



BOOK OF GRADUATES

Research Abstracts 2018





Research Abstracts 2018

Annemieke Calatz

How to move (to) Eco-metropole Eindhoven
De Persoonlijke Onderneming

Marie Conroy

A time to shine
Shell Upstream International

Karin Elgin - Nijhuis

Cittaslow in the Netherlands
Elgin & Co.

Irene Gloudemans

The potential of a thought leadership strategy for Vion (Pork-division)
Vion Food Group, division Pork

Myriam Heffels

Optimising communication climate in organisations by fostering employee followership
Ingage Inc.

Ivan Kosenkov

Building strong Employer Brand to attract and retain best talent in controversial industries
JT International

Loth Kroeger

Moments that matter
Aegon N.V

Malou Kroezen

CSR at a Business School: Do Executive Education Customers Care?
Martin Ward Anderson Recruitment

Job Leeuwerke

Who am I? Who are we? Organizational identification in Dutch homecare
Omring

Veronique van Ede - Lefel

The crisis is the story
Royal IHC

David McCann

The relationship between communication, governance and reputation in the UK banking sector
Ecolab Deutschland GmbH

Laurens Ohlenroth

Towards a contemporary perspective for organizations dealing with social inclusion and diversity issues
NS

Dorin Panfil

Profiting on reputable companies or how the stock market values reputation
Ambianta Trade Group

Regina te Raaij

Engaged to be merged
NN Group

Lydia Verkerk

Better services or Big brother is watching you?
P-PR Communicatiestrategie

Gineke Wilms

The role of CSR in building consumer brand preference for food retailers
Jan Linders Supermarkten

Preface

This year we celebrate the 20th graduation of the Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication Programme (MCC) at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. The programme was founded to foster the academic and professional development of communication professionals, so they are able to communicate and lead with impact. This is still the philosophy of the programme today.

*Sixteen new graduates have officially been awarded the **Master of Science in Corporate Communication** Degree as a result. We are proud to present the abstracts of the sixteen theses that have been written by the graduates of this Master programme.*

Including this year's graduates, the MCC programme has delivered around 300 MCC graduates. Many of them made a significant career move after their graduation, which they were able to realise by the knowledge, insights and skills gained by the programme, and even more so by their own perseverance and ability to bring this into practice.

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

The new Masters of Science in Corporate Communication are:

- *Annemieke Calatz;*
- *Marie Conroy;*
- *Karin Elgin – Nijhuis;*
- *Irene Gloudemans;*
- *Myriam Heffels;*
- *Ivan Kosenkov;*
- *Loth Kroeger;*
- *Malou Kroezen;*
- *Job Leeuwerke;*
- *Veronique van Ede – Lefel;*
- *David McCann;*
- *Laurens Ohlenroth;*
- *Dorin Panfil;*
- *Regina te Raa;*
- *Lydia Verkerk;*
- *Gineke Wilms.*

We hope they have learned a lot during the courses over the past years, not only from our education but also from their peers, their 'colleagues' in the corporate communication field. The least we could say, also on behalf of all the teaching staff that worked with them, is that we have learned a lot from them too. Their willingness to discuss situations and challenges from practice in their own organisations and to relate these to the topics discussed in the lectures were inspiring and exciting.

In the twenty years of the Master of Science in Corporate Communication programme we succeeded in creating an international programme that presents all leading experts in a teaching role. We would like to thank the following people (teaching staff) who contributed tremendously to the success of this programme: Paul Argenti of Dartmouth College U.S.A.; John Balmer of Bradford University UK; Mignon van Halderen, Fontys Hogeschool; Mark Hunter, INSEAD; Oriol Iglesias, ESADE Business School; Jan Kleinnijenhuis, VU University Amsterdam; Michael Pratt of University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign; Davide Ravasi of Bocconi University; Eliane Schoonman of Issues Management Institute; Majken Schultz of Copenhagen Business School; Bob de Wit of Nyenrode Business University; Ansgar Zerfass, University of Leipzig and from our Faculty: Cees van Riel, Guido Berens, Frans van den Bosch, Dirk Brounen, Gerrit van Bruggen, Pursey Heugens, Slawek Magala, Gerard Mertens, Lucas Meijs, Stefano Puntoni, Eric Waarts, all working at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

It is also with great pride that we welcome Emeritus Professor Cees van Riel to award the 'Impact in Corporate Communication Award' for the most impactful thesis in the field of Corporate Communication.

The award is created in recognition to the founder of the Master of Science programme Prof. dr. Cees van Riel. 'The Andreas Innovation in Communication Award' is presented by Ing. Dries van de Beek, Former Chairman of the Board, CCC BV, to the author of the most innovative thesis of 2018. The winners are announced on November, 30th during the official graduation ceremony.

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



Marijke Baumann
Executive Director



Prof. dr. Joep Cornelissen
Academic Director

Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication

Annemieke Calatz

How to move (to) Eco-metropole Eindhoven?

During the electives of the master Corporate Communications, the role of communication in transformations was highlighted. But in the many traditional, still hierarchical organisations we have in society, the role of the actors was largely limited to employees and the CEO. This may have provided a meaningful lens for years to look at change due to the limited complexity of the context it operates in. But what needs to happen when big changes in society occur? We still prioritize the proper functioning of the system over the well-functioning of people. This needs to be turned around.

The purpose of this study is to gain better understanding of the role of change agents in transforming Eindhoven into a highly sustainable region and to explore and understand the factors that determine their success so that a framework for successful change can be built and acted upon.

Research question

To this objective, the general research question is addressed as follows:

What is the role of change agents in transforming Eindhoven into a highly sustainable region and what factors contribute to their success?

The formulated sub-questions are:

- A.** What is a transformation and what does the theory mention about a transformation?
 - To what extent do transformations differ from a transition or a 'normal' change?
 - To what extent do Eindhoven's sustainability goals require a transformational process?
- B.** Who are actors of change and what characterizes them?
 - What does the theory tell about change agents and their role in transformative change?
 - What factors contribute to their success?
- C.** In what way does strategic communication help them in a successful transformational process?

Academic literature findings

The theoretical review provided insight into what a transformation is and how it differs from a 'normal

change' or a 'transition'. It further offered some first insight into the role that change agents can take during such a transformation. Finally, the literature review resulted in an overview of potential success factors in transformational change, which offered me a rough conceptual lens in identifying the success factors during the transformational change in Eindhoven.

Method of data gathering and analysis

To gain better understanding in the role of change agents in the transformation of Eindhoven into a highly sustainable region, interviews were conducted with actors who are in a way actively involved in the transformation issues (of Eindhoven). Next to these interviews, desk research was conducted to gain better understanding in the way Eindhoven addresses its sustainability goals, not only the existing ones but also the higher goals needed to transform Eindhoven and all its stakeholders. To analyse the gathered interview data, grounded theory approach was used.

Findings about the role of change agents

In answering the first part of the research question about roles of change agents, three types of roles (*challengers, anchors and connectors*) were distilled that change agents can take up.

“The language we have in this world is not large enough for the territory that we’ve already entered”.

David Whyte

Challengers are already transformed and armed with a strong belief and vision for a better world. Emotional, heart-driven, ambitious people who do not have or take position in mobilising others around sustainability issues.

Anchors have the position to incorporate new changes and act accordingly from the role of influencer rather than challenger. Anchors participate actively in the change process as long as the required change is not embedded; then they tend to stop their participation.

Challengers and anchors do not easily or immediately understand each other. Although they both want to win, they play a different game. What they need is guidance; a coach or collaborator who is able to prepare new, common ground. That is the third role of the *connectors*. On that ground this connector orchestrates the match in the transformational endeavours of each agent. Together, all three roles of these change agents play an important part in greasing and herewith keeping the wheel of change in motion to realise a transformation.

Findings about the factors that contribute to their success

In answer to the second part of the research question about success factors contributing to a transformation, three factors were identified. These are: 1) *constructing collective meaning*, 2) *mobilise others in the transformation process* and 3) *engage and bridge through communication*.

Constructing collective meaning is a long term process that can be compared to the dynamics of an eco-system. Creating a common ground is important to build and shape collective meaning. In the collective part; each different type of role of change agent is important. In the meaning, explicit and tacit knowledge are important. The captivating idea is to construct a coalition of the willing rather than of the winning.

‘Fingerspitzengefühl’ is an important talent to have during the *mobilisation of others*. Some people are more than ready, others by far not. The break with the current status quo needs to be firm and explicit. From this new transformative mindset, start to seduce others to join by dosed attempts. Finally, show supportive behaviour by nudging people in reaching the desired goals.

Last but not least, *engage and bridge through communication*. When transformative changes can be seen as a way of thinking and acting, communicate accordingly. Use language in a discursive way. Communicate a clear and simple message, but tell a great story to sell it. Take (the role of) communication serious in building and maintaining trust.

How this study adds to existing literature

The findings both confirm and add to existing literature in several ways. The findings offer a more nuanced insight in the role of change agents by identifying three types of roles that change agents can have. It also suggests the importance of the interplay between these three roles, something that prior literature has to my best knowledge not paid much attention to. Moreover, my findings show three success factors that may facilitate change agents in reaching their transformative goals or ambition. These success factors are partly in line with literature.

The findings of this research are also insightful when it comes to giving direction to transformative processes. The change leading framework that is constructed can therefore be seen as a guideline towards successful transformation. The contribution of this guideline lies in the combination of aspects that are formulated to choose from. To bring movement into the static framework (table 4), a dynamic vehicle is constructed to illustrate the iterative process of transformation.

What other researchers and practitioners can take from this study

This research is relevant for both researchers and practitioners in the field of transformational change. It may contribute to existing literature on transformational change as it offers more insights into how change agents can have a successful role during transformation. Managerially, this thesis aims to collect findings to develop a framework for transformational change that may guide active participants in a transformative change.

Finally, this thesis ends with an advice for the municipality of Eindhoven how to work on a tactical plan around their sustainability matters (www.nieuwetijden.com).

Biography

Annemieke Calatz (1967)



In my personal and business life, change is a constant factor. I have always been extremely interested in why people follow and get 'stuck to' certain patterns. In most situations this offers comfort but at the same time it makes it difficult to adjust when circumstances so require. I believe in life-long learning and learning by doing, although my two beloved boys Bram (14 years) and Ties (12 years) think differently ;-).

I am a result accelerator by touching people on the consequences of change. I believe in business development through human development. I love to work with companies and people with ambition and even resistance, because both are a guiding energy, but I don't flog dead horses. I listen and ask questions. This brings me to the core of the issue. That can be another than imagined. I am a '*doenker*': doing/acting and thinking go hand in hand. With a cool head and a warm heart. Targeted and fast but not overnight. And, as Cees van Riel proclaims: always first Corporate, then Communication.

In the more than 15 years of working experience I have had the ability to learn and contribute to change in companies.

My career started at Dutch Railways during their period of change from a state-owned company into a public one. After inspiring years, it was time for me to move on and I became partner in a company that developed emotional marketing. Here, my thoughts about business coaching became clear. On my path came The Amersfoortse Verzekeringen, where I worked as head of communication during change because of collaboration (brand endorsement) with Fortis Insurance. An interesting period of implementing the seeds of change in the heads of technical oriented companies like insurance companies are. Ending up working as head of external communication a.i. for Interpolis.

I believe in the adage: to win outside has to begin inside. People are the material of change. Not the system. For the last 10 years I have my own company from where I contribute to change daily and with lots of pleasure together with my business partner and collaborating with other change agents who like us, grease the wheel of change in organisations, unremitting. Go, and get warm!

To contact Annemieke, please visit her LinkedIn profile www.linkedin.com/in/annemiekecalatz

Marie Conroy

A time to shine

Leveraging reputation to ensure solar energy can reach its potential.

Solar energy has enormous potential as a vital component of the future energy mix. The focus of this thesis was to identify what elements of reputation matter in this emerging industry and to develop a set of recommendations to help strengthen or leverage corporate reputation to increase the speed in which solar energy is adopted. Thereby helping to ensure this energy source can reach its potential.

Focus and research questions

Today, there is growing consensus that climate change is one of the major challenges facing mankind. Its impact can be seen in changing weather patterns and rising sea levels that significantly threaten the safety of people and the production of food. According to the United Nations, without drastic action today, changing these patterns in the future will become more difficult and costly.

The Paris Agreement is one of the main actions taken to help combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a low carbon future. This future entails moving away from fossil fuels to low carbon fuels such as renewables. This change is especially needed in the energy sector because energy accounts for two-thirds of total greenhouse gas emissions and 80% of carbon dioxide. Because of this shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, solar power is expected to become the largest source of low-carbon energy by 2040, making solar energy a vital component of the future energy mix.

Energies companies are adapting to meet this change. Large established energy companies such as Shell are introducing renewable power into their traditional oil and gas portfolios. In addition, there are many companies focused purely on generating electricity from solar power.

However, as it stands, the world is highly unlikely to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, with nearly 1°C rise in global average temperature already seen since the pre-industrial era.

Therefore, the focus of this thesis was to identify what elements of reputation matter in the emerging solar energy industry. And to develop a set of recommendations for industry leaders and communication professionals to help them to strengthen or leverage corporate reputation to enable business success and to help this industry to grow.

Research approach

To answer the main thesis question, research was divided into desk research and field research. The desk research comprised a literature review examining the fundamentals of corporate reputation, why it is important and what drives it. Based on these findings a conceptual theoretical framework was developed.

For the field research 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders around the world, involved in the solar energy industry. The intent of the interviews was to understand what elements of reputation appeal to 'solar energy buyers' such as utilities, energy procurement managers and governments and compare this to the elements of reputation that 'solar energy developers' are striving to achieve. A thematic analysis approach was used to provide a structured and systematic process to analysis the data.

Findings

The conceptual framework for this thesis suggested six factors which drive reputation. They are consistency, credibility, visibility, distinctiveness, transparency, and authenticity. The research tested these factors and revealed that the top factors that both solar buyers and developers find important in terms of reputation are credibility, followed by consistency.

In addition to the identified concepts, common themes were found that will bring competitive advantage to solar developers. These include building credibility through project delivery, building relationships to create trust and stakeholder engagement. These themes are closely aligned to the concepts outlined in the literature review. Namely that reputation is formed as a consequence of relationships and interactions between stakeholders. And that reputation is important because it results in positive consequences such as attracting stakeholders, resources and positive economic outcomes.

The research validates the fact that reputation matters in this industry. And suggests that there is a distinct competitive advantage for companies that can build a reputation for being credible as this is the key reputation attribute that is most valued by solar energy buyers.

