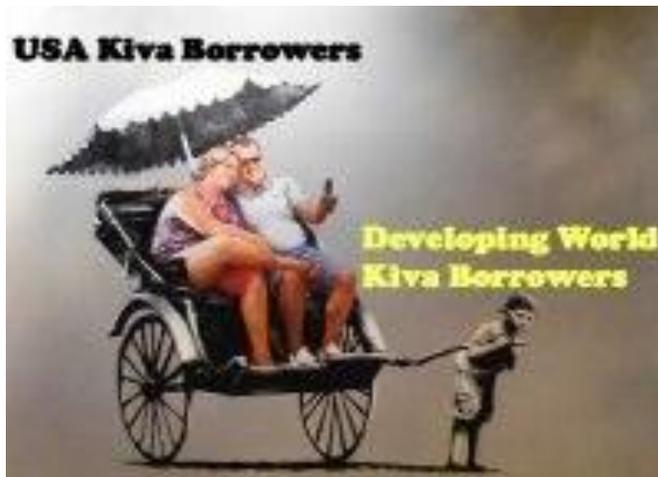
PICTURE 2: *techcrunch.com/2009/07/03/the-inevitable-anti-us-backlash-has-started-on-kiva/*

The branding discourse emerges from another paradigm, drawing on corporate communication, according to which brand consistency is a strong brand asset implying that organisations once established should stick to their brand uniqueness (Schultz *et al.,* 2005). Such discourse supports traditional corporate identity approaches (e.g. Balmer & Grey, 2000) where an organisation's identity can be described in definitive terms as one, authentic organisational self. Several comments trace the *unfaithful* position, addressing the issue from within a brand discourse (cf. examples 3 - 6):

> (3) Kiva has to protect their brand. As a long time Kiva lender and U.S. small business owner, I believe while the micro-lending platform can meet the needs of both causes however the Kiva brand must stay true to the mission of its Community.
> (4) I'm sure Shah is making a considered personal career move. But really the Kiva brand has 'jumped the shark.

(5) Not what I see kiva as being for…
(6) I also do strongly believe that this program should not have been opened up to the U.S. as it does to some extent move away for Kiva's original mission.

In these examples, Kiva is positioned as a strong and consistent brand, owing to its unique status as a lending facilitator in the developing world. A more moderate position of how to deal with Kiva's brand consistency–or lack thereof–is articulated in examples 7 and 8:

(7) Create a new brand leveraging the same platform, and invite members of the Kiva community to participate if they'd like.
(8) They should have offered the same service under a different brand, it doesn't belong in kiva. Give it a different name under a different mission statement and there's no backlash.

In examples 7 and 8 Kiva is not blamed for jeopardising its mission. A more constructive position is undertaken by suggesting that Kiva's mission is not necessarily in danger. If the organisation creates a second brand in order to embrace U.S. borrowers in need of capital, the backlash is avoided. The crucial point, thus, is that Kiva is addressed as an organisation who may keep its integrity albeit with a dual identity, corresponding to two different sub-brands: one for U.S. borrowers and one for borrowers in the developing countries. The positioning of Kiva in these examples is stretched *between being faithful or unfaithful to its mission*.

Finally, several comments disagree with the positioning of Kiva as unfaithful, e.g. examples 9 - 11:

(9) I think that Kiva's decision, while somewhat unpopular with some groups, is a good move on their part. It will help to create more awareness of the program in the US, which is where the money is to begin with. Hopefully, this will lead to more loans abroad.
(10) Opening up to US borrowers means growth, which means more profit potential, which means Kiva is in a better position to fulfil its core mission, which is to support entrepreneurs in developing countries.
(11) I think that fits right in with Kiva's mission and doesn't dilute the brand at all.

The commenters support the decision made by Kiva indicating that opening up for micro-lending in new markets is not only acceptable, it may even leverage the potentials for the beneficiaries and thus the fulfilment of the initial mission. Framed within an economic discourse of sustainable development, Kiva is positioned as an organisation who does nothing but complete its mission and, consequently, stays completely *loyal and faithful to this mission at all times.*

Tentative Findings and Discussions

Our illustrative analysis points towards a few, central findings. First, multiple identity positions are assigned to Kiva within the framework of the debate in question. Secondly, the identity positions are socially intertwined in the digital sphere. And thirdly, that identity construction is a reciprocal process.

The analysis illustrates how Kiva is not assigned a single identity position, but rather inhabits a spectrum of positions ranging from unfaithful to its core mission to faithful to its core mission. The lenders and other discussants who participate in the debate articulate this complex spectrum of identity positions as they seek to either distance themselves from or associate themselves with the organisation. The different positions highlight the fragmented, complex, and fluid ontology of an organisation's identity.

Moreover, the analysis shows the interactive nature of identity construction in the digital sphere. The interactive nature is present with the multiple voices that participate in the identity constructing debates. These voices are different as well. Some are the voices of Kiva lenders speaking up, individually or on behalf of a collective. The voices speak either in support or rejection of Kiva's decision–or in support or rejection of the other voices. Interestingly, Kiva lacks a corporate or organisational voice (cf. Heath, 1994). As such, the organisation is absent from its own identity construction. Organisations that are born in the global age are more likely to adopt digital devices and platforms which stimulate processes of interconnectivity and social network relationships and which blur the boundaries between inside and outside, close and distant (Castells, 2001) and consequently between corporate and constituent voices.

The third, and final, point of discussion is that identity construction is a reciprocal process. As individuals–e.g. volunteers, fellows, and lenders–debate Kiva thereby participating in the construction of its collective identity, they simultaneously construct identities for themselves both as individuals and as collectives, e.g. the U.S borrowers (cf. pic. 2) and the 'Unhappy Kiva Lenders'. By presenting itself as "unhappy", the team positions itself in opposition to Kiva and as more faithful to the Kiva mission than Kiva. Interestingly, their positioning claim is countered. Thus, the members of the 'Unhappy Kiva Lenders' are criticised not only for their opinions or for being false philanthropists, but also for having based their involvement with Kiva on wrongful motivations (cf. examples 12 and 13).

> (12) What people appear to be objecting to is losing the opportunity to display their own virtue as a 'Kiva lender'. Opening up lending to US entrepreneurs dilutes the 'vanity-bling' nature of the Kiva brand.
> (13) You are absolutely right. At the end of the day, the act of lending on Kiva is, for almost all users, an act of vanity and self-important "altruism." They wouldn't admit this, but they know it's true.

The critical Kiva lenders are positioned by others as being self-centred. This is accentuated by the emergence of the 'Happy Kiva Lenders' team:

> We Happy Kiva Lenders think Kiva is great and are happy to see Kiva lending to everyone including US citizens. People in need are people in need regardless of where they live (*www.kiva.org/team/happy_kiva_lenders*).

