ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

BOOK OF GRADUATES

research abstracts 2013

Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication

The business school that thinks
and lives in the future

RSM ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

Preface

This year we celebrate the 15th graduation of the Part-time Executive International Master of Science in Corporate Communication Programme (MCC) at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. Twenty-three new graduates have officially become Master of Science in Corporate Communication as a result. We are proud to present the abstracts of the twenty-three theses that have been written by the Graduates of this Master programme.

Including this year's graduates, the MCC programme has about 230 MCC graduates. Many of them made a substantial career move after their graduation, which they were able to realize not only by the knowledge insights and skills gained by the programme, but even more by their own perseverance and ability to bring this into practice.

Over the last years they have been challenged with intensive courses, case studies, role plays, management games, the most recent academic theory and guest lectures from worldwide renowned universities and businesses in order to support their goals to become even more successful Communication professionals.
The new Masters of Science in Corporate Communication are: Ellen Alkemade (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Marc Bachman (BITKOM), Marijke Baumann (Reputation Institute the Netherlands), Sandra van Beek (HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht), Riemke Born (Rabobank the Netherland), Marcus Dias (Reputation Institute Brazil), Ange Dunselman-Kunzmann (Philips), Dan Jiao, (Xinhua News Agency), Marion Kiewik (Randstad), Santa van der Laarse (Philips), Xun Liang (Bank of China), Marenthe de Nijs (PRima!), Margriet Papma (Vitens), Catharina Pulka (De Lage Landen International B.V.), Florian Ramspoth (Trend Design GmbH),

Namratha Rao, Daphne van Roosendaal (Bisdom Breda), John Smyth (Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen), Amy Stapleton (Syngenta), Viola Walsma-Wijnands (Syntens), Inge Weel (Fredrikson), and Alsu Zianshina (Cushman & Wakefield).

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 organizations and to relate these to the topics discussed in the lectures were inspiring and exciting.

In the sixteenth years of the Master of Science in Corporate Communication Programme we succeeded in creating an international programme that presents all leading experts in a teaching role. I would

like to thank the following people (teaching staff) who contributed tremendously to the success of this programme: Paul Argenti of Darthmouth College U.S.A.; John Balmer of Bradford University UK; Joan Hemels, Universiteit van Amsterdam; Jan Kleinnijenhuis, VU University Amsterdam; Onno Maathuis, Positioneerder; Wally Olins of Saffron Brand Consultants; Michael Pratt of University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign; Davide Ravasi of Bocconi University; Eliane Schoonman of Issues Management Institute, Majken Schultz of Copenhagen Business School, Denmark; Bob de Wit of Nyenrode Business University; and from our Faculty: Guido Berens, Frans van den Bosch, Dirk Brounen, Gerrit van Bruggen, Fred Gertsen, Mignon van Halderen, Pursey Heugens, Muel Kaptein, Slawomir Magala, Gerard Mertens, Lucas Meijs, Erik Waarts, all working at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

It's also with great pride that we welcome Drs. Bert Regeer of Royal Shell Netherlands, who will present the 'Shell Netherlands Stimulation Award for Excellence in Corporate Communication' to the author of the 'best thesis' of 2013. 'The Andreas Innovation in Communication Award' will be announced by Ing. Dries van de Beek, Former Chairman of the Board, CCC BV. The winners of both awards will be announced at the Graduation Day on November 29, 2013

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

Contents

From Havaianas to Clogs: The reputation of the Netherlands through Brazilian eyes

The world is changing. The West is becoming less dominant due to the emergence of economies of countries as Brazil, Russia, India and China. As a result, the economic balance of power is shifting. Brazil has an emerging economy. Not only Brazilian exports are increasing Brazil is increasing its investments abroad as well.

Companies are establishing their European or global HQ abroad, including in the Netherlands. Therefore it is important for the Netherlands to stay distinctive and to keep its top position as a European country with an attractive business, working and living environment, one of the dimensions of the Dutch country reputation.

The above has lead to the research question:

How do Brazilian business stakeholders form a reputation of the Netherlands as their business, working and living environment and how can the Netherlands seek to influence their perceptions?

Sub questions are defined as:

➔ What specific positive attributes and characteristics do Brazilian business stakeholders notice and how do they interpret these attributes in forming their reputation of the Netherlands?

➔ Want specific negative attributes and characteristics do Brazilian business stakeholders notice and how do they interpret these attributes in forming their reputation of the Netherlands?

➔ Based on these insights, what is their general conclusion after interpretation of these attributes and qualities in forming their reputation of the Netherlands?

Literature review first gave answers to how reputation is defined, what the role of reputation is and why reputation matters. Then I continued to focus on country reputation and looked at the business, living and working environment of the Netherlands as a specific dimension of the Dutch country reputation.

Further I highlighted two country reputation measurement instruments, the Anholt-GfK Roper Nations Index(sm) and the Country RepTrak™ Methology, as well as two instruments of country reputation management.

I used the results of a short preliminary research, extensive desk research including website, reports and news articles as an input for setting up my research that consisted of seventeen explorative interviews with a diverse group of Brazilian business stakeholders in the Netherlands.

After analysing the results of the interviews, I distinguished the following two main themes of the Dutch business and living environment:

1 Organisation in and of the Netherlands
2 Dutch business and living climate
  In addition, I then distinguished two sub-themes of the theme 'living environment' namely:
  2a. Dutch health care system
  2b. Dutch customer service orientation

Finally, based on the findings of the interviews and literature, I formulated managerial implications to improve the above identified themes and sub-themes.

I belief it is important to consider the quality of the working and living environment as important additional aspect that can influence the decision-making process of foreign companies to establish a business in a foreign country. Even if a country has an excellent business environment, it is not a guarantee expats, high potentials and experts will move to that country. If the living climate and working conditions are not attractive, expats and high potentials will prefer another country to live and work (Birdseye, Meg G., and Hill, John S., 1995). Therefore I consider the quality of both the working and living environment important assets that can have a crucial impact on foreign direct investments (FDI).

I am of the opinion that measuring certain subthemes and attributes of existing dimensions of the Country RepTrak™ Model should be taken into account only if a country considers the results relevant for its economy, tourism, investments, exports and others. At present a universal set of attributes that is applicable for all countries and stakeholders does not exist. Therefore I believe it is necessary to conduct additional studies regarding subthemes and attributes among different groups of stakeholders of those countries that are important for - in the case of the country of this paper - the Netherlands.

Ellen Alkemade,
Rotterdam, November 2013

ELLEN ALKEMADE

Ellen Alkemade (1960) is currently employed as communication advisor at the Consular Affairs and Migration Policy Department (DCM), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague.

She is responsible for the internal communication and the positioning of DCM within the Ministry and for setting up the reputation management strategy in times of change, as well as its implementation. She is a result-driven communication professional with over 25 years combined international experience in project-management, protocol, public diplomacy and communication.

Previously Ellen has been assigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Rio de Janeiro, Washington DC, Madrid, Tokyo and Kosovo. During her assignments abroad, she has obtained several qualifications of the Open University in the field of business administration. Ellen completed a bachelor's degree in Communication at The Hague University.

Country of origin factors and German consumer perceptions: A study on influences and consequences

This research was conducted to find out if a certain naming strategy can lead to positive perceptions. This was approached by investigating the differential impact between 'country-of-origin (COO) positioning' (i.e. including the name of the country in the corporate brand name) and 'international positioning' (i.e., excluding the name of the country in the corporate brand name) on stakeholders' reactions toward the company.

MARC BACHMANN

Marc Bachmann is a communications professional with a strong background in the public sector, especially in defense and security policy. Starting his career in the German military 13 years ago he was a Navy officer and in particular a Naval Aviator. The last years he worked as a spokesperson and PR-officer for the German National Military History Museum and the German Department of Defense.

Ultimately he left the military and took a position at the industry association BITKOM in Berlin. There he works as a public affairs and issues management professional with clients that combine the fields of telecommunication and IT with public security and defense. That includes multinational industry leaders such as Deutsche Telekom, IBM, Siemens and Hewlett Packard.

Marc holds a Master of Arts degree in History and Social Science and he successfully completed the Master of Science program in Corporate Communication from the Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus University in 2013.

The study focused on German companies which are also internationally known and whose official company names include the word 'Deutsche' (German); of these companies, some use the 'Deutsche' in their advertising, while others seem to try to leave out the 'Deutsche' where possible.

The literature in this area shows a very ambivalent picture of research. Some scholars suggest that COO does not have a very strong overall impact on consumers' *knowledge, attitude* and *behavior* (KAB), or that products cause even more positive perceptions where a global orientation is emphasized. Other studies show that depending on the country-of-origin, the location in which the product is sold, and the genre of the product, the COO can have an impact on consumers' KAB. In relation to the research done for the purpose of this paper, anecdotal evidence from brand managers suggests that the potential exists for the rationale behind the naming strategies of companies such as Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Post DHL, Deutsche Telekom, Deutsche Bank, and Deutsche Lufthansa to not or no longer be grounded in conscious decision making.