Recommendations

Based on the research I recommend the following specifically for Shell:

- Leverage current reputation to build credibility
- Leverage investments to demonstrate credibility
- Link solar energy investments to societal expectations

Based on the research I recommend the following for Shell as well as other solar energy developers:

- Focus on developing a reputation for being credible
- Know what reputation you want to have
- Have a clear message and amplify it
- Build and maintain positive relationships with key stakeholders

Implications

This research provides evidence that reputation matters in the solar energy industry, it contributes to the understanding of the significance of reputation, brings knowledge on which attributes of reputation are most valued and it shows the importance of stakeholder engagement and relationship building, in this emerging industry.

For an industry with so much promise, the findings have implications for society as they can help the industry to grow at a faster pace, which can in turn support the objectives of the Paris Agreement by helping to accelerate the growth of solar energy.

Biography

Marie Conroy



Marie Conroy is an enthusiastic and results-driven communication professional, with wide experience in managing strategic communications projects in an international environment. Well versed in global reputation management, strategic advisory as well as hands-on implementation of corporate communication strategies, media relations, employee engagement and she is a native English copywriter and editor.

Marie joined Shell in 2002 and has since held roles covering communications and reputation management at global and business level, including Shell's Solar, Integrated Gas, Unconventional resources and Projects & Technology divisions. Through these roles she contributed to establishing a positive and differentiated reputation for Shell through identifying and leveraging opportunities to communicate in a compelling and consistent manner Shell's global capabilities and thought leadership through strategic engagement, messaging and positioning to build preference with partners, customers and other stakeholders.

Marie has also been responsible for internal communication and has developed and implemented internal engagement strategies and global change programmes for over 10,000 staff.

Prior to joining Shell, Marie worked for Ireland's inward investment and development agency, IDA Ireland. A government agency responsible for the attraction and development of foreign investment into Ireland. During this time, she was responsible for various media, public relations and marketing activities for the agency. She has international experience including working in Ireland, the Netherlands, and South East Asia.

In her spare time, Marie loves to travel and explore new places with her partner.

To contact Marie, please visit her LinkedIn profile_ [linkedin.com/in/marieconroycommunications](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marieconroycommunications)

Cittaslow in the Netherlands

Raising Brand Awareness

“It is not enough to challenge the old narrative, however outdated and discredited it may be. Change only happens when you replace one story with another.”

George Monbiot

The sense of urgency

Hardly a day goes by without experts trying to create awareness of the fact that we are heading towards severe crises due to global warming, pollution and acidification of the oceans, environmental noise and loss of biodiversity. Hardly a day goes by without the backgrounds to and consequences of inequality, migration and overurbanisation being pointed out to us. In addition, globalisation has left people searching for identity, authenticity and belonging. Humankind urgently needs to make conscious choices to ensure a future characterised by sustainability and peace.

More than 250 cities in 30 countries and territorial areas *have* made a conscious choice, namely, to become an accredited Cittaslow and join the Association Cittaslow-Rete Internazionale delle città del buon vivere, the international network of cities “where living is good” (Association Cittaslow, October 2018). Ten of these Cittaslows are in the Netherlands. They have pledged to establish quality of life for residents and visitors: preserving valuable landscapes and biodiversity; maintaining traditions and protecting the uniqueness of individual cities in times of globalisation and homogenisation; cultivating hospitality and social cohesion; providing inspiration for a healthier lifestyle; innovating to achieve sustainability.

The aim of my research project was *not* to examine whether and in how far the Cittaslow movement is an

effective one in coping with the problems mentioned above. Whilst the jury is out, I assume that, as there is an urgent need to handle this finite planet and its (human and non-human) residents with far more care than is currently the case, *any* attempt, certainly one at municipality level, is a valuable one. Brand awareness of the Cittaslow movement in the Netherlands, however, is very low, and the ten Cittaslow accredited municipalities in the Netherlands are hardly known as Cittaslows and what they stand for.

Research questions

What explanations can be identified for the fact that Cittaslow accredited municipalities in the Netherlands are not known as Cittaslows, either amongst residents or amongst visitors and other stakeholders? What opportunities can be identified to raise brand awareness? And what is the role of the ‘Supporters’, that special group of “business owners and organisations differentiating themselves from others in their industry” (Cittaslow Netherlands 2018) and awarded the status of ‘Supporters of Cittaslow [municipality name]’?

Supporters “support the Cittaslow values in their own municipality. In carrying out all their work they actively visualise that they adhere to and apply these values as a matter of course” (Cittaslow Netherlands 2019). The majority of Dutch Cittaslows work with Supporters, of which there are 333 (April 2018).

Working with Supporters - within the Cittaslow movement a unique phenomenon - seems a sensible approach. Only resilient and thriving communities are capable of guarding natural and cultural heritage and of working towards a competitive identity. This in turn requires investment in stakeholder engagement.

Analysis of 300 Supporters' websites revealed that the majority of the Supporters do not mention their status of Supporter and thus do not assist in creating brand awareness, at least not via their websites. This finding elicited curiosity into the perceived value of the status of Supporter and the collaborative alliance with the municipality. Subsequent questions included: what opportunities are there to leverage the role of the Supporters in raising brand awareness, and what can be learned from this case as to stakeholder engagement and management in general?

My research project evolved into a journey of discovery - figuratively, as it was a highly explorative and iterative process; and literally, with visits to Cittaslows in the Netherlands and abroad.

Research methodology

For problem analysis, problem diagnosis and design (potential solutions and recommendation) - the first three stages of a practice-oriented research project - I drew on theory of (place and destination) branding and on theory of collaboration, collaborative alliances and the value accruing to partners in such an alliance.

A wealth of information and impressions was gathered through a multi-method approach, concurrent data collection and analysis, and the use of an exploratory model. Methods included fieldwork observations, website analysis, interviews with mayors and policy advisors of Cittaslow municipalities, interviews with passers-by (residents and visitors of Cittaslow), and questionnaires sent to and conversations held with Supporters.

Problem analysis

Low brand awareness is indeed perceived as a problem by the majority of municipalities interviewed. Reasons pertain to license to operate (residents need to understand why a municipality makes specific choices); competitiveness (in particular to attract tourists); the need for a joint identity in a municipality comprising several villages; the wish to increase influence as small municipalities at a national level, to share Cittaslow values and best practices, and to make this world a

better place. 25% of the responders to the Supporters' questionnaire state they regret that brand awareness, and thus their status as Supporter, are low.

Problem diagnosis

Desk research and interviews with mayors and policy advisors informed me about admirable projects aimed at familiarising members of the municipality, governments and administration and residents with Cittaslow values, and about policies aimed at implementing them. The interviews also revealed explanations for why brand awareness is low. Cittaslow is a philosophy, "a way-of-life"; it is about "being and doing", "a guideline in day-to-day decision making", "an identity", but also about development and innovation. Municipalities do not find it easy to 'translate' something as elusive as a philosophy into specific brand promises. Other explanations include the absence of strategy, a high workload and a lack of capacity, as well as the existence of other (tourism) brands.

Supporters express disappointment about aspects of the collaborative alliance; a reason for not communicating about it. This is regrettable, for they also express what in collaboration theory is called 'linked interests', that is, they do adhere to Cittaslow values, even have a sense of urgency, and are motivated to support the municipality in establishing quality of life and sustainability. The Cittaslow movement encourages members and stakeholders to meet and learn from each other, and this is what Dutch municipalities facilitate too. The wish of the Supporters, though, is for visibility and for change-oriented and purposeful collaboration with the municipalities and with other Supporters (provided they have matching value frames), resulting in specific outcomes. These wishes are some of the aspects of what Austin and Seitanidi (2012b) call 'partnership compatibility' and 'partnership implementation' which make stakeholder engagement and management such a multi-layered phenomenon, and which municipalities need to address.

Design (potential solutions and recommendations)

Creating brand awareness is about exposure and experience; about achieving integration, consistency and coherence; about strategy, purpose and partnerships. My recommendations to those Cittaslow municipalities that wish to raise brand awareness pertain to these aspects and offer answers to two interrelated questions in particular: 'How to brand a philosophy?' and 'How to leverage the role of the Supporters?'

Strategic narratives and storytelling are some of the solutions offered. Incorporating the art and science of storytelling in their strategy and communications will assist Cittaslow municipalities in translating Cittaslow values into meaningful and memorable (service) experiences; aligning Supporters and engaging them in purposeful partnerships aimed at implementing the values; achieving integration, consistency and coherence by turning the Cittaslow story into a shared story. Tools offered include the concept of a story tree, narrative techniques, toolkits aimed at enhancing visibility and communication, and best practice examples.

References

- Association Cittaslow: www.cittaslow.org
- Cittaslow Netherlands: www.cittaslow-nederland.nl
- Austin, J.A. and M.M. Seitanidi (2012a) 'Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and business: Part 1. Value creation spectrum and collaboration stages', *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly* 41(5): 726-758.
- Austin, J.A. and M.M. Seitanidi (2012b) 'Collaborative value creation: A Review of partnering between nonprofits and business: Part 2. Partnership processes and outcomes', *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly* 41(6): 929-968.
- Monbiot, G. (2017) 'How do we get out of this mess?', *The Guardian*. Accessed 1 February 2018 on www.theguardian.com/books/2017/sep/09/george-monbiot-how-de-we-get-out-of-this-mess

Biography

Karin Elgin-Nijhuis



Karin Elgin-Nijhuis works with heritage organisations and tourism destinations on optimising their strategy and communication. Either as a partner in Elgin & Co. or as a senior associate consultant in TEAM Tourism Consulting, she assists in brand development, (digital) content strategy and planning, visitor experience development and stakeholder engagement.

Karin read ancient history at Utrecht University and for several years she combined a university role with work in tourism. Fascinated by the opportunities the internet and new media offered, she trained as an internet developer and adviser and obtained certificates in gamification and e-commerce.

She worked as an internet consultant and Head of Consultancy and Projects for the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Congresses (NBTC Holland Marketing), before founding her own consultancy in 2004.

She is the managing editor/co-author of three World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and European Travel Commission (ETC) publications: *Evaluating and Improving Websites – The Destination Web Watch* (2005), *Handbook on E-marketing for Tourism Destinations* (2008) and the *Fully Revised and Extended Edition* of this Handbook (2014).

She co-founded and organises the Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality, International Conferences (HTHIC) and the Tourism StoryLAB® which is dedicated to the exchange and development of knowledge of strategic narratives and storytelling.

More information: www.elgin.nl, www.team-tourism.com, www.heritagetourismhospitality.org.

Irene Gloudemans

The potential of using a thought leadership-strategy for a company in an industry under societal debate

Analysis of possibilities for Vion (Pork)

Company confidential

The meat industry is an industry with an intensive societal debate on several issues. Paradigms in the Netherlands, Germany and other North-Western European countries are shifting, for example with regard to what a healthy diet should look like, the way animals should be treated, traceability of food chains, sustainability of food and meat production, and the degree of transparency in operations. Van Halderen states that in a world in which stakeholders value hearing refreshing viewpoints, a thought leadership strategy enables companies to substantially raise their profiles (Van Halderen et al. 2013). I have researched the potential of using such a strategy for Vion (Pork), one of the leading companies in the international meat industry.

Case study Vion (Pork)

Vion is an international meat producer with 25 production locations in the Netherlands and Germany and sales support offices in more than ten countries worldwide. Through its three divisions – Pork, Beef and Food Service – the company provides fresh pork and beef, and by-products for retail, foodservice and the meat processing industry; in its home markets of the Netherlands and Germany, other countries in Europe and the rest of the world. One of Vion's strategic challenges is to be recognized as a game changer in selected themes of the industry. In March 2017, Vion introduced an elaborated CSR-report, in which it described its actions and priorities in the CSR-domain. The company received the Kristalprijs for 'fastest grower in transparency' for this report.

Formulating a CSR-strategy with focus points, was an important step for Vion in its process to be recognized as a game changer in the industry and to stimulate improvements. A thought leadership-strategy could potentially raise the company's profile and fill in its ambition to be recognized as a game changer even further, as thought leadership is about novel insights on

relevant themes in society. It is about breaking the status quo and creating changes (Van Halderen et al. 2013).

Research question

In my master thesis, I have investigated following research question: ***How and to which extent could a thought leadership strategy be suitable for Vion (Pork)?***

Literature research and a case study were conducted to come to answers regarding the research question and the sub questions belonging to it. The diagnosis part of the Thought Leadership Framework™ of Van Halderen et al. (2013) was applied, in combination with the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) model of Schultz and Hatch (2003). For the case study, desk research was conducted and 16 qualitative interviews were executed; 8 interviews with internal stakeholders and 8 interviews with external stakeholders. Although qualitative research was executed at Vion (Pork), the conclusions from both the literature study and the interviews also have provided insights on the applicability of a thought leadership strategy for companies in industries under debate. Furthermore, the research has delivered certain contributions to the academic literature around thought leadership.

Recommendations

Answer to the research question

In the master thesis, the question if 'a thought leadership strategy is suitable for Vion (Pork)' was answered positively: both internal and external stakeholders recognized the growth path which Vion (Pork) is following, 'granting' the company (and division) credits for several traits and characteristics. These characteristics matched opportunities in market and society. The precondition for pursuing a thought leadership strategy by Vion (Pork), is that there has to be commitment and that resources have to be (made) available sufficiently. Van Halderen (2015) mentions two types of logic regarding thought leadership: thought leadership with a strategic focus and thought leadership with a transformation focus. A blended approach – using both types of logic – has been recommended for Vion (Pork).

Implications

Applicability for companies in an industry under debate

It is often said that companies in an industry under debate should not try to express thought leadership, but should focus on (re)building trust. The Vion (Pork)-case study proves that there is **potential for a company in an industry under debate to follow a thought leadership strategy**, under certain conditions:

- **Trust** in the company by internal and external stakeholders has to be present sufficiently – at least in certain (relevant) domains – and the **expertise** of the company has to be **recognized sufficiently**.
- The company should create a strong connection with relevant external stakeholders, **bringing outside view-points** and perceptions **pro-actively into the organization**. Although the tendency within a company in an industry under debate could be to become a bit 'introspective', it is of utter importance to stay aligned with the outside perceptions.
- **Internal and external viewpoints** should be taken into account in **defining Novel Point(s) of View and themes**; the company should have a feeling how the Novel Point(s) of View fit with the perceptions and 'schemas' of its stakeholders.
- A strong **action programme** should be present, **proving** the thought leadership-vision: an action based communication strategy (Van Halderen 2015) is recommended. This builds trust in a solid way.

