ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication

BOOK OF GRADUATES

Research Abstracts 2015

RSM *Erasmus*
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

The business school that thinks and lives in the future

ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication

Research Abstracts *2015*

Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication Programme

This year we celebrate the 17th graduation of the Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication Programme (MCC) at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. Fourteen (14) 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 fourteen theses that have been written by the Graduates of this Master programme.

Including this year's graduates, the MCC programme has delivered around 270 MCC graduates. Many of them made a substantial career move after their graduation, which they were able to realise not only by the know-ledge, insights and skills gained by the programme, but even more by their own perseverance and ability to bring this into practice.

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

The new Masters of Science in Corporate Communication are:

Lonneke Aanraad (Achmea); Hans van Avendonk (Nationale-Nederlanden); Consuelo Capri (European Central Bank) – Italian nationality; Ilse Jansen-Jansink (AkzoNobel); Maarten Jurriaanse (Ping-Pong Design); Ben Kooi (Van Koppen & Van Eijk); Jasmine Kuo (Micron Technology) – Taiwanese nationality; Soledad Monsalve (RHEA-Aviation & Aerospace) – Argentine nationality; Silvia Moreira Salles (Reputation Institute Brazil) – Brazilian Nationality; Lidia Moret (NN Group); Yvette Oswald (Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen); Erik Paulis (KPN); Aline Stanworth (SABIC) – Brazilian nationality; Arnold Vonk (De Nieuwsmakers).

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

In the seventeen years of the Master of Science in Corporate Communication programme we succeeded in creating an international programme that presents all leading reputation experts in a teaching role. I would like to thank the following people (teaching staff) who contributed tremendously to the success of this programme: Paul Argenti of Darthmouth College U.S.A.; John Balmer of Bradford University UK; Joan Hemels, Universiteit van Amsterdam; Mark Hunter, INSEAD; Jan Kleinnijenhuis, VU University Amsterdam; Onno Maathuis, De Positioneerders; Michael Pratt of University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign; Davide Ravasi of Bocconi University; Betteke van Ruler, UVA ; Eliane Schoonman of Issues Management Institute; Gabi Schaap, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen; Majken Schultz of Copenhagen Business School, Denmark; Bob de Wit of Nyenrode Business University and from our RSM Faculty: Guido Berens, Frans van den Bosch, Dirk Brounen, Gerrit van Bruggen, Fred Gertsen, Mignon van Halderen, Pursey Heugens, Muel Kaptein, Slawek Magala, Gerard Mertens, Lucas Meijs, Eric Waarts, Rolf Zwaan, all working at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

It is also with great pride that we welcome Drs. Bert Regeer of Royal Shell Netherlands, who presents the 'Shell Netherlands Stimulation Award for Excellence in Corporate Communication' to the author of the 'best thesis' of 2015. We are also very pleased to have Ing, Dries van de Beek, former chairman of the Board of the VSB Fund and of course of the CCC BV who will present

the Andreas Innovation in Communication Award' to the author of the most innovative thesis of 2015. The winners will be announced on the 27th of November 2015 during the official graduation ceremony.

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

Prof. dr. Cees B. M. van Riel

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

Effective reputation management in the Dutch insurance industry

In various studies, such as Fortune's *World's Most Admired Companies* and the *Annual Reputation Ranking* of the Reputation Institute, it becomes clear that certain companies consistently outperform others in the field of corporate reputation. The objective of this thesis is to provide insights into what makes companies more successful than others in building consistently strong reputations with the general public. Also the impact of moderator variables, related to the firm's performance, on the relationship between corporate communication and the reputation is part of the thesis.

Reputation rankings have shown that the industry has a strong impact on the reputation bandwidth of companies within the industry. This is why this thesis focuses on a single industry, the Dutch insurance sector, in order to exclude this variable.

The research attempts to determine how reputations are managed in the Dutch insurance industry and provide indications on why some insurance companies out-perform industry peers in the area of reputation. Based on available academic research and knowledge, the following variables related to reputation management have been selected:

1. Does the corporate communication department report directly into the management board and have the respect for and trust from senior management?
2. Size and seniority of the corporate communication department
3. Organizational integration of branding (marketing communications) and corporate communication
4. Consistency of communications over a longer period of time and in all media, modalities and channels
5. Share of out-of-pocket investments in communication campaigns and sponsoring
6. Positioning: collectivistic versus individualistic

In addition, there are 3 variables included in the study that are not part of reputation management but are expected to influence the effectiveness of it:

7. Extend to which an organization is owner of a salient public issue
8. Market share
9. Corporate social responsibility ranking

Based on the learnings from academic research, variables 1 to 6 are assumed to have a positive impact on reputation. The assumption is that the (moderating) variable 7 has a negative impact on the effectiveness of reputation management, while moderating variables 8 and 9 are expected to reinforce the efforts in reputation management.

The research focuses on a 4-year period, from 2011 until 2014. The insurance companies that are included in the study are: Achmea, Aegon, a.s.r., Delta Lloyd and Nationale-Nederlanden. The data are collected via a combination of desk research and qualitative interviews. In desk research optimal use was made of available databases such as Reptrak, Sponsormonitor, LexisNexis and Sustainalytics. In addition to this extensive desk research, semi-structured interviews are conducted. The objectives of these interviews are to gather infor-mation that is not publicly available and to provide more in- depth insights into the research variables included in the research model.

Main conclusions

The research outcomes indicate that corporate commu-nication departments have acquired an established position in the Dutch insurance industry, close to the management boards of the companies. Management of reputation is not the exclusive domain of the commu-nication department anymore in this industry. Some companies have put the lead in reputation management (partly) outside the corporate communication depart-ment and the management board is getting more involved in decision making about reputation. The creation of reputation boards with representatives from the management board is an illustration of this develop-ment.

The study indicates that reputation management is about getting all aspects right. Based on the research outcomes, there doesn't seem to be one reputation management variable that clearly singlehandedly impacts the reputation score in this study. Though, the research provides clues that consistently investing in advertising can contribute to a stronger reputation.

The effectiveness of reputation management seems to be impacted by moderating variables. A strong performance on the moderating variables 'link to public issue' (low association) and 'market share' offers an ideal starting point for reputation building. More specifically, a high market share seems a favorable context for building a strong reputation, while a high association with public issues seems to limit the impact of reputation building activities. The study didn't provide any indication of the impact of CSR performance.

A relatively weaker performance on the moderating variables seems to be surmountable by strong reputation management that does well on all aspects covered in this study.

Hans van Avendonk

Hans van Avendonk is Head of Branding & Sponsoring at Nationale-Nederlanden in the Netherlands. He joined the company in 2010 to assume responsibility for brand strategy, visual identity, media planning and advertising, amongst others. Before joining Nationale-Nederlanden, Hans held senior positions at international advertising agencies where he worked for various blue chip clients such as Volvo Cars, Procter & Gamble and McDonald's. He started his career as a marketeer at FrieslandCampina, one of Europe's largest international dairy companies. Hans holds a Master in Business Administration degree of Erasmus University Rotterdam, with a specialization in marketing management.

The role of social media communications to increase transparency and support public trust.

What are the rules of engagement for central banks?

This thesis aims to identify how central banks can best integrate social media in their communications strategy to increase transparency and enhance public trust in their ability to deliver monetary and financial stability.

My research covers the social media presence of 5 central banks: European Central Bank, Bank of Finland, De Nederlansche Bank, Bank of Italy and Bank of England. After an extensive literature and academic review, relevant data has been collected via desk research – harvesting websites, blogs and social media profiles – and through interviews with 12 communications experts working within the 5 selected central banks. Grounded research methodology has then been used to analyse the data by disaggregating core themes as categories and concepts (initial and axial coding) to identify key issues and overarching themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

My desk research has highlighted that:

✦ Level of presence in social media varies widely, with all 5 central banks regularly posting on Twitter but only one active on Facebook (De Nederlansche Bank) and the Bank of England featuring the most proactive approach.

✦ All central banks observed use signposting to and from their websites to attract and redirect traffic to their main hubs, which are increasingly rich, accessible and user-friendly within an integrated digital strategy. Websites are generally designed and maintained as main repositories and dynamic information hubs to refer to for complex and in depth contents.

The findings of this study have nonetheless confirmed that social media have created their own ecosystem and new communication rules that central banks need to take into account in order to fully exploit the vast potential of the web 2.0 in terms of reach and users'

engagement. In relation to my specific research, my three sub questions are addressed through the following findings:

1. **Social media can deliver increased levels of transparency:**

Central banks are perceived more open and transparent when they effectively integrate social media within their overall outreach strategy, as long as they are able to simplify their messages for the fast consumption of wide and diverse audiences. Multimedia contents (tutorials, contextualised visuals, videos, infographics etc.) also greatly help break down complex contents, stimulate interest and create economic and financial education opportunities for audiences whose attention span, interest and time are limited.

2. **Social media can enhance public trust:**

Transparent and open communications are in turn instrumental for central banks to gain the trust and credibility of society, the more so when they are prepared to engage with citizens. Central banks that are able to foster a better understanding of their role and responsibilities in the economy and also be perceived as caring and "real" are more trustworthy, which also builds reputational capital. Increasing public engagement with added services and personalisation builds on the perceived ability of central banks to perform effectively and strive for integrity and competence in the public eye. Engagement can be generated and sustained on selected topics in a way to raise and support awareness, which in turn will bridge the gap between citizens and institutions and generate legitimacy towards central banks as institutions there to deliver the "public good" of a stable and trusted currency.

3. **The reputational risks of social media engagement can be mitigated and managed (up to a certain point):**

The reputational risks that central banks can face when actively participating in social media mainly pertain to critical stances having higher visibility in the public domain or loss of ownership of messages once these are commented on and replicated in news cycles which spread worldwide within minutes. Whereas the possibility that conversations might be taken over with malicious intents is virtually impossible to avert, even fierce criticism should be dealt with firmly and constructively. Central banks continue therefore to be particularly cautious when it comes to using social media to publish market-sensitive information, for which every word is carefully considered and weighted. They are, however, are more relaxed about "safer" issues such as recruitment, banknotes campaigns, events management, financial education, etc. or when addressing specialised audiences. These topics could be pushed further in social media for their good potential to generate positive engagement and act as reputation-building grounds.

Nevertheless, withdrawing from active participation also implies reputational risks, particularly as a consequence of being unable to promptly step in and readdress incorrect information or misinterpretations gaining traction on social networks. Discussions and opinion-building take place on the web anyway, regardless of whether central banks are part of them.

Participating in social media marked a new milestone in the path towards increased transparency, as they have stepped up their efforts to try and engage directly with the public and provided simplified interfaces to explain

how they deliver the "public good" of a stable and trusted currency. By so doing, central banks are also enhancing their credibility and level of democratic accountability towards society, as they are striving to be clear about how they perform on their mandates and the way they exercise their independence from political interference in managing monetary policy.

Scope for further research

This study contributes to analyse the dilemma that central banks face when trying to further expand their presence in the social media environment to enhance their transparency and legitimacy but fear for with message ownership. This is an issue about which little research is available in a framework constantly evolving. While this research confirms the findings of mainstream literature applied to big organisations and the public sector, the specific risk profile of central banks indicates scope for extra caution in embracing social media to the full extent, particularly when dealing with market-sensitive information. More research would nonetheless be useful in connection with opinion polls of public perception and the setup of reputational metrics to assess and track the impact of "social" communications efforts deployed by central banks and how these affect public trust and legitimacy.