Combining what is known about the unclear strategic implications for companies and best practices as defined via the different streams of literature, the goal of this piece of research was to gain more insight into answering the following question: Does the inclusion of the word 'Deutsche' (German) positively impact stakeholders' responses, and if so, in what way? Besides the testing of the 'total effect', if country-of-origin naming leads to an increased positive perception

The conclusions of the resulting analysis suggested that emphasizing Germany as the country of origin of the companies tested caused more positive feelings on the part of respondents than the naming alternative that excluded Germany, to a nominal extent.

on consumers' KAB or not, possible mediating drivers for consumers' KAB related to the COO *(quality, effectiveness and belongingness)* were also included in the testing.

In order to find out to what extent using the 'Deutsche' as a reminder of the company's German legacy effected consumers' KAB, an internet-based experiment was developed and performed on respondents residing in Germany. Since the goal of the research was to find out the differences between two alternative naming strategies two different questionnaires were developed and distributed.

The first group of 75 people received a questionnaire in which they were asked to give their perceptions about two top German companies listed on the DAX 30, whose brand name included 'Deutsche'. These two companies were Deutsche Lufthansa and Deutsche Post. The second group of 75 people received a questionnaire in which they were asked to give their perceptions about the same top German companies, but where the names do not include 'Deutsche', namely Lufthansa and DHL.

The conclusions of the resulting analysis suggested that emphasizing Germany as the country of origin of the companies tested caused more positive feelings on the part of respondents than the naming alternative that excluded Germany, to a nominal extent. The results of this experiment point to the fact that COO could very well have an impact on consumers' KAB. But, in agreement with the existing literature on this subject, the overall impact is rather small and, perhaps most significant is how difficult it is to influence the *behavior* (i.e. buying intentions) of consumers through merely emphasizing

the German origins of the brand names studied. In summary, COO can be used as a tool in communication to emphasize certain attributes, but should not be used as a sole means of communication to enhance consumers' KAB.

Another tangential result of this research was that it became clear what the possible drivers for this 'total effect' were. The findings of the study show that the driver with the strongest impact was the quality of *effectiveness*, described in specific terms by the word 'punctuality'. The second strongest driver was *belongingness*, referring to the emotional bond between the consumer, the company and the country of origin. In contrast with what is confirmed in the literature, the driver *quality*

had the weakest overall influence on consumers' KAB out of all the drivers identified.

This study lays the groundwork for future research areas such as whether the same results could also be found in other German companies in Germany, in different countries and whether comparing the results from developed versus developing countries garnered significant insights to enhance our understanding on this subject. In addition, there could be more drivers in the relationship between COO and KAB and focused research on this area could provide the field of marketing with proven tools to increase *effectiveness*.

COO can be used as a tool in communication to emphasize certain attributes, but should not be used as a sole means of communication to enhance consumers' KAB.

Realizing Double Digit Growth by Realigning Internal & External Stakeholders

Markets are turbulent; competition arises, consumer preferences are changing, demographics are changing, globalization, credit crisis and so on. Accordingly, organizations can not rest on their laurels. In order to survive, organizations must adapt to and exploit changes through strategic and organizational change. This study shows how organizations can realign internal and external stakeholders with strategic change and how this impacts the financial performance of organizations. The findings presented in this thesis are based upon the case study of DELA.

MARIJKE BAUMANN

Marijke Baumann is a senior consultant at the Corporate Communication Centre of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

Marijke works (partly in conjunction with the Reputation Institute) on projects aimed at increasing understanding in topics like 'employee alignment' 'corporate branding' and 'corporate reputation' Marijke is managing editor of the academic Reputation Institute journal Corporate Reputation Review.

She is preparing various articles in the field of corporate communi-cation and delivers on regular base speeches at international conferences on the above mentioned topics. Marijke holds a Master of Science degree in Business Administration and in Corporate Communication.

DELA is a Dutch funeral insurance and care organization that chose to transform itself from a traditional funeral insurance and care organization to continuity of life (focusing on remembering and passing on life stories of deceased to relatives) while preserving the roots of the organization. DELA was founded in 1937 to 'Bear one anothers's burdens' (in Dutch: Draagt Elkanders Lasten) abbreviated as DELA. People, who could not afford to arrange a decent funeral, could join the association for a limited amount of money and were always guaranteed of a dignified funeral.

In 1947, DELA had become the largest funeral insurance and care organization in The Netherlands. In that time, DELA crafted a clear sense of the brand - an organization with Christian roots and traditions that serves anyone regardless of rank, position or income. The business always seemed stable, predictable and profitable. Yet, in the 21st century the funeral business became under pressure. Consumers' attitudes towards funerals had been changing. In the highly individualized society, people are, on the contrary, looking for solidarity and social cohesion. Accordingly, the focus shifted from saying goodbye to remembering and passing on life stories.

Accordingly, DELA's leadership concluded that in order to continue the success of the organization - DELA's ambition was to Double Digit Growth - the strategy needed to change enabling DELA to meet the changing needs of their customers and to launch new product market combinations in order to realize their double digit growth ambition.

The changing strategy required DELA to realign with its internal and external stakeholders. On the one hand, the roots of the organization had to be preserved to continue the success in the funeral business. While on the other hand, the positioning had to be extended to meet customers' needs and to market new products and services to strengthen their business performance. This study shows how DELA realigned its employees (employee alignment), realigned its external stakeholders (reputation) with its new strategy, how DELA communicated their newly developed strategy (corporate branding) to their stakeholders and how this impacted their business performance positively.

The findings of the study show that DELA successfully transformed its organization. The change was embedded internally and externally while preserving the origins of the organization. Employees were aligned with the strategic change, barriers to change were eliminated and employees were involved in the change process by numerous initiatives. External stakeholders were also step by step involved in the changing organization by DELA's corporate branding activities. The change process internally and externally was driven by efforts of top management, HR, IT and Corporate Communication; it was clearly a joint effort.

The Corporate Communication Director of DELA has played a significant role in the change process. The Corporate Communication Director carefully orchestrated the corporate branding activities over the years; each and every corporate branding activity touched the right note at the right time in order to prepare the public for the shift DELA was taking. The Corporate Communication Director had to courage to develop challenging and innovative corporate branding activities; addressing to needs of internal and external stakeholders and creating a platform to launch new products and services. The most recent corporate branding campaign even won the Cannes Lions Grand-Prix Media, indicating that the public accepted and supports DELA in its new direction.

DELA's ambition to double digit growth is to a great extent achieved. DELA shows an enormous improvement in business results over the years of the strategic transformation. The number of employees, the balance total and insured capital doubled. The premium income, equity and number of funeral services also show an enormous increase, on average around 80% increase. The numbers of members increased with 35.2% - indicating that DELA has attained one million customers over an eight year period. We can conclude that the realignment positively influenced DELA's business performance.

Consumers' attitudes towards funerals had been changing. In the highly individualized society, people are, on the contrary, looking for solidarity and social cohesion. Accordingly, the focus shifted from saying goodbye to remembering and passing on life stories.

DELA needs to prove to its stakeholders that their positioning has positive influence on society. DELA should show key facts and figures about their contribution to society based upon their new strategy.

Not all indicators show a double digit growth, but in these current turbulent market conditions DELA performed outstanding! However, DELA there are still some challenges ahead...

The first challenge for DELA is to leverage the positive feelings to other enabling stakeholders as well. The reputation studies have shown that customers have a strong bond with DELA. Accordingly, DELA needs to build an emotional bond with other enabling stakeholders like opinion leaders (who are primary rational decision makers) as well to continue their success.

Secondly, the functional areas within DELA need not only to be integrated but also aligned with DELA's new positioning. Each product, service, advertisement, mailing, commercial, interview and so on need to be centered around DELA's new positioning. Stakeholders should have one consistent image and experience with DELA. Only then, DELA will be able to maintain its leading position in the field.

Thirdly, a 'big tree attracts the woodsman's axe'. The distinctive positioning of DELA in the field and the success of DELA will undoubtedly lead to criticism among a selection of stakeholders. So, DELA need to be prepared to react to criticism. DELA needs to prove to its stakeholders that their positioning has positive influence on society. DELA should show key facts and figures about their contribution to society based upon their new strategy. Criticism on rational aspects is much more difficult to overcome for a company than criticism on emotions - because emotions always win no matter what argument they bring...