- Strong commitment by the CEO and topmanagement and good internal **alignment** of the management and employees should be present; this is crucial for a successful implementation.

Contribution to academic knowledge around thought leadership

Looking at the Vion (Pork)-case study, following **findings contribute to the academic knowledge and models** around Thought Leadership:

- The Thought Leadership-framework™ of Van Halderen et al. (2013) works well in building up a balanced thought leadership strategy for a company.
- For companies in an industry under debate, the most evident **addition to the Thought Leadership-framework™ of Van Halderen et al. (2013)**, is to **add a gap-analysis** to the diagnosis-part of this framework: creating insights on eventual gaps in internal and external perspectives regarding market and societal trends, identity and expertise and possibilities for Novel Point(s) of View. In the case study, the VCI-model of Schultz and Hatch (2003) was used to identify gaps.

In the case of Vion (Pork), by following a thought leadership strategy the company really could trigger change and transformation in the industry. Vion (Pork) has the position in the market – as a leading, (inter)nationally operating company - and has the position in the food chain, to positively influence matters and make a difference.

References

- Van Halderen, M. and Kettler-Paddock, K. and Badings, C., 2013. *Thought leadership, How to differentiate your company and stand out from the crowd: thought leadership*. Adformatie Groep B.V. Amsterdam.
- Van Halderen, M. (2015). *Shifting paradigms – thought leadership as instigator of societal change*. Publication which is an elaborate version of the inaugural speech of Mignon van Halderen on 15 October 2015 at Fontys University of Applied Sciences, School of Communication Eindhoven, The Netherlands.
- Schultz, M. and Hatch, M.J. (2003) 'Cycles of corporate branding: the case of the LEGO Company', *California Management Review*.

Biography

Irene Gloudemans (1975)



Irene Gloudemans (1975) graduated from the Avans Business school (HEAO) in Den Bosch and earned her bachelor in International Business and Languages in 1997. She started her career in Communications at Rabobank, building and executing the communication strategy at two local banks between 2000 and 2008: first at Rabobank Zuidwesthoek and after that at Rabobank Veghel-Erp.

In 2008, she joined Agrifirm (at that time still Cehave Landbouwbelaang) as a Communication manager. This is a company which produces animal feed and products for agri- and horticulture. She built the corporate communication strategy at Cehave Landbouwbelaang and guided a merger process between Cehave Landbouwbelaang and Agrifirm. Besides that, she contributed to building the branding architecture and positioning of the new company Agrifirm. In 2014 she was project leader of a process building a thought leadership strategy for Agrifirm Feed.

This strategy was later used for Agrifirm Group as a positioning strategy; with focus points on innovative and sustainable solutions.

In 2016, Irene continued her career at meat company Vion (Pork) as a Communication manager. In building the communication strategy for Vion (Pork), she helped the management entering into a more pro-active way of communicating; opening up to dialogue with stakeholders and press. Profiling and launching new, upgraded supply chains has been a key aspect within the Vion (Pork) communication plans in the last few years. The subject of her master thesis, also has been a project which has been led by Irene within the company last year. A thought leadership vision for Vion (Pork) has been developed. At the moment, the potential to stretch this vision to Vion Group is being researched.

Myriam Heffels

Optimising communication climate in organisations by fostering employee followership

Effective employee communication is key in stimulating employee alignment and engagement, which are linked to improved organisational performance. However, employee communication is also still a neglected topic in literature. Of its four dimensions – structure, flow, content and climate – communication climate is the most intangible one. It has been linked to increased job satisfaction and employee commitment, and as such to engagement. So it seems well worth gaining a better understanding of communication climate and what influences it. When an educational institute that struggled with their internal communication entered the scene, this opened up an opportunity to study those influences in the reality of an organisation. The answer was as surprising as simple: a positive communication climate arises from supportive interactions between employees, and most of all, between employees and their supervisor.

In this research I have explored the concept of communication climate in connection to employee communication, first through an extensive literature study and then by research in an organisation.

Understanding communication climate

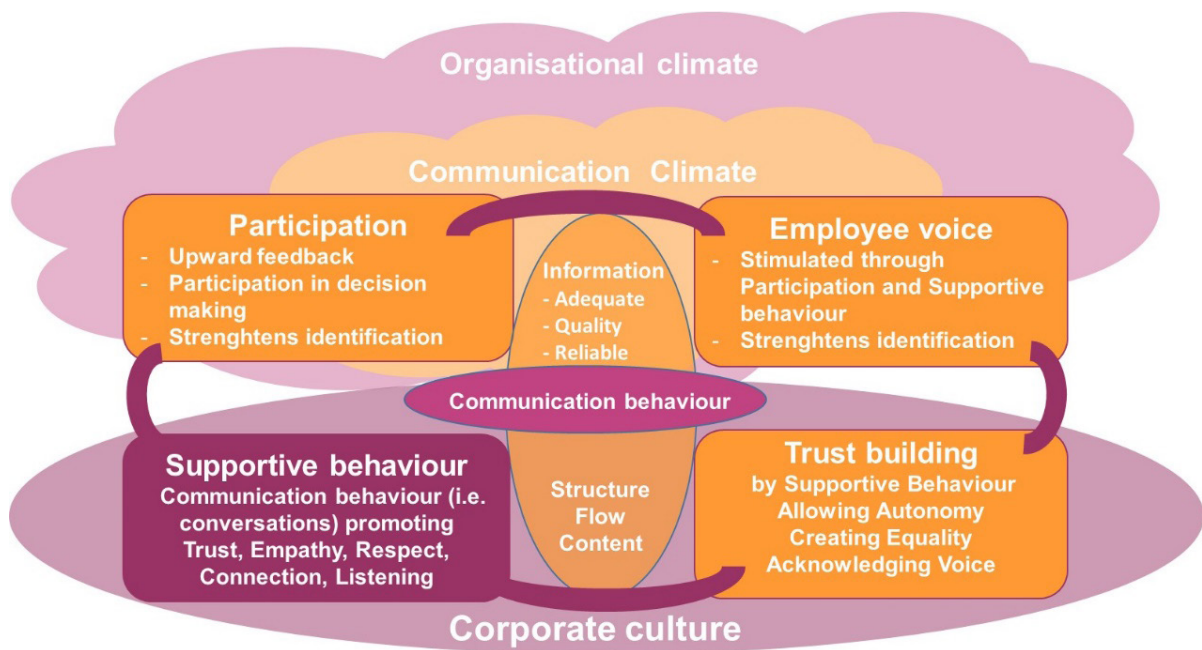
Communication climate is constructed from the perception of each employee of the communication behaviour in one's organisational environment. As the culture of an organisation is expressed in the behaviours of employees, it is also expressed in the communication behaviour, which in turn is perceived as the communication climate.

A communication climate that is generally perceived as open ('conductive to positive mutual connection') strengthens organisational identification of employees. When employees are able to participate in the organisation, by being able to give upward feedback or to influence decision making, they perceive the communication climate as more positive too and they become more committed followers. To be able to participate, employees have to feel safe to voice their feedback, thoughts or ideas. This is especially important in the relationship between the employee and their supervisor, who employees have to trust in order to be able to voice. That trust is built by the supportiveness of the interactions that employees have. The perception of communication climate lies between two extremes on a continuum, from open (supportive, trust building, voice

stimulating and participative) to closed (defensive, distrust fuelling, silence inducing and non-participative). Each of these extremes are connected to certain behaviours and dimensions, which can serve as a useful tool for employee communication professionals to identify where improvements could be made or initiatives could be taken to develop the communication climate. However, employee communication professionals could also play an important role in developing supportive interactions organisations, by coaching management and supervisors to build more trustworthy relationships with employees.

Researching an educational institute

I was introduced to a small Dutch internationally oriented educational institute with 57 employees (both academics and support staff), who are very committed to their work and cause. They enjoy much freedom in their work and teams and generally perceived a family atmosphere. However, the employees expressed a lack of trust in the management team and suffered from (reporting) structure and roles not being clear. There was little collaboration, even competition, between the teams, favouritism and unjustifiable differences in the execution of rules. Much went on in the undercurrent of the institute, which ultimately led to employees burning out or leaving. Management took action to reorganise the structure with employee participation and to develop HR, defining job roles and supporting personal development.



Mediation was hired to get to the root of the issues. I was allowed to join one of their sessions and also joined several other workshops and working group meetings. Then I interviewed 12 employees by responsive interviewing, which means the interviews have a conversational character, and questions are based on the responses of the interviewees. The interviews were analysed by responsive methodology: Constructing narratives or stories written from one personal perspective derived from connecting interviews through shared examples and attributed meaning and interpretations from the interviewees. This, together with previous findings from the institute (employee surveys), helped to understand the issues of the institute and develop several recommendations to improve internal communication.

A story about supportive interactions

The key issue was lack of leadership from the management team, allowing for much autonomy of teams to create their own work and rules. Academics and support staff were disconnected and teams worked in silos. The cultural differences of employees and uncertainty of those with temporary contracts induced a general climate of silence. Those who did voice their thoughts resorted to doing so by being angry, or found their voice not acknowledged and gave up. Although employees were allowed to participate in decision making on the new organisational structure, they thought it was either too complex, or believed it would not make a difference. Interestingly, employees were also not aligned to the new strategy of the institute and had no shared values.

It was clear that the supportive interactions between employees of different teams, and between the management team and employees were lacking. Inside of the team the communication climate was perceived as more positive. To help connect all employees more, the narratives from the interviews can be used to do a story workshop. This will support a dialogue on shared experiences, instead of emphasising differences, and stimulate more supportive interactions between all employees and with management. Management should also develop their understanding of modelling supportive behaviour. This is where an internal communication coach with a knowledge of pitfalls and effects of supportive behaviour can definitely be helpful.

Currently information in the institute mostly travels through informal channels, which creates noise and is unreliable. So the institute needs a formal employee communication structure and should develop managers' roles as communicators towards employees. Feedback giving and the cultural differences need attention. Lastly, I recommended employee sessions to create the future of the institute, building on strengths of the institute like idealism, history, international environment, exciting work, family atmosphere and freedom. Employees can also define shared values to guide them in their work together. Through improving interactions between all employees trust can be built and stronger working relationships can be developed.

Biography

Myriam Heffels (1975)



Myriam (born 1975) is curious by nature and has always had an interest in Life Sciences in the broadest sense of the word. In 1998 she completed the master program Chemical Engineering at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). After her studies Myriam's passion for communication, language and connecting people prevailed over a career as engineer. For several years she worked as a job consultant and recruiter. In 2000, together with a close friend, she co-founded Scala Productiehuis, a foundation that produces (semi) professional theatre, musical and film productions and courses for young people and students.

Myriam completed the bachelor Communication at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in 2006 and was recruited by the communication department of Fontys. After a move to Utrecht, Myriam switched to Utrecht University of Applied Science (HU), where, as event manager, she led the organisation of large public events like the annual opening of the academic year and the opening of the new building of the Faculty of Education by H.R.H. Princess Maximá. After that she worked as the internal communication advisor for several departments of HU Services, mainly for the department and director of Human Resources.

She was also part of the team that developed strategic communication in support of organisational changes of HU. In 2015 Myriam became corporate communication advisor and was responsible for the innovation of the internal communication channels and developing stakeholder management.

At the end of 2017 Myriam realised a long held dream and became an entrepreneur. She founded her own business, Ingage inc., with the mission to help employees work better together and organisations reach more of their potential. Today, Myriam works as an employee communication specialist, interim communication manager and (management) coach. She develops and manages employee communication that is not just effective, but also grows awareness for the relevance and importance of supportive interactions in organisations.

Myriam currently lives in Utrecht with her husband and eight year old daughter. She loves Norway and exploring its magnificent nature, enjoys reading and writing, playing the piano and singing with her friends in the Pitch! choir.

Ivan Kosenkov

Building strong Employer Brand to attract and retain best talent in controversial industries

Case study of Japan Tobacco International

In the modern business world the competitive landscape requires organizations to stay ahead of the game by creating and sustaining a competitive advantage through possessing and leveraging some of the unique assets. Nowadays, talent is definitely becoming one of them. Companies face an ever-increasing competition in attracting and retaining talented employees- the ones that will become a strategic “game changers” for them in the long-term.

But do all companies have equal chances to compete and win the best talents? There are solid theoretical reasons to believe that employers with so-called “stigma”, or social disapproval status, that come from less socially accepted industries- like tobacco, alcohol or weapons- generally appeal and attract fewer quality applicants, which therefore limits their choices to select and employ the best prospective candidates. For the organizations that represent such “controversial industries” it becomes critical to understand and address the “touch points” of their target talent audience and find all the good reasons to convince them to consider joining such an employer. This will help HR, communication and talent acquisition specialists develop and deploy employer brand and communication strategy more efficiently to increase employee appeal, engagement and retention and decrease overall recruitment costs.

At the heart of this study is the concept of the employer value proposition (EVP) and employer brand. Generally, an employer brand can be defined by perceptions that external talents and existing employees hold of a company as an employer. It influences whether or not talents would choose to work for a particular employer. And strong employer brand is just as relevant to employee loyalty, engagement and retention as it is to attracting new, external talent. It helps a company stand out in the recruitment market and, ultimately, secure the best talents in the long term.

To influence how employees and external talent perceive and experience the employer brand, organizations need an Employer Value Proposition (EVP). Universum Global (2017) argues that the primary purpose of an Employer Value Proposition (EVP) is to define the qualities an organization would most like to be associated with as an employer. It provides the key attributes and themes that underpin employer brand communications and activities. The EVP then becomes the underlying content that is transformed into messages and a communication strategy for different talent groups.

The notion of emotional engagement of the employees, their commitment and motivation is closely linked with the concept of employer branding because of the associated emotional and psychological benefits that are anticipated from the employment experience. This unwritten set of expectations of the employment relationship, which is distinct from the formal employment contract, is known as the “psychological contract” (Schein, 1978).

So, on these premises, the thesis aims to examine the factors that contribute to the development of a strong and differentiated employer brand in a controversial industry and also study the relationship between employer branding and psychological contracts: how firmly these two are grounded in psychological and motivational factors that influence existing and prospective employees.

Examination and comparison of the empirical findings obtained through exploratory research conclude that the evidence leans in support of the assumption that strong, authentic and differentiated employer brand has a positive impact on the overall employee experience and promotes talent attraction to the companies that represent controversial industries. Results obtained from the qualitative interviews conducted with a sample of 18 existing JTI employees and 18 external target talents also show a positive relationship between outcomes of the employer branding efforts (employee engagement and psychological contract) and employee retention.