The relationality of all constituents is thus illustrated as a processual one: Kiva's decision to offer loans in the U.S. spurred the formal emergence of negative constituent groups, which in turn generated positive constituent groups. In summary, we suggest that in order to explore the identity construction of Kiva, we need to address the constituent identities that give life to and feed off the organization as well.

Conclusion

The original research interest was the emergence of social and digital organizations, i.e. organisations that have altruistic purposes and whose existences depend on virtual partnerships and social networks. In order to explore these organisations, we began by constructing a theoretical framework that suggests the identity of organisations to be relational, and addresses digitalisation as amplifying identity relationality. From within this framework, we proceeded to explore one particular social and digital organisation, namely, the online micro-lending facilitator: Kiva. We took our point of departure in a single identity issue. The issue of choice was Kiva's decision to extend lending offers to U.S. entrepreneurs. In a tentative analysis, we argue that Kiva is assigned one of three identity positions: unfaithful, faithful, or in-between. The different positions highlight the fragmented, complex, and fluid ontology of identity; point to identity construction as a social practice within online forums; and, suggest identity construction to be reciprocal. In conclusion, we address potential directions for our research. As the reciprocity of identity construction was repeatedly highlighted in our analysis, a key future direction is to map the complexity of the constituents' identity construction practices by looking further into how the different individual and collective constituents are constructed. In addition, different types of digital and non-digital organisations can be included in the investigation, e.g. global and local organisations, non-profit and for-profit organisations, large and medium sized organisations.

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Note

[i] The team's page is no longer active. Consequently, our presentation of the team and its members' views is based on secondary sources referencing what was stated on the page.

Voices in Conflict? The Crisis Communication of Meta-organizations

A Multiple Case Study

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Meta-organizations such as industry trade associations are organizations whose members are other organizations. Meta-organizations differ from individual-based organizations in important ways. On one hand, meta-organizations are complex organizations serving as an intermediary between its members and their external social environment. On the other, they are searching for consensus between their members trying to avoid inter-organizational conflicts. When a private company finds itself in a crisis situation, the news media often contact a spokesperson of the corresponding industry trade association(s) asking him or her to comment on the situation. Based on Ahrne and Brunsson's (2008) theory of meta-organizations, and on a multi-vocal approach to crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010), the aim of this paper is to examine how meta-organizations communicate in a crisis situation affecting one or more of their members, or the industry as such. The following research questions will be addressed: (1) How do meta-organizations work with crisis management and crisis communication? (2) How do they define their role in a crisis situation? (3) How do they communicate, externally and internally, when one of their members is in crisis? (4) What kind of expectations do their members have when it comes to gaining communicative support from their meta-organizations? The research design consists of a multiple case study. Three organizational crises, taking place within three different industries in Denmark, have been subjected to empirical study (combining interviews, archival studies, and rhetorical analysis).

Keywords: Conflict, Crisis communication, Meta-organization, Multi-vocal approach.

Paper type: Case study.

We Hear What They Say

The Local Museum in the Media

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The purpose of this paper is to question whether the notion of organizational legitimacy can be utilized when analyzing external stakeholders expectations in a qualitative media analysis. Here themes are used to categorize stakeholders' expectations to a city museum as depicted in local media. Organizational members mirrored external perceptions of the museum but external stakeholders also mirror other external stakeholders images of the city museum. Therefore, stakeholder management theory should account for the dynamic relations between external stakeholder groups. Managing stakeholders based on themes is presented as a strategic approach for small museums. From this, the legitimacy framework could be used to select and display a "yes we hear what you say" approach towards external stakeholders.

Keywords: Stakeholder management, Organizational legitimacy, Qualitative media analysis, City museum.

Introduction

Employees and management of a small city museum in Aarhus, have experienced the complexity and difficulties of "managing for stakeholders" (Freeman et al., 2010:76). Freeman points to the 'joint-ness' in stakeholders interest, instead of perceiving stakeholders as having fixed-stakes, where the management of organizations are forced to choose among or balance the variety of stakeholders interest. But in the everyday work at the city museum the stakes were negotiated among internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders had a certain way of legitimizing their actions, primarily by referring to the legislative obligations of the Museum Act but failed to answer to other prominent stakeholders. As such it might be right that "[m]useums are typically involved in a broad range of relationships, more heterogeneous and demanding than the typical relationships in the business world'. (Kotler & Kotler,1998:151). The case study of the City Museum displays that a small museum can be facing an almost impossible task of trying to meet stakeholder expectations, such as balancing conflicting stakeholder claims (Friedman & Miles 2006:150). Analyzing stakeholders' expectations towards a museum is here done by making an analysis of the local media. Here the local media represent a visible arena of stakeholders participating in the negotiations of legitimacy for a city museum. Therefore this article attempts to analyze which expectations stakeholders project in local media coverage and asks which forms of legitimacy are at play.

The main focus of this article is to present and discuss the following questions: 1) How are different kinds of expectations to the city museum expressed in local media? 2) How and which forms of legitimacy are in play in reports about the city museum? 3) Are organizational members of the city museum participating in the reports and are legitimacy claims projected through the issues they articulate? 4) How can organizational legitimacy be analyzed through media analysis?

The paper presents and discusses the answers to these questions. Initially, the case study and the media analysis are outlined before the theoretical framework is described.

The Case Study

The City Museum was used in a single case study that from a qualitative perspective produced three data sets: 1) analysis of the internal organizational identity of the City Museum by observations and qualitative interviews carried out at the City Museum from April 2010 until July 2011, 2) qualitative interviews with external stakeholders as to the expectations and image of the City Museum, 3) a media perspective of how organizational legitimacy for a city museum is articulated and negotiated in the local media. The latter part is the focus of this article. During the observational period, the City Museum can be seen to be the object of legitimacy negotiations among stakeholders as public debate was raised in local media partly due to a problematic and delayed opening of the new museum building. Also negative press stories about a lost court case between the museum and the fired founder of the City Museum is mentioned in local media reports. But foremost the local media reflects how local politicians' patience with the City Museum "ran out" since the museum failed to build the long promised and awaited main exhibition telling the story of Aarhus. Qualitative interviews with external stakeholders in the case study showed that essential external stakeholders regarded the museum as almost an "empty but lovely architectural building". Finally, the city counsel decided to close the museum and the five-year-old museum building was put up for sale. All museum workers, management and activities were transferred to a bigger cultural history museum in the same town. This was a very controversial political decision in a country where all cities of a certain size holds and maintains some form of an independent city museum.

The present article presents and discusses how local media can be seen as reflecting the legitimacy negotiation about the museum. However, an important delimitation has to be mentioned: An organization with high organizational legitimacy has easy access to the media. When an organization is subjected to low organizational legitimacy the organization will instead have a higher risk of experiencing negative coverage, unwanted regulations and consumer boycot (Suchman, 1995) pointing to the organizations possibility to play a visible part on the media scene. This affects how much the organization is able to be present in the press reports. Therefore it could be a delimitation of looking only at media accounts of legitimacy of an organization when organizational legitimacy is low as in the case of the city museum. But still analysis of the media discourse uncovers the 'who's' and 'what is said' and how this seems to inflict on each other in a dynamic relationship that constitutes the organizational legitimacy (Deephouse & Carter, 2005) of the City Museum. By analyzing the local media it becomes obvious which themes (Atheides, 1996) that was seen by the local society's stakeholders as important regarding the City Museum and how the negotiation and mirroring between external stakeholders also inflicted on the framing of the local city museum.