Concluding, DELA has step by step successfully convinced internal and external stakeholders to accept and support their new positioning. Accordingly, DELA's ambition to double digit growth is to a great extent achieved. Nonetheless, there are still some challenges ahead in order to obtain an unrestricted license to operate.

Creating employee commitment to the transformation from a school to a knowledge institute: using identity as a compass for change

In the last decade the majority of universities of applied sciences have grown to become massive institutes with up to 50,000 students. There have recently been several incidents which has led to a mistrust in the value of the diploma's handed out by the universities. The Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science has given universities of applied science the task to increase quality as well as diversity.

To increase quality, HU will need to focus and specialize. And to be able to position itself, HU needs to become aware of its current identity and define its desired identity. The question is: who is HU and how can HU use its desired identity as a compass for change?

Higher education has taken a leap in recent years. There is an ongoing debate about what education should look like in a period where knowledge is always readily available through the internet. There is also a trend in the availability of online courses. With Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC's), a programme from any university is now affordable and accessible for anyone. The question HU should be asking is, what is the value that HU offers to prospective students?

The Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science has given universities of applied science the task of increasing quality and diversity. To be able to position itself, HU needs to become aware of its current and desired identity. Some strategic decisions have already been made and through this thesis I have measured whether these decisions are known and supported by employees. I also measured what the perspective is of current and desired identity of both employees and of topmanagement.

There are few topics which have been researched as much as identity. There are many definitions and perspectives from different disciplines. I have used a broad definition from Wally Olins: "Who you are, What you do and How you do this." This can be translated personality traits, vision/strategy and culture/values.

In a period of change it is important that employees engage with HU and are strategically aligned. The main research question of this thesis is "How can HU use its identity to create employee engagement?". The research has been done through interviews with fourteen employees at different faculties and in a range of different positions. I compared the outcomes of these interviews with the outcome of a jam that I organized with twenty topmanagers.

The results of the research show that employees primarily engage with their teams and to a lesser extend with HU. The current overall identity is described as large, inert, cold and diverse. They would like to see HU as smallscale and

uncomplicated. For many employees education of bachelor students is the core business. Applied research and education for professionals are perceived as extracurricular activities.

Management has a different perspective regarding the identity of HU. They see HU as committed and professional. For the year 2020 they have an image of a university where research is fully integrated with its educational activities for bachelor and professional students. The biggest challenge lies in developing relationships with the professional practice as well as the circulation of knowledge in the fields:
1. Creative industry, 2.Sustainable development, 3.Health care and technology, and 4.Social innovation at the local level.
In 2020 management would like to see employees as proud, professional and externally focused.

THE MOST IMPORTANT IDENTITY GAPS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT WERE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

1. The goal of the organization
Employees perceive education of individuals as the most important goal of HU. Management sees education as a way to create value to the enhancement of the economy of Utrecht. In defining and communicating the desired identity it is important to include both perceptions.

2. Focus on education versus research
Employees see bachelor education as the core business of HU. Research and education for professionals are seen as separate activities. Management sees these activities as fully integrated. This means that the transition from a 'school' to a knowledge institute has not yet been made.

3. External focus
In the jam, management said that the most important improvement to be made is the relationship with the professional practice. It should even be a differentiating factor in comparison to other universities of applied science. However, in the interviews this topic was not raised. The fact that 'external focus' is one of the core values was not known by half of the repondents. None of the respondents said that the core value played a role in their daily activities or decision making.

4. Smallscale and uncomplicated
Employees want to be recognized and want more social cohesion. The solution is being sought in the creation of small teams. However, social cohesion can also be stimulation by aligning employees with the strategy of HU and committing them to a higher goal at HU level.

Identity is determined by the components corporate communication, behavior and symbolism. Management can change current identity into the desired identity by altering the components. The most important recommendation is the development and communication of a corporate story in which the mission and desired identity of HU are further explained. It is also important to engage employees through information, motivation and development of capabilities. Only then will employees go the extra mile and demonstrate corporate citizenship behavior in achieving the goals of HU.

SANDRA VAN BEEK

Growing up in Venezuela and the Philippines, Sandra van Beek (1975) knew she wanted an international career. She studied International Business in Groningen and started her professional career in the advertising industry. In the year 2000 she moved on to become a management consultant at Accenture and worked on several change projects at Epon, Essent and Nuon during a period of privatization of the energy sector.

After a few years she had the opportunity to move to Johannesburg, South Africa and worked at Publicis. She was responsible for the accounts L'Oreal, Nestle and Child Welfare. In 2006 she moved to Barcelona to become central marketing manager at MidOceanBrands.

After six years working abroad she returned to Holland and became communications manager at Hogeschool Utrecht. She recently started lecturing bachelor students and combines her teaching work with interim communication roles at the University Utrecht. Sandra is married to Edwin and has 2 daughters, Nicky (8) and Kim (5).

The cooperative bank: how can internal stakeholders align with the identity of Rabobank?

The cooperative structure of Rabobank defines its corporate governance, as well as its identity. Virtually all organizational members attach their own meaning to the identity of the bank. There is a gap between the reputation of the bank in the perception of external stakeholders and the perceived identity of internal stakeholders with regard to its cooperative identity.

Rabobank is currently restructuring its domestic banking operations. By 2016 there will be fewer banks, while products and services will be offered by virtual means. Standardization and centralization are key words in the Vision 2016 change program, while at the same time the cooperative identity of the bank will need strengthening.

The support of employees is essential to internal alignment within an organization. This applies in particular to an organization which is going through substantial change, like Rabobank in the Netherlands. This thesis addresses two main questions: (1) how is alignment within the organization influenced by the current context of turbulence, distrust and changes externally imposed by financial authorities and by changes internally resulting from Vision 2016? And, (2) what is a suitable approach for Rabobank to go about aligning its organizational members by means of communication?

To answer these two questions, I have gathered relevant intelligence for the communication role to best align organizational members in the change toward 2016 as this is the prerequisite for building and maintaining sustainable alignment with key stakeholders. As my focus has been on internal alignment, I looked into

The reputation of the financial industry has severely deteriorated since the downfall of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Distrust of the sector has grown dramatically, in particular in the Netherlands. As a cooperative bank, Rabobank was affected to a lesser degree[1]. While the reputation of Rabobank Group was good, internal identification has been decreasing since some time. Moreover, there are differences between the perceptions of the identity at the level of the independent local Rabobanks, Rabobank Nederland and Rabobank International.

the overall and specific identity traits of the organization, and the degree to which employees indicate their support of the new strategy in their daily actions. In combination with external data, beyond the focus of this thesis, these are the building blocks which form input in decision making regarding the strategic road map.

This intelligence includes extant longitudinal as well as in-depth qualitative research among organizational members from the domestic banking operations. Extant

research indicates that although there is a clear crisis of trust in the banking industry, the reputation of Rabobank remained strong. This is helped by the fact that cooperatives, in general, score high on reputation. In many recent sustainability rankings, Rabobank was included in the top 3. The 'Zeitgeist' appears to be very much in favor of the cooperative business model. From internal sources, it becomes apparent that alignment by organizational members with the cooperative identity shows a decline. Moreover, the relationship between local Rabobanks (LBs) and

---

1   Data for this thesis were collected prior to Libor settlement on 29 October 2013

The 'Zeitgeist' appears to be very much in favor of the cooperative business model.

Rabobank Nederland (RN) is under pressure. There is a difference between the perception of LB and RN staff towards each other. Employees from both LBs and RN have a good knowledge of the values of Rabobank. The cooperative identity, the core values and brand values give staff direction in the execution of daily work. The main outcomes of the in-depth interviews confirm the results of the longitudinal quantitative data.

For Rabobank to successfully align its organizational members towards Vision 2016 and the increased centralization of the organization, it is essential for the communication role to be knowledgeable of the different levels of identity, as well as the supportive behavior of employees towards the new strategic objectives. I have drawn on the outline of the three clusters of intelligence in the figure below to gather relevant internal data. The classification of overall identity traits as proposed by Van Riel (2012) is based on the degree of external turbulence in which an organization operates, as well as the degree of formalization and centralization of the organization. It distinguishes accountability, bureaucracy, shared meaning and ideology. It appears that Rabobank matches the ideology overall identity best.