Using the qualitative data from internal and external these interviews, the study provides insights into

development of the unique, differentiated EVP themes and distinctive communication strategy (messaging and channels) that would appeal to prospective hires as well as existing employees.

Based on a comparative data analysis between two groups of respondents and discussion of the results, implications of the new knowledge obtained in the course of this study are discussed in academic and managerial context. The thesis concludes with the evaluation and limitations of the used research methods and provides recommendations for future research to further expand the knowledge in the areas of employer brand, talent attraction and employee retention in the context of controversial industries.

Biography

Ivan Kosenkov



Ivan Kosenkov is an open-minded globetrotter and ambitious go-getter, who trusts in his global and industry-diverse experience and “out of the box” thinking to spark ideas that generate growth. With extensive expertise in tobacco, management consulting, pharma and sports sectors Ivan’s achievements include front-end experience selling and marketing to digital-savvy millennials as well as the ability to build trust, alignment and long-term commitment among various stakeholder audiences.

Having elevated brand marketing, communications and talent attraction initiatives of some global organizations through driving innovative brand and communication campaigns and social media strategies Ivan offers more than 15 years of his experience in these areas.

He has a strong personal passion and experience with high-end products and luxury brands. Ivan believes that creating memorable and distinctive ways for consumers and prospective talents to be immersed in a brand’s offering can ultimately strengthen organization’s employer value proposition and create long-term financial award for the business.

Ivan’s educational background includes an MBA with major in International Marketing from Case Western Reserve University, USA. He also received a B.A. in Economics and Management from Zaporizhyya State University, Ukraine. He is married, has two children and lives in Geneva, Switzerland.

Moments that matter

Moments that matter is a naturalistic approach to engagement, aimed at understanding employee engagement in its specific context of a changing workplace. The research contributes to the discussion about employee engagement and the importance of reflection for the growth of social capital.

Not surprisingly, the research data shows that engagement means different things to different people, because people attribute and construct different meaning to the same elements that together build a workplace. Personal experiences and opinions regarding for example flex work, team meetings, team lunches, virtual interaction etc. color these elements. This coloring is rooted in, among others, personal character and work philosophy. However, instead of explaining those differences and researching the various root causes, *Moments that matter* focuses on describing these differences in a real-life context in two narratives (Gestalts) that emerged from the data. The narratives zoom in on human interaction and the effect of (the absence of) face-to-face interactions on engagement. Gestalt I craves human interaction and face-to-face contact. Flex-work has a negative impact on the engagement of people who recognize themselves in Gestalt I, as these individuals will not interact with their co-workers in a manner, which suits them best. This group finds it important to know the people around them well, as this forms the foundation for trust and reciprocity. On the other end of the spectrum are the people who thrive when working remotely (Gestalt II). Their focus, productivity and feelings of engagement grow when they are not around their colleagues all the

time. The open spaces and lay out of offices make it hard for this group to feel at ease and to be productive. Both Gestalts prove that transformations in the workplace cause important changes in work processes and organizational culture. De Bruyne and De Jong: "Workspaces do not only have a physical, but also a virtual and a social component."¹

Data analysis and literary research confirm that these developments define a 'new normal'. Innovations in communication techniques and office spaces introduce new language and new symbols.² As stated by researchers from the Center for People and Buildings: "Office innovation is often a radical change. It entails an important turn in work processes and organizational culture, and often is only one aspect of many changes that simultaneously occur in an organization."³ It is not clear if decision makers are aware of the fact that they trigger a chain reaction of radical side effects when introducing flex work-arrangements and new communication techniques.

This radical change in the workplace has in its turn, an impact on social capital, which can be defined as the connections among individuals.⁴ As a result, social structures disintegrate. In Putnam's view, two elements

1 De Bruyne, E. And De Jong, A. (2008). *The Workplace Game: exploring end users' new behaviour* [pdf]. Center for People and Buildings. [Online] <https://www.cfpb.nl/kennis/publicaties/the-workplace-game-exploring-end-users-new-behavior/> [Accessed 4 October, 2018].

2 Morgan, G. (2006) *Images of Organization*. [Updated version]. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 1-520.

3 De Bruyne, E. And De Jong, A. (2008). *The Workplace Game: exploring end users' new behaviour* [pdf]. Center for People and Buildings. [Online] <https://www.cfpb.nl/kennis/publicaties/the-workplace-game-exploring-end-users-new-behavior/> [Accessed 4 October, 2018].

are important in (re)building social structures: bonding and bridging. Bonding is characterized as inward looking. Bridging is outward looking, and is aimed at reinforcing identities when reaching out to people who think differently. Bonding networks are in his view the sociological 'superglue'.⁵ Not surprisingly, in his vision 'workplace networks' are one of the seven separate measures of social capital. However, "(...) the large master trend here is that over the last hundred years, technology has privatized our leisure time." Replace the words 'leisure time' for 'work time' and it's clear that the distinctive effect of technology has been to enable modern employees to work and receive information while remaining entirely alone.⁶ Or, to stick with the metaphor: we increasingly miss the sociological superglue at work. And this is bad news for engagement.

The good news however, is that we can (re)build social capital and thus boost engagement. The remedy can be found in encouraging the formation of social bonds. Social capital is created through interconnectedness. Social interaction leads to the formation of common symbols, shared leaders and ideals. Or, to speak in the language of Morgan (2006): the formation of cultures.⁷ Investments in the creation of these social bonds or cultures, with their own distinctive values, norms and traditions can turn the tide. It comes as no surprise that these social bonds come with obligations. It's in the nature of obligations that they lead to reciprocity. Interesting enough, this element of reciprocity directs us towards the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which is the foundation of Saks' multidimensional perspective on employee engagement. According to the SET, we constantly evaluate and re-evaluate our relationships. These relationships are built on mutual obligations. Saks found that employees choose to engage themselves based on this condition of reciprocity (the mutual obligations). However, you need to know your co-workers and management and have to be able to trust that they will answer your commitment with theirs, before you engage.

You can only trust someone if you know who you are dealing with. If bonding networks are the sociological superglue, then trust is the 'Velcro' in corporate relationships. This research chooses the Velcro metaphor, because trust requires *all* stakeholders to give and take to stick together.

Moments that matter finally leads to the important realization that there are important moments that matter for *both* Gestalts in terms of engagement in the changing face of work. The key for both groups can be found in reflection and learning. The 'golden nugget' of this research lies in double-loop learning.⁸ Like Schön, this researcher strongly believes that personal and professional growth begins when people start to view things with a critical lens. Conversations about engagement, collaboration and how new communication techniques impact human interaction in the workplace, can deepen knowledge and help build bridges between different groups of peers and between employees and management. These conversations and systematic reflection shape *and* add to the organization as culture. Reflection and learning will be(come) the 'new normal' and 'the oil that makes the machine run'.

Through the 'inward looking' conversations, in which listening skills are paramount, bonding mechanisms will be triggered. This will foster understanding and stimulate trust. In these conversations reflection will take place, which enables learning on all three levels: the personal level, the team level, and the organizational level. As all stakeholders are involved, this research claims that these conversations will define the 'new normal' of the corporate culture. Eventually, this will counter – in the style of Putnam – the large master trend that technology will privatize our work time.

4 Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster

5 *Ibidem*, p. 23

6 Roberts, S. (2015). *Who Americans Are and What They Do, in Census Data* [Online] <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/15/us/15census.html?hp&ex=1166245200&en=d40213194fc19049&ei=5094&partner=homepage> [Accessed 1 October 2018]

7 Morgan, G. (2006). *Images of Organization*. [Updated version]. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

8 Argyris, C., Schön, D.A. (1978). *Organizational Learning: a Theory of Action Perspective*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Biography

Loth Kroeger (1976)



Loth Kroeger (Arnhem, 1976) is an internationally oriented communication professional with over 15 years of experience. She is a creative team player with an open and energetic attitude. Loth has a strong track record in a wide range of corporate communications disciplines.

After graduating from Leiden University in Dutch literature and history, Loth began her career at TPG (now TNT) as a management trainee. Since then she has had a number of different communication roles, both in internal and external communications at TPG Post (now PostNL) and ABN Amro.

In 2007, she left the Netherlands, swapping Amsterdam for Singapore, where she developed and implemented an internal communication network for TNT Express in Southeast Asia.

Having lived in Saigon (Vietnam), Shanghai (China) and Doha (Qatar) - where Loth earned a teaching degree, and worked at various international schools - she returned to the Netherlands in 2014, taking up the role of global internal communication manager at Aegon NV in The Hague. Here she further developed her interest in employee ambassadorship and the power of communication in disruptive transformations.

Loth currently leads the internal and external communication team at DAS Holding NV, a Dutch legal and financial service provider. Away from the office, she has a healthy wanderlust and lives with her husband and three children in the Kennemerland.

CSR at a Business School, do Executive Education Customers Care?

A cross-case analysis on how high-involvement service characteristics will effect purchase intent in case of a CSR strategy

In May 2017, RSM, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) launched its new mission: to become a force for Positive Change in the world and committed itself to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Working as a Learning & Development Manager at RSM's Executive Education department, where I am responsible for Customized and Open Enrolment programmes for Executives, I followed this mission with great interest. How would 'my customers' react on this mission change? Would they be responsive to this? What would they expect in terms of communication and service delivery? In other words; CSR at a Business School, do they care? This thesis describes the story of my journey that started with these questions and ended in a qualitative case research that provided several interesting theoretical and managerial implications.

Literature

Although ample research on CSR exists, most of the research on CSR and purchase intent is directed to tangible commodity consumer and retail products (Auger et al. 2003, Sen et al 2011, Mohr and Webb (2005)). Executive Education can be seen as a high-involvement service, which consists of several characteristics that are not easily compared with the, in the existing CSR literature frequently researched, commodity goods. High-involvement services differ in purchase process and post-purchase evaluation due to its intangible nature and uncertain outcome. Reputation in general, Corporate Ability as defined by Brown and Dacin (1997) in specific, and worth-of-mouth are expected therefore, to have a higher impact on purchase intent than CSR attributes. However, since hardly any research on Professional Services in relation to the effect of CSR and purchase intent exists, the exact impact remains unclear. Even though research on CSR in Business Schools is growing, it has a different nature. It mainly focuses on the debate of what the role of a Business School should be in educating future business managers (Matten and Moon 2004; Gardiner and Lacy, 2005; Wright and Bennett, 2011). Research on consumer (student) behaviour towards CSR in a Business School remains limited (Cornelius et al, 2007).

My research objective is to fill this gap by building further on the existing CSR theory and to gain a deeper understanding into how CSR will affect purchase intent within high-involvement professional services by addressing the following research question:

1.a How will the shift to a CSR focused mission of RSM impact the consumer's decision to apply for RSM's executive open programmes?

In addition, this research aims to develop ideas and insights about which changes RSM should make in the CSR categories; product-related features, business practices and philanthropy, as defined by Pelozo and Shang (2011) and what effect these changes will have on future purchase intent;

1.b What CSR related changes are expected to ensure congruence with the CSR mission statement?

A Qualitative Case Research & Triangulation

As a method to answer the above research questions, a qualitative case research was chosen for several reasons as will be outlined in this thesis. The qualitative interviews and mind map method, as part of these individual interviews, lowered the chance on a social

Factor	Case	Options	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
Background participants	Job title	NA	Project Manager	Commercial Director	Manager Service Delivery in Customer Care	Manager Open Innovation & External Partnerships	Behandlungscoordinator	Senior project engineer	Technical service manager	Operational manager	Manager Supply Repair (incl. Bar, Catering & sales) manager
	CSR Mission in Company	YES/NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
	Satisfied with programme	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	X	YES	X
Purchase process and criteria	Initial course	NA	Teamleadert p	Finance for Non Financials	Essentials of Leadership	Teamleadert p	DPGM package	DPGM package	Power of Presence	Essentials of Leadership	New Business Development
	Clearly assessed skills/knowledge gap	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	SOMEWHAT	YES
	Mentioned Changed role or to change role	YES/NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
	CSR Mission in mindmap (interviews only)	YES/NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	X	X	X
	CSR Mission as purchase attribute (calls only)	YES/NO	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO	NO	NO
	RSM reputation mentioned as purchase criteria	YES/NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
	WOM mentioned to influence purchase	YES/NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Awareness	Aware of mission RSM prior to purchase	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Aware of mission post-purchase	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	NO	SOMEWHAT	SOMEWHAT	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	X	NO	X
	Experienced mission in programme delivery	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	NO	SOMEWHAT	NO	NO	YES	NO	X	NO	X
Congruence & fit with BS and Programme	Mission appropriate for Business School	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	SOMEWHAT	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	SOMEWHAT	YES
	Programme congruent to Mission	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	SOMEWHAT	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	X	NO	X
How they feel about CSR mission	Likes mission statement	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	SOMEWHAT	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	SOMEWHAT	YES	YES
	Mentions that mission could be differentiator for Exec Ed	YES/NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Change in purchase intent	Mentioned knowing more about mission influenced positive feeling about programme/school	YES/NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
	More awareness would have changed down purchase intent	YES/SOMEWHAT/NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	SOMEWHAT	YES	YES	NO	NO

X: Not answered / or not able to answer

Fig. ES.1 Cross-Case Analysis

desirability bias, further adding to the CSR literature on purchase intent. Moreover, in line with Pelozo and Shang (2011) this qualitative research added to the more often quantitative CSR literature, where experiments are more the rule than the exception. When setting boundaries for the case researches, the Diploma Programme in General Management (DPGM) was selected. This programme is one of the larger open enrolment programmes within the open enrolment portfolio from a time and investment perspective and therefore can be classified as a high-involvement service. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants of the DPGM resulting in six case narratives. To increase the external validity of this research, a questionnaire was send out to participants that recently subscribed to one of the other open programmes to compare the findings of the interviews and check for overarching similarities and differences. This triangulation process resulted in additional information from the survey respondents and three additional qualitative phone interviews and case narratives. The findings resulted in a cross-case analysis, displayed in fig. ES.1. The survey was used to validate these results.

Managerial and Theoretical Implications of the results:

When aware, Executive Education Customers do not care (in the pre-purchase phase).

The findings of this qualitative case research and the triangulation data showed that the effects of the CSR mission on purchase intent are limited in the purchase phase, which supports current CSR literature and further adds to the limited existing CSR literature on purchase intent within Business Schools.