Why an Analysis of Local Media?

The case study of a city museum in Aarhus shows an organization that has been criticized for years by the local newspapers. The media is here defined as "*a generalized resource for symbolic definition* (Silverstone, 2004) that "produces, disseminates and legitimizes organizationally specific meanings about *who we are* and *what we stand for*"(Chouliaraki & Morsing 2011:9). Viewing the "[n]ews as a window to the world" (Tuchman 1978:1) is - despite the seemingly functionalistic expression - a social constructivist perspective on the media focusing on the

media's role in constructing an interpretative frame of reference for both internal and external stakeholders of an organization. The media can here be seen as a social actor in constructing organizational legitimacy by projecting stakeholders' articulation of the organization in the media. As such "media legitimates organizations by creating an interpretive context [and therefore] plays an important role in legitimation processes" whereby the "media is viewed as "a propagator" of legitimacy" (Pollock & Rhindova, 2003:632). Within the dynamic stakeholder perspective media coverage is interesting as Fassin states: "Press coverage and the media can suddenly highlight a claim - as a serious incident, a demonstration or a boycott - from a specific pressure group in such a manner that a secondary stakeholder can, overnight, become a primary stakeholder" (Fassin, 2008:14), as such media coverage can over time show how an issue develops amongst involved visible stakeholders.

Qualitative analysis of media articles "reflects social activity" (Altheide, 1996:27) and are here used to identify how different stakeholders express what they expect from a local city museum but when turning to Altheide, 'issues' is not the word he uses, rather he distinguishes between themes and frames: *"Themes* are the recurring typical theses that run through a lot of reports. *Frames* are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event. Frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed. Certain themes become appropriate if particular frames are adopted (Altheide, 1996:31). When speaking of issues it is in the sense of Altheide's notion of themes. As such the variety of themes or issues are defined as parts of the discursive elements that external stakeholders displays in the local media. When stressing that issues and themes are alike, this is done in order to distinguish the analysis from the impression management tradition that is focusing on critical issues. In the media critical issues can be negative stories about the organization but also the scope of specific issues.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework behind the media analysis connects stakeholder theory with the notion of organizational legitimacy. An important (but sometimes implicit) element in stakeholder management theory is the notion of legitimacy (Suchman,1995), since in order to have a stake there must also be some kind of scale that can be used to analyse stakes in the organization. Here the concept of organizational legitimacy (Deephouse & Carter, 2005) is used in order to develop an analytical framework suitable to account for and order the different themes, which can be perceived as presenting a picture of how organizational legitimacy for the city museum is constructed in local media. The case of the city museum shows an organization where the organizations' right to exists was negotiated among stakeholders. This is pointing towards Suchman's definition of legitimacy; that "legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995: 573-4).

Dowling and Pfeffer argue that organisational legitimacy implies congruence between social system, norms and social values as implied by an organization's activities (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). In their view organizations can build legitimacy in three ways: conform to existing social norms, alter social norms, and identify with social values while suggesting that changing social norms is difficult. At the City Museum it was observed that the internal perceptions in regards to the organizational legitimacy of the museum were quite different from the external stakeholders perceptions but internal stakeholders expressed awareness of what was expected by external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders saw a lack of funding as the main obstacle of meeting external stakeholders expectations. This can be explained with the notion of legitimacy gaps

(Sethi, 1979). Organizations that "lack acceptable legitimated accounts of their activities […] are more vulnerable to claims that they are negligent, irrational or unnecessary" (Meyer and Rowan 1991:50). This also making a present study relevant as such claims were articulated in the local media in reports about the City Museum.

Furthermore the analytical framework of the media analysis employs Suchman's identification of three different forms of legitimacy; 1) as being pragmatic, 2) moral or 3) cognitive forms of legitimacy. First pragmatic legitimacy refers to the exchange of value – accounts of 'are there anything in it for me?' could be an implicit pragmatic legitimizing question from stakeholders. Secondly moral legitimacy points to accounts where the organization is deemed to be doing right or wrong according to the stakeholders different belief systems. And finally cognitive legitimacy are more or less hidden in implicit consensus on traditional customs and values (Palazzo & Scherer, 2006) among the stakeholders, when the organization is taken for granted and naturalized on a subconscious level and "emerges, when the societal context regards an organization and its output, procedures, structures and leader behavior as inevitable and necessary […] on some broadly taken-for-granted assumptions" (Pallazzo & Scherer, 2006:72).

When concerned with organizational legitimacy of an organization, the media present one of the 'peek-holes' to the constructed consensus among stakeholders of an organization. The local media can be seen as the scene of public debate where one is able to "extract legitimacy-management histories from press accounts or from key-informant interviews and then subject these histories to qualitative narrative interpretation" (Suchman, 1995:603).

When approaching museum stakeholders, stakeholder theory can be approached from three main traditions: the broad, the narrow a priori and the narrow situational approach, where the narrow situational approach is chosen here because if its focus on not only stakeholders' interest in the organization but depending on the situation, stakeholders are viewed as also having perceptions that can inflict consequences for the organization, being either "non-public, latent, aware or active publics" (Illia & Lurati, 2006:300). Mitchel, Agle and Woods consider from this approach the identification of stakeholders on the basis of the degree of power, legitimacy and urgency that stakeholders possibly imply on the organization (Mitchel et al., 1997). Some stakeholders are as such more important than others but the narrow situational approach also tends to focus on the interrelationship between identity and image (Illia & Lurati, 2006:302). The analysis presented in this paper defines organizational identity and image as interrelated constructs formed by stakeholders' perceptions of the museum (Hatch & Schultz, 2004) and external stakeholders image of an organizations are mirrored in organizational identities (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Here media reports covering organization is regarded as reflecting some of the dynamism in this process. Furthermore the case study supports that internal stakeholders mirrors external stakeholders perceptions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). However empirical studies undertaken in the present case study shows that when approaching external stakeholders, organizations should also be aware of a similar mirroring process among external stakeholders. When attending to the relationship between external stakeholders, the stakeholder literature focuses on social networks and personal relationships among stakeholders, knowledge mapping or actor-linkage matrices (Reed et al., 2009). An other dynamic approach to stakeholder theory can be found in other works from the analytic perspective of stakeholder theory with Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (1997) who focus on how certain stakeholders becomes salient due to issues of power, legitimacy and urgency. Also Rowleys network theory of stakeholder influence, leads to a complex field of stakeholders (Friedman & Miles, 2006). These theories focus on selecting and identifying stakeholders and point to the non-static positions of the stakeholders while issue management seems more dynamic in its approach[i]. Fassin develops a graphical model that accounts for the dynamics of the different stakeholders while pointing to the non-homogeneity of

different members of stakeholder groups (Fassin, 2008). As stakeholders can belong to several stakeholder groups at one time, the traditional Freeman approach is a non-dynamic stakeholder approach and as such a problematic strategic tool to use when analysing and deciding how to act as an organization in the landscape of external stakeholders. Furthermore Fassin points to Phillips' notion that there can be multiple linkages between an organization's stakeholders. As such Fassin states that the external stakeholder dynamism is presented in that the stakeholders position is dynamic when positioning the stakeholder but still his graphical model is a set and fixed 'stakeholder landscape' from an organizational centric point of view that does not account for the possibilities of external stakeholder groups mirroring each other's stakes in an organization.