Figure 1. Three internal intelligence sources (Van Riel, 2012)[2]
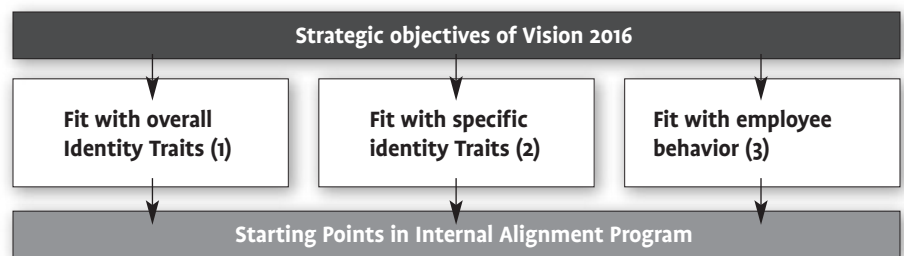
There is high external turbulence in combination with a low level of centralization and formalization presently. This best links in with the ideology overall identity. The desired overall identity traits (including greater centralization) regarding Vision 2016, would suggest a shared meaning perspective. Specific identity traits such as local autonomy and a lack of strong identification with leadership at group level, call for a pragmatic approach when developing an internal alignment program. There is a high degree of supportive behavior towards the objectives of Vision 2016. In sum, extant quantitative research and in-depth qualitative research leads to the following conclusions: there is a

2 Van Riel, C.B.M., (2012), The Alignment Factor, leveraging the power of total stakeholder support, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 44

medium fit between the strategic objectives of Vision 2016 and the ideology overall identity, a medium fit with specific organizational identity traits of Rabobank and a high fit with employee behavior.

Communication must take into account that CI is deeply embedded in LBs and less in RN. As stakeholders have different views and expectations of the change to 2016, the content of the key message has to be adjusted and tuned to the specific groups. Preferably in co-making with the target groups themselves. A communication program must be built around a compelling narrative, that skillfully argues that the organization's decentralized organization in combination with increasingly centralized entities can work well together if they embrace and act in alignment with the cooperative foundations of Rabobank. Focusing on a limited number of urgent topics is highly recommended when taking a pragmatic approach toward for the communication role.

Organizational members will in all cases only become aligned when they see 'what's in it for themselves', so there must be a mutual rewarding element when they adapt to changes. Moreover, the organizational process may demand a major attitudinal shift from top management as well. If a shift in their daily behavior is perceived by organizational members, the chances that they will follow suit, will increase substantially.

Investing in alignment with key stakeholders pays off, especially in hard times.

RIEMKE BORN

Growing up in an international environment in Asia, at an early age I was confronted with children and grown-ups from various cultures, backgrounds and nationalities. Getting across to one another, learning from each other, identifying with each other and working together, requires one important thing: communication. To achieve my goal, in those early days, I spoke Punjabi and Urdu, in addition to Dutch and English. Nowadays, only the latter two remain . . .

In due course, communication became my profession, after studying English Language and Literature, as well as General Linguistics in the nineteen eighties at the Free University of Amsterdam, where I obtained my Master's degree.

I consequently put it to practice at IBM Nederland, Nationale-Nederlanden, ING Group and now at Rabobank within HR. And at the personal level, together with my husband, raising three teenagers in a world dominated by social media, it is all about communication.

Re-entering university as a student of Erasmus University was my means of staying in touch with new academic and applicable insights in the corporate communication field, many of which originate from the US, in order to complement my professional experience. Thanks to the generosity and patience of my wonderful family I have been able to complete this invigorating program and wrap it up with a pragmatic look into the identity of Rabobank. After all, it's about lifelong learning!

November 2013, Bussum

Employee Alignment in Brazil
How to build strategic aligned behavior in a typical Brazilian context

Organizations rely on the support of their stakeholders, both internal and external to succeed. Such support can be revealed in multiple manners, defining the sort of relationship that is established between a company and a specific stakeholder. For clients, for example, this support can be revealed through purchases of products and services of the organization; for an investor, to support an organization is to finance its growth and development, for neighboring communities it can be to welcome an organization into their grounds whereas to employees, to support a company is to be more productive and bring the strategy to life, perhaps even "going the extra mile", as the English idiom states.

Therefore, through an outside in perspective, companies that count with more support from their stakeholders can be expected to have lower transaction costs as it becomes cheaper to attract key resources that can go from capital to employees and partnerships. And from an inside out perspective, the lower transaction cost can come from higher productivity from employees, as previously mentioned.

Fostering support demands the establishment of a relationship between company and key stakeholders that is "mutually rewarding", something that can be named alignment (Riel C. B., 2012). Building on this concept, strategic alignment can be explained as the degree of supportive behavior among key audiences, rooted in awareness and understanding of the "what and why" of a firm's strategic intents (Riel, Berens, & Dijkstra, 2009).

Building and maintaining strategic alignment is not a simple task and depends on the strategic intents of an organization being in sync with the viewpoints of stakeholders (Riel C. B., 2012). If such undertaking is challenging enough with stakeholders from outside the organization; with internal stakeholders like employees it can be even more sensitive, given the intimate relationship they naturally have with the company. In this context, alignment is understood as the degree to which employees take initiatives to implement the company's strategic goals. Following Riel et al. (2009) and Gagnon & Michael (2003), I term this behavior "strategically aligned behavior (SAB), defined as "on-the-job actions that are aligned with the strategy". (Riel, Berens, & Dijkstra, 2009)

Making the relationship between employees and organization one that is mutually rewarding, henceforth building strategically aligned behavior is something that can be very much influenced by specific contexts in which the relationship is established. The purpose of this study is to contribute to management practice as it attempts to explain how SAB is built in one of these specific contexts: the Brazilian one.

This was done by studying the possible effect that efforts performed by managers and perceived by employees have on SAB. The results of this study confirm that the higher the perceived motivating efforts,

the perceived capability development and the perceived informing efforts, the higher the strategic aligned behavior – SAB in a typical Brazilian context.

Based on these findings, my first recommendation to managers seeking to strategically align their employees in a typical Brazilian context is that, besides informing, motivating and developing their teams, that they also establish strategies that build positive perceptions regarding these efforts. A special attention to perceived capability development might also maximize this effect as this was found to be the driver with the highest weight on SAB in this specific context.

More specifically, employees are expected to demonstrate a higher degree of strategically aligned behavior should they perceive that managers are granting them sufficient resources, training and empowerment to implement the strategy.

Secondly, I recommend that managers look for complimentary efforts to foster SAB which are typical to their companies. One situation that can possibly contribute to SAB is creating employee identification to the company and to the company values, for example.Enabling Strategic Alignment at De Lage Landen: A case study investigating the road of DLL towards becoming a High-Performance Organization

Marcus Vinícius Campos Dias is a specialist in corporate communications, reputation management and employee alignment. He has presented and moderated sessions related to these topics in international conferences across North and South America, Europe and Asia, as well as featured as guest lecturer in some of Brazil's most renowned academic institutions such as FDC, PUC-MG, UFMG and FIA.

Marcus has dedicated the last +8 of his career to streamline Reputation Institute's (RI) business in Brazil. At RI he is a director responsible for strategy and advice, leading some of the company's key accounts such as Petrobras, Fiat and Braskem. Most recently Marcus had the opportunity to deepen his knowledge by following the International Master of Science in Corporate Communication at Erasmus University, which provided him with a solid background, valuable insights and practical frameworks.

Marcus is also a passionate supporter of Clube Altético Mineiro (Galo), winner of 2013's Copa Libertadores.da América.

Orchestrating a perfect storm Building Innovation Leadership Reputation in the Network Society

We are being confronted with deep systematic shifts, caused by the combined effects of changing socio-cultural, economic, environmental and technological realities. In this paradigm shift, businesses are trying to understand the changing world and how they can survive and even thrive within it.

ANGE DUNSELMAN-KUNZMANN (1966)

Ange is Senior Director and Head of Design and Innovation Communications at Royal Philips. She is passionate about authentic leadership communications, change communications and social responsibility - and believes that through communications real change can be achieved. She is strategic and pragmatic, driving and delivering effective internal and external communications, thought leadership programs and change initiatives. Her strengths include being able to build, enable and engage successful teams and foster relationships across organizational boundaries.

The red thread throughout Ange's career is her drive to make positive change. After earning her Bachelors degree in Psychology and Women's Studies from Antioch College, Ange worked with exploited women and those escaping abuse. She transitioned early from counseling to Development and Fundraising. Later as Stakeholder Relations Manager at Reed College, named 'the most intellectual college in the country', Ange stewarded benefactor relationships and pioneered internet-based fundraising activities.

In 1999 Ange joined Royal Philips as global Online Communication Manager in the Consumer Electronics division. In 2001 Ange moved to lead the Communications activities at Philips Design. In that role she was globally responsible for Philips' internal and external communications on Design, building Philips' reputation as a thought leader in people-focused design. In 2013 Ange expanded her scope of responsibility to lead Innovation Communications, bringing the elements of design and technology together to drive Philips' reputation as a leader in meaningful innovation.

Ange was born in Germany, raised in the United States and has made her home in The Netherlands since 1998. She lives with her husband, Jacques, and their two children, Jamie and Nienke, in the southern part of the Netherlands.