Consuelo Capri

Consuelo Capri is a seasoned communications professional with over 25 years' experience in a number of fields of corporate communication, from public relations to outreach, qualitative and quantitative research, development of creative concepts and production of multimedia materials.

Originally from Rome, she left the Bank of Italy in 1999 to join the European Central Bank (ECB) and the "Euro 2002 Information Campaign" Project Team, to work on delivering the unprecedented challenge of informing over 200 million European citizens about the euro changeover, an endeavour still unmatched today in terms of reach, impact and budget. Public information campaigns at the EU level have since become one of Consuelo's favourite challenges and she is passionate about their measurable impact in people's lives: she has since been in the front line of the roll-out of euro changeover campaigns in Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus, Slovakia and the Baltic states.

She is currently working as senior communications officer in DG Communications at the ECB as part of the unit responsible for raising awareness about the new series of banknotes in all euro area Member States; this is implemented via a multi-channel outreach strategy executed in 23 official languages of the EU, 4 of which Consuelo speaks fluently. Specifically, she is in charge of coordinating activities in the field of research, direct marketing, creative strategy and execution.

Studying for the MSc in Corporate Communication further strengthened Consuelo's interest in academic and research-backed decision making. Her choice of topic for her master's thesis (social media and central banks transparency) indicates her strong interest in the way that social media can enhance transparency and build trust.

Consuelo lives in Langen, Germany, with husband Bill, their 2 dogs and, now and then, 2 children who allegedly left home to study.

To contact Consuelo please visit her LinkedIN profile.

Company Pride: the ultimate test in creating external alignment

The financial crisis has led to a crisis of trust for the financial sector by the general public and relevant stakeholders. Occurrences that happen in the financial sector are magnified and often subject of – public – discussion. Leading companies in the financial sector have the responsibility to gain back the trust of various stakeholders. Achmea is a leading company in the financial sector (9 million Dutch are insured by one of Achmea's brands). Achmea wants to distinguish itself from competitors in the sector, by building a good reputation and making sure stakeholders support the organization and its strategy.

Employees are an important link in the relationship with stakeholders, because they interact and are in direct contact with relevant external stakeholders. This research shows that the Achmea employees are proud of the Achmea organization, despite the above mentioned trust issues and the ongoing reorganization within the Achmea group.
This pride offers opportunities for the Achmea group. If the existing pride can be externalized to the relevant stakeholders, then this can enhance the external support for Achmea's strategy and Achmea can further distinguish itself by its reputation.

Research question

The central question of this thesis is defined as:
How can Achmea deploy company pride in improving alignment with relevant external stakeholders?

Company pride is defined as: 'being proud of the organization and promote that you work there. Identify with and commit to the direction and goals that are formulated, support these and 'go' for your company.' Literature and the empiric research (qualitative and quantitative) contributed to new insights that answer this important research question.

Contribution to existing literature

This research focuses specifically at Achmea, although the results may be general applicable. The goal of this research is to contribute to more knowledge around the concept of company pride, the relation with organization identification and alignment and which role company pride can play for Achmea in creating external alignment. Although a broad spectrum of literature can be found on company pride, organizational identification and alignment, little can be found on the interdependencies between these three concepts, how company pride differs from identification and alignment and how employees benefit from company pride. This research addresses these inter-

dependencies, hierarchy and earnings of company pride, and contributes to existing literature.

Findings

This research provides order and hierarchy to identification, alignment and company pride, as shown in below figure.
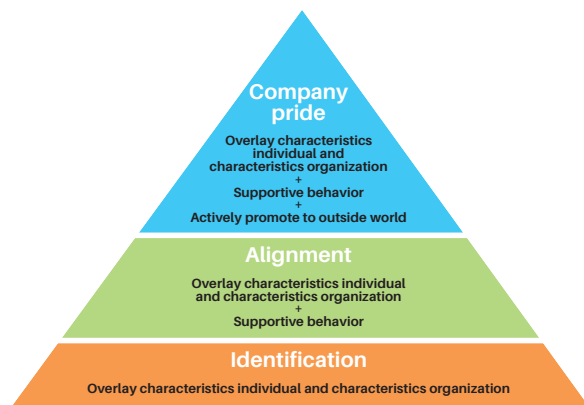
Hierarchy Identification-Alignment-Company pride
Source: Lonneke Gerrits-Aanraad, 2015.

Identification and alignment are prerequisites for company pride. Company pride is the ultimate test that shows the unconditional support to and identification with the organization. By actively expressing ones pride to 3rd parties, employees actually expose that they belong to the organization and support the strategy.

However, employees have to be sufficiently facilitated to express their pride and promote the organization. This research identified that this element is rather overlooked and needs further attention within Achmea group.

This research identified the side-effects and upside of expressing organizational pride by its employees (in random order):

a. Job satisfaction with own profession and colleagues that one works with;
b. Improved (social) appreciation from peers important to employees;
c. Increase of contentment with employer;
d. Increase of perceived status;
e. Feeling better about own performance compared to 3rd parties;
f. Energized to do own job;
g. A (potentially) higher individual reward in money or gratitude.

The above upsides support the hypothesis that proud employees increase performances of the organization.

This research shows that employees' pride and willingness to actively promote their pride, seem less perceptive to external perceptions. This finding appears to be a discrepancy from the incumbent academic understanding on employees self-perception and perceived external prestige. The perception of the 'outside' world is being rationalized and mitigated by Achmea's employees.

Recommendations

In order to deploy company pride and enhance external alignment, following recommendations can be defined:

1. Facilitate and stimulate employees in expressing their pride.
2. Stakeholder identification and assessment for the individual employee or its team.
3. Increase the (positive) rewards and operationalize company pride in KPI's.
4. Internalize and disseminate relevant data & information to increase understanding and awareness for external perceptions.
5. Company pride starts with 'selection at the gate' by recruitment of resources that identify and align themselves with the Achmea strategy.

Implications for Management

Achmea's management has to follow and expedite the above recommendations in order to enhance and deploy company pride and improve alignment with external stakeholders.

Furthermore, management has a leading role in communication (implicit and explicit) on vision, strategic choices and direction of the company. Discussion and dissemination of this information is crucial to energize company pride. Management should engage employees in the conversation about strategic information and choices and discuss what each employee's contribution to the organization is.

This research has generated a model to plot the individuals and/or team current positions towards company pride and the rewards of expediting company pride. This model provides Achmea management a tool to create a 'snapshot' of its current position in this grid and a first guideline to actively manage and direct towards the preferred position. Because of the premature phase of this model and the further optimization as a management tool, it is recommended to further study and develop this model.

It is expected that by undergoing the conversation about company pride within the Achmea group, it will contribute to the organizational learning of deploying company pride and the differentiation of Achmea within the financial sector.
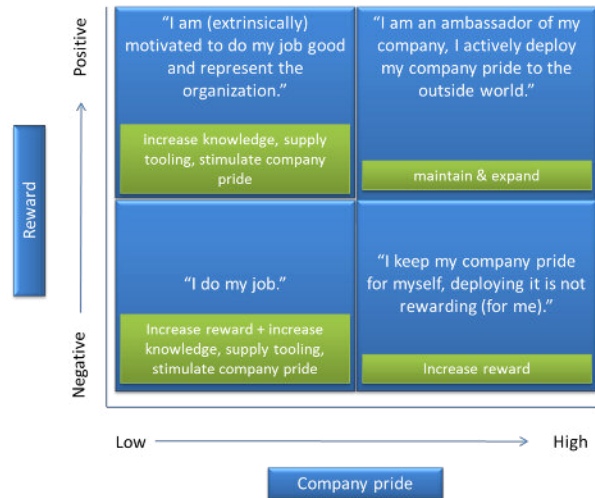
Perspectives on Company pride and Reward
Source: Lonneke Gerrits-Aanraad, 2015.

Lonneke Gerrits-Aanraad

Lonneke Gerrits-Aanraad (1975) is an experienced senior communications advisor at the Corporate communications department of Achmea. Achmea is the largest insurance company in the Netherlands, with 9 million Dutch clients. Over the last two years Lonneke has been working on the communication about Achmea's largest and most impactful reorganization in its history. In this role, she's responsible for the internal change communications and strategic communications and focusses primarily on supporting the C-suite and senior management in their communication role. Before working at Achmea, Lonneke has worked as a communication advisor in different companies: the Japanese multinational Fujifilm, the Academic Center for Epileptology and Neurological Learning and development Kempenhaeghe, and the Police region Middle- and West Brabant.

The personal drive for Lonneke is to bring energy to the colleagues she works with and to share her passion for & experience in the communication work field. She has a special interest in the topic of company pride, ambassadorship and employee engagement and how employees can contribute to enduring relationships with relevant stakeholders and in building a sustainable reputation. Especially from the perspective of a company in the financial sector, due to the influence of the financial crisis on employees and the pride they experiencing.

Read more about Lonneke on her LinkedIn profile:
https://nl.linkedin.com/pub/lonneke-gerrits-aanraad/29/692/750

'Leadership' Thoughts on Human Cities

The role of Leadership in successfully implementing AkzoNobel's Thought Leadership program 'Human Cities'

The world is changing rapidly. It is becoming smaller and smarter. Customers are constantly searching for insights in issues that matter to them. They increasingly expect that companies will add value to important themes in society like aging society, standards of living, health, welfare and environmental impact. Companies today need to redouble their efforts to remain successful. Successful in this context means not only making profit, but also contributing to social issues.

AkzoNobel 'Human Cities'

AkzoNobel recognized an important economic and social theme: rapid population growth in urban areas. According to forecasts, by 2050, more than 75 percent of the world's population will live in cities. So the world's cities have to adapt to become more resilient to these changes and better able to cope with the common set of challenges. Given that 60 percent of the company's products are in the Buildings & Infrastructure and Transportation end-user segments, AkzoNobel is fundamental to the process of urban transformation that's taking place today.

In 2014 AkzoNobel developed the 'Human Cities' thought leadership program in order to respond to the rapid urbanization. AkzoNobel believes that the relationship between a city and its citizens goes beyond purely functional aspects. AkzoNobel wants to position the company in this social change by making these cities more 'human'. In particular, the emotional component provides new and refreshing viewpoints and differentiates 'Human Cities' from 'Smart Cities' initiatives.

There are two types of logic of thought leadership: thought leadership with a strategic focus and thought leadership with a transformation focus. 'Human Cities' is aiming on both types of logic. AkzoNobel wants to gain a position and competitive advantage (strategic focus type of logic) and contribute to a societal transition (transformation focus type of logic). The relevance of 'Human Cities' can be indicated by positioning the brand, societal responsibility and engagement.

The role of leadership in thought leading strategies

Leadership appears to play a fundamental role in the successful implementation of thought leading strategies. This led to an interesting research question; **what is the**

Figure 1:
Six pillars of
Human Cities and
their meaning

role of Leadership in successfully implementing AkzoNobel's Thought Leadership program 'Human Cities'?