Methodology of the Media Analysis

The qualitative media analysis is inspired by the grounded theory data construction method (Eneroth, 1984), where data is segmented into qualities, categories and themes, which ideally are seen to be able to grow from the total amount of data. In this way the overall categories were formed and categorized into the larger themes regarding the City Museum. From there the themes were subjected to the legitimacy framework while encompassing expectations from stakeholders. Furthermore, it turned out that the mirroring process identified in qualitative interviews with stakeholders in the case study, seemed to be present also in the local media reports. Therefore, three research questions was formed during the two-step coding process:

FIGURE 1. Overview of coding scheme for the presented media analysis

First coding: Expectations	Research question: What does external stakeholders expect of the City Museum?	Resulted in: Four categories of main themes
Second coding: Legitimacy	How are stakeholders' perceptions of organizational legitimacy of the City Museum projected?	Examples of cognitive, pragmatic or moral forms of organizational legitimacy accounts.
The above revealed mirroring processes projections among external stakeholder initiating another coding, leading to the following:		
Mirroring?	Does the stakeholder implicit or explicitly mirrors other stakeholders' perceptions regarding the City Museum?	Mirroring is suggested to be present at three different levels: An intra-organizational, interpersonal and inter-media level.

Local media reports covering the city museum was selected from Infomedia, a bibliographic database, providing all published media reports in Denmark. This gave access to searching and selecting reports from 16 local media for accounts of the City Museum while encompassing large and less authoritative sources (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). In the observation period 1.4.2010 – 1.7.2011 the City Museum was mentioned in 258 reports, which was printed, read and down sized to 216 relevant articles. The remaining articles mentions the City Museum only as a geographical pin-point in relation to other activities not otherwise related to the City Museum. Since the "unit of analysis (Furguson, 2010:92) was the appearance of the word "city museum", a control search was initiated in order to locate whether other articles about "museum" contained implicit references to the City Museum. As this did not change the result of the 216 articles, these were regarded as representing the way in which stakeholders expressed their views on the City Museum in the local media during the observations period. Only local newspapers were used, as there was no local TV coverage about the museum in the observation period.

Results of the Analysis

The results depict the expectations articulated by external stakeholders as reported in local media. Many stakeholders are active: Journalists and editors, the former as well as the present director of the City Museum, directors of other museums, employees of the City Museum, citizens with special interest in city history, as well as politicians and visitors of the museum express their expectations to the City Museum. Four main themes are articulated with examples of statements. The first theme consists of expectations as to the *management* of a museum. The management is not only regarded to be the responsibility of the director of the museum, but also regarded as a mutual responsibility of the director, the board of directors as well as the local politicians. This was articulated by a politician; "a new director of the museum […] that has not been able to step out of the shadow of the former director, and that has not succeed in making the museum visible and brand the museum […] but I also mean, that the municipality has defied its duty by not keeping the museum at a shorter leach." [ii] And furthermore the leadership of a city museum is expected to be "innovative, enthusiastic and energetic" [iii], as expressed by an editor when comparing the present leadership to the former director of the City Museum.

Another theme evolves when stakeholders discuss *the future* of the City Museum where the discussion of the location of the city museum reflects that a city museum is expected to be located in a prominent building in the city center as well as articulating concerns for how the merger will inflict on citizens access to the museum. The *production* of the museum is visible when events and exhibitions are presented in the local media. This is shown in calendars and small reports depicting what is at offer at the museum. Here the internal stakeholders might be present but they are more visible when acting as expert sources in journalistic reports. The production of the museum is also associated to the promised missing new main exhibition, which is articulated and referred to as an example of the inefficiency of the museum both by citizens, politicians, journalists, editors and the former director of the museum. *The role of the museum* is yet another theme like an editor remarks: "The City Museum has not to a sufficient degree been able to attract attention and has therefore had few visitors. This is creating an evil circle of then not having the funds to create exciting exhibitions" [iv]. Thereby, both pointing to the role of the museum as most importantly expected to be able to attract a high number of visitors and that visitors represent income for the museum. Furthermore stakeholders expect a city museum to have a clear role in relation to other museums in the city. A journalist here explains the origin of the City Museum: "The problem was that a city museum was build without clearly defining its role in a city with other large museums" [v]. Reports mention that the City Museum organized an

event at the museum, discussing "which role should the city museum play in the city…"[vi]. This shows that the museum is active within this main theme of the local media coverage.

From the results of applying the organizational legitimacy framework, *pragmatic legitimacy* is found when politicians are concerned with attending figures. Thereby they refers to the higher number of visitors that they expect revealing a legitimacy gap between politicians and the City Museum as to how many visitors they should attract. "The museum has not been able to answer to our demands" [vii], states the head of the cultural department in a report and refers to the city museum were regarded as fulfilling their contractual agreement with the cultural department of the municipality. *Cognitive legitimacy* is less obvious, by the fact that a municipal investigation of the City Museum has four possible scenarios for future places for the museum. This refers to the taken-for-granted norm that a city should have a city museum. This was in conflict with the descriptions of the City Museum as stated in media reports. Here the present state of the City Museum is projecting a city museum, as it should not be: "The past has shown that as so much else the City Museum is dependent on people. There has to be initiative and out-going-ness[viii] also refers a cognitive legitimacy gap. The editor of the paper expresses this when he articulates the ways in which a director of a museum is expected to act (on the front page of one of the leading local newspapers). This also touches upon the *moral legitimacy*, as what are the rights and wrongs of how to be a leader/a museum is implicit in the statement. However, when it comes to incorporating the themes of the sum of expectations expressed to a city museum in the local newspapers, the legitimacy framework seems to be most important in framing the themes. When analyzing the main themes of the news reports in terms of three forms of organizational legitimacy the relation is outlined in the following figure:
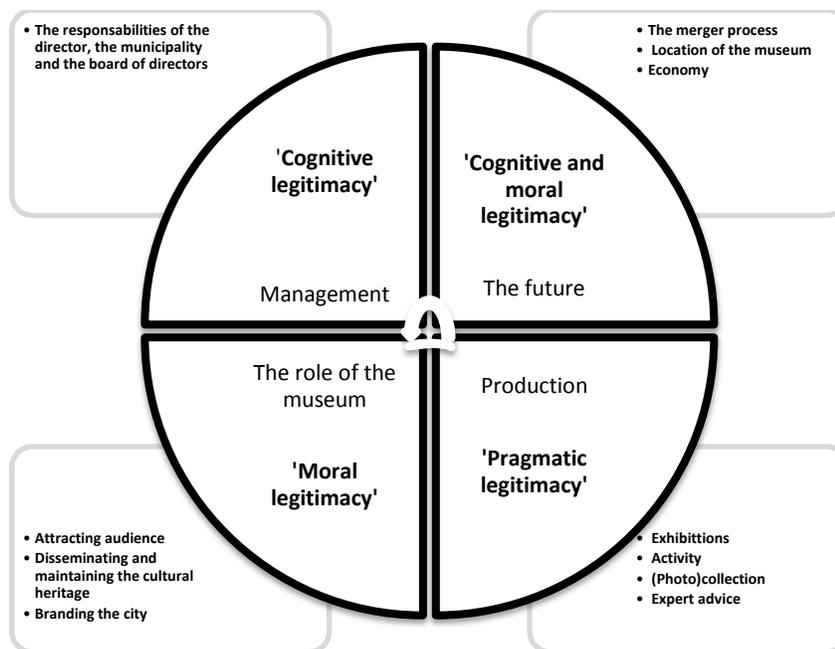