Twitter: AngeZ
LinkedIn: ange-dunselman-kunzmann

'Innovation' is often being touted as a key factor for businesses to ensure sustainable growth now and in the future. At the same time the Corporate Communications function is being confronted with its own paradigm shift. The connected networking of society is changing the way companies communicate and engage with their stakeholders. While traditionally the function of Corporate Communications has been to manage the company's strategic messages, in a network society, centrally managing the messages around a company has become increasingly complex.

This research focuses on understanding how companies that are perceived as leaders in innovation build their reputation and use their communications within the new model of the network society. To do this I have explored the core elements of innovation, innovation communications and the network society through literature and taking a deeper look at two companies, Shell and Philips, and how they are navigating these issues.

Out of the research it is clear that a positive innovation reputation, as well as the communications needed to build it, is increasingly recognized as being important to companies. However, because there is no decisive, shared definition and understanding of innovation or what innovation leadership should be built upon, companies are challenged to propel strategies to build their innovation reputation.

At the same time, within the network society, stakeholders are expecting more transparency and conversational relationships with companies, making it increasingly difficult for the Corporate Communications function to control messages.

In this new paradigm it is crucial for companies to drive reputation based on open communications, alignment and authenticity. So what is communicated must reflect the behavior of the company - or as a twist on the expression, 'talking the walk'.

Through this research, I identified and explored three interlinking areas which I believe are key to understanding perceived innovation leadership in a networked society: Innovation identity, Innovation drivers and Degree of openness.

INNOVATION IDENTITY

The 'innovation identity' of a company indicates how a company defines itself with regards to innovation and if innovation is at the core of a company. This can be seen by looking at a company's mission, vision, brand and heritage, as well as how the Innovation function is organized within the company.

INNOVATION DRIVERS

A company's 'innovation drivers' are the topics which are used to drive the innovation leadership perception. As shown by the research, there is no clear, widely shared definition of innovation. Therefore, innovation drivers must be defined both by what a company communicates to position itself as innovative, as well as what its stakeholders choose to shape their perception of the company. I identified four categories of innovation drivers, which I believe can be applied widely to analyze how other companies are driving their innovation: Technology/R&D, Future focus, New value, Inside innovation (people & processes). By understanding the level of alignment of these innovation

drivers with the innovation identity of a company, communication strategies can be built with content that is aligned with the core of the company.

DEGREE OF OPENNESS

In the network society, the 'degree of openness' of a company in the area of innovation encompasses both the degree of openness of communications as well as the degree of openness of innovation. This can move from communications Broadcasting to Dialogue, through to Open-tools, Collaboration and real Co-creation.

By bringing these three areas together companies can assess and make strategic choices on how to drive reputation and openness of innovation. Successfully orchestrating the converging worlds of innovation leadership and communicating in the network society is like creating a perfect storm which can positively drive reputation and new ways of innovating.

While traditionally the function of Corporate Communications has been to manage the company's strategic messages, in a network society, centrally managing the messages around a company has become increasingly complex.

The Ways to Remove Intercultural Communication Barriers for Chinese Enterprises in The Netherlands

Increasing Chinese enterprises are making inroads into the European markets, taking the Netherlands as gateway. According to the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency (NFIA), 330 out of all 8,000 foreign companies registered in The Netherlands originate from China, out of which all executives are ethnic Chinese. When Chinese and Dutch employees work together, cultural disparities in organizational communications emerge as rising managerial issues and potentially undermine business efficiency.

Culture Differences
Culture can also be defined as 'the software of mind' that can influence people's patterns of thinking and behaving. And from the behavioral science, a value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action. People are immersed in different cultures for many years, which may lead to create different core values, mindsets and behavior patterns.

By applying Hofstede's five dimensions of national culture, the huge difference gap of national culture values between the Chinese and the Dutch can be defined in Power distance, Individualism vs.

Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity. And, Project GLOBAL supported the similar results of six global leadership dimensions. Another conceptual context of Cultural Leadership Theory (CLT), found that people with different cultural background of Confucian and Germanic perform leadership in quite various ways on 'Participative' and 'Self-protective'.

With the influence of national culture, Chinese leaders tend to be authoritative and expect respect and obedience with less employee participation in decision making. In contrast, Dutch style is mentioned as being independent, flexible, equal rights, coaching leader, management facilitates and empowerment. These differences may lead to numerous barriers in organizational communication within Chinese corporations operating in The Netherlands. There were lots of quantitative or qualitative studies about the relation of intercultural communication and organization management. But few of them focused on the barriers between Chinese culture and Dutch culture.

Strategic Alignment
As we know, strategic alignment is the linkage between the goals of the business, which quantify the progress of the implementation of the strategy towards the vision, and the goals of each key contributor, including groups, divisions, business units, and departments. Leaders should create high expectations about the contributions of internal communication for improving the internal strategic alignment through three interrelated efforts: informing, motivating, capability development. These Chinese companies may face challenges on building internal strategic alignment because the differences of national culture may influence the effect of understanding and implementation of strategies.

Methodology
This study aimed to (1) identifying barriers in intercultural communication between Chinese employees and Dutch employees; and (2) exploring pathways in building strategic alignment of these Chinese companies in The Netherlands through three types of efforts: informing, motivating, capability development and analyze the effectiveness from four key instruments (Structure, Flow, Content, and Climate). The study interviewed 20 participants who are working in Chinese companies for over one year. Half of them are Dutch employees; and others are Chinese employees.

Research Findings

In general, the communication barriers include language barrier, communication style and organizational hierarchy. Most of all, hierarchy in Chinese organizations is a sensitive and key issue in Chinese-Dutch encounters. The interviews indicates there are three key aspects related to organizational hierarchy in Chinese firms, which included 'No-joking rule', 'No-arguing rule', and 'Low-participating rule'.

Chinese employees tend to respect their superiors, and follow his superior's instructions. Hierarchical culture in Chinese firms also shows that the employees are submissive to senior management. The subordinates often have limited access to decision-making process; listening becomes a predominant mode of communication. Dutch values contrast Chinese ones obviously with their own 'egalitarian' attitude. They feel not to be engaged due to lack of information transparency and participating in decision-making. Dutch staff members maintain that Chinese communication process is closed-circuit and like black box.

Embracing western theories and practices, Chinese corporations would still have difficulties in adopting open symmetrical communication. The understood intelligence of company's strategy and goal is usually proportional to the employees' positions in most Chinese companies. And we find that the communication efforts of 'Informing, Motivating, and Development' within these Chinese companies are inadequate and still pending improvements.

Embracing western theories and practices, Chinese corporations would still have difficulties in adopting open and symmetrical communication. The companies overweight the importance of line communication as part of their management structures. Lack of enough two-way participative communication might influence to build higher level of trust and openness between management and employees. Though Chinese leaders try to maintain harmony in business environment, most of the participants agree that the communication climate in their companies is not open enough.

Discussion

Though changes have been observed in modern Chinese companies, the deep rooted cultural tradition and political system are bound to have a great influence on the instruments of internal communication. Culture ethnocentricity can often result in depreciating others, including their behaviors, and result in a superficial understanding and low appreciation of other people. The multinational companies should emphasize understanding both cultural difference of Chinese and Dutch. They should strengthen their parallel communication such as intranet, internal media, to facilitate their goal, strategy and corporate identities with more English use, which is the emotional need of 'identity issue' for the employees working in the overseas subsidiaries.

Currently JIAO Dan is the marketing manager with Hague Bureau, Xinhua News Agency, which is China's state-run newswire and a top global news and information service organization. She is responsible of developing long-term cooperation with local organizations and creating various activities to improve Xinhua's influence in The Netherland. As a member of Foreign Press Association of the Netherlands, she published not only articles on major events but also stories on Dutch people and families to help Chinese audience better understand Dutch culture.

JIAO Dan achieved the bachelor degree of Economics from Shenyang Pharmaceutical University, majoring in Marketing. Before joining Xinhua, she worked at Pfizer for eight years in China, which is a famous pharmaceutical company in the world, starting as Sales District Manager and finally promoted to Product Group Manager which enriched her expertise in marketing, branding and portfolio management.

She was the winner of President Award in 2007 and 2009 by Pfizer China for extraordinary performance. She led the team conducting a nationwide awareness campaign for a new product. This project was granted with both 'Ethical Campaign of the Year' issued by Asia-pacific Public Relations Association and 'Golden World Award' issued by International Public Relations Association (IPRA) in 2011.

CSR communication: pursuing an effective and sustainable approach in a cross-cultural multinational company

In the spring of 2012, Randstad Holding nv published its sustainability framework. It had been developed based on workshops with internal, Western European audiences: a good start but through an inside-out approach. In the year that followed, I noticed some hesitance among colleagues from outside Europe in adopting these principles, probably - in part - having to do with their different cultural backgrounds.