Sub questions aiming at defining the leaders and their role, the role of the CEO, the leadership style and pitfalls to take into account should also be answered. To answer these questions, in addition to a literature study, a case study was executed. For the case study, a significant amount of desk research on 'Human Cities' has been done and 22 interviews at all levels in all Business Areas have been conducted.

The CEO plays a crucial role. It all starts with the conviction of the CEO. She or he has to drive the program, show ownership, led by example. She or he also has to articulate a strong vision and communicate the strategy clearly, because in most cases this also means a cultural change. Externally, CEOs also play an important role building networks and representing the company.

The research demonstrates that employees more broadly also play an extremely important leadership role as some act as ambassadors. The level of enthusiasm for the program is more important than the position within the company in defining who takes on the ambassador role; . Other leaders are mainly Executive Committee (ExCo) members and line managers. The most important roles of the leaders are: energetic drive, role modelling, cascading and showing ownership. Engagement can be created by communicating clearly, showing examples and making the translation to practice.

Both charismatic and transformational leadership styles seem to be effective in doing this. The charismatic leader should be authentic and creates enthusiasm as a result. The transformational leader motivates and inspires followers and arguably this is a more sustainable leadership style. The best solution seems situational leadership. In the ideal situation, a charismatic leader is preferred to share the vision, set the agenda, lead the

way and inspire and the transformational leader is necessary to transfer the message and engage people at different levels in the organization.

Pitfalls

The successful implementation of thought leadership programs like 'Human Cities' does not only depend on the behavioral traits of leaders. Leaders also need to keep a keen eye out for the pitfalls, such as whether

Ilse Jansen

Ilse Jansen is an enthusiastic, responsible, creative and result-oriented marketing and communication professional with over 20 years of experience in different marketing and communication functions. The last 9 years she works for AkzoNobel as Communication Manager for Industrial Chemicals at the site in Hengelo. She is responsible for all internal and external communication at the site like employee communication, change management, crisis communication, reputation- and stakeholder management. She is also spokesperson and experienced in political and environmental sensitive subjects.

Before that time she worked as Product Manager and Marketing Communication Manager for Dunlop Protective Footwear, an international company producing and selling wellington boots. She is experienced in product management, corporate branding, marketing communication and market research.

Ilse followed the master program to expand her communication knowledge to develop herself and fulfill her ambitions. She was highly interested in both leadership and thought leadership and combined these in her thesis. Now she has finalized the thesis she is looking back at a very interesting master program with highly professional teachers and inspiring discussions with colleague students.

there are sufficient ambassadors and whether the program has credibility. It is also important to assess whether the message comes across effectively. Do people understand the program? Is it clear 'what's in it for them' and how they can contribute to the program's success? Linked to this is the potential size of the gap between the highest corporate levels and the site level. Leaders must be aware that this gap exists and ensure that there is full alignment throughout the company, all the way to shop floor worker level. Last but not least, the timing for introducing such a thought leadership program is crucial. Programs such as 'Human Cities' should not be introduced when employees have other important priorities which might conflict (or at least might be perceived to conflict) with the program such as reorganization, working pressure or cost efficiencies. This can be avoided by aligning thought leadership programs with other corporate communication programs.

Conclusion and recommendations

Thus, this research provides a clear answer to the research question 'What is the role of leadership is successfully implementing AkzoNobel's thought leadership program 'Human Cities'?'. The role of leadership is fundamental and should be seen from a variety of perspectives. That does not mean there are no limitations to this overall outcome. To give a more complete view, it is strongly recommended that this research is extended beyond the Netherlands to other AkzoNobel key countries, such as the US, the UK, China and Brazil. Furthermore the research should be repeated within a few years when internal communication has been fully executed. Lastly, this research could also be extended to cover thought leadership programs in other companies.

Kicking the ball into no-man's-land:

How commodity services organizations shift from a transaction-oriented exchange model to a meaningful, long-term relationship-based model

Firms like Zappos, Southwest and Patagonia have succeeded in maintaining *networks of long- term relationships* as a competitive resource *by* aiming for shared goals that lie beyond the self- interest of the company. Zappos provides an identity platform for internal and external constituents to engage with their mission of 'delivering happiness'. A philosophy which inspires different stakeholders to return and invest in the relationship because the mission seems to trigger a sense of contributing to the world that exceeds basic needs of salary, supply contract, return on investment or utility-need satisfaction.

By adhering to neoclassical production dogma's, many commodity services organizations like banks, telecom and energy suppliers, seem to have turned their backs to customers, to have lost the raison d'etre of their organizations and gradually started to believe their role of being mere producers of low interest commodities. However, these organizations are too important too be left for lunch on the plates of startups. With their broad customer base and deep roots in society they have the potential to impact the social, economic and environmental crises we are facing on a much wider scale than any government or social institution can.

So how can commodity services organizations shift from the transaction exchange models that they are adhering to, towards adopt meaningful, long-term relationship-based models?

Research

Transaction models – In my research I found that many of these organizations cope with the remainders of bureaucratic and procedures-oriented operating models, based on neoclassical views of business organization. It

is important to understand these remainders in order to address them. Fundamental to these models is the focus on production, on division of labor, compartmentalization, command and control management and the idea that value is principally created *inside* the production process. The customer is merely the transaction and production endpoint, which can be delegated to the marketing department to maximize volume and profit.

Relationship- models – Companies such as Zappos and Southwest are grounded on creating excellent customer interaction experiences by focusing on the quality of their cultures based on a shared and compelling vision. They apply the fact that happy employees have direct causality to happy customers, *and* happy suppliers, happy partners and happy investors. Customers are part of the organizational network and integrated in the enterprise value chain. Networks of internal and external stakeholder relationships shape the organization's identity and facilitate a process of self-enhancement by offering a sense of belonging and contributing to a greater visionary purpose that serves business as well as society.

Case study

To identify the critical challenges and success factors involved in *how* organizations can engage in such a shift I did a case study research by interviewing senior and executive managers at Eneco, the largest integrated sustainable energy services supplier in the Netherlands. Since 2007, under the visionary leadership of Jeroen de Haas, Eneco has a vision to reduce CO2 emissions and natural resource depletion by empowering access to- and shared ownership of decentralized, renewable energy sources. That vision made Eneco embark on an ongoing transformation journey to change itself from a traditional procedures oriented production incumbent towards a service innovation and relationship-oriented company.

Findings

The four dimensions that emerged through a grounded theory process of coding, labeling and clustering of the various perceptions of their company's transformation, revealed three dimensions with critical success factors and one dimension with critical challenges.

Vision imperative – The new vision and de Haas's visionary leadership helped the organization to "imagine the flight of the butterfly," (a respondent) – to picture and understand the economical, social and environmental purpose of that future landscape. The vision continues to function as a touchtone for internal as well as external stakeholders; it helps them to reshape internal relations, attract new talent and reframe business partnerships. Simultaneously, the organization is also opening up to feedback, which motivates partner stakeholders to enhance the organizational developments by 'holding up the mirror'.

Activation signals – this dimension functions as amplifier of the *vision imperative* by activating internal as well as external stakeholders and audiences. Visual roadmaps and visual strategic frameworks that evolve along with the organization's transition facilitate internal understanding and represent Eneco's gradual acquisition of its own change capabilities. This is accelerated through symbols: The new headquarter not only facilitates new collaboration networks but the design also radiates the purpose of the vision. Product introductions demarcate new business territory to competitors as well as it provides evidence. The new digital thermostat Toon is a proud representation and eye-level utility translation of Eneco's vision, allowing average consumers to save energy waste.

Tensions – Eneco also suffers from remainders of neoclassical management structures. Command and control leadership impedes innovation and employee learning from exposure to customer interactions. Lack of front line leadership has negative effect on employee motivation and ultimately customer satisfaction. But this dimension also reveals a strong employee motivation to close gaps between promise and daily reality – and seem to polarize between 'believer' and 'non-believer' subcultures. Engaged employees have a vested interest in the organization's vision as they enhance and categorize their self-image based on that.

Value Relationships – Although many aspects are still under construction, respondents are consistent about the required capabilities Eneco needs to develop: people need to be able to unite across units; to join stakeholder and customer communities for shared goals. Recognize and enhance potential value chains and the ability to encourage partnerships for long-term investment relationships. The mission provides a lens through which commodity relations can be enhanced and reinvented, and service partnerships based on shared goals provide a platform for sustainable, *meaningful and long-term* relationships.

These four dimensions appear to interact with one another: the *vision imperative* kick-starts the shifting process, which seems to be amplified and accelerated by the *activation signals*, which in turn creates *tensions*, but also helps shape *value relationships*. Engaged employees and partnership stakeholders appear to be motivated to close gaps between company projections

and daily realities so as to enhance their self-image and categorization process.

Maarten Jurriaanse

Maarten Jurriaanse (1969) is a designer at heart; he has a natural curiosity to understand things, to find out how it works, how things relate and how they could be made differently.

He graduated with a bachelor degree in arts in 1994 from the Willem De Kooning Academy in Rotterdam and worked for 6 years at the corporate identity design agency Studio Dumbar. He had a hunch that organizations' identities entail more than logos and design manuals, and believed that organizations become more effective if they engage in two-way, direct and indirect interaction with consumers and other stakeholders.

Therefore he co-founded PingPong Design in 2000; a strategic (service) design (thinking) consultancy working for corporate clients such as Rabobank and Eneco, as well as startups such as Landmarkt and Fish Tales, and international clients such as the industrial services company KAEFER in Germany and the pharmaceutical company Sprunk-Jansen in Denmark.

He regularly teaches and lectures about branding, design and communication strategy at Fontys Hogeschool Breda, Hogeschool Rotterdam and Hogeschool The Hague.

Maarten is also co-founder of a new initiative called "one-extreme-day," a rollercoaster workshop method to help public and business organizations to collaborate with non-average consumers, extreme improvisers, innovators, makers and mavericks outside the bell-curve to prototype futures in the timespan of one day. This international method has participated in Rotterdam and in Cape Town South Africa, and in February 2016 in New York.

Collaboration or Termination?

A study on consumer evaluation of Corporate Social Responsibility and supply chain management

Recently big companies have been in the media spotlight regarding various scandals in their supply chain. Issues ranging from animal abuse, child labor and physical abuse are just some of the topics of these scandals in which esteemed companies are involved.

Notable companies involved in them are for example Apple (labor rights violations), McDonald's (animal abuse) and G-Star (human rights violations). These scandals have brought organisations tons of negative press while also conflicting with their statements and activities of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR or the idea that a company should be interested in and willing to help society and the environment as well as be concerned about the products and profits it makes would dictate that organizations need to resolve these issues in order to ethically and responsibly conduct their business. Two courses of action have been most notable in some of the recent events. A collaborative partnership in which the organization works together with its supplier to solve these issues is the first (Apple, McDonald's). The second being the termination of partnerships with suppliers that violate for example its employees rights (G-Star). Through media, these issues now also reach the consumer, the persons that buy the electronic devices, food and clothing of these companies.

That raises an interesting question:
"*What does the consumer think of the manner in which companies work with their suppliers?*".