FIGURE 2: Legitimacy themes of the City Museum in the local media.

The themes of the media reports might provide the museum with an overview of which themes to collaborate with external stakeholders on when seeking to raise the organizational legitimacy of the organization. The moral and pragmatic themes of the lower section in the model

illustrate the themes that management could attend to. While the themes in the upper part of the model would present the management with the hardest job, as these are related to cognitive levels of organizational legitimacy.

The notions of mirroring among stakeholders have turned out to be surprising. Mirroring is used in the sense of stakeholders referring to other stakeholders in implicit or explicitly ways by accounting for other stakeholders' images of the city museum. The notion of mirroring is defined by Hatch and Shultz as "the process by which identity is mirrored in the images of others" (2004:378) referring to the internal stakeholders of the organization. While external stakeholders also seem to reflect other external stakeholders, a mirroring process is suggested to be present as other stakeholders' mirror other stakeholders' images of the City Museum. This process inflicts on which identity external stakeholders ascribe to the City Museum. As such *mirroring* is found on several levels in the articles. For example the director of the museum reflects descriptions of the Cultural Heritage Department. Here the director as an internal stakeholder seems to look into an *intra organizational mirror* by pointing to the Cultural Heritage Department as a way of legitimizing why the city museum do what they do. Secondly, mirroring is identified where external stakeholders mirrors each other. For example it seems as if a journalist implicitly reflects the statements of the former director of the museum, by stating that the City Museum need to be more professional, as well as several politicians stating the same. The need for a " lift of the state of the art of the museum" [ix] is here used to describe the City Museum throughout a number of articles. This could indicate that external stakeholders create a consensus due to *interpersonal mirroring;* a process that also the journalist takes part in. Furthermore journalists of the same newspaper mirrors other journalists constructing the third mirroring element identified for example when re-using the expression of "the City Museum is a hot political potato" in the editorial of the paper, which another journalists have used in the same newspaper a few days earlier. This might be referred to as *inter-media mirroring* - also in play when other newspapers of the same news organization reprints articles which happened when all five local papers had the picture of the head of the cultural department along the reused text stating that "moving the City Museum will give the needed lift to the museum".

Conclusion

When analyzing stakeholders' expectations to the City Museum in local media four main themes articulate the management, the role of the museum, the future and the production of the City Museum. All three forms of organizational legitimacy are present in media reports; external stakeholders articulate pragmatic, moral and cognitive organizational legitimacy. Organizational members of the city museum participated in media reports also reflecting legitimacy claims. In this way organizational legitimacy was analyzed through qualitative media analysis of the textual accounts using the stakeholders' expectations towards the organization as the coding gateway.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Mirroring amongst stakeholders is empirically found as a process between stakeholder groups' perceptions of an organization. This should be reflected in the traditional stakeholder models with two-way arrows between stakeholder groups. Also within a certain stakeholder group, the mirroring process is present among stakeholders within the group, making the Freemans notion of "managing for stakeholders" quite problematic as an organizational stakeholders hear what 'they' (other stakeholders) say. How the mirror process takes place among external stakeholders could need further empirical and theoretical investigation into how, when and among who the relations

and dynamic processes among stakeholders takes place, in order to answer how organizations are able to break the mirrors.

Implications for practice could be to employ an approach to stakeholders of *managing with themes* as a way to "manage for stakeholders" (Freeman et al. 2010:76). This could present a strategic approach for small museums working with themes of mutual interest among stakeholders as a dynamic way of both listening and making strategic use of the mutual stakes relevant for both internal and external stakeholders. The legitimacy frameworks could be used to choose between which 'dynamic relations' a small museum organization should aim at in order to display a "yes we hear what you say" approach towards external stakeholders.

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Notes

[i] (a.i. pointing to the stages of issue development and Weiss (2003) continuously monitoring who and what is affected by issues).

[ii] Tilbage til start", Århus Onsdag, 6. oct. 2010, p. 62

[iii] "Før fortiden ind i fremtiden", Aarhus Stiftstidende, 9. sept. 2010, p. 22

[iv] Tilbage til start, Århus Onsdag, 6. oct. 2010, p. 62

[v] Kursen er sat mod 2017, Stiftstidende, 26. dec. 2010, p. 22

[vi] Debat om bymuseet, JP Århus, 6. sept. 2010, p. 20

[vii] Den Gl. By favorit til at huse Bymuseet, Aarhus Stiftstidende, 16. Sept. 2010, p. 14

[viii] "Fortiden har vist at ligesom så meget andet er Bymuseet i Århus personafhængigt. Der skal være initiativ og udadvendthed".(Editorial, Århus Stiftstidende,17. sept. 2010)

[ix] "Museumsfaglig løft" refers to reports where stakeholders are cited for, that the City Museum need to be stronger in the traditional museum work.

What Came First: The Chicken or the Egg?

On Social Media Use in Internal Communications

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Purpose: In this study we view the effects of social media use in internal communication. Many studies have focused on the presence of organizations on social media, counting whether they have an account on various forms of social media. In this study we will study the effects of the frequency of use of social media on organizational commitment and the intention of sharing knowledge

Method: Via a call issued within social media (Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) old media (newspaper and breakfast TV) we asked people to complete a questionnaire on the effects of social media. The questionnaire contained questions about social media use in private life, among colleagues and with business partners and, in addition, included as variables affective commitment and the intention to share knowledge.