Although participants do not seem to care so much in the pre-purchase phase, the findings did show that in the post-purchase evaluation stage, CSR does matter to the Executive Education customer. Overall awareness of the CSR mission was limited until now. The results showed that due to the specific characteristics of a high-involvement service, attempts to raise this CSR awareness, can enhance post-evaluation, with increasing satisfaction, worth-of mouth and (repeat) purchase intent as a result. These findings led to a revised suggested theoretical framework, further building on the limited available CSR literature on purchase intent within high-involvement professional services.

In general, the respondents felt that the CSR mission could be credible for an Executive Education department within a Business School, since it educates future leaders. Nevertheless, they did not feel the programmes were congruent with the CSR mission yet. This perceived congruence is necessary to ensure participants feel it is not just a marketing slogan. The latter could increase the risk of hypocrisy with a negative impact on satisfaction and purchase intent as result. Therefore, in order to enhance awareness and credibility, making changes in the Executive Education curriculum is advisable. Yet subtleness is key. Changes in CSR activities in the product-featured category are preferred over changes in Business Practices and Philanthropy. These findings further build on Peloza and Shang's (2011) formulated propositions and suggest an adjusted proposition and further research to test this.

Besides theoretical implications, these findings have several managerial implications for RSM Executive Education. RSM Executive Education can benefit from a well-thought out post-purchase communication strategy and CSR related changes in product related features and business practices as will be outlined in more detail in this dissertation.

In addition to a theoretical contribution to the existing CSR literature, the case narratives derived from these case studies, not only gave a very clear insight whether and how Executive Education customers care. The narratives also provide rich and refreshing details on the consumer's decision-making process and their reasons for selecting programmes at RSM from a broader perspective. This information is of vital importance for the Executive Education department and its Marketing & Sales team as it enables implementation of (communication) changes to improve this decision making process and to increase overall purchase intent.

As in all journeys, boundaries and bumps in the road came along, that asked for several choices with some limitations as a result; the limited amount of respondents, the low response rate of the triangulation survey, the limiting factor of only selecting the DPGM as cases, to name a few. Besides that these limitations provided reasons for further research and investigation, it were particularly these hiccups and limitations that thought me a great deal about the challenges that academic researchers come across. Consequently, this thesis was not only valuable from a theoretical and managerial point of view, but after 16 years of writing my last thesis, and working at this University, this thesis was also a valuable journey that enlarged my respect for all these passionate academics that I am surrounded by.

Biography

Malou Kroezen



Malou is a Learning & Development Manager with a strong track record in training & development, talent management, recruitment and HR. Passionate about developing & connecting people, Malou is the linking pin between client and faculty. Together with them, she develops customised executive development programmes, which unite the best of both, business and academic, worlds. Furthermore, Malou is programme director of the open enrolment programmes; Diploma Programme in General Management and the Advanced Management and Leadership Programme.

Malou has a master degree in International Business. She is very interested in the playing field between strategic corporate communication and talent development, one of the reasons she decided to do the Executive Master Corporate Communication.

Malou believes change is good and inevitable. With that in mind and heart, she strives to help future leaders to adapt to the ever-changing environment and to become a force for positive change.

Job Leeuwerke

Who am I? Who are we?

Organizational identification in Dutch homecare

This report describes and analyses the role of organizational identification in Dutch healthcare at three homecare organizations through a comparative case study. The hypothesis that the degree of organizational identification is higher at Buurtzorg than Omring and De Zorgcirkel is partly confirmed. Respondents of Buurtzorg show more signs of strong organizational identification in comparison with Omring and respondents of Omring show more signs of organizational identification than respondents of De Zorgcirkel. However Omring and Buurtzorg are close together on the degree of organizational identification. The findings in this report are not only relevant for further research, but also for decision makers in Dutch homecare regarding possible solutions of the current reputational issues.

The reputation of the Dutch healthcare industry is under pressure. Negative media coverage, a lack of healthcare professionals and increasing public costs are some important topics in this reputational issue. Exception however seems to be homecare organization Buurtzorg. Buurtzorg is mostly covered in the media and the public debate in a positive way (Buurtzorg, 2018).

If Buurtzorg is an exception in the way healthcare organizations are covered in comparison with other healthcare organizations, what does this mean for their employees and the level of organizational identification? The hypothesis in this research is that the degree of organizational identification is higher at Buurtzorg than the other two healthcare organizations.

The research question is:

What is the difference in the degree of organizational identification between employees of three Dutch healthcare organizations, why and how do these differences exist and what is the effect of them for the employees and organizations involved?

In order to find an answer to this question, a literature review and a qualitative research is conducted.

The objects of research are three Dutch homecare organizations: Omring, De Zorgcirkel and Buurtzorg.

Theoretical background

People tend to classify themselves in social groups in order to define themselves in social life (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Turner, 1985). This 'leads to activities that are congruent with the identity of and support for institutions that embody the identity, stereotypical perceptions of self and others' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989: 20). When people use membership of social groups to enhance or reinforce their sense-of self, the organization is an important social category and can become a large part of one's identity (Edwards, 2009). This social identification plays an essential role in the organizational environment (Van Dick et al., 2004). This form of identification is called organizational identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992). It is 'the perception of "oneness" with an organization' (Ashford and Mael, 1989: 20) and defined by Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994: 239) as 'the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization'.

Organizations have different levels of identity (Foreman and Whetten, 2002; Olkkonen and Lipponen, 2006). Members identify with multiple identities at the same time (Bartels et al., 2010) an organizational identification is also related to different organizational topics and work-related behaviours (Riketta, 2005).

Findings and conclusions

The hypothesis that the degree of organizational identification is higher at Buurtzorg is partly confirmed. Overall, respondents of Buurtzorg show more signs of strong organizational identification in comparison with Omring and respondents of Omring show more signs of strong organizational identification than respondents of De Zorgcirkel. However Omring and Buurtzorg are close together on the degree of organizational identification.

The (perceived) identity of Omring and Buurtzorg seems to be more clear and concrete. At Omring, respondents mention the innovative and progressive identity of the organization and at Buurtzorg, respondents mention autonomy, lack of management and the vision/slogan as important identity traits. At De Zorgcirkel there is a lack of a clear and concrete perceived identity.

Buurtzorg seems to have organized some important factors, that can create strong organizational identification, better. At Buurtzorg there seems to be almost no gap between the perceived and desired identity, respondents seem to be more satisfied with the organization on a superordinate level, disidentification/distinctiveness focuses on organizations who do have different layers of management and another organizational structure, organizational communication is perceived as good and transparent and the organization is perceived as supportive.

Omring and Buurtzorg are close together on the level of organizational identification where the following results apply for both organizations: a strong fit between the personal and organizational identity, a more positive and

concrete perceived organizational identity and several examples of members who experience the organizational accomplishments, both positive and negative, as their own. At De Zorgcirkel, identification with the organization as a whole seems less strong. These respondents in particular identify with the region of De Zorgcirkel they work for.

Identification on group-level is high in all three organizations. This may indicate that the kind of people who work in healthcare are quite focused on personal relationships. Respondents of Omring and De Zorgcirkel show higher levels of identification with their profession than respondents of Buurtzorg and respondents of Buurtzorg show higher levels of identification with the organization as a whole. The interpretation of this result can be that members identify first and foremost with their own profession/career when the organizational identity is less attractive and vice versa.

Remarkable insight from this research is that in all three organizations the construct of organizational appreciation seems to be of great influence on organizational identification.

Results show that the reputation of the industry has an influence on the way respondents identify with their organization and work. Leaders and communication professionals in Dutch homecare should investigate how they can work together on improving this reputational issue.

Results of this research show that if an organization has a strong perceived organizational identity, strong organizational support, transparent vertical communication and strong leadership which focuses on creating a feeling of oneness and appreciation, a high degree of organizational identification is to be expected. This can contribute to the organizational performance, the overall reputation of the industry and to a possible solution to the shortage of healthcare professionals.

Biography

Job Leeuwerke



After graduating from the School of Communication Management (Hogeschool of Utrecht), Job Leeuwerke (1981) graduated from the University of Amsterdam in 2007 where he earned his master's degree in Communication Science. After this he started working for healthcare organization Omring as a communications professional. In these years he was promoted several times with the result that he is currently a member of the management team and ultimately responsible for all corporate communications. Omring has 3.500 employees and services 10.000 people with the right healthcare.

Job has a special interest in internal communications, storytelling and organizational change. However, he is typically an all-round professional. Besides communications, he is also interested in other organizational issues in the area of strategy and leadership.

Colleagues typify Job as a very social, reliable and creative member of the organization. He can easily adapt to different organizational environments and has the ability to get accepted within all layers of the organization. This talent is vital in formulating and implementing effective communication strategies.

At the moment he lives in Alkmaar with his girlfriend Eline and his son, Guus.

To contact Job, please visit his LinkedIn profile: [linkedin.com/in/jobleeuwerke](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jobleeuwerke) .

The crisis is the story

Using strategic storytelling in crisis communication and crisis management

Storytelling has become increasingly important in corporate communication. That in itself is not really surprising because the telling of stories is mankind's oldest way of communicating ideas and sharing information with an audience. We live and breathe stories, we live in a landscape of make-believe and stories give us the superpower to create and spin fantasies. Even sporting events and criminal trials unfold and are told as exciting narratives, which draws people in and keeps them wanting to know more. As has been identified, people tend to be more interested in stories about mistakes, failures and small disasters, as well as embarrassing moments, personal tragedies and everyday conflicts. We apparently need a little bit of thrill in our stories, but still want and need that happy ending. Yet, looking at many organizational stories, that little piece of crisis we yearn for is often missing. Organizational stories tend to focus more on the positive and try to paint a positive picture for its audiences, but its audiences are most likely more interested in reading about the issues and crises the company had to face and how they solved it. That juxtaposition is what drew me towards the question – what about strategic storytelling in crisis communication?

Since I believe in the untapped potential of storytelling as a crisis management tool, the purpose of the research is to explore, discover and offer a better understanding of what storytelling can do for an organization in times of crisis. The purpose of this study is therefore to look at if and in what way strategic storytelling can positively and effectively contribute to crisis communication.

Literature

Considering how natural stories come to us and the fact that we are mostly interested in stories about (small) crises and conflicts, there is surprisingly little research available on storytelling in crisis situations and crisis communication. Even the research on storytelling in the field of corporate communication is limited and often performed by experienced storytelling professionals. This was not just a challenging factor to overcome, but made the research infinitely more interesting to me.

To attempt to objectively prove storytelling's potential and added value in crisis communication, this research attempted to combine findings that resulted from the literature review on storytelling as well as on crisis communication by identifying the overlapping, complementary and contradicting elements.

By combining the two subjects, it was possible to gain new insights that underlined the relevance of this study. Interesting to note is that the literature review seems to confirm the added value of storytelling. And furthermore suggests a CEO should take center stage during a large-scale crisis and should incorporate a clear apology and lessons learned within their story. At the same time they will have to keep in mind the type of story that would achieve the intended results.

Research

This research offers new insights into storytelling in crisis communication not just by combining academic research available on both subjects, but also by presenting a basic framework for communication professionals to be used in crisis communication. To be able to develop the framework, this exploratory study used a comparative case study approach.

To be able to objectively test whether or not storytelling can be of added value in crisis communication, a number of propositions were formed, based on an extensive literature review. Thereafter three primary cases were selected as research subjects. The propositions would be checked against the initial conclusions and used to draft

a preliminary framework. The complete package of data for these three cases consisted out of both primary and secondary data. To test the validity and robustness of the framework, I looked at three additional cases. These existing propositions were again checked against the secondary cases, which were built solely on secondary sources. The research used the pattern-matching theory to analyze these propositions, properly test their validity and decide on which ones can be accepted and which ones should be rejected. To ensure objectivity of the research, the formulated propositions and accompanying questions were summarized in a matrix and used as the basis for the final framework.

Findings

Although according to the literature review storytelling is perfectly suitable for crisis communication, reality seems to be more complicated than that. In essence, the data confirms the added value of storytelling in crisis communication and while it also shows the importance of the so-called Hero's journey (as identified by Joseph Campbell) in storytelling, yet in a way it also refutes the belief that all steps of the journey need to be present for it to be a successful story. The framework shows what elements the Hero's Journey should at least be present in crisis communication at specific times during a crisis. The number of elements of the Hero's Journey present in the organization's communication efforts steadily increases over the course of time and as the crisis further develops.

In the post-crisis stage, all organizations researched use almost all elements of the Hero's journey. It could be argued that while in the beginning of the crisis the organization is mostly focused on informing stakeholders about the situation that occurred and provide more information about what happened and what was happening to resolve the issue, later on organization feel the need to get their side of the story out and really tell what happened.

In summary, based on this study it can be concluded that strategic storytelling appears to be a contributing factor in the overall reception and evaluation of the crisis, directly impacting the reputation and brand value of the organization.

Recommendations

Considering the limited research available on storytelling and the exploratory nature of the study, there are countless opportunities for communication professionals to further research and prove the added value of storytelling in crisis communication. Further research can also be focused on identifying the limitations or possible consequences of using a more narrative approach in crisis communication. I hope in the future that the body of research will match the quantity of the times storytelling is used and that storytelling will be increasingly used in crisis communication to really make the audience see and feel the organization's side of the story.

Biography

Veronique van Ede-Lefel

(1988)



Veronique van Ede - Lefel (1988) considers herself to be a corporate communication enthusiast and has, since the beginning of her career, dedicated herself to learning as much as possible about corporate communication and its many disciplines. Through work and study, she has been able to grow into an all-round and experienced communication professional with an already strong background in various disciplines of corporate communication. During her journey she developed a specific interest in internal communication, crisis communication, leadership communication and overall reputation management.

Veronique is currently global internal communication specialist at Royal IHC. In this position she is, among other things, responsible for the internal

communication for and about a global and large-scale organizational change. Within this role she especially focuses on leadership communication, employee engagement, reputation management and, of course, storytelling.

In her free time, Veronique enjoys traveling, spending time with friends and family and enjoying good food with a good glass of (red) wine. She's happiest when she gets to learn new things or gets to know new people.

Veronique lives in Rotterdam with her husband Wibout and their two daughters: Olivia ('15) and Harper ('18).

David McCann

Ten years after the crash – What have we learnt?

The changing relationships between communication, governance and reputation in the UK banking sector

The financial crisis of 2008 represents a watershed for the global Financial Services industry. At an industry, corporate, and personal level, reputations were destroyed. Whilst governments and regulators were left to consider their role in events, customers and bank personnel were left questioning the wisdom of their bank senior leadership. Where was the governance that would have prevented such a disaster and why did nobody tell us what was going on?