Two hypotheses were developed;
1. *Consumers evaluate collaboration more positively than termination* and
2. *Consumers evaluate companies that collaborate more positively than companies that terminate.*

Research Method

To research these hypotheses, an experiment was conducted among a representation of the general public. Two identical scenarios were developed for each of the previously mentioned business decisions. Over one hundred respondents participated in the experiment and were given a scenario at random, half of the participants received a collaboration scenario while the other half was handed a termination scenario. After

reading their scenario, they evaluated the course of action as well as the company involved in the fictional event on a seven-point scale.

Analysis and Conclusions

Analysis of the results indicated that both groups had a reasonable amount of awareness regarding both CSR activities of companies, as well as the awareness of social issues. Both the collaboration and termination group positively evaluated the chosen course of action in their scenario. Closer analysis of the results indicated however that consumers in the termination group, evaluated the course of action as well as the company slightly higher. This meant that the hypotheses that were developed were in fact proven to be false. In summary, while small, there is a difference in evaluation between collaboration and termination with consumers leaning more towards termination. Companies that terminate relationships with troubled suppliers gain a higher evaluation than companies that approach a collaborative solution for supply chain issues. While more research has to be done as to understand all different variables that impact consumer evaluation of supply chains, for now it seems, at least from a consumer's perspective, that companies should terminate relationships with suppliers if severe social issues within its factories are discovered.

Future Research

It is important to note that more research, on a bigger scale with more variables, has to be done on this subject to create a better understanding of consumer evaluations of supply chains. The limited amount of research available on this subject hinders the creation of a full understanding of how consumers evaluate partnerships and what factors are in play. Some of these factors could for example be severity of the issues, location of the factory and the history of the company involved.

Ultimately, a full understanding of consumer evaluation of supply chain management could prove useful for organizations to behave and operate more in line with consumers' expectations. This alignment could eventually create higher shareholder-value and a better reputation for the organization itself. Commitment from top management to assess their supply chain management according to their CSR goals and activities would be key in achieving this objective.

Ben Kooi

Ben (1991) holds a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Communication and Multimedia Design with a specialization in Marketing and Project Management. As part of his Bachelor's degree, he studied and worked abroad for fourteen months. A minor in Business and Marketing in Spain and a marketing communications internship in New Zealand were part of this international experience. During his Bachelor he worked as a junior account executive at a medium sized advertisement agency.

After graduating in 2014, Ben applied for the Executive Master in Corporate Communication programme whilst finding a new job as marketing communications officer for an international recruitment agency (Van Koppen & Van Eijk) based in The Hague. In his role as marketing communications officer, Ben was responsible for internal and external communications, as well as marketing activities for the entire firm. By applying learnings from the programme he was, among other things, able to revamp the organization's brand and the external message that was connected to it. Having since moved on from this position and after successfully graduating from the programme, Ben is now looking forward to new international challenges and opportunities.

You can contact Ben via his LinkedIn: LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/benkooi

Crisis on Country Image: How a national food safety crisis changes a country's international reputation

The international food import and export has been thriving because of the rapid changes in technology and transportation. It has become much easier for us who live in Europe to have a taste of the square watermelon from Japan or those juicy mangos from Thailand because of the much more efficient import and export.

However, when there a crisis happened in one country which has a renowned reputation for food productions and manufactures, how its image and reputation would be perceived differently by other countries? That's my purpose of my thesis would like to find out.

Introduction

During the period of 2011-2014, there were several outrageous food scandal broke out in Taiwan, which made all the consumers terrified and became extra careful while Taiwanese foods had always been their first choice in daily shopping. It didn't take too long for the Taiwanese government to react to the scandals as well as the countries in the Asia pacific area, all types of ban and restrictions were announced and executed by nearby countries and Taiwanese officials. The contaminated foods could be easily traced back and dumped out, but the reputation damage was not so easily repaired. The influence of losing trust and confidence on Taiwanese products was huge, via viral media, the making or breaking reputation was within a blink. It significantly affected the reputation in local residents and people who have a frequent habit to purchase Asian food products.

Therefore, my interest lies in the field to comprehend how the public in various groups perceived Taiwanese products before the scandal, how they react towards the scandals, what types of strategies the countries had made to prevent affected products and how the general public changed their shopping preferences after the scandal.

Research process

In order to explore a deeper understanding about how crisis in a country can be linked to national reputation crisis. The structure of my survey was to construct a before and after experience scale and to have further analysis on these results. The foundation of my thesis was to build on the literature references about the drivers of country images, the impact of country image on consumer behaviors, and my expectation on my target group. Before taking the survey, a complete timeframe of all the relevant events was provided in the introduction, so that the participants can refresh the memory of these cases. There were 28 questions provided in the survey, each participants would need to fill out their age, gender, nationality, and resident country for background

categorization. The rest of the questions were designed to ascertain the degree of differences about the feeling towards these scandals.

From the process of the methodology, I ought to use my previous expectations on my sample groups to compare with the outcome. The original expectations for each groups matched some of the research results, but the gaps from the statistical data of the mean from each group were too small to draw an absolute conclusion. Therefore, if a further research can be conducted, the statistical analysis shall be continuously conducted.

Aftermath

After completing the survey and analysis, I've obtained a considerable amount of knowledge to initiate an academic research, which I've never had done before taking this program. The past courses had helped me to open a door to understand this academic field of corporate communication so that I could apply several methods and theory to write my own thesis. This thesis means a lot to me as well as my friends who had helped and contributed their opinions to complete my research process. We all feel much more accountable for being Taiwanese in representing a country image and also feel more responsible to explain this case to people who might have uncertainty in buying Taiwanese products. This research created a valuable opportunity for some people to communicate and exchange their opinions about the food safety case after years. It's great to feel connected to the people who are highly concerned about my own birth place's social issue as much as I do. Overall, this thesis has taught me a great lesson and has been an enriching experience during whole process, even though there were many challenges and limited access. Thus I learned that there should be more engagement in governments, monitoring by social organization, and higher degree of transparency between corporations and publics to prevent the next scandal from happening.

Jasmine Kuo

"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me." At age 16, Fountainhead came across my reading list and influenced me significantly to recognize my desire to achieve what I want in life. I've followed my goals to exceed myself everyday in the past 10 years, and that's why I started this corporate communication programs 2 years ago.

My name is Jasmine Kuo, and I am a business professional specialized in accounts management that covering sales, trades, logistics, contracts negotiation and business relationship maintenance in IT business internationally, mainly Asia, the U.S. and the Europe. I graduated with a bachelor degree in German language, fluent in English and Mandarin is my mother tongue, and now with some basic grasp of Dutch. Now I am working for an American semiconductor company, Micron Technology as sales manager and based in South Holland, Rotterdam.
I was born and raised in Taiwan but I have always prepared and determined to be a high flyer for the pursuit of career. I've strived hard to explore my opportunities around the globes and my driven personality trait has always led me to take exciting challenges in my profession. From a language student, I first had an oversea working as a tech-PR in the United States then later joined semiconductor industry as an account manager who was responsible for potential sales and trading business to win the market share and coverage.

In 2012, I was relocated in the office in South Netherlands with the project to set up local sales operation and also managed a team from Taiwan to guide them how to support and reinforce the local trades and sales activities via the hub facility and supply chains. This was an incredible expatriate experience in Europe, and since then I know my career would not stop in sole function, and this opportunity enabled me to dream bigger and make a higher leap. Working in the Netherlands is an eye opening experience, to see how corporate gives a considerable amount of emphasis in corporate responsibility and communications within the organization. In order to obtain a more thorough knowledge in learning sustainability, crisis management, reputation management at the corporate levels, I applied at Erasmus University of Rotterdam for executive master program in Corporate Communications. And I believe this learning journey will be a valuable asset next to my skills in international sales and commercial trading in the coming future.

Corporate Reputation and Brand Co-Creation

Understanding the Implications of Cultural Intelligence and Stakeholders' Identity Inclination in a New Multi-Stakeholder Market Configuration

The switch from the old to the new market model has influenced the approach to brand and reputation management. According to McIntosch (2015), in 2003 society experienced the sixth technological revolution.

This market switch did not just happen due to digital interconnectivity, it also happened because of the increase in migration movements. According to a United Nations report from 2013, international migration has increased by 150% since 1990. In the last decade, interconnectivity through the Internet also increased by 556%, according to an International Telecommunication Union report from 2014. In this interconnected and global environment, companies spend millions of dollars every year trying to engage their stakeholders through different brand and reputation programs.

Now, employees can work with other colleagues based in different countries; one can travel the entire world without leaving his or her home, and a person with particular computing skills and other sets of skills and motivation can impact the reputation of a company. In this context, companies have spent the last years adapting to this new paradigm, and most of these firms are still working on doing so. From a reputation management and branding standpoint, there are

practitioners trying to take the lead on connectivity and introduce companies to the new market environment. Other practitioners that prefer not to engage and still do business in the global markets are now suffering consequences.

In the last decade, literature in globalization and cross-cultural studies has increased significantly. In spite of this effort, practitioners are still using the same old market techniques to navigate the market and position the reputation and brand of companies. These endeavors are mainly based in the old structure where demographics were the core aspect of the market research. There are still companies building their stakeholders' mapping based on these old tools. The market is now facing a change of paradigm. Marketing scholars are moving from a customer-focused era to an era of multiple stakeholders' value creation (Kormum & Mühlbacher, 2013; Vallaster & Wallpach, 2012). From retailers placing the brand in specific physical spaces in a store to a potential customer writing about a product that he or she wants to acquire, brand identity and corporate reputation is less and less a result of top management decision-making and more and more a social construction. This multi-stakeholder approach, based on stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), considers that the value creation of reputation and brand comes from the interaction of these multiple stakeholders. Corporate reputation is considered a means to gain customers, investors, employees, and even licenses to operate in certain markets and industries. If managed carefully, reputation can have a desired impact on building strong companies. Therefore, it is relevant to understand its interdependence with the co-creation of brands in this multi-stakeholder environment.

Consequently, there is a need to approach the current market differently. Brands and corporate reputation are created not only by consumers but shaped constantly by multi-stakeholder interactions. The key variables that are part of this new market paradigm are related to how the different stakeholders understand reality because by understanding this, we will be much closer to understanding their capacity to impact the reputation and brand. Therefore, the key constructs that we selected to

explain their impact in the reputation and brand co-creation are cultural intelligence and stakeholders' identity inclination.

Using Principal Component Analysis and Spearman-Rank correlations, we tested the relationships of the key variables that are part of this new market paradigm. We performed an online survey in UK and US markets. A total of 613 respondents participated (309 from the UK and 304 from the US). Our aim was to understand the interdependence of these behavioral variables and their impact on the reputation of regional and global companies and to comprehend the interdependence of the reputation of regional and global companies with brand co-creation.

Since we wanted to understand the nuances of the regional companies and the global companies, we made a distinction between regional and global companies in order to understand to what extent the reputation of regional and global companies, as separate constructs, are impacted by each of the behavioral variables in this study. For that, we had to adapt the corporate reputation measurement scale and test its reliability.

We introduced a framework under the scope of the stakeholder theory, social psychology, cultural globalization theory, and multiple intelligence theory. The aim of the framework was to understand the correlation between the key behavioral variables, such as cultural intelligence and stakeholders' identity inclination and the new real implications of the corporate reputation and brand co-creation. The aim of the present study was threefold. The first objective was to understand to what extent different cultural intelligence dimensions correlate with the global and local identity inclination of the stakeholders. The second aim of this investigation was to comprehend the correlation between the different cultural intelligence dimensions and the global and local identity inclination of the stakeholders in the reputation of the global and regional companies.