Results: Respondents who indicated that they frequently use social media with colleagues and business relations showed higher affective commitment and higher intention to share knowledge compared to respondents who indicated that they less frequently used social media in their professional life.

Implications: Social media appears to facilitate the relationships people engage in enabling sensemaking. It might be that social media is like a virtual coffee machine by which information and knowledge is shared more easily than by other media. Our results show that social media may help the building of relationships within the company and with business partners, and seems to help / create conditions for sensemaking

Limitations: It might be that respondents who already were committed to the organization and always shared knowledge extensively find within social media the tools to do this virtually. This might be due to personality traits. There might also be a selection bias, in the sense that in our sample only social media enthusiasts and addicts were present.

Women's Protests in the Revitalization of Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies by Oil Companies in Nigeria

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This paper examines the role of women's protest in the revitalization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a core corporate communications and business survival strategy for multinational oil companies operating in the Niger-Delta area of Nigeria. This is an empirical paper utilizing the method of case studies of two oil companies and content analysis of the media coverage of the protests and the impact the coverage had on the response of the oil companies to the demands of the protesting women as well as subsequent CSR strategies adopted by the two companies in their relationship with the community of focus. Key findings from this study indicate that the oil companies were reported to be receptive to the demands of the protesting women. Also, findings show that the women's protest had an impact on Chevron's corporate social responsibility activities in the communities as the company changed its community relations strategy.

Purpose: In this paper, we propose to examine the role of women's protest in the revitalization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a core corporate communication and business survival strategy for multinational oil companies operating in the Niger-Delta area of Nigeria.

Approach: This is an empirical paper utilizing the method of case studies of two oil companies and content analysis of the media coverage of the protests and the impact the coverage have on the response of the oil companies to the demands of the protesters as well as subsequent CSR strategies adopted by the two companies in their relationship with the community of focus. The two companies are Shell Oil Company and Chevron Oil Company.

Findings: Key findings from this study indicate that the oil companies were reported to be receptive to the demands of the protesting women. Also, findings show that the women's protest had an impact on Chevron's corporate social responsibility activities in the communities as the company changed its community relations strategy.

Research Implications: The findings from this study help to shed further light on the paradigm shift in CSR practice from a top down to a bottom up approach in community relations. The study also highlights the importance of contexts in the application of concepts such as CSR outside the areas where they originated from and are widely applied.

Practical Applications: This study will be useful for professionals working in the areas of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility who are interested in how contexts mediate the effectiveness of corporate communication strategies that have global appeal.

Keywords: Corporate Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility, Community Relations, Reputation Management

Ecological threats linked to natural resource exploitation in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria resulted in protracted violent conflicts in that region, which appear to have had a disproportionate impact on women. Not only do they suffer the immediate impacts of the conflict including

violence, loss of income and displacement; they also suffer greater burden of the conflicts on the household because women must take care of their families by providing for and protecting their families, as well as themselves from starvation, rape, trafficking, bodily harm and disease (Aworawo, 2000). In an attempt to call the attention of the multinational corporations to the perceived exploitation that has worsened the plight of the people of the Niger Delta, especially the women who suffer the consequences of the conflict, some women in the region embarked on protests (Eghagha, 2002). A few examples are the Ekpan women's uprising in 1986; Okutukutu and Etegwe women protest in November 1991 due to over flooding of their farms caused by Gbaran link road in Yenagoa; the Obunagha community protests in 1992 due to lack of social responsibility by SPDC while drilling in Gbaran 1 (Aworawo, 2000); and in 2002 there were two women protests – one on July 12 2002, August 8th 2002 (Eghagha, 2002).

The perceived marginalisation of the Niger Delta people by the multinational oil corporations in Nigeria which has resulted in violence in the Niger Delta region, with its attendant consequences on the women and households brought women into the struggle for a more responsible approach to balancing the need for economic profit with socially responsible practice by multinational oil corporations. The women protests were not intended for them to lead a separate life from the men or the rest of the society. They were, and are not fighting for a different world. They fought to make a point i.e. demand for justice not hand-outs; draw national and international attention to the plight of the Niger Delta people; prove that an equitable and a just world, which are the tenets of corporate shared values are possible. Specifically, this paper provided answers to the following research questions:

- To what extent did women protest the exploitation and neglect by the multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
- Why are women involved in the Niger Delta struggle in Nigeria?
- To what extent has the protest of women changed the face of CSR in the Nigerian oil industry?

Women's Protests in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

On July 12 2002, women in Aruntun and Ugborodo (two Iteskiri communities) set off on a non-violent confrontation with the oil companies, which explored oil and exploited the economic base of the people of the Niger Delta region, showing that the days of docility are gone; and that women have joined in the struggle against the exploitation of the Niger Delta region (Eghagha, 2002:12). Again on August 8th 2002, several women about 600 (ages 30-90), and in some cases with their children, occupied the Escravos Terminal and swamp locations of CNL, and held about 700 Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) workers. They were protesting lack of employment and the need for more community development programmes in their communities. The women refused to leave Chevron's facilities until Chevron agreed to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with them (*Thisday,* 2005). In addition, *The Guardian* newspaper of September 12th 2002, reported that old people between ages 60-90 years "invaded the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) sub-station at Ughelli in Delta State-Nigeria" (Eghagha, 2002:12). Why these women protests in the Niger Delta region?

According to Adeyemi (2012), a recent television broadcast on Koloama community near the site of the recent fire incident at the Chevron offshore rig, revealed that available water is polluted, dead fish are floating on the sea from whence people of the area earned a living by fishing; the sight of malnourished children and disheveled mothers; and their wells, their source of water tainted by one hundred per cent crude oil. This is just one reported case out of the several that occur almost daily, which are unreported. Again, DonPedro (2005:A14) said:

> …whenever there is conflict, it is the women that suffer. They are the ones whose lives get disrupted. They are the ones who have to run gathering their children for safety. Life has never been easy for our women in the past years because of the conflict in the [Niger Delta] area. They get to fish…pick shrimps and other seafood. They still have to take care of their husbands and their children.

Furthermore, the grievances and demands of the Niger Delta women who have been victims of the Niger Delta conflict include a clean environment conducive for survival; jobs for children; safe drinking water; need for hospitals and health care; addressing pollution of river and creeks that have led to poor access to fish and cray-fish and low farm yields. These, they argued, are indications that oil exploration has negatively impacted on the livelihoods of the people of the Niger Delta, especially women. It has mostly impacted on women because the traditional division of labour gives the rural women the primary responsibility for providing and managing natural energy sources required for the sustenance of the household; and environmental pollution places extra burden on them. Pollution increases the women's hours devoted to fetching drinking water, gathering forest and water products, which are crucial for food supplements, and firewood for domestic use. Also, since the rural woman is the last to be hired by the oil companies, she suffers a discrepant impoverishment, thereby deflating her collective gender status vis-à-vis men. Therefore, the ultimate effect of oil exploration on women includes: a high level of poverty, poor access to good prenatal care, spread of diseases, respiratory track diseases related to cooking with firewood, hours wasted in search of clean water, teenage mothers with fatherless babies, spread of HIV and AIDS, reduction in economic activities, scarcity of medical plants for alternative medicine, blockage of creeks, lakes, swamps, etc., (Ononge, 2002).