Royal Bank of Scotland - Governance, Communication and Reputation

The financial support elicited from the UK Government by the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) ensured that it would become the 'poster boy' for all that was wrong with the financial services industry. The bailout guaranteed that the media would maintain a healthy interest in monitoring and reporting on the investment made by the UK Government, and the scale of the bailout ensured that previously passive or ignored stakeholders would have access to the media through whom they could voice an opinion regarding the future state and developments at RBS. For RBS, the situation also ensured that external stakeholders would have an unprecedented opportunity to influence the future direction and agenda regarding bank strategy.

Method

A comprehensive assessment of the Annual Reports issued by RBS between 2005 and 2017 was conducted. Whilst there recognised limitations relating to a study stemming from the sole focus of communication derived from reviewing RBS annual reports, the issuing of the annual report into the public domain is usually a significant enough 'event' in order to guarantee both the reporting of and the interpretation of the contents by the general media. As the general media are usually the main or significant source of information for many stakeholders, it was considered that reviewing the content and messaging to be of significance with regards to possible reputational impact. The central goal of the investigation remained to identify insight

and learnings that could be applied beyond the realms of RBS to other companies looking to affect reputational improvements by leveraging governance as a key driver.

A framework to capture Insight.

To assess how the role of governance and communication developed over time, it was necessary to collate and present the evidence around a set framework. This was derived from an initial review of the annual reports and comprised of the following:

- a. Structure of Governance - How the organizational structure of RBS evolved in order to affect better governance provided insight as to the strategic importance leadership placed on governance as a driver of recovery and improved reputation.
- b. Internal Attitude - Intended to draw insight regarding the notion, mindset and beliefs leadership placed on governance and the value it was assigned as a driver of recovery and improved reputation.
- c. Focus of Messaging – Consideration of the messaging conveyed and the reaction of stakeholders, as an indicator of how effective governance based communication was at engaging and building trust.
- d. External Influences – Assessment as to whether external stakeholders (if any) had the power to change / influence governance practices at RBS.
- e. Primary arbiter of effective governance – How this changed over time and a possible indicator of complexity associated with engaging with multiple stakeholders in order to drive reputational improvement.

	2005 – 2007 Pre-Crisis	2008 Crisis	2009 – 2012 Turnaround Part 1	2013 – 2017 Turnaround Part 2
Strategic Objective	Rapid Growth fueled by acquisition / cheap monies	Emergency actions to stave off insolvency	Business restructuring, clean up and cementing foundations for growth	Returning to Normal - a new state defined
Structure of Governance	Procedural, traditional, membership predisposed to group thinking. Limited scope of Board sub-committees	Initially confused as CEO and most board members leave. Restated KPIs focus on managing risk	First Structural change – additional Board sub-committee set up to manage risk	New CEO and expanded Board sub-committees for Divisional and restructuring oversight.
Internal Attitude	Functional compliance deemed sufficient – Internal focused	Focus on risk aversion. Internal governance seen as way to regain control	Reputation noted as damaged – governance at Board level signaled inadequate – review conducted by outside experts	Significant Change - New Values launched. Further reviews of process conducted by external experts
Focus on Messaging	Limited explanation Credibility and competence proven by results	New Chairman – noticeable change. Acknowledged pain of customers, employees & shareholders	Stated wish to be admired - Improved openness and transparency – honesty remains questionable	KPIs defined and publically shared around trust and advocacy
External Influence	Limited – Predisposition to self regulation = freedom to act as best saw fit	UK FI (The UK Government) become the single most influence external driver	UK FI, Domestic Regulators, General Public – influenced by media reports	Complexity remains – highly political
Main Arbiter of Governance	The RBS Board	The RBS Board and an ‘hands off’ government investor	Superficially the RBS Board – In reality government plays a more significant role – strained relationship	The RBS Board & Government - relationship improving

The overall findings are summarized in the graphic above

Analysis & Learning

There is clear evidence to suggest:

- A significant development in the role and scope of governance since the crisis, moving from a position of internal focus and functional passive compliance, to an externally aligned active driver of reputation.
- RBS do align messaging and information to resonate with the differing concerns of various stakeholders in an attempt to drive reputational benefit - this similarly reflects that businesses today are subject to greater external stakeholder scrutiny than ever before.
- RBS uses the Annual Report and the topic of governance as a vehicle to frame messaging in order provide context and understanding for consideration by different stakeholders. This they employed successfully to secure bonuses for employees despite overall losses by posturing a choice - Pay a bonus and retain the talent required to turn the business profitable, or don't, and run the risk of losing the talent.
- RBS employ governance to address agency issues in a number of ways. These include: reform around rules and the acceptability of financial risk criteria in the business, establishing values and code of conduct for employees, encouraging the board to formally engage externally with stakeholders. These undertakings help mitigate overall risk by building a common understanding of the real worth RBS has to wider society.
- By openly stating a commitment to report against measures of advocacy and trust, RBS institutionalizes a continuing commitment to that openness and transparency. This has already produced results, as the bank has been invited to contribute to the rules and regulations surrounding future UK Corporate Governance reform. In effect, if a company wants

to be part of the future decision making forum, embracing such reforms appears an effective method to secure inclusion.

- This is perhaps the overriding practical implication of the study, in that by embracing governance reform and communicating openly as such, reputational improvement can be achieved.

Further Research

A study that centers on merely one institution might be considered to be a little suspect in terms of applying learning or insights to all other similar type institutions. It would therefore be appropriate to utilize the framework and apply it to a number of other institutions in order to determine commonality or conclude that the example set out by RBS is unique. Similarly the sole focus on the Annual Report as a means of communicating with stakeholders may also be considered a limitation – A widened review of communication material dispatched by RBS would rebalance the weight of the annual report, and thus more closely reflect reality.

The study relies on the subjective interpretation of messaging. Whilst review of the reports was done around a fixed framework, no attempt was made to capture or model data in the text of the reports from which quantitative analysis could be drawn in order to support or dismiss hypotheses linking governance, media communication and reputational outcome. As such future research utilizing ‘content analysis’ driven by the identification and coding of key words, themes and topics could provide valuable quantitative insight into identifying linkage between governance, media communication and reputational outcome at industry level.

Biography

David McCann



David McCann is a dual national UK/German Marketing professional. He is a Business Management graduate from Trinity College, Leeds University (1992) and holds a postgraduate diploma in Marketing from the University of Huddersfield (2007). His career has included local, regional and global roles within Henkel, Carlsberg and Ecolab, and has had the opportunity to travel accordingly with assignment in the UK, Germany, Australia, Austria and Switzerland. In his spare time he is an avid follower of Huddersfield Town AFC and enjoys travelling, reading and sports.

He is married to Lydia and they have 2 children. They live in Langenfeld, Germany.

Laurens J. Ohlenroth

Towards a contemporary perspective for organizations dealing with social inclusion and diversity issues

This thesis turns the lens of wicked problems to issues associated with racism, homo- and transphobia and xenophobia. The initial objective is to gain a more systematic insight into how organizations should deal with these social inclusion and diversity issues. As the introduction presents evidence that these issues are wicked problems, a deeper understanding of this concept will support corporations to manage them. The following research question is addressed in this work:

How should organizations deal with social inclusion and diversity issues such as racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia?

The literature review presents an overview of reflections about the concept of wicked problems. Furthermore, it explains that three developments have contributed to the increasing visibility of wicked problems: the Internet and the rise of social media, the way corporations operate in the 21st century, and the growing pluralism of Western societies. Finally, four contemporary ways of dealing with wicked problems are investigated, including a paradigm shift to problem-solving, stakeholder involvement, influencing the social discourse, and social issue management.

The qualitative research, based on Grounded Theory, was conducted by consulting 14 experts during 12 interviews and through conducting desk research. The interviews generated two main results. Interviewees confirmed the conceptual lens of 'wickedness' that was chosen to investigate social inclusion and diversity issues. They described the social and inclusion issues: first, complex, multi-layered, comprised of many elements and possibly unresolvable; second, related to social contexts and to personal belief systems; and third, involving organizations as well as politicians and actors.

Using the interviews, a framework, on how to effectively dealing with social inclusion and diversity issues was deduced. The framework consists of three category's which cover a total of seven strategies. The framework recommends organizations:

- A** To approach complex problems differently:
 - To look at the issue from a variety of perspectives;
 - To improve the problem-solving process;
 - To act according to what the organization stands for.
- B** To involve and engage stakeholders:
 - To collaborate with a variety of groups;
 - To listen (to contradictory points of view and to listen more carefully).
- C** To design more effective communications:
 - To be clear about what the organization is dealing with;
 - To tune the organization's tone of voice and messaging.

As the identified strategies offered some first exploratory insights on effectively dealing with social inclusion and diversity issues, they were in need for

further testing. This was done by investigating the degree to which these strategies had been used by four organizations which faced challenges in dealing with these issues: the National Police, NS, HEMA and Suitsupply. This desk research was conducted by analyzing a great number of offline and online media coverages. To complete the desk research additional experts were consulted.

Applying the framework to these cases revealed that all identified strategies were apparent in the relatively more successful case and less apparent in the relatively unsuccessful cases. Thereby, cautionary evidence was found that the identified strategies are important to consider when dealing with social inclusion problems and diversity issues. The application of the framework highlighted the importance of two strategies in particular: *to look at the issue from a variety of perspectives (strategy 1a)*; and *to act according what you stand for (strategy 1c)*.

When integrating the results of both the interviews and the desk research it becomes clear that organizations need to change the way they define problems and solutions. As social inclusion and diversity issues are first *social*, defining them is a *social* process as well: organizations need to invite others to the table to discuss the problem definition. As this, to a certain extent, was already recommended by Rittel in the 1970s and Conklin and Weil in the 1990s, in the twenty-first century organizations may need to apply a next level in stakeholder management: organizations should consider to move from *taking initiatives* and *inviting* others to their table to *monitoring* which *initiatives* have already been undertaken and *joining* others who already are discussing the issue or problem. When involving and engaging with stakeholders, organizations should take special care of diverging values, including its own values. Before exploring common values and a collective problem definition, diverging group identities should be validated.

This thesis adds to existing literature by providing a framework and a set of strategies that may guide organizations in approaching such wicked problems. By applying a more suitable approach to wicked problems, organizations may decrease any impact of controversies on strategy execution. Although it is uncertain whether controversies can be prevented, tempering them is worth trying because that may weaken discomfort between groups, and hence, decrease further societal polarization.

Since the Sustainability Development Goals of the United Nations include reducing inequality based on for example, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, the recommended framework and strategies might gain further importance.

The framework and its strategies plea for corporate communications departments that enable organizations to listen more carefully to others who have a stake in society and team up with them, including future generations. In this respect, the corporate communications department is a full partner in strategy development.

Biography

Laurens J. Ohlenroth



Laurens (1975) is an all-round communications professional with almost 20 years of experience in corporate communications, internal communications and public affairs.

He earned a Master of Arts in Urban Planning from the Radboud University of Nijmegen in 1999. By then he had started working with NS. Soon he found out that stakeholder- and issues management were a better fit than urban planning. From 2001 until 2012 he helped NS maintaining relationships with a variety of stakeholders: the Municipality of Amsterdam, the Ministry for Infrastructure, consumer interest groups and representatives of the European Union and international railway institutions. In 2012 he took on his first position as a manager of communications at NedTrain, the largest company in maintenance of rolling stock. Early 2017, he joined the corporate communications team of NS.

Social inclusion, communications and writing are the three red threads in his life, which he brought together in his master thesis. He cares for social inclusion because people are still being excluded, ignored or bullied on the basis of, for example, gender or sexual preference. As a consequence, they sometimes feel depressed or even commit suicide. Therefore, inclusion is a matter of humanity – of taking care for one another.

To contact Laurens, please visit his LinkedIn profile.

Dorin Panfil

Does The Stock Market Really Value Reputation? The Value of a Strong Reputation

Reputation is said to be the most valuable intangible asset of a company. Companies with great reputations are able to attract stakeholders and align them with their objectives. The same is said to be true when it comes to investors – it is assumed that they are willing to pay more for a share of a highly reputable company than for a share of a company with similar financial performance but with a lower reputation. But is it really true and how much more are they willing to pay for reputation? The goal of this Master's thesis is to contribute to the discussions regarding the value attributed to reputation by equity markets through substantiating that the stock markets highly value reputations.

Previous relevant research indicate the lack of a shared view on the issue related to the value attached to reputation by financial markets. There are studies that point to a direct link between good corporate reputation and increased market value of the underlying company. Some of them even take a step further and reveal the superior performance of the equities of reputable companies on the markets. However, other studies reject this causal effect and claim that they have not found evidence on the increased value generated by corporate reputation. Moreover, there are some that even state that good reputation can have the opposite effect and be detrimental for market performance of some companies.

Nevertheless, the majority of research conclude that markets pay close attention to reputation and tend to factor its value in equity prices.

Analyzing the previous research, I have identified their following limitations:

1. The majority of the previous research base their analyses on comparisons of differently weighted portfolios of maximum 40 reputable companies to the Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500). The S&P 500 vast composition prevents it from being an equal direct comparison benchmark for the high reputation portfolios, which by definition cannot be as representative as S&P 500. At the same time, different formula of allocation in portfolios that are compared can generate misleading results.
2. Previous research mostly use the Fortune's "America's Most Admired Companies" ranking as basis for the portfolios of highly reputable companies whose performance is tested against the wider market. Using only a limited number of rankings in testing the performance of highly reputable companies restricts the analysis to the selection criteria employed by those particular rankings.
3. There is very limited research that has analyzed the behavior of reputable companies in extended times of market volatility and their ability to recover from market corrections.

In order to evaluate the value financial markets attribute to reputation as well as to address the aforementioned limitations of the previous research, this Master's thesis is testing the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1

A portfolio composed of the top 30 reputable US companies outperforms the Dow Johns Industrial Average (DJIA).

To test it, the performance of four High Reputation Portfolios (HRP) based on MetaRep, RepTrak, Interbrand, and Fortune reputation rankings were compared within a timeframe of 5 years to that of the Dow Jones Industrial Average to establish their ability to outperform the DJIA. The HRPs have been built respecting DJIA's formula of allocation and the latter's number of components. As a result, all HRPs have increased their value in 5 years at a degree that led to outperforming the DJIA in high double digits. From April 15, 2013 to April 17, 2018, DJIA has increased its value by 68,32%, while the value of MetaRep HRP increased by 131.49%, RepTrak HRP by 138.9%, Fortune HRP by 124,15% and Interbrand HRP by 126,66%.