This led us to the third aim of this thesis research. We also wanted to understand if there is a correlation between the reputation of global and regional

companies and brand co-creation intention and brand co-creation behavior. For this, we also tested the global and regional companies' reputation effects on behavioral intentions in order to understand the correlation with the brand co-creation intention and the brand co-creation behavior.

We tested the 18 hypotheses presented in our framework and found confirmation of all the interdependences presented in the hypotheses. More specifically, we found that the behavioral variables had an impact on the reputation of regional and global companies and that the reputation of regional and global companies was interdependent on brand co-creation intention and brand co-creation behavior. Moreover, we found that the new dimension of brand co-creation proved to be different from brand co-creation behavior and both are correlated with the reputation of regional and global companies. This confirms that reputation as a means to gain customers, investors, employees, and even licenses to operate are affected by the new market reality of a multi-stakeholder approach where companies are less in control of the fate of their reputation. We also found a correlation between cultural intelligence and stakeholders' identity inclination.

This thesis presents five main contributions to understanding the implications of cultural intelligence and stakeholders' identity inclination in a new multi-stakeholder market configuration and their effects on the corporate reputation of regional and global companies.

Soledad Monsalve

With a talent for creative conceptual thinking and a passion for shaping and implementing communication and marketing functions, Soledad Monsalve has built and managed international and regional communications and marketing functions from conception through operation in more than ten countries.

Recently appointed as the Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications for RHEA (Aviation & Aerospace), Soledad will be heading their internal and external communication and marketing activities, from planning to execution, at the international level.

Her success in leading strategic decision-making in global teams has contributed to her accomplishments in effective strategy development in corporate communications, reputation, marketing, and business management.

Soledad earned two master's degrees and an MPhil before pursuing her Ph.D. in management, empowering her to contribute consistently more than expected in every role—from her first communications advisory assignment, through promotions to internal, corporate, and marketing communications consultancy roles, and on to her recent senior global communications and marketing management positions.

Connect with Soledad on LinkedIn at https://be.linkedin.com/in/soledadmonsalve/en.

Leadership language in creating internal alignment

An analysis of the linguistic connection between purpose, people and performance

The objective of this research has been to gain an understanding of how senior managers create internal alignment amidst organisational change, what role communication plays for leaders, and how communications departments can support senior managers solve the challenges they face.

This study offers an empirically grounded framework that shows how leaders aim to create internal alignment by means – and different types of – language. The framework offers insight in leadership language and the intricate marriage of different elements (speaker, audience, message, physical setting) that only when integrated can successfully create internal alignment. Like the elements of a car, to get where you want to go, you need to integrate all of the parts.

Theoretical review

The theoretical review first provides an analysis of the concepts of alignment and engagement. Secondly the theory of management as a symbolic action, and sensemaking & sensegiving are being studied.

Furthermore, a rhetorical perspective on internal alignment underlines the importance of language in this context.

Field research

The field research for this study was provided by participants from NN Group, an insurance and investment management company active in more than 18 countries, with a head office in the Netherlands and 5 million clients predominantly in Europe and in Japan. Qualitative interviews with 17 organisational members of NN's international leadership group were conducted. These participants are (mostly) direct reports to the members of the NN Group Management Board. They fulfil positions such as CEO of a business unit or country leadership teams or are leading teams in the Support Functions at the head office.

The main insights gathered in the interviews are structured in an overall framework and explained according to the methodology of Grounded Theory Approach. Two key themes provide the structure: *alignment & engagement*, and *sensemaking & sensegiving*.

Alignment & engagement

Under the first theme, 'alignment & engagement', many insights shared related to the drivers of internal alignment, as defined by van Riel: *informing actions, motivating actions and capability development* (Riel, 2012). Findings related to *informing actions* brought strong evidence of indicators related to the future: putting the vision for a compelling future on paper, and clearly communicating to employees how this dot on the horizon looks. Many leaders put effort into interaction in creating internal alignment, since several indicators lead to the variable '*motivating actions*': to have meaningful dialogues, committed conversations, and to take actual time to listen. The concepts defined for '*capability development*' encompass coaching efforts, selection of the right people and optimising circumstances for employees.

Sensemaking & sensegiving

With regards to the second theme, 'sensemaking & sensegiving', leaders indicated aspects of both *sensemaking* (meaning construction, cognition and under-standing the nature of a change) and *sensegiving* (the attempt by the use of language, symbols, ceremonies, and physical settings) to influence the sensemaking of others and their action towards the organisation's reality (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991 p.443-444). Since 'language' is a vehicle used for '*sensegiving*' activities, it encompasses elements that are also related to *sensemaking* aspects. The speaker – the one engaging in *sensegiving activities* – attempts to influence the *sensemaking process* of the audience (using language). Rhetoric, or persuasive communication (Perloff, 2010) as a sensegiving activity deals with:

✦ Characteristics of the speaker (ethos)
✦ The relevance of the emotional state of the audience (pathos) and
✦ Aspects of the message (logos)

Ethos: On the characteristics of the speaker, moderate evidence was found related to how leaders want to appear: energising, honest, stable, authentic and personal in their communication. Next to the literal words leaders chose, the tone of voice also played a large role. Specifically, leaders were aware of the impact if they *don't* use the right tone of voice.

Pathos: A moderate amount of evidence was found on the emotional state of the audience, mainly related to the effort leaders mentioned in order to change something, to touch or move people, to add value and to be relevant.

Logos: Moderate evidence was also found of the aspects of the message: to be repetitive and purposeful. However, a large amount of evidence of storytelling was found. This might be one of the keys in using language to increase internal alignment: leaders that strive to be an excellent communicator invest in skills training on persuasive communication.

Physical settings: Accessibility and visibility are part of physical settings that can, quite easily, be improved if a leader feels he falls short on that aspect. The testimonials of CEOs who have embraced the 'new way of working' are quite positive and this might be an inspiration for other senior leaders.

One conclusion is that all leaders interviewed are well aware of the relevance of communication in creating internal alignment. They see communication as an integral, major task of a leader, they use a wide variety of channels for different audiences to articulate the purpose, values and strategy, and they are aware of the impact of better and worse communicative actions.

Communication support

The second part of the research question [...] *and how can communications departments support these*

senior leaders? gained a moderate amount of supporting evidence, leading to two main concepts: overall quality of the support leaders receive or expect from communications teams, and indicators related to strengthening the company as a whole, which encompass consistent messaging between different parts of the business and to internal and external audiences.

Overall, this research underlines the relevance of an integrated approach to leadership communication, and this should resonate in the support given by communication professionals. The orchestration of communication activities by leaders is the key approach, instead of execution through communications teams being the sender. Supporting leaders to be inspiring communicators and good listeners, facilitating teams to have meaningful conversations, and encouraging employees to share feedback, concerns and ideas with their leaders, can bring challenging, interesting and rewarding aspects to the communications profession.

References

Gioia, D. A., & Chittipeddi, K. (1991). Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal (1986-1998), 12*(6), 433.

Perloff, R. M. (2010). Introduction to persuasion, part 1, chapter 1. *The dynamics of persuasion* (4th ed., pp. 3-40). London: Routledge.

Riel, C. B. M. v. (2012). *The alignment factor: Leveraging the power of total stakeholder support* Routledge.

Lidia Moret

After obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Leisure Science & Event Management in Rotterdam, Lidia Moret went on to gain a Master's of Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam. She knew right away that 'communication' was the direction she wanted to pursue. She started her professional career in 1997 – when the internet was just emerging - as Communications Manager for 'new media' and Editor in Chief for Internet at ABN AMRO.

After years of exploring adventures in online communications, she shifted to internal communications, which became the common denominator in various roles and responsibilities in the years to come. In 2009, Lidia left ABN AMRO to work for 2.5 years as a freelancer. Since then, she first joined Nationale-Nederlanden and now works at NN Group Corporate Communications & Affairs in The Hague.

In recent years the significance of leadership communication has gained both more attention in management literature and has become more prominent in her working life. The Advanced Elective Courses 'Leadership & Communication', 'Language & Reputation management', and 'Crisis Communication' were especially inspiring classes in this context.

Her love of language and her responsibilities for NN's global internal branding programme collectively brought her to the topic for this final thesis. With pride and joy she looks back on a very rewarding and inspirational time at RSM/Erasmus.

More: www.lidia.nl - twitter @LidiaMoret

The visibility of CEOs within pharmaceutics

The impact on corporate reputation and the effect on patients

Do powerful CEOs have the ability, by using their visibility, to increase the reputation of their company? There are many examples of CEOs whose visibility were important and influenced the reputation of their companies in a positive way, for instance Richard Bransons (Virgin), Steve Jobs (Apple), Bill Gates (Microsoft), and Anita Roddick (Body Shop). Do we recognize visible leaders in the pharmaceutical industry, and are these CEOs able to influence the reputation of their companies?

During the past decades pharmaceutical industry's most important stakeholder groups were investors, prescribers, insurance companies and media (e.g. Kessel, 2014). However, research (e.g. Grogan, 2014) found out there is a growing importance of the patient. But, are patients aware of, and interested in the company and the CEO behind their medication?

In the last decades the pharmaceutical industry saw an increase in corporate misconducts (Mattera, 2012), with negative impact on the reputation of pharmaceutical companies (PWC, 2015). A survey in 2012 by Baum, about the reputation of 29 global pharmaceutical companies, found a decline of 19% in corporate reputation. A company's reputation is among its most valuable assets: The percentage of a company's value attributed to tangible assets decreased from 90% to 25%, whereas the intangible asset of a company (including reputation) represents 40% to 60% of a corporation's market capitalization (Brigham and Linssen, 2010;

Gaines-Ross, 2008). Important reputation drivers of pharmaceutical companies are being a responsible, reliable, ethical, transparent company, offering high quality products, and being a good corporate citizen. (Reputation Institute 2015).

An important driver of corporate reputation is the reputation of its CEO (e.g. Shandwick, 2011; Murray and White, 2005). A company is a reflection of its CEO (Hambrick and Mason, 1984).

A CEO is the personification, the embodiment of a company and responsible for its successes (Ranft et al, 2006). About 45% of the corporate reputation and market value is estimated to be an attribution of its CEO's reputation (Weber Shandwick, 2015a). The way CEOs behave influences the opinion of stakeholders about pharmaceutical companies (Global Economic Crime Survey, 2014). An important way to improve the industry's reputation is the increase of engagement between the pharmaceutical sector and patients (Dewulf 2015), it gives possibilities to a better understanding of patients' needs and wants (e.g. Abelson et al, 2003) and it realizes trust and confidence in the health system (Wiseman et al, 2003). With an increase of patients empowering and engaging in health care issues on the Internet, pharmaceutical companies, represented by its CEO, should use the opportunity to become part of the conversation by explaining what their companies stand for (Weber Shandwick, 2015b; 2013,). Online presence, the use of social media is the platform to connect and build engagement between a pharmaceutical company and its patients (Dewulf, 2015).