My thesis is an attempt to identify effective ways to communicate Randstad's sustainability, taking potential cultural (and other) differences among countries or geographical regions and different stakeholder requirements into account, where feasible.

Stakeholder engagement is the name of tomorrow's game.

The CSR concept
The history of social and environmental concern for businesses can be traced back to Ancient Mesopotamia and Greek thinkers such as Aristotle and Cicero. The CSR concept has changed over the years however, under the influence of economic, cultural, social and legal circumstances. Today, CSR is a container concept, with ambiguity surrounding the term.

The underlying motivations for companies to engage in CSR are diverse and so are the approaches. Potential drivers are of an economic, political, integrative or ethical nature. CSR can be beneficial to society, to companies, or a combination of the two. Literature suggests CSR is a key determinant of reputation, it can enhance brand value, and is increasingly seen as a competitive advantage. It can, however, also have a boomerang effect, for example when an organization fails to act in accordance with its principles or when the public perceives CSR communication as 'greenwashing'. Key stakeholders such as consumers, employees or investors are likely to reward perceived good 'corporate citizens' and punish the bad ones e.g. in their buying behavior.

Factors of influence on CSR and communication
The financial and economic crises of the past decades have affected the impact of CSR: expenditure on CSR activities decreased. A positive consequence though has been its accelerated transition into a more conceptual and strategic approach.

Legislation and regulations are also factors of influence. At a global and European Union level there are various CSR guidelines and principles. The state of affairs by country is very diverse. There are a number

of globally recognized CSR reporting frameworks such as that of the Global Reporting Initiative and of the International Integrated Reporting Council. CSR reporting is claimed to increase both growth and value of a firm through innovation and learning. Stakeholder consultation is increasingly an element here.

Another factor is culture. People from different cultures learn to learn differently. This has consequences for the way they communicate and interpret others' communications. Academic Geert Hofstede has studied cultural diversity around the world. The differences among countries reflect a number of underlying value dimensions along which countries can be positioned. If an international organization wants to influence its stakeholders' behaviors and gain intercultural communication abilities, it needs to understand their societies and cultures first. Here, Hofstede's dimensions can be of help.

CSR communication strategies and audiences
CSR communication seeks to enhance the legitimacy of a firm among its stakeholders and to create a favorable public image. CSR communication, however, can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, the public expects companies to engage in CSR activities, and on the other hand, they expect them to be modest in communicating this engagement.

This skeptical public opinion generally occurs sooner in Europe than in the United States, due to cross-cultural differences in the image of businesses. One way to minimize skepticism is to involve - critical - stakeholders in a company's communication. Thus, these stakeholders become co-creators of corporate CSR messages and

are more likely to identify positively with the company. More generally speaking, it is crucial for a company to identify their various stakeholders, their perceptions and information needs, ideally also through proactive consultation. Depending on the audience they are aiming for, companies may want to emphasize different initiatives.

Stakeholders can be a target audience but can at the same time function as a communication channel. Employees, considered as an especially credible source of information, can be powerful advocates with a wide reach. The power of consumers, through word-of-mouth and social media in particular, should not be underestimated either.

CSR practices and communication
To get deeper insights into the way CSR is preached and practiced in a number of - Randstad relevant - countries, I collected information both through desk research and through qualitative empirical research by means of a survey among Randstad Communications and CSR practitioners. These are some of the most striking outcomes:

➔ The main difference between the US and Western European societies is the role of the State when it comes to welfare; Western European countries have a relatively extensive -though currently diminishing - 'social safety net'. American companies fill in the open ends that are left by their governments, hence tend to engage in philanthropic initiatives.

"A truly global perspective calls for an examination of the tension between the global and the local in the conceptualization, discourse and practice of CSR. (…) A global CSR is responsive to the multiple cultures, value sets, and communicative practices of different nations while recognizing that (inter)organizational contexts are no longer bounded by the nation-state."

(Stohl, Stohl and Popova, 2007)

➜ US firms predominantly use the moral obligation as justification for their CSR practices, while European companies often present CSR as an activity that returns the investments to the business.

➜ Philanthropy tends to be given priority over ethical and legal concerns in emerging economies like India, where many people still live at the 'bottom of the pyramid'.

➜ Latin American countries with the highest level of foreign direct investment and the greatest exposure to global markets demonstrate the greatest involvement in CSR initiatives. Paradoxically, they are inclined to lift social or environmental protection measures if this attracts more investors.

These contrasts may be felt as arguments against uniform cross-border communications about global CSR, such as the Randstad Sustainability Framework. But a multinational, for several reasons, needs to transmit single messages - where necessary and possible - tailored to country needs by local practitioners.

Then, what are the most effective means by which to communicate CSR to cross-cultural audiences? This question for sure is food for further research. My most important plea, however, is to consult stakeholders and have continuous dialogue with them, embedded in the company's business processes. Only they can really educate us in this respect.

Stakeholder engagement is the name of tomorrow's game.

MARION KIEWIK

Communication has been a common theme throughout my 30 years' experience in the HR Services industry, of which 20 years with Randstad Holding. With this global company, I worked in various positions and departments, among which as Corporate Secretary to the Executive and Supervisory Boards, as Project Manager for the Randstad 50 Jubilee Book, and as Central Integrity Officer coordinating the Group's grievance mechanism.

In 2010, I took on the role of Group Sustainability Manager, responsible for furthering the global sustainability (or: CSR) strategy while creating awareness and support among stakeholders, initiating state-of-the-art solutions for sustainability reporting, including developing and validating KPIs, aligning local sustainability programs, and supporting operating companies in communicating their CSR approaches. In these positions, I cooperated with all functional areas internally, and with institutions, peers and other stakeholders externally. My experience ranges from internal and external communications to editing and translating, investor relations support, human resource management and business ethics.

Originally having studied Educational Science, in my latest role I felt the need to gain more background knowledge in Communications and I started studying for the Part-time International Master of Science in Corporate Communications at RSM, in 2011.

My MCC thesis reflects my passion for sustainability combined with a deep interest in cultural diversity and the related communications challenges. Through this thesis I have sought to connect these dots.

Changing Brand Perceptions

Building a strong brand is about defining a future position for the company and establishing a clear strategic direction. A strong brand is capable of generating positive brand associations and powerful feelings in customers' minds regarding the relevance and uniqueness of the company's offerings. It strongly influences the way customers talk about the company and how they consider the brand in the purchasing decision process.

Strong brands have a high impact on the profitability of the entire organization and therefore, act as a critical strategic asset. They owe a significant part of their success to their unique positioning in the minds of customers.

Companies without a strong brand will always depend on a specific product category and therefore its life span will be tied to the life span of those products which creates more risks for the stakeholders. For a company that wants to grow it's important to have a strong brand with a positive brand reputation.

When a company is able to establish a positive brand reputation in the eyes of the consumers, they are able to attract more customers and as such increase market share. A good reputation will enhance the buyer's expectations about the company's propositions and will take away any uncertainties about the offering's performance. A positive reputation is not a goal in itself, but merely a means to improve the company's financial or social position.

Over the years Philips transformed from a high volume electronics company to a global leader in Healthcare, Lighting and Consumer Lifestyle. And even though nowadays two thirds of the turnover comes from the professional businesses, Philips continues to be seen as a TV company according to the Philips Heartbeat brand study.

In this thesis I am addressing the following research question: "Under which conditions can Philips shift from a consumer electronics dominated category towards a health and well-being category?"

When a company introduces new products, services or subsidiaries using the corporate brand, the company actually tries to categorize the new activity as a member of the brand category, and tries to evoke the existing brand association to the new activity. A perfect match will lead to a positive evaluation in the consumer's mind of the new activity, but a mismatch will lead to frustration and anxiety if the new information cannot be successfully accommodated in the existing category. It is crucial that the new activity's relates to the current activities in some relevant way, so stakeholders will successfully accommodate the information.

So in order for Philips to shift the mindset away from of the TV category they will have to introduce the other businesses in a way people can relate to in order for the consumers to categorize the new activities as member of the parent category. Philips will need to ensure a consistent brand experience for the stakeholders across more than 30 diverse product categories and more than 100 countries. The question is how can Philips do that? Philips will need to establish a unified brand, however, Philips will also need to enable the diverse businesses to differentiate.

Philips will need to explain to the different stakeholders why it makes sense for Philips to be in the Health and Wellbeing space and how the TV category, but also healthcare and lighting fit under the same parent category. Philips needs to explain how the products interlink and what they actually bring to the different stakeholders. This has been attempted with the launch of Sense & Simplicity slogan but up till now has not have the desired effect.