Hypothesis 2

Reputation can reduce the impact of market corrections/downturns on the share price of highly reputable companies and can expedite restoration of their value compared to broader market.

This hypothesis is tested by comparing the behavior of the MetaRep HRP to the Standard & Poor's 500 within the market correction that took place in 2018. The objective is to observe the ability of reputation to reduce the impact of excess volatility within market corrections on the share prices of reputable companies and to foster the recovery of their value compared to S&P 500. The results proved that the MetaRep HRP in its market capitalization-weighting version, used also by the Standard & Poor's index, has been less affected by the market correction than the S&P 500. The MetaRep HRP has outperformed the S&P 500 during the correction by roughly 4 percent with a considerably lower standard deviation, which indicates that the HRP has been also less volatile during the correction than the index. To exclude the market capitalization allocation factor that has been favorable to MetaRep HRP, the way the HRP would have behaved during the correction should its components be allocated equal amount of weight in the portfolio has also been tested. The MetaRep HRP in the equally weighting formula has as well outperformed the S&P 500. An investment in MetaRep HRP during the 2018 correction would have lost 1,76% less value compared to the same investment in the S&P 500.

The results revealed by this Master's thesis corroborate the findings of previous research that indicate a direct link between good corporate reputation and increased market value as well as superior performance of the equities of the underlying companies. The impressive outperformance of the DJIA by all High Reputation Portfolios in the high double digits levels as well the lower volatility and faster recovery of the MetaRep HRP compared to S&P 500 within the 2018 market correction confirm the hypotheses addressed in this thesis. Thus, the thesis validates the assumption that reputation is highly valued by the financial markets and it can be a feasible and a powerful criterion in selecting components of portfolios with the aim to outperform the wider market and weather the effects of market downturns.

Biography

Dorin Panfil



After graduating in 2000 the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest, Romania, Dorin Panfil joined the diplomatic service of the Republic of Moldova. Next 14 years, he served in different capacities within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, managing to advance from attaché to the position of head of division. 6 years out 14 in the foreign service, he spent in the Embassy of Moldova in Washington DC. His last tenure in the Moldovan diplomatic service was Minister Counselor, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Moldovan Embassy in the United States.

In 2014, Dorin decided to challenge himself and switched from diplomacy to private sector. This decision had been driven by his predilection for business and finance. In 2015, D. Panfil joined the Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication at the Rotterdam School of Management willing to expand his theoretical knowledge in business while combining it with his previous experience in communication.

Dorin is passionate about investing and trading stocks on financial markets. He is married, with two handsome boys of 4 and 6 years old.

Engaged to be merged

In 2017, NN Group combined the activities of the Dutch/Belgian insurer Delta Lloyd with the Dutch and Belgian activities of NN Group. Based on many studies, scholars refer to the low success rates of mergers often due to the human factor. Engaged employees are seen as a powerful asset but engagement is also likely to drop as result of a merger.

The objective of this thesis is to combine the results of agency-driven surveys and explore if being ready, feeling willing and being able to change relates to engagement and if this relationship depends on belonging to the acquired or the acquiring company. These insights might help organisations to prioritise their change and communication efforts during a merger.

Combining change and engagement models

Many studies have researched the attitude towards change and engagement, but in the literature less research is found on the direct relation between readiness for change and engagement. The theoretical review provides an analysis of definitions on change and engagement and the relationship between both. Combining the change model of Oreg (2006) with the engagement model of Saks (2006) and the change beliefs as described by Armenakis (2007) forms the basis of the conceptual model and hypothesis as shown in figure 1 and 2. In this study engagement is defined as Intention to Stay and Organisational Commitment. The organisational readiness for change is defined by being ready, feeling willing and being able to change and measures how employees feel about organisational readiness.

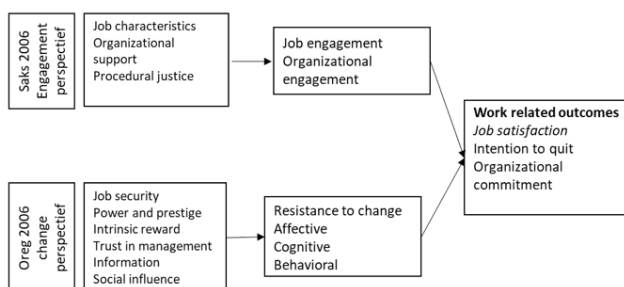


Figure 1 Combined models of Saks and Oreg.

Ready questions measures if employees see the problem and, therefore, the need for change and find the solution to be appropriate. This emphasises the important role of leadership in explaining the need for change, setting the direction and roadmap for change and getting employees behind the change.

Willing questions measure if employees are willing to embrace the change because they see the valance of the change and perceive principal support. The valance of change is seen in personal benefits, for example, more inspiring jobs, more responsibilities or personal development. Procedural justice is important in how these benefits are distributed and if this is perceived as fair. Leadership plays an important role in this.

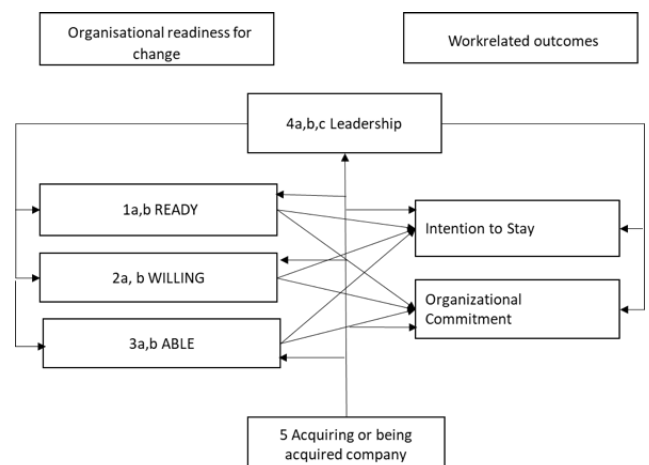


Figure 2 Theoretical model with study hypothesis

Being able measures the capability of management to change and questions the organisational culture. As ready and willing addresses attitude, able refers to actual behaviour and organisational efficacy.

The underlying factors in the models of Oreg and Saks: job characteristics, job security, power and prestige, intrinsic reward, organisational support, trust in management, information and procedural justice, are related to the change beliefs of Armenakis as well as the work-related outcomes: Intention to Stay and Organisational Commitment. Therefore it is expected that employees who feel that the organisation is ready for change have a higher Intention to Stay and Organisational Commitment. Leadership plays an important role in the underlying factors and is seen as a strong influencer of readiness for change as well as for engagement. Therefore the influence of leadership is researched separately towards organisational readiness for change as well as engagement.

Findings

Being ready, feeling willing, and belonging to the acquired or the acquiring company are related to Intention to Stay and Organisational Commitment. Employees who feel their company is ready for change are more organisational committed and have a higher intention to stay. Both being ready and feeling willing are strong predictors for engagement but the most strong predictor is leadership. Leadership fully mediates the effect of being ready and feeling willing towards Intention to Stay and partially towards Organisational Commitment. With this case study organisational readiness for change and the importance of leadership as influencers for engagement is confirmed.

Being able was not related to Intention to Stay nor to Organisational Commitment, nor to leadership and this seems to be in contradiction to studies in which trust in senior management is seen as important factor to successfully merge companies. As being able defines actual behaviour, the questions on behaviour might be too early to judge for the respondents and the scores might have been influenced by previous behaviour of senior management. As the able questions in the agency-based survey only explore capabilities of the organisation and culture, no conclusions can be drawn on the influence of the in literature described self-efficacy.

Conclusion and limitations

The simplified framework covers the areas of organisational readiness for change and engagement. The results of an agency-based survey can indicate organisational readiness for change which in itself serves as an indicator for engagement. Due to possible multicollinearity between being ready and feeling willing questions and the importance of leadership, it is advised to check agency-based surveys on leadership related questions and make sure also principal support toward individuals is addressed. Further research on the capabilities of senior management and organisational culture in relation to organisational readiness and engagement is advised.

The continues focus on readiness for organisational change and the importance of leadership for this gives practical implication for communication departments. Organisational readiness for change should be a constant in messaging and actions. Communication departments should not only support senior leadership in explaining the need for change, but also (direct) managers should be supported in their role to in turn support team members during constant change and in particular during major changes as these changes have impact on managers themselves.

References

- Armenakis, A., Bernerth, J., Pitts, J. & Walker, H. 2007, "Organizational Change Recipients' Beliefs Scale", *The Journal of applied behavioral science*.
- Oreg, S. 2006, "Personality, context, and resistance to organizational change", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*.
- Saks, A.M. 2006, "Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*.

Biography

Regina te Raa



Regina te Raa graduated with a teaching degree in biology and chemistry in the early 1980s and switched careers after two years of teaching. With experience as an intermediary at Randstad uitzendbureau, she became operational manager at ING in the early 1990s. Within ING, Regina again changed careers, becoming Human Resources communications manager. She learned the communications profession on the job, and was valued for professionalising HR and CLA communications.

In 2011, following the split from ING, Regina choose NN Group and was part of the CLA negotiation team that co-created the first NN CLA together with

the trade unions. With this renewed approach, NN Group won the social innovation prize of the Dutch employers association (AWVN) in 2012. Regina became a member of the corporate communications team in 2013, and contributed to the independence of NN Group with the role out of several global employee and values programmes. In 2014 she started the Master in Corporate Communication at Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus University and graduated in 2018. Regina is married, has three adult children and lives in Heemstede.

Lydia Verkerk

'Better services' or 'Big brother is watching you'?

Influencing citizens' legitimacy judgement

Privacy is under pressure due to rapid technological developments. It seems to put pressure on the relationship between government organisations and citizens. The legitimacy of the exchange of personal data of citizens and the use of data analytics and profiling techniques gets questioned in the media on a regular basis. Opinion leaders do not question if it is legitimate by law, but if it is according 'social standards of appropriateness' (Lenz & Viola, 2017). This two-sided approach of legitimacy has been the starting point of my research.

In order to answer my research questions, I have carried out an extensive literature review, aimed at creating contextual clarity about legitimacy as concept. Based on prior research from Lenz and Viola (2017) I have developed a conceptual framework. Through qualitative research I have searched for deepening of my conceptual framework. For this purpose, I have interviewed 13 respondents all active for central and local government organisations, social sector and in science, leading to some interesting observations.

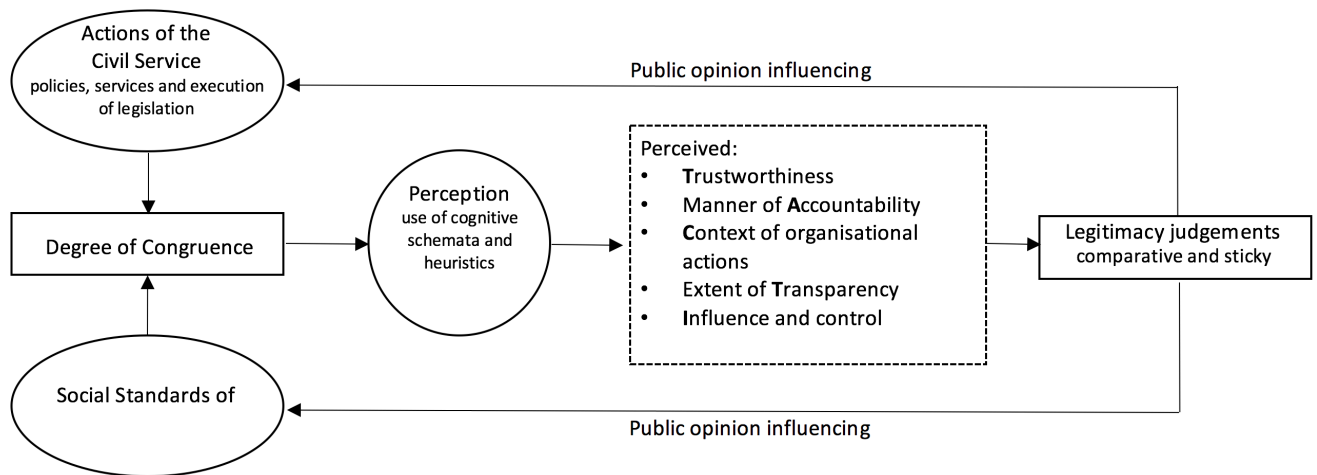
Legitimacy seems to have two sides: a normative side (are the actions of government organisations in line with laws and regulations?) and a societal side (does it comply with citizens' standards and values of appropriateness?). These two sides should be in balance - or there should be 'congruence' (Lenz & Viola, 2017) - for actions of the civil service to be *perceived* as legitimate.

Since a legitimacy judgement is influenced by a citizens' perception, it is interesting to know how citizens perceive the exchange of their data and the use of data-analytics and profiling techniques? I have not found any study into the perception of data subjects, however my research suggest that perceptions can be sceptical but most of all: paradoxical and in motion. It suggest that citizens think that privacy is important but that there are not too much privacy concerns when it comes to government organisations using their data for delivering integrated services.

One may question: is there then a legitimacy issue? During my research several respondents touched upon ethics which I believe makes the legitimacy issue very topical. Who decides what is ethically just behaviour? Knowing that the public opinion is in not in balance and citizens are paradoxical when it comes to their privacy, the civil service itself might have to develop a new yardstick now of what is ethical just when it comes to the use of these new technologies.

Another observation is in the field of communication. My research suggests that opinion leaders let themselves be heard and government organisations are struggling with how to respond adequately. As a result, government organisations might become the ball in the game of activists who influence a citizen's legitimacy judgement in a negative way. What can influence a citizens' legitimacy judgement? My respondents did seem to support my line of reasoning that **trust, accountability, context, transparency, influence** and **control** and **communication** are drivers that can influence a legitimacy judgement, as visualised in the figure on the next page. In my thesis you read how.

Based on the literature review, personal experience and my research I dare to conclude that next to the drivers, public opinion formation is essential for influencing a legitimacy judgement and requires a more orchestrated approach, bringing me to the overarching question of my research: What can influence the (perceived) legitimacy of government organisations exchanging personal



Conceptual framework

data of citizens and using data-analytics and profiling techniques? Firstly, by awareness of the necessity of striking a balance between what is lawful and what is socially acceptable and since this is in motion: what is ethically responsible. Secondly, by behaving more as 'one government organisation' as my research suggests. Than citizens see data exchange as a logical consequence of the cooperation between multiple organisations. Thirdly by developing a legitimacy management strategy in which the interaction between government organisations and citizens is an important pillar.