To be able to discover if a visible CEO within the pharmaceutical industry in the Netherlands increases the reputation of his/her company, and to find out whether his or her visibility is relevant for a target group of growing importance, the patient, it was necessary to identify a visible CEO. I found one visible CEO within pharmaceutics: Marcel Joachimsthal, CEO of GlaxoSmithKline Netherlands (GSK). GSK is expert in the area of pulmonology. To investigate his visibility, the visibility of his company and products, and the effect of his visibility related to the reputation of his company, I got the chance to compose and expand an online survey (July 2015) among 900 lung patients, members of the patient advocacy group (PAG): 'Longfonds', (response rate 51%, n=464) (appendix c). The results of the survey suggest a visible CEO of a pharmaceutical company specialized in pulmonology in The Netherlands, is not visible among his lung patients. Not even for respondents, who could be defined as involved in, and having knowledge of their lung disease and treatment. Almost all respondents (99.8%/463) were not able to mention the name of the CEO of the company of their medication, nor were able to answer the question whether a CEO could have influenced their image of the pharmaceutical company of their medication. 2% of the respondents (11) answered they knew the man presented on the picture (Joachimsthal) in the questionnaire. 50% of the respondents (234) would like to receive information from the pharmaceutical company, of which: 78% about medication, 19% about the pharmaceutical company and 5% about the CEO.

This moment Dutch lung patients do not see the relevance of a (visible) CEO nor the (personal) advantages

a visible CEO of the company of their medication could offer. An important reason for CEOs invisibility in The Netherlands is related to the legislation and regulation of the pharmaceutical industry. Industry's unawareness about the attribution a CEOs reputation could deliver to (the value of) a company's reputation could also be a reason of CEOs invisibility.

One of the implications of this study is the development of communication activities initiated by Nefarma (Association for Dutch branches of innovative pharmaceutical companies), to increase awareness within the pharmaceutical industry in The Netherlands about the importance of reputation, corporate reputation and CEO's reputation in relation to company's reputation, resulting in positive effects towards their stakeholder groups. Another implication is related to the strict regulation of the industry with regard to the direct communication between the

industry and its patients, defined by the CGR (Code of conduct for pharmaceutical advertising). With an increase of patients searching health information online, the distance between a pharmaceutical company and its patient is decreasing. More patient health engagement will result in a growing demand and supply of health information, resulting in (more) direct communication between company and patient, which causes a blurred boundary between industry and patient, between information (permissiveness) and advertising (prohibition). Clarity throughout the industry is needed, both CGR (revising regulation) as well as Nefarma (information and communication) have to take their responsibilities.

Yvette Oswald

Yvette Oswald, Studied healthcare and got a bachelor's degree. She is a professional client service director, and experienced for more than 25 years working at global advertising agencies (e.g. Publics, FCB and Ayer).

She is specialized in the areas of pharmaceutics, cosmetics and food, and has developed communication strategies and implementation plans for international accounts like Beiersdorf (e.g. Nivea), AT&T (corporate), Ricoh (corporate) and Heinz (e.g. De Ruijter), Novartis, (cardiovascular, pulmonology, neuroscience) Johnson and Johnson (neuroscience), Bristol-Myers Squibb and AstraZeneca (diabetes).

At the moment she is lecturer communication at the HAN University of Supplied Sciences, developer of the curriculum of communication studies, actor for the internal communication at corporate level of the HAN and former member of the faculty council.

To contact Yvette,
please visit her Linkedin profile.

Thought Leadership on the 48 hours Society

Paradigm shift of the New Way of Living and Working

The New Way of Working has made its entry to the Netherlands in the 1990's. KPN defined this as "The New Way of Living and Working" and adopted it as one of its major corporate themes. It encompasses the company's views on how businesses and consumers can achieve their goals better with the use of information and communications technology (ICT). What's more is that this corporate theme has a strong societal component. The New Way of Living and Working can contribute to many societal improvements such as energy savings, reduction of traffic density and an enhanced balance between professional and family life.

Main research issue

The development of the theme has stalled in the past few years. The New Way of Living and Working seems to have converted to a luxury working condition for employees: in the opinion of employers, employees especially take advantage of it, with the diminishing ability of managers to be in control. It has converted (and become constrained) to the concept of working from home. We see, however, two disruptive developments that will change the view on this theme which will lead to a shift towards a society where working and living will intermingle, both physically and virtually. From its core business and rooted connection to the Netherlands, KPN is one of the enablers of this shift. Using this as a starting point, I have researched how KPN can position itself more distinctively on the theme New Way of Living and Working, to contribute to Dutch society in a relevant way on one hand and to maintain its market position where possible on the other.

Paradigms and paradigm shifts

From a scientific point of view my research is focused on the rise (and maintenance) of paradigms through paradigm shifts and the existence of new paradigms. I will support this theory through my literature research. At the base are the considerations on paradigms of scientific philosopher Thomas Kuhn, as expressed in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962). I have applied this theory on paradigms to the theme New Way of (Living and) Working. I have also adopted a translation

to KPN: how can the company act as a thought leader on the new paradigm.

Empirical research and methodology

The empirical research consists of sixteen in-depth interviews with directors and managers of different organisations and (corporate) companies. The outcomes have been complemented by a research on The New Way of Working carried out by HR managers in particular, which has been executed by research agency Motivaction, commissioned by KPN. Prior to the research I have held explorative sessions with students of Fontys Hogeschool in Eindhoven. The research should answer the main question: *how KPN can position itself more distinctively on the theme New Way of Living and Working, to contribute to Dutch society in a relevant way and maintain its market position where possible?*

Current paradigm on The New Way of Working

The in-depth interviews have led to three main themes that characterize the New Way of (Living and) Working :

Theme	Sub-theme
Flexibility/freedom	Working independent of time and place: ability of working always and everywhere
	Reconciling work and family life and finding a balance
Productivity	Better results through higher revenues, an improved labour productivity and enhanced customer loyalty
	Cost efficiency thanks to less necessary office space, lower sick leave and higher work satisfaction
Organisation of work	Increase in responsibility of employees thanks to more control on their jobs and being reviewed on their output
	Collaboration within the company based on a different open behavioural culture

Two tipping points

Respondents indicate a paradigm shift from two points of view:

Theme	Sub-theme
Human factors	Flexible labour model in which employees decide how they prefer to work, from personal leadership within a different revenue model and within different terms of employment
	A different way for collaboration within a trans-sectoral, connected and networked society
	Aspiration to a higher quality of life in spite of or rather, due to a working career
Technological factors	Possibilities of technology, like cloud, internet of things and robotization
	A higher speed of technology development compared to how society is arranged which forces to make better (ethical) choices

Interpretation of the new paradigm

According to the respondents, the tipping points will lead to a new reality. In this new paradigm there will be a new interpretation of the themes Organization of work and Flexibility/freedom. Two new themes arise: Technology and Quality of life.

Theme	Sub-theme
Organisation of work	Autonomy of the employee/contractor, employees decide how and for whom they like to work with a high degree of personalized decision-making
	New labour relations where jobs become tasks, collaboration is key and employers are merely facilitators
Flexibility/freedom	Need for personal freedom (of choice), no fixed but flexible working hours, employer even stimulates flexibility
	Full acceptation of this way of working because it has turned into the standard and people are called to ask about this
Technology	Technology as an opportunity because it enables flexibility, productivity and quality of life
	Technology as a threat because it suppresses physical contact
Quality of life	The good life, that is all about experiencing a better quality of life from any approach
	Sensegiving, also beyond work, that enriches people

Significance for KPN

What does the new paradigm mean to the service of KPN? The responses to this question do not refer to concrete products or services, but they describe the sort of service and how KPN could become a thought leader (creating conditions for service).

Theme	Sub-theme
Related to society	Sectoral approach (in health care, education, government) for example on themes like privacy, security and sustainability
	Take a stance on issues within the theme, by which KPN shows leadership
Related to networks	Quality of state-of-the-art networks, with a minimized latency and continued availability everywhere
	Applications enhance network relevance, like domotica, internet of things, e-ID
Consultancy	Implementation of professional and family life, not only from ICT technology, but also on furnishing working locations, coaching of preferred behaviour etc.

Novel-point-of-view: 48 hours society

The paradigm shift leads to a new insight on the theme, a novel point-of-view: the 48 hours society. In this society physical and virtual actions are intermingled, which results in many more possibilities for which we now still need 24 hours to realize. This has many consequences for productivity of work and quality of life. From its core business, KPN can (and should) take the lead in this from its mission and vision and strive to thought leadership.

Recommendations for thought leadership KPN

To realize this position, KPN should focus on four aspects:

1. Company focus (including communication) on one corporate theme, in this case the new paradigm of the New Way of Living and Working: the 48 hours society.
2. Adapt HRM policy and labour market communication to the new role of the employees of the future.
3. Show that KPN is frontrunner on ICT technology and live up to this claim.
4. Take position in discussions on the 48 hours society. This includes the positive perspectives as well as the dialogue about possible threats.

The research shows that respondents do not see KPN as a thought leader on the theme yet, but that there is much potential to possibly fulfil that role: all prerequisites are there to become successful.

Erik Paulis

Erik Paulis graduated at the Hotel Management School in Maastricht, the Netherlands where he laid the foundation for his customer-oriented approach and mentality. Interpersonal and organizational communication however, has always been his drive and passion; he was able to combine his talent for hospitality and his strength in communication as an advisor for the Horeca Branche Instituut (the Dutch institute specialized in Hotel and Catering).

After a few years his entrepreneurial spirit started to mature and together with his business companion Monic Lansu, he decided to launch a full-service communication agency. For almost thirteen years they successfully ran this business, which focuses especially on non-profit organizations, including ministries, universities and branch organizations. After selling his share of the company, Erik sought to broaden his corporate work experience.

He took the opportunity to start as a senior corporate communications advisor at KPN (Royal Dutch Telecom), the leading ICT provider in the Netherlands. In this position he is responsible for both internal and external corporate communication on a business and executive level, with extra attention given to the technical (network) division.

Erik currently lives with his life-partner, Wim Poort, in Leiden and enjoys, travelling, playing tennis, cycling and gastronomy in his spare time.

Communicating Successfully On Twitter

While social media have been present in people's lives for over a decade, it has only been a few years since companies started to fully explore the potential of this type of communication channel. When communicating in social media, as is the case with other types of media, companies not only divulge information about themselves, but they have to do it in a way that will yield the kind of support they desire from their stakeholders.

Objective

The objective of this thesis is to investigate what type of communications from companies in social media has the most impact on their reputations and the level of support they receive from their stakeholders.

Objects Of Analysis

The two largest private banks from Brazil were chosen for this analysis: Itaú Unibanco and Bradesco, which are both very active communicators, on traditional and social media. This study focused specifically on how both banks communicate on Twitter, a social network that can be defined as a microblog, which has over 300 million users worldwide.

Research And Methodology: Phase One

The first phase of research consisted of a qualitative content analysis done on all tweets posted by both Itaú Unibanco and Bradesco over the course of one year, specifically from July 2014 to August 2015. During the same period of time, Itaú Unibanco had 416 original tweets and Bradesco had 196.