Philips has to invest in its brand across the globe and send out a consistent message, not only on a product level but also on a company level so consumers understand what the brand stands for and what its strategic direction is. If Philips does that successfully it will be able to generate a positive brand association across the company and its stakeholders will understand the relevance and uniqueness of the company's offerings.

> Philips will need to ensure a consistent brand experience for the stakeholders across more than 30 diverse product categories and more than 100 countries.

SANTA VAN DER LAARSE

Santa van der Laarse is an experienced communications professional who has spent more than 10 years at Royal Philips, working in a many different parts of that organization. Santa started her career as a Communications Manager in the Consumer Electronics division and later worked for the European Regional Marketing Department. For the last three years she has been working as Senior Press Officer in the Philips Group Level organization.

Santa has always been very proud to work for Royal Philips, enjoying its dynamism, its diversity, and its global reach. Before starting her professional career, Santa studied International Business Communications at the Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen (The Netherlands) and studied one year International Commerce and Management at Université Paul Valéry Montpellier (France).

Santa has three young children and enjoys going for walks with her dog in her free time.

Prisma Peremarket's Internal Communication's Alignment

Purpose of the Thesis Improve the internal alignment of Prisma Peremarket employees. Prisma Peremarket Prisma Peremarket is retail chain with Finnish roots that was established in Estonia year 2000. By now Prisma Peremarket is among 5 biggest retailers in Estonia with the fastest growth of market share. Company has 8 hypermarkets, 1 grocery store and several restaurants and cafes in the biggest Estonian cities. Prisma Peremarket is among biggest Estonian employers giving job to more than 1200 employees.

KADRI LAINAS

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS (2/2008 to present) Strategy and Corporate communications Developed and implemented the retail chain's corporate communications strategy which led to 20% increase in customer purchases. Creator of the "Hinnagarantii" campaign that has raised yearly sales up to 25%. Initiated first local brand development project in SOK group. The localized brand was successfully launched in the spring 2010. Established comprehensive internal communication system, raising employees' satisfaction 10%. Public Relations and Crisis Communication. Successfully managed several crises communication cases. Experienced in giving interviews to all media channels; presented to audience greater than 500 people. Leadership and Management. Responsible for a team of marketing specialists, managing a budget of 2M Euros. Member of the executive management team responsible for developing and executing strategy in Estonia.

COMMUNICATION BUREAU JLS CONSULTANT (9/2005-2/2008). Managed one of the most multinational press events in Estonia- opening PR campaign of the Kumu art museum, visited by 70 international journalists. Generated 25% of the company's turnover.

KALEV CHOCOLATE FACTORY BRAND MANAGER (9/2000-9/2005) Most valued brand in Estonia 2003-2007. Led annual peak sales season project in 2003, involving marketing, sales, purchasing, producing, R&D and logistic. 10% y-o-y sales growth. Managed more than 100 different products, responsible for brand creation, advertising, package design, sales support, pricing and R&D in all target markets.

ESTONIAN DEBATING SOCIETY (1996 to present) Founder of the non-political campaign "Notice the arguments" aiming to make political campaigns in Estonia more arguments based and less propagandistic; the project is nominated the best citizen's initiative in Estonia on 2009.

Communication Strategy

According to Prisma Peremarket's strategy the main communication channels are the shops themselves. A store has to offer appropriate selection of goods with reasonable prices, good service and convenient shopping environment.

All kind of marketing campaigns could increase market share temporarily but without fulfilling the wide selection, reasonable price level, good service and convenient environment promises, all new or loyal customer are easy target to all other competitors.

This strategy also means that internal communication plays significant role in achieving economic goals as fulfilling all these strengths could be received only by dedicated employees who understand and support the company's values and objectives.

Market Situation

Competition in Estonia between retailers is very tense as the market is small, purchasing power low and market is divided between 5 big retailers and 9 different brands. In bigger cities the different hypermarkets are located so close to each other that customers always have a change to choose between different hypermarket and supermarkets on their way at home or office.

According to Nielsen research Prisma has the strongest Store Equity and the best recommendation index amongst Estonian retailers.[1]

Academic Studies

According to academicals studies "10% improvement in alignment can create 2% better outcome in a company's performance," [2] is said by Van Riel in Strategic Alignment lecture and described in figure 2.

The Strategic Alignment Lecture lead by van Riel described three internal intelligence sources that are also seen in figure 3.[3]

Fit Between Strategic Objectives and Desired Overall Identity

Prisma Peremarket's organizational identity is accountability, as appropriate for a retailer with low margins and high labor turnover in a highly competitive business sector. From gap analyses good be seen that the company is:

➔ Customer oriented

➔ Trustworthy, honest and transparent

➔ Stable

➔ Human resource is highly valued

➔ Efficient

Figure 1
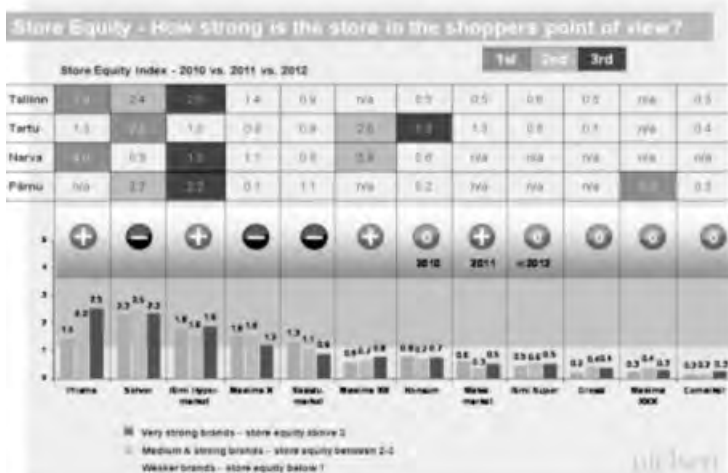
1 Nielsen Shopper Trends in Baltic States 2012

2 Van Riel, C.B.M. Lecture: Strategic Alignment. Understanding the Organizational Context. April, 2011

3 Van Riel, C.B.M. Lecture: Strategic Alignment. Understanding the Organizational Context, , April, 2011

Figure 2

10% Improvement in Alignment	→	6% Improvement in Employee Effort	→	2% Improvement in Performance

Figure 3

Strategic Objectives

Fit with Overall Identity Traits

Present Situation

Bureaucracy, Shared Meaning, Accountability, Ideology

Desired Situation

Bureaucracy, Shared Meaning, Account-ability, Ideology

Which Attitudes need to be focused on most?

Fit with Specific Identity Traits

Which Overall Identity Traits exist?

Desired, Projected Perceived?

Gaps between the three sets of Overall Identity Traits?

Which Traits need to be focused most?

Fit with Employee Behavior

Awareness, Attitude, Behavior Gaps between Employee Segments

Which focus point need to be addressed most??

Focus Points in Internal Alignment Program

Gallup and Focus Groups

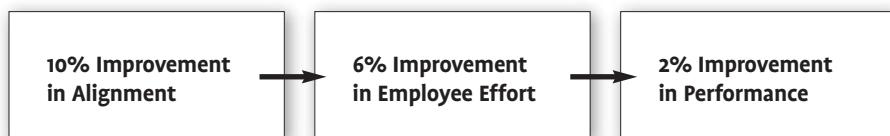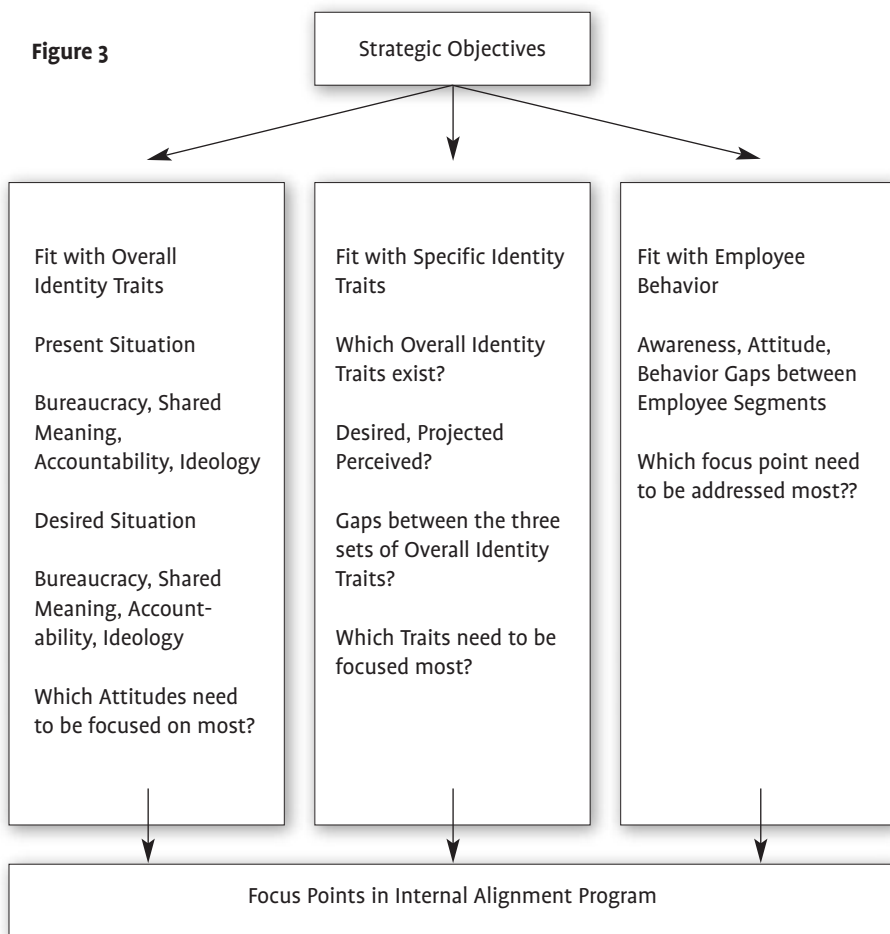According to Gallup Q12 gaps between average and middle managers are not remarkable but management results clearly distinguish from others. Conducted focus groups turned management attention into different issues that have to be taken into account to improve alignment.