Naturally my research has its limitations. It was aimed at finding conceptual clarity and not at theory building. Research into the actual perception of citizens should, in my opinion, be another subject for future research. It is reasonable to expect that the technological possibilities with data will grow. Under what conditions do citizens think data exchange, analytics and profiling remains acceptable? What drivers have to most impact on a citizens' legitimacy judgement? Are there differences across the Dutch population? A more citizen centric view begins with actual knowledge. Future research can be part of a triple or quadruple helix consortium in close cooperation with the scientific field.

Biography

Lydia Verkerk



Lydia Verkerk is a senior communications advisor, with an inborn curiosity about ICT and innovation, is driven to work towards a better digital government. 'As I have extensive experience working for Dutch government organisations and for ICT service providers, I speak both languages, which has added value in my work.'

Over the past fifteen years, Lydia has fulfilled various roles, ranging from: consultancy and writing jobs to permanent and interim positions in management. She is quick to familiarise herself with new environments and easily forges relationships.

Lydia has a keen eye for the interests of various stakeholders. And, whenever a project is being 'critically' followed, she certainly feels right in her element.

Her professional interests lie mainly in the field of internal communication and change communication within complex projects.

During her year of graduation, Lydia worked on a major governmental data project entailing a collaboration between more than 1,000 civil servants from over 250 government organisations.

Gineke Wilms

The role of CSR in building consumer brand preference for food retailers

The attention for Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, has been growing as an effect of increased transparency and an increased consciousness towards environmental and societal issues. Food retailers, because of their economic impact and their bridge function to end consumers, are embracing CSR in their business strategies. These efforts are increasingly rewarded by consumers; according to the Deloitte Consumentenonderzoek 2017 a growing number of 19% of the Dutch consumers choose for supermarkets who act socially responsible. However, less than 33% would switch to another supermarket because of their CSR policy. The latter number is only one indication for the challenge food retail is facing when attempting to attract (new) customers, as consumers primarily choose their supermarket based on other, functional attributes, such as location, assortment and pricing level.

With lots of literature confirming the positive effects of CSR on a company's performance (e.g. Prout, 2006; Luo and Du, 2015; Brown and Dacin, 1997) and on a company's image and reputation (e.g. Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001), it is relevant for managers and strategy makers to understand the role of CSR in the next step in the hierarchy of effects: brand preference (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961). Brand preference is not only an evaluation of a company (Keskin and Yildiz, 2010), preference arises from a comparison (Wu, 2001) and a prioritization (Singh et al, 2008). In that way brand preference really says something about the intention of a person to buy at a certain store. This research aims to explore what the role of CSR is in building consumer brand preference for food retailers, which can be of help for making well-considered choices for the role of CSR in business and marketing strategy.

Therefore, three hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Awareness about CSR activities has a positive influence on the importance of the role of CSR in consumer brand preference

Hypothesis 2: The most effective channel to increase awareness of CSR in food retail is the store

Hypothesis 3: Perceived value from CSR activities is of influence on the importance of the role of CSR in consumer brand preference

In order to test these hypotheses, an online survey was conducted among Dutch consumers, gathering data of 514 respondents. It is shown that when consumers are straightforwardly asked what aspects are playing a role in their choice and in their preference for a supermarket, CSR aspects are indicated as playing the smallest role of all provided aspects. A deeper look at CSR aspects shows that societal activities (philanthropy) play the smallest role and following law and regulations the biggest. Functional aspects, mainly quality of the products, pricing level, assortment and location, are indicated as most important in both store choice as in preference. Looking further, the results show that awareness about societal activities is significantly of influence on the importance of the role of CSR in brand preference. In other words, the more a consumer is aware of societal activities of supermarkets, the less functional attributes and the more CSR aspects – except philanthropy – are indicated as being of influence in preference for a supermarket.

In addition, it is seen that CSR activities that are recognised (top of mind and aided awareness) are indicated as being positively of influence on the image of the supermarket.

Looking at communication channels, it is shown that the supermarket has a significant relationship with building awareness of CSR, but is not the most effective channel. Word of mouth seems more effective. Other channels that are significant are newsletters, social media and newspapers. Although straightforwardly most mentioned as source of information on CSR activities, deals flyers aren't significantly related to top of mind awareness of CSR. This is also the case for commercials on radio and tv, advertisements and information on the website.

Further, it is seen that more than two third of the respondents is perceiving value from CSR activities of supermarkets. For those respondents, CSR aspects play a bigger role in preference for a supermarket than for respondents not perceiving value from societal activities by supermarkets. The results show that perceived value is significantly of influence on the importance of CSR in brand preference, whereby it seems that different types of value effect different CSR aspects playing a role in preference.

The role of CSR activities in consumer brand preference for food retailers in The Netherlands - 4 The results are providing interesting insights for which it is recommended to explore further. The role of CSR in brand preference can be deepened, but also the effect of CSR on brand loyalty could be explored more widely, especially in the context of food retail. For instance, it would be interesting to look at the effects of specific CSR activities (or categories) on brand preference. For instance, philanthropic activities, as from all CSR aspects this category has by far has the highest number of respondents saying it does not play a role (at all) in store choice. It is interesting to find out why. Another interesting area to explore further is to see if and how CSR is effecting actual store choice and purchasing behaviour. Given the dominant role of functional attributes like location, assortment and quality of the products, it is interesting and relevant for strategy makers to see if there is a role for CSR.

To summarize, although functional attributes –such as product quality, price, assortment and location- are predominant in consumers' preference for a supermarket, CSR seems to fulfil a positive role in building a positive image. Awareness of CSR activities and perceiving value from CSR are both positively of influence in the role CSR fulfils in consumer brand preference for supermarkets.

Biography

Gineke Wilms



Gineke Wilms started her marcom career at Panini Collectibles in 2005. As product manager, she was successfully responsible for the collectibles ('voetbalplaatjes') in The Netherlands during the World Championships 2006.

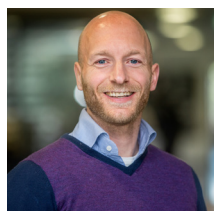
After this informative period, she became Manager Marketing, Communications & PR at the family owned business Neptunus Structures, a worldwide leader in tents for events and semi-permanent structures. Repositioning the brand and appealing a broader target audience was her assignment here. After a period of 5 years, the desire to focus on a more specific communication discipline arose, as well as the desire to work for a corporate organisation.

This was followed up by starting as PR & Sponsorships Manager at Ricoh Netherlands, a Japanese multinational. Again, a repositioning of the brand was her assignment, and after a few years her responsibility was extended to being responsible for Ricoh's reputation in a broader sense. As Manager Corporate Communication she rolled out an intensive internal branding campaign, was a trusted advisor for the C-suite and from an external communications point of view she was focussing on thought leadership.

By launching the branded content platform WerkTrends.nl and by being of one of the first large branded content partners of NRC Handelsblad, she worked at the forefront of content marketing. After 6 years a new challenge at a well-known –again family owned- food retailer came across, which she couldn't resist. Since 2 years, Gineke now works as Manager Marketing & Communication at Jan Linders Supermarkten, an awarded, regional food retailer in the south of The Netherlands with 59 supermarkets. The challenge now is not a repositioning, but maximising marketing and communication effectiveness in a competitive and dynamic sector.

Gineke is married to Michiel Geraedts. Together they have a beautiful son, Mathijs, who is 17 months.

Coaches



Joep Cornelissen

Professor of Corporate Communication and Management
Academic Director MSc. Corporate Communication
Rotterdam School of Management

Joep Cornelissen is Professor of Corporate Communication and Management at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. The main focus of his research involves studies of the role of corporate and managerial communication in the context of innovation, entrepreneurship and change, and of social evaluations of the legitimacy and reputation of start-up and established firms. In addition, he also has an interest in questions of scientific reasoning and theory development in management and organisation theory.

His work has been published in the *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organisation Science* and *Organisation Studies*, and he has written a general text on corporate communication (*Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, Sage Publications) which is now in its fourth edition. He is an Associate Editor for the *Academy of Management Review*, a Council member of the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies, a former General Editor of the *Journal of Management Studies* (2006-2012) and serves on the editorial boards of the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Management Studies* and *Organisation Studies*.



Paul A. Argenti

Professor of Corporate Communication
Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth
United States of America

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

Professor Argenti's textbook, *Corporate Communication, Seventh Edition*, was published through McGraw-Hill/Irwin in 2016. He also published the first edition of a seminal work in 2016 entitled *Corporate Responsibility for Sage*, which focuses on corporate values, shared value, corporate character, and the purpose of the corporation in modern society. Argenti co-authored (with Courtney Barnes) *Digital Strategies for Powerful Corporate Communication*, published by McGraw-Hill in 2009. Some of his other books include: *Strategic Corporate Communication*, published in 2007 by McGraw-Hill, *The Power of Corporate Communication* (co-authored with UCLA's Janis Forman), published by McGraw-Hill, and *The Fast Forward MBA Pocket Reference* (several editions), released through Wiley. Professor Argenti has written and edited numerous articles for academic publications and practitioner journals such as *Harvard Business Review*, *California Management Review*, and *Sloan Management Review*.

Professor Argenti also blogs regularly for publications such as *Harvard Business Review*, the *Washington Post*, and *US News & World Report* and appears frequently on radio (NPR and APM) and television (CNBC Fox Business) commenting on topics related to management, communications, reputation, and corporate responsibility.

Professor Argenti is a Fulbright Scholar and a winner of the Pathfinder Award in 2007 from the Institute for Public Relations for the excellence of his research over a long career. The Ethisphere Institute also listed him as one of the most influential people in Business Ethics. He serves on an advisory board to the President of the World Bank and the Board of Trustees for the Ethisphere Institute. He has also served on advisory boards to CEOs globally for a variety of companies. Finally, he has consulted and run training programs in communication for executives at hundreds of organisations over the last three decades including General Electric, The Detroit Lions, Mitsui, Novartis, and Goldman Sachs.



Guido A.J.M. Berens (PhD)
Assistant Professor
Rotterdam School of Management

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



Mignon van Halderen (PhD)

Lector (Associate Professor) Thought Leadership

Fontys University of Applied Sciences

Founding Director: www.dutchschoolofthought.com

Mignon runs the Professorship *Thought Leadership in a Society of Change* at Fontys University of Applied Sciences (School of Communication) in Eindhoven. The goal of this professorship is to develop innovative knowledge on Thought Leadership and share this with a large community of organisations, researchers, communication professionals, teachers and students. She also advises organisations on making choices about thought leadership strategies and offers in-company presentations to organisations that are keen on pursuing a thought leadership strategy, but first like to have a richer insight into its meaning and how it can be pursued. Within the MCC programme of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Mignon offers the executive course Thought Leadership in a Society of Change, is a guest speaker at the annual summer course and coaches students during their final graduation project. In 2014, Mignon won the Lecturer of the Year award in teaching Communication Research at the Master of International Communication Management at The Hague Applied University.



Erik van 't Klooster

Department of Marketing Management

Rotterdam School of Management (RSM)

Over the past 10 years Erik has been a teacher (both bachelor and master level) and a consultant on marketing strategy, marketing communications and consumer behavior. Also, Erik has coached many master theses on a wide range of marketing topics (e.g. consumer retail, b2b marketing, financial services, brand management, marketing automation, social media). Erik is experienced in both qualitative and quantitative research methods.



Lucas Meijs

*Professor of Volunteering, Civil Society and Businesses and
Professor of Strategic Philanthropy*

**Department of Business-Society Management
Rotterdam School of Management**

Lucas C.P.M. Meijs is professor of Strategic Philanthropy and Volunteering at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM). Professor Meijs' current research focuses on issues related to strategic philanthropy, volunteer/non-profit management, corporate community involvement, voluntary energy as a natural resource and involved learning (life-long development by volunteering).

- He served two term as the first non-american co-editor in chief of Nonprofit and Voluntary Action Quarterly.
- He has been an appointed member of the Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, the official policy advisory body for the Dutch government and parliament.
- He was a guest researcher at the Centre of Philanthropy and Non-profit studies at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia.
- He has also been a visiting scholar at the University of Georgia's Department of Political Science as well as its School of Social Work.

Professor Meijs teaches NGO/NPO management and several business-non-profit relations courses at the master level, as well as service learning, consultancy and social entrepreneurship at the bachelor level.



Ton Roodink (IR. PhD)

Assistant Professor

Rotterdam School of Management

Ton has been an assistant professor at the Rotterdam School of Management at Erasmus University Rotterdam since 1990. Ton teaches Management of Change and predominantly he gives lectures to students between the ages of 30 and 50 who attend the programme of the Part-time Master Business Administration (MScBA). In addition, he has been a member of the faculty's Examination Board for many years.

As a consultant he performs organization research, provide organizational advice, work as a mediator and give workshops and training courses. Since December 2004 Ton is a senior lecturer in courses at Sezen Academy in Wijk bij Duurstede.

Graduated in Applied Mathematics, with a specialization in Operations Research (Technical Highschool Twente), he worked as a researcher from 1979 to 1983 at the Institute for Theater Research Amsterdam. From 1983 until 1990 I was a lecturer of Philosophy of Science at the University of Twente in Enschede. His main focus areas are change management, organizational development and conflict management. He is especially interested in the use of stories as a diagnostic and interventional methodology.



Lonneke Roza (PhD)

Academic Researcher

**Department of Business-Society Management
Rotterdam School of Management (RSM)**

Lonneke Roza (PhD) specializes in employee engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with a special interest in community involvement strategies (i.e. corporate citizenship; corporate community involvement; corporate philanthropy). She has published various articles on this topic in international peer review journals, books and popular outlets (see for a full overview her publication list). Lonneke is the leading editor the first ever academic handbook on Corporate Foundations. Lonneke teaches in Non-profit Management, Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship.

Particular to her profile is the continuous search to bridge research and practice. She publishes many practical reports, booklets and blogs, participated in radio shows, gives workshops and organizes conferences to bring people from various disciplines, industries and sectors together. Next to her appointment at RSM, she works in practice herself where she was a CSR manager and supported companies to set up a corporate foundation or develop their citizenship programmes. She is chair of the board of Nuon Foundation, and boardmember of Facilicom Foundation and Lokale Fondsen Nederland.



Ingrid de Vries

Teacher

HZ University of Applied Sciences

Research Associate

**ERIM Centre for corporate eco-transformation
Rotterdam School of Management**

Ingrid de Vries currently works at HZ University of Applied Sciences and the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University Rotterdam. Ingrid does qualitative research in Circular Economy, using systems thinking and soft systems methodology.



Research
Abstracts
2018