In this analysis tweets were categorized according to their type of content and type of framing technique used. The type of content was determined according to Reputation Institute's RepTrak® system, which tracks and assesses stakeholders' perceptions of companies (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015), resulting in a general reputation score called Pulse. The Pulse score is the construct of four emotions stakeholders can have for companies, namely admiration, feeling, esteem and trust. This score represents Reputation Institute's definition of reputation as an emotional bond stakeholders have with a company. This emotional
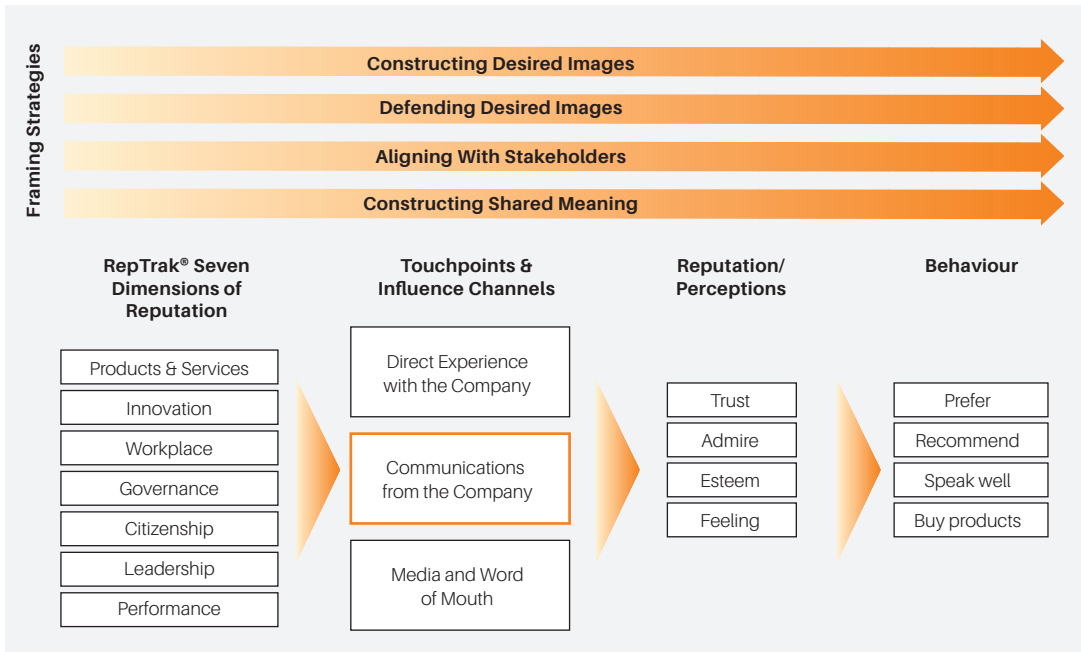
bond is elicited by "underlying informational drivers of reputation" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 4) and the RepTrak® system enables a comprehensive understanding of such drivers, organized into seven dimensions. They are:

1. Products & Services, which "assesses perceptions of a company's offerings based on whether they are thought to be high in quality, in value and service, and in their ability to meet customers' needs" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 6).

2. Innovation, the dimension that assesses "perceptions of a company as innovative and adaptive" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 6).

3. Workplace, which assesses "perceptions of a company's practices in maintaining an environment that shows concern for employees, and for treating and rewarding them fairly and equitably" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 7).

4. Governance, which assesses "stakeholder perceptions of a company as ethical, fair and transparent" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 7).

5. Citizenship, the dimension that assesses "perceptions of a company as environmentally friendly, a supporter of good causes and a positive contributor to society" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 8).

6. Leadership, which assesses perceptions "of leaders as excellent and visionary managers, and strong endorsers of their companies" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 8).

7. Performance, the dimension that assesses "stakeholder perceptions of a company's overall financial performance, profitability and growth prospects" (Fombrun, Ponzi & Newburry 2015, p. 8).

For the categorization of the tweets' type of content, Professor van Halderen's Framing Typology (2014) was

used, in which four main phases of different types of framing are described. Each phase has specific framing strategies. They are:

1. Constructing desired images, which has the purpose of creating "a strong and sustainable position" for an organization in its environment (Van Halderen 2014, p. 10). This can be achieved by: a) Master Framing and/or b) Frame Amplification.

2. Defending desired image, which can be used if an organization suffers criticism of any kind, by a) Frame Turning, b) Counter Framing and/or c) Decoupling Frames.

3. Aligning with stakeholders, which proposes to "ensure mutual understanding, trust and legitimacy" (Van Halderen 2014, p. 28). This can be achieved through a) Frame Bridging, b) Frame Extension and/or c) Frame Balancing.

4. Constructing shared meaning, used by organizations in efforts to be "active participants within the social meaning construction in their environment" (Van Halderen 2014, p. 36) through a) Frame Transformation and/or b) Frame Contesting.

Research And Methodology: Phase Two

The second phase of the research consisted of two focus groups conducted with participants that fit the profile of Twitter users. Participants were asked to choose their favourite tweets from both Itaú Unibanco and Bradesco from a selection of tweets from each bank that contained two examples of each framing strategy used. Participants explained why they liked the chosen tweets and described whether reading those messages impacted their perceptions of both banks in any way.

Results And Conclusions

Results show very clearly that main framing strategy Aligning With Stakeholders, which aims at ensuring "mutual understanding, trust and legitimacy" (Van Halderen 2014, p. 28), especially its strategies of Frame Extension and Frame Bridging, is the type of framing technique that resonates the most with consumers on Twitter. When these framing strategies are used in messages with content related to Citizenship, they are the ones that have the most positive impact in the degree of trust and esteem consumers can have for a company, which confirms the original purpose of this framing strategy. In other words, communicating about Citizenship in social media through framing strategies Frame Extension and Frame Bridging will have the most positive impact for companies in regards to their reputations with consumers.

Silvia Salles

Silvia Moreira Salles was born in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, on May 1st 1983. Having always loved film and literature, she decided to major in communications with emphasis in advertising, graduating from college in 2004.

Silvia's career, however, steered towards corporate communications. In the years following college, she worked for the communications departments of two Brazilian companies, in the retail and the aviation industries, respectively. Silvia's experience with consulting services began in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she lived and worked from 2007 to 2008.

In January 2010, Silvia joined Reputation Institute, where she currently works as a senior consultant for companies in the oil & gas, pharmaceutical and mining industries.

She continues to love literature and film. Other loves include travel, her friends and family (especially her nephew), and dogs.

The Circular Alignment

Creating Shared Value for Business and Society through the Circular Economy of Plastics

After the financial crisis that hit the world in 2008, the increasing global competiveness, the ageing of its population and changes in consumer behavior, weaker productivity, high unemployment, skills shortages, fragile banking systems, a slowdown in global trade and increased competition through the growth of emerging economies, Europe is facing a future of great uncertainty.

Europe remains very resource dependent. It imports 60 percent of its fossil fuels and metals. More than 30 million jobs in the EU and many key economic sectors such as automotive, aerospace, and renewable energy are dependent on a sustainable supply of raw materials[1].

Europe's industrial revival depends on its ability to maximize resource productivity as a source of wealth, competitiveness and renewal. A report published by McKinsey[2] reveals that a circular economy, enabled by a technology revolution, can allow Europe to grow resource productivity by up to 3 percent annually, bringing total benefits to around €1.8 trillion in 2030 versus current projections.

Plastics is a transversal and versatile material that is virtually present in every product related to living, work, food and mobility. The unique characteristics of plastics allow them to make a strong contribution the Circular Economy and a resource-efficient Europe.

The Plastics Industry gives direct employment to over 1.45 Million people in the region, working in more than 60,000 companies; most Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It is considered to be amongst the top 5 most innovative sectors in the region and it has a multiplier effect of 2.4 fold in GDP and for every job in the Plastics Industry three jobs are created in the value chain.

While there is a common understanding amongst the Plastics Industry, the European Commission (EC) and Society that the Circular Economy is the only way to sustain Europe's economy, agreeing on how to get there is the great challenge.

[1] European Commission (2015) Growth Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/raw-materials/

[2] McArthur, E. Foundation, Sun & McKinsey Center for Business and Environment (2015) Growth
Within: A Circular Economy Vision for a Competitive Europe.

The key to a successful transition lies in the alignment between two crucial, definite stakeholder[3] groups: the European Plastics' Industry and Policy Makers.

The Circular Alignment is about fostering continuously a relationship aiming to build a Circular Economy that brings benefits to all stakeholders involved and addresses social, economic and environmental issues in the region.

With the use of Cees van Riel's road map for external alignment[4] and the application of the principle of Creating Shared Value (CSV) of Michael Porter and Mark Kramer to the Circular Economy, this thesis aimed to answer the question: *"What are the enabling factors and obstacles in creating alignment between Policy Makers and the Plastics Industry to realize the Circular Economy of Plastics in Europe?"*

Secondary research on the theme of Circular Economy including EC initiatives, Plastics Industry's view statements and qualitative research based on Grounded Theory[5] were the sources used to answer it. Interviews were conducted with nine influential stakeholders from the Plastics Industry and the European Commission.

The following findings and recommendations are made in this thesis:

The European Commission took the lead in initiating a negotiation road map for alignment. In June 2015, The EC organized the Circular Economy Conference, conducting stakeholder consultation meetings. The input is going to be used for the Circular Economy Strategy, which will be announced in December this year.

The next likely step will be in building consensus between EC and stakeholders, including the Plastics Industry, to validate the Circular Economy strategy

implementation. Both groups portray similarities and differences in point of views regarding CSV enablers:

1. *The concept of value as "benefits versus costs".* The Plastics Industry realizes that resource efficiency can bring competitive advantage for Europe in the long term while contributing towards the Circular Economy. EU Policy Makers also concur to the principle, committing to address barriers and enable the development of new markets and business models.

2. *A supportive regulatory framework and innovate for social value.* Both groups also agree that a level playing field has to be in place in order to create resource efficiency from bio feedstock and enable long term investments in infrastructure. However, there are different views between these groups on legislation enforcement, the approach on Life Cycle Assessments and criteria regarding eco-design and recycling targets. Furthermore, EU regulators need to overcome obstacles, such as, getting internal consensus, lobbying forces from the Energy sector and lack of structural support from local governments (i.e. municipalities).

3. *Innovate for Social Value.* The EC intends to stimulate research & innovation via EU funding instruments. Although the Plastics Industry sees that innovation is instrumental for the Circular Economy, specifically in recycling technologies such as chemical recycling, and use of CO_2 as chemical feedstock, investors tend to be risk-averse. This is because investments of that nature are very high and must last for the long-term, e.g. 30 years. Hence, investor confidence needs to be nurtured.

Amongst the reinforcing elements found in the research of Pfitzer et al.[6] on 'Innovating for Shared Value', *Co-creation* between the Plastics Industry and the European Commission could be an approach to strengthen the alignment with the support of additional stakeholder groups, such as NGOs, Academia, Innovation Agencies, Professional Associations (e.g. Industrial Design) and Global Equipment Manufacturers. To achieve that, the Plastics Industry would have to engage more

[3] From the PUL model. Mitchell, R.K.; Agle, B.R. & Wood, D.J. (1997) Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts, The Academy of Management Review, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 853-886

[4] Riel, C.B.M. van (2012), The Alignment Factor: Leveraging the power of total stakeholder support, Routledge, New York.