Focus groups emphasized following issues: **Shift of identities.** The shift of identities has to be clearly explained to middle managers, to make them to understand their role and management expectations towards them. As accountability is agreed organizational identity the rewarding and recognition system of the middle managers should be overviewed by the management, integrating strategic objectives into the salary and bonus systems.

→ **Involving middle managers into strategy execution process through different projects.**
As loss of big picture and comfort zone were also the main issues that have been discussed in this paper. Different projects that help to execute strategy should help to improve this problem.

→ **Developing dialogue with middle managers and average employees.**
Responsibility to raise different issues and dialogued by middle managers has to be encouraged. Management has also meeting with average employees in different business units twice a year. In some units some the dialogue opens very well and even salary questions and bonus systems are openly discussed. At the same time some people are too shy or afraid to speak up.

According to Nielsen research Prisma has the strongest Store Equity and the best recommendation index amongst Estonian retailers.

➔ **Internal development**.
Prisma Peremarket is trying to encourage employees' development as managers are usually promoted among current employees and all CEO's of the company have once started as average clerks. To encourage internal development there should be communication activities to share some positive examples and stories among Prisma Peremarket's employees.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

According to the current study Prisma Peremarket's management should concentrate on following to improve internal alignment:

Improve dialogue
➔ Encourage the middle managers to raise topics in monthly and annual meetings.

➔ To be clear when management is expecting middle managers discussions to make decisions and when their opinion is asked to execute already made decisions.

➔ Raise the frequency of meetings with average employees. Create constant communication channel where average employees could give feedback and raise questions to management.

➔ Create communication strategy test group where people from different level of organization belong and from whom regular feedback about different communication activities is asked.

Recognition and Reward
➔ As accountability is agreed organizational identity the role expectations of the middle managers and average employees should be overviewed and clearly stated.

➔ Giving positive feedback to colleagues has to be encouraged. Different internal communication channels have to highlight good employees and good work results.

Capability Development
➔ The success stories about career development have to be described in different communications channels.

➔ Training and coaching employees in the context of the strategic objectives has to be reviewed.

As Prisma Peremarket will enter into new strategy period from the beginning of the year, many insights of this paper will be taken into account and execution, to improve internal alignment and business results.

The ultimate issue of internal alignment: a study of Chinese financial institution "Going Global"

From a managerial perspective, internal alignment is vital to the success of companies. This study is focused on internal communication of a Chinese bank, a typical example of Chinese financial institutions during the transition of "Going Global". The results of surveys and in-depth interviews conducted with employees located in 10 different countries, providing insights into the ultimate issue of internal alignment under the complex circumstance of international settings.

The CAR Factors
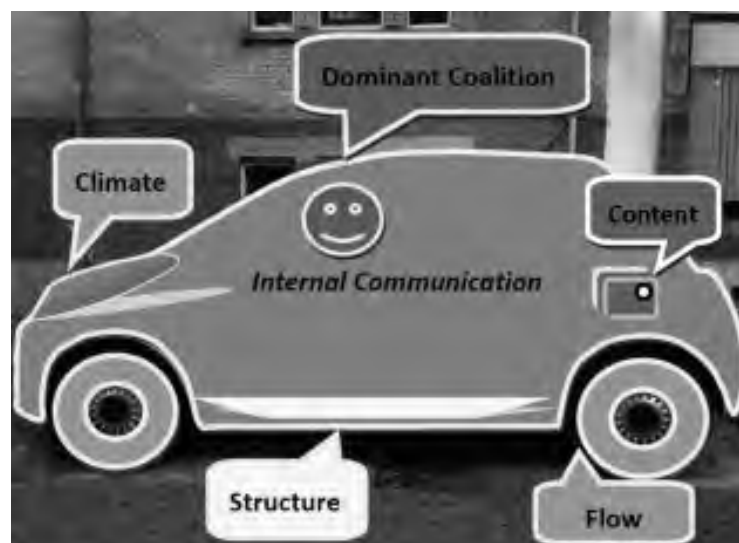
Research objective

When new media, one of the great examples: social media, its users is rapidly growing around the world in a comparable short period of time. The power of new media is overwhelming towards tradition mean of communication like newspapers, TV and radio broadcast. Communication is no long feeding information to audiences, but interacting with them. From an oriental culture perspective, a big Chinese bank can easily tend to treat internal communication as propaganda rather than communication. It might work twenty years ago, but with more and more new employees grown up from the internet age with higher education, Chinese bank is facing culture differences when expanding its business outside the home country. This traditional way of communication has lost its charm and effectiveness. Most importantly, the ultimate goal of internal communication is helping to build up alignment in order to serve the organization's strategic goal as well as to achieve financial targets.

Management of the bank is facing challenges to adopt new media. For example, how a big Chinese bank can benefit from new media on internal communication and not being "hijack" by it? To get a well balance and ongoing adapting the changes are great challenges to communication professional and the top management. But, does channels really matters? Or, there are more fundamental issues that need to be taken care of. This is the question that Chinese financial institutions are facing and the author is trying to find the answer.

Conclusions

Along with recent years' trend of "Going Global", Chinese companies are expanding

their business around the globe, which internal communication becomes internationalized instead of domestically dealing with mono culture background. Internal communication is becoming a more delicate piece of work, which top management and communication professionals need to be aware, be prepare, and be willing to adapt new changes.

Above all, the ultimate issue of the internal communication is the climate. Micro climates are the components of the overall communication climate within an organization. Alignment is not only applied to the internal communication, but more importantly, alignment needs to be achieved within the "Dominant Coalitions" at the first place. As the member of the "Dominant Coalitions", management of each level needs to maintain constant effort and open mind regarding internal communication. The top CEO alone cannot ensure the organization has the same experience on internal communication without the involvement of his/her fellow management team. The political

campaign "Mass Line" at present in China is somehow matching the quest of openness and interaction with ordinary employees. Internal communication in a Chinese bank has its own characteristics, purpose and mission. Indeed, there are distinctive different between internal communication and political campaign, but positive momentum can be borrowed from this campaign, which can be used as the driving force to improve the climate of internal communication of the bank.

The author uses the four factors of internal communication: structure, flow, content and climate to form a framework "the CAR Factors", which demonstrates the relationship between "Dominant Coalition" and internal communication.
"The CAR Factors" framework, further coordinates with the study in five dimensions: one-way versus two-ways communication; tradition media versus new media; formal communication versus informal communication; desired result from internal communication versus reality at present within the organization;

the relation between dominant coalition and internal communication, all together they can comprehensively demonstrate a graphical image of interaction among internal communication factors, and how these factors can work together in order to achieve alignment.

The study also attempts to contribute to the interpretation and demonstration factors of internal communication, which can be used by communication professionals to present in front of management with a simple and visually concept when explaining why managements' involvement and attitude are decisive to communication climate, the ultimate issue of internal communication.

More importantly to demonstrate to the management that alignment of internal communication, which can help to make the organization a better place to work and help the organization becoming a stronger player in the financial industry when a Chinese bank is during its transition of "Going Global".

Xun Liang (1976) is the Deputy General Manager of Bank of China Rotterdam Branch. As the member of the management team, he is responsible for the corporate communication in the Netherlands for Bank of China.

With over 15 years of experience in the banking industry, he starts his career in China. He served Bank of China in Guangzhou for 6 year, as a team