The impetus for the Niger Delta women protests is the perceived threat that oil exploration activities of the multinational corporations pose to their livelihood the "…deprivation, endless bloodletting, unemployment and several other indices of underdevelopment. So, they decided to join the Niger Delta struggle as they are affected by the indices of underdevelopment occasioned by the operations of oil multinationals. Women in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria through protests, brought to the fore the gender dimension of the exploitation and neglect that has led to unhealthy and unsustainable relationships between host communities and the oil multinationals which have resulted in the protracted conflicts that have become a permanent feature of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The women questioned the existence of multinational oil corporation for their economic activities that give nothing back to their host communities; rather the communities in the region, due to corporate activities, suffer environmental degradation and violent conflicts with their attendant consequences on women. Abugu (2004) suggests that this situation makes a compelling case for socially responsible interventions from the multinational corporations active in the Niger Delta area aimed at de-escalating conflict in the Niger Delta region, and which must pay particular attention to women who have been victims of continued discrimination, social and economic exploitation, and conflicts.

Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility

The movement for CSR has won the battle of ideas (*The Economist,* 2005: 3). As a matter of fact, "the complex global economy with continuing economic, social and environmental inequalities has raised the issue of corporate social responsibility to the front burner of businesses" (Ogwezzy, 2006: 38). Corporations use it as a means of winning the support of target publics (Bahl, 1994) especially in a competitive business environment. According to Ajala

(2001:131) corporate social responsibility is a deliberate activity to manage core business whilst adding social, economic and environmental value in order to produce a sustainable positive impact for the society in which operations are based. "Those who believe in the concept see it as the responsibility to plan and manage organization's relationships with all those involved in or affected by its activities. They view CSR as an excellent opportunity to "bank" goodwill in the community… view CSR as a social investment".

So, in the broadest sense, it entails addressing the legal, ethical commercial and other expectations society has for business, and making decisions that fairly balance the expectations of all stakeholders. This may account for why Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), a leading Global Business Partner, defined corporate social responsibility as achieving commercial success in ways that honour ethical values and respect people, communities, and the natural environment (Uzor *et al* 2003, cited in Ogwezzy, 2006). As Kotler and Lee (2005:5) aptly captured it, it is "the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life, in ways that are good for business and development".

Achieving this mutually beneficial relationship requires the adoption of an approach; and the CSR approach adopted underpins the synergy achieved in terms of outcomes. Some corporations adopt a top down approach; while some adopt a participatory approach. In the top down approach, companies see communities as non-participants in the process of development and therefore conceive, plan and execute projects for the host communities without their active involvement (Ojo, 2004) instead of the participatory approach, which is gaining global interest.

The participatory approach "attach importance to enabling people determine their own concerns and form their opinions, rather than rushing in with an outside agenda" (Chambers, 1997; Cornwall and Welbourn, 2000:16). Cornwall and Welbourn (2000:16) further posited that "over the last few years, there has been an explosion of interest in participatory methodologies [which] has been supported by the realisation that involving people more actively in setting priorities and determining needs can make a difference", highlighting the weaknesses/threats of top down CSR strategies and the strengths/opportunities of participatory approach. This approach, which is somewhat in tandem with the arguments against the magic bullet theory of communication, would render multinationals corporations non-prescriptive.

So, the issue is: in the planning and execution of CSR activities, did the oil companies work with their various stakeholders, or did they plan and implement CSR programmes without involving members of the host communities and, as a result, may have caused feelings of exploitation and neglect by the women protesters? The latter may be the case, which most often than not has resulted in conflicts between companies and their publics, especially host communities as is the case in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Their projects, which were aimed at endearing the oil companies to their host communities in order to create an enabling environment for the conduct of their business, were greeted with antagonism leading to a series of conflicts that still exist today.

Analytical Framework

Steeves (1987) in an essay about feminist theories and media studies, distinguished different feminisms by various broad organising principles - individualistic, biologistic, social psychological or socio-cultural and economic. Although all these have contributions to make, he suggested that social feminism, which critiques the public/private dichotomy, and which addresses crucial contextual and pragmatic issues such as violent conflict in the Niger Delta

region, offers the greatest potential as a comprehensive framework for addressing women's oppression (Steeves, 1987 cited in Creedon, 1989).

The public/ private dichotomy reinforces the traditional notion of women's roles. The public realm which covers the workplace, law, economics, politics, intellectual and cultural life, where power is exercised, is regarded as the preserve of men and seen as men's domain; while the private domain refers to the home and family, where women are seen to belong (Cook, 1993). So, women, through embarking on protests in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, have shown that the public sphere belongs to both men and women, and as such, the public sphere is no longer the exclusive preserve of men. Thus, it is not unlikely that the findings of this study would reveal that the women's protests led to the revitalisation of the CSR strategies by multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It may be argued that the public/private dichotomy has in the past been used to silence women from voicing their concerns in the face of operation, but perhaps now, a paradigm shift has taken place that is contrary to what occurred in the past where women seldom got involved in work, in the pursuance of careers, or in public life such as being involved in protests (MacBride *et al,* 1981:190)

Methodology

Data used for this study are from primary and secondary sources. For the primary data, the interview research method was used for data gathering; and interview guides were the instruments. Two sets of interview guides were designed for the two categories of interviewees (two selected personnel from CNL and a woman activist). Interviews were conducted face to face which afforded the interviewee the opportunity to speak freely and in detail, while it afforded the interviewer the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and clarify issues that arose in the course of the interview; while secondary data are excerpts from newspapers, in house journals and brochures. Data were analyzed qualitatively, interpreted and discussed in line with the literature reviewed and theoretical framework. The generality of oil companies in Nigeria and women activists formed the population of this study. However, since the study was purposive, the elements were chosen based on the fact that they are known useful sources of data for the study. Being a purposive study, only known useful sources of information i.e. selected personnel from Chevron Nigeria Limited [CNL]) and a woman activist involved in the protest formed the sample size.

Findings and Discussion

Findings reveal that women protested the exploitation and neglect by the multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. On July 12, 2002, women in Aruntun and Ugborodo (two Iteskiri communities) protested and confronted the oil companies, which explored oil and exploited the economic base of the people of the Niger Delta region. Again, on August 8 ,2002, several women about 600 (ages 30-90), and in some cases with their children, occupied the Escravos Terminal and swamp locations of CNL, and held about 700 CNL Workers to protest lack of employment and the need for more community development programmes in their communities. Also, on September 12th 2002, old people [women] between ages 60-90 years "invaded the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) sub-station at Ughelli in Delta State-Nigeria" to register their grievances against the company's exploitation and neglect (*Thisday,* 2005 and Eghagha, 2002). Why did these women protest in the Niger Delta region? Women joined in the struggle over the exploitation of the Niger Delta region. They protested the lack of employment and the need for more community development programmes in their

communities, which resulted in the revitalization of corporate social responsibility strategies by oil multinational companies in Nigeria.