[5] Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967), The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.

[6] See Chapter 1.4.3. INNOVATE FOR SOCIAL VALUE, P.11

intensively on the consensus approach of the negotiation road map initiated by the European Commission.

A way to do this is by setting up multi-disciplinary task forces for the creation of "lighthouse projects" that could address the needs and gaps between EC and the industry. They include: chemical recycling, logistics infrastructure (to collect, sort, separate and transport waste), universal standards for Life Cycle Assessment and recycling targets, design standards for recycling, use efficiency and durability, and new material technologies that curb the use of hazardous substances.

Psychological barriers, such as mind-shifting from current working methods and finding a common understanding of both industry and EC limitations can be overcome by constant dialogue and transparency. Ad hoc platforms directed to these EC policy makers could help bridge the gaps for consensus. This could be in done in informal consultations where the Plastics Industry can provide a business perspective of the Circular Economy while validating the role of policy makers as advisors.

Next to buffering and lobbying as tactics for alignment through negotiation, the Plastics Industry can opt for informal consultations with EC regulators that are supportive to creating opportunities for the access and reuse of bio renewable feedstock and enforce the ban of landfill of valuable plastics waste. The Plastics Industry could develop together with them an alignment approach to help them address their internal consensus issues that impairs the implementation of rules and directives to support a sustainable level- playing field for the industry and enable investor confidence in new technologies and infrastructure.

At this crucial stage of strategy formulation and validation for the Circular Economy, though, the fundamental investment from the Plastics Industry needs to be in *communication* - building and nurturing alliances amongst value chain players in the Plastics Industry more actively, promoting transparency and visibility of the industry's initiative towards the European Commission and engaging stakeholders in science and society to co-create in the future with the industry.

The Circular Alignment is at sight and it is instrumental for the realization of a new economy that will create shared value for "people, profit and planet". The good news is that both Plastics Industry and European Commission want to reach the same destination. But to get there, both parties need to jump on the same boat.

Aline Stanworth

Aline Stanworth is a passionate driver and believer in the power of strategic communications that enhances commercial performance, ensures a company's license to operate and builds value chain alliances to propel and materialize value propositions like sustainability, customer focus and innovation.

As Communication Leader at SABIC in Europe, Aline's role is to act as business partner to senior leadership, creating and leading the implementation of strategic communications. Born in Rio de Janeiro and living in Europe for more than 20 years, this Brazilian and Dutch national carries more than 17 years of experience in Marketing and Communications positions in Personal Care, Healthcare, Music, Dentistry and Chemical Industries.

In October 2015, Aline has been honored for the campaign "Stories of Possible" for SABIC with a Silver and Bronze Stevie Trophies in the categories B2B Communi-cations Campaign and Brand Experience of the Year at the 12th International Business Awards, the world's premier business awards program. She has been also named finalist of the Women in Business Awards in New York for "Stories of Possible" in the categories Communications Campaign and Marketing Campaign of the Year – Business to Business.

Aline has an undergraduate background in Journalism and International Business Management and a Master of Science in Corporate Communications from RSM at Erasmus University.

Think Platforms: In Search of Think Tank Legitimacy

Today governments are allowing unprecedented access to their documents. Judges are permitting media coverage of ongoing proceedings. While politicians and diplomats communicate their doings and whereabouts via Twitter. They all purport to believe in transparency, or are nudged to do so by various watchdogs. Professional opinion makers such as media and think tanks are equally pressured to become more transparent. This thesis, therefore, focuses on how think tanks can effectively secure their legitimacy in such an evolving and demanding environment.

Research

Think tanks can be defined as semi-autonomous research organizations, analyzing and commenting on policy issues in order to set agendas and improve society. They operate in an intellectual marketplace dominated by bureaucracy and politics, and encroach upon the fields of media, economics and science. Therefore, how do think tanks best communicate in order to preserve their purpose and legitimacy in our society? Answering this pertinent question required the collection of information from and opinions of 18 stakeholders working for or with think tanks.

Conclusions

Neither the literature nor the 18 interviews conducted for this thesis have uncovered a communication strategy that is specific to think tanks or that distinguishes them from other institutions and experts operating outside the think tanks' sphere. In fact, think tanks, if anything, have strong ties to these institutions and experts. They are known to partially borrow and incorporate their strategies and even recruit their staff. This is not, in and of itself, considered problematic, so long as think tanks are not beholden to any specific interest and maintain their research independence. This, in addition to external pressures and rankings, has pushed think tanks into becoming increasingly transparent in their operations.

The information revolution has to a degree shaken think tanks' traditionally secure positions in society, consequently, challenging their legitimacy. By cleverly investing in the three types of legitimacy, think tanks can firmly position themselves in their unique narrow sphere bordering all other opinion makers, and engage in ameliorating exiting policies. *Cognitive legitimacy* is gained and preserved by proving a think tank's added value to and advantage over other opinion makers. Think tanks win *moral legitimacy* by interacting

transparently with society, and by showcasing how their research profits the public. Lastly, *pragmatic legitimation* strategy pushes think tanks into focusing on the quality of their research as well their communication. Seven overarching themes have emerged from the above-mentioned interviews. These are further characterized within each type of legitimacy.

Cognitive legitimacy

1. **A think tank needs to prove its relevance to society.**
   This theme is considered by far the most important in managing legitimacy. The findings show that think tanks can prove their relevance best when their analyses are timely, and subjected to review and / or debate by persons or institutions their audiences want to read, see and meet. Think tanks aiming for cognitive legitimacy need to permanently invest in their networks.

2. **A think tank needs to prove its relevance compared to others.**
   Think tank clients are now in a position to shop around in the intellectual marketplace. They are equally likely to switch experts when a think tank fails to deliver what they want. Consequently, think tanks need to increasingly compare themselves with other opinion makers - and showcase the advantages they provide over the others.

Moral legitimacy

3. **A think tank should explain how it has come by its ideas in order to be trusted.**
   Stakeholders find trustworthiness to be essential, albeit difficult, for think tanks to showcase their contributions to society. Think tanks must be open about their modus operandi as well as their data and funding sources.

4. **A think tank should explain its added value to society.**
   To prove they are working for society's benefit, think tanks try to remain current on issues, which are

important to the public. They achieve this by hiring fresh talent, and by inviting influential personalities to join their programs on a short-term basis.

5. **A think tank must take a conversational approach with stakeholders.**
   Think tanks do proactively seek contact with the public in order to identify pressing needs. This strategy, however, is not as often mentioned as the other moral legitimation strategies mentioned above. Clients have indicated in interviews to be attracted to this particular type of strategy.

Pragmatic legitimacy

6. **A think tank should communicate its research well.**
   Think tanks have embraced a number of new communication techniques while deliberately ignoring others deemed too volatile for communicating analysis. Additionally data visualization is deemed useful but only after the data have been subjected to a thorough analysis.

7. **The quality of its research is of great importance to a think tank.**
   During the interviews, researchers and clients were silent on the issue of a think tank's thorough research. Conversely, directors and communication officers did acknowledge its importance. They advised think tanks to invest in talented researchers in order to remain relevant. Research is indeed the basis of a think tank's legitimacy.

Suggestions for further research

The thesis' conclusions may not apply to undemocratic societies. These conclusions are more relevant to European think tanks than they are to their American counterparts. Future research may need to focus on other countries and cultures. That does not however diminish the insight it may bring to non-European think tanks. Further research is also needed into think tanks' communication strategies and the perception

universities and elected institutions have of them.

Recommendations

Think tanks should:

1. transform their organizations into think platforms, where the curious meet the famous, and where thoughts are timely exchanged for the benefit of society;

2. showcase their advantages over other experts and organizations, and brand star analysts;

3. be neutral with their research and methodology and transparent with their budgets and funding sources;

4. remain current by inviting influential figures and talent to joint their teams and programs;

5. proactively stay in touch with society, by provoking debates and joining conversations, and identifying pressing needs;

6. develop a unique communication style by communicating transparently, neutrally and interactively, and by focusing on both data and society;

7. explore the utility of those new communication techniques that serve to bolster their research – the core of any think tank's legitimacy.

Arnold Vonk

As an entrepreneurial Dutch journalist and an experienced media trainer, Arnold Vonk (1977) has focused on training academics, corporate sector experts, and other authors in advanced Dutch writing skills, helping them increase their impact and win more recognition for themselves and their institution.

In 2011 Arnold Vonk co-founded De Nieuwsmakers, a brand journalism consultancy where editors and other media trainers show clients how to turn their writings into high caliber, effective, journalism pieces. He has developed the publishing platform Opiniestukken.nl and written a handbook for opinion makers.

His clients range from leading think tanks and research institutions to political parties, government institutions, universities and consumer organizations. These include; the representations of the European Commission and the European Parliament in The Hague, the University of Leuven, and Clingendael.

Arnold Vonk has taught journalism, editing and op-ed writing at the Universities of applied sciences in Amsterdam and Utrecht. From 2000 to 2009, he worked as Editor at De Volkskrant, helping transform the Volkskrant's online op-ed pages into a leading opinion platform.

In 2000 Arnold Vonk earned a Master of Arts in Journalism Studies from the University of Groningen, and a Master of Education from the ICLON Institute, Leiden University, in 2004.

Thesis coaches

Prof. dr. Cees B.M. van Riel
Professor of Corporate Communication
Rotterdam School of Management
Programme Director, MSc. Corporate
Communication
Corporate Communication Centre

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

Mignon van Halderen (PhD)
Lector (Associate Professor) Thought Leadership
Fontys University of Applied Sciences (Eindhoven)
Owner of Leading Thoughts

Mignon runs the Professorship Thought Leadership at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Eindhoven (www.fontys.nl/thoughtleadership). Acting as an international research institute, the professorship has been created for (non-) profit organisations, governments, communications professionals, teachers and students who consider thought leadership to be a relevant positioning strategy, and have a clear need for knowledge, tools and instruments for making their thought leadership strategy a success. The professorship develops inspirational case studies on thought leadership, supplies models, methods and tools that support organisations in formulating their thought leadership strategies. The professorship shares its knowledge and latest insights through presentations, lectures, seminars and projects by Fontys students. Next to running the professorship, Mignon advises companies on their (re-)positioning strategies, with a specialty in thought leadership (www.leading-thoughts.com). Mignon earned her PhD in Corporate Communication at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. Through her 10 years' experience at the Corporate Communication Centre of the Rotterdam School of Management, Mignon has become skilled in combining research, consulting and (executive) teaching. Mignon is also a thesis supervisor for the Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication. She has published in various journals, including the California Management Review,

The Journal of Brand Management, the Journal of Business Ethics and The Corporate Reputation Review. She is the author of the in Dutch published book: Thought Leadership – Vernieuwende inzichten en waardecreatie op het snijvlak van markt en maatschappij.

Dr. Guido A.J.M. Berens
Assistant Professor
Corporate Communication Centre

Dr. Guido Berens is an Assistant Professor at the Corporate Communication Centre (department Business Society Management) of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He earned his doctoral degree in Corporate Communication from the Erasmus Research Institute of Management (Erasmus University) and Master degrees in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Nijmegen. Guido's research interests include reputation management, corporate social responsibility, and 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 in the Master and PhD programmes at RSM.