According to Chevron, as a result of the women's protests, held under extremely difficult circumstances, the company went on to sign various MOUs and almost immediately began to implement the agreed terms. To facilitate the process of implementation, a completely new community development project group was created, and was headed by two of Chevron's Senior Engineers located in Warri. The group was said to be created to give the right focus to the execution of community projects. As part of the terms of the 2002 MOU, several young men from the communities were hired to work with Chevron's contractors as liaisons with the communities (*Thisday,* 2005 and Anonymous 1, 2005).

Corroborating Chevron's position, Wariyai (2005), said that as a result of the 2002 protest,

> Chevron employed 10 Ijaw youths (five from Gbaramutu and five from Egbema Kingdom); gave two boats to the traditional rulers (one for Gbaramutu and one for Egbema Kingdom) ; the number of the scholarship beneficiaries and amount given were increased (for those in the tertiary institutions, the amount was increased from N50,000.00 to N75,000.00; secondary school from N10,000.00 to N20,000.00; and a micro credit scheme for women to be handled by a registered reputable company to avoid people killing themselves over the N200 million and sustainability of the scheme. Furthermore, the oil firm said that it has adopted some of our points in our discussions and agreements to form the basis of the proposed Global Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Besides, Chevron said that it promised one health centre for one community in the affected host communities; it will apply to all the communities [perhaps based on the regional development councils concept as contained in the GMOU], which is different from the situation where some communities have facilities and others did not have at all.

Furthermore, Shell Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) had been involved in partnership activities in health care, human capital development, economic empowerment, and business development in host communities (Shell Development Company of Nigeria Limited, 2005).

The above list of direct aid provided by the multinational corporations in the region were good practical CSR interventions, but were not strategic because they were not sustainable. So, how could the protesting women of Niger Delta ensure the sustainable development of the region through CSR? Wariyai (2005) stated that after attending the 5th World Social Forum, which took place January 26-31, 2003 in Port Allegre, Brazil, she was no longer asking for hand-outs i.e. practical interventions, but looking for justice through strategic interventions. Activist had now away from requesting direct aid to advocating for a sustainable environment. According to her,

> I have found out that all these demands (scholarships, health centres and so on) are not the issues. Even if they give us scholarships and our environment is destroyed, then of what use is it? So, we are now looking at things from a different dimension, that another world is possible. The restoration of our environment is the focus now. Let them [the oil firms operating in the Niger] begin to restore our degraded environment now! As they take out of the environment, they should be able to replenish

Wariyai (2005) averred that the damage done over thirty years was such that, in the next 20 years, the Niger Delta environment would become so terrible that they would have lost everything. As she puts it:

We want a situation that in the next five or 10 years we should see where the people who would take care of the environment are given the necessary training to handle the protection of the environment …if there is a spill, they will be in [a] position to handle that …if it is aquatic life, they will be able to act quickly. There will be people who are trained to breed fishes. We have creeks, natural creeks that can be dammed, may be for eight or nine months if there is fish in there. Then they can open them up for people to harvest and live a normal life. Then our forest resources should also be taken care of. That is what we will be looking at now.

The clarion call became to remediate the region's environment, devastated by years of oil exploration and exploitation. Essentially, what would bring lasting peace are justice and equity. As Wariyai (2005) asserted "we want fair play. We want equity". Therefore, de-escalating or resolving the conflict in the Niger Delta region was hinged on justice and equity through corporate social responsibility!

Hence, the interesting development emerged that women who used to be in the background of the various struggles to fight marginalisation of the Niger Delta peoples, have come to the fore; and are becoming potent forces in the Niger Delta struggle against exploitation and neglect, instead of remaining in the private sphere. This is a shift in the public/private dichotomy which reinforces the traditional notion of women's role being only in the home (Steeves, 1987 cited in Creedon, 1989).

Furthermore, the protests revitalized the CSR strategies of oil companies in Nigeria. It changed from a top down to a participatory approach that engages the citizens and communities, in planning and execution of CSR programmes. It is now contained in the 2005 GMOU, which defined the relationships between the stakeholders. This is expected to help to build capacity, reduce conflict and promote the spirit of self-help, community ownership and sustainable development (Anonymous 2, 2005). This strategy is quite different from the bilateral relationship between the leadership of host communities and excluded other participants for the most part. The participatory approach seeks to be more inclusive of other stakeholders in the development of the Niger Delta region. Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor agencies, development agents (Niger Delta Development Commission [NDDC]) and the regional development councils will work collaboratively to build community capacity, mediate conflict, promote peaceful co-existence and sustainable development. This participatory approach to CSR supports the views of Welbourn (1991); Chambers (1997); and Cornwall and Welbourn (2000) who argued that the participatory approach enables the target audience to play an active role in their development and thus enhance community ownership and programme sustainability. Again, the previous approach of dealing with a few "leaders and representatives" of individual communities did not promote transparency and accountability. It only led to unfounded rumours about how much was spent on what, and unsubstantiated allegations about improper use of funds meant for community development, which were further fuelling the conflict.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper brought to the fore, the fact that the CSR strategies used are germane and underpin the synergy achieved in terms of outcomes. The study found that the oil companies were reported to be receptive to the demands of the protesting women; and that the women's protest had an impact on the multinational oil corporations' corporate social responsibility strategies in the communities because unlike the top down approach, the firm listened to the voices of the women who were formerly not heard. As a result, they changed their CSR strategy from top down, which is outside driven to participatory approach, where the realities of various stakeholders count in the planning

and implementation of CSR programmes; not discounting the fact that the approach is more inclusive of other stakeholders in the development of the Niger Delta region, which is believed would ultimately enhance community ownership and project sustainability. Therefore, the study concludes that women's protests on the exploration and exploitation of the Niger Delta have led to a paradigm shift from a top down to a participatory approach to CSR by oil companies in Nigeria, which is hoped will reduce dissatisfaction and a feeling of neglect that has been causing conflict in the Niger Delta region.

Research Implications/Practical Applications

The findings of this study on the women's protests in the Niger Delta struggle, and its impact on the CSR activities of multinational oil corporations in the region, help to shed further light on the paradigm shift in CSR practice from a top down to a bottom up approach. It also highlights the importance of contexts in the application of concepts such as CSR outside the areas where they originated from and are widely applied. This study would be useful to professionals working in the areas of corporate communication and corporate social responsibility who are interested in how contexts mediate the effectiveness of corporate communication strategies that seem to have global appeal. Invariably, the findings of the study would provide useful data in the quest to de-escalate or resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as it could also be used as a platform for advocacy to the multinational oil corporations for the purpose of conflict prevention and resolution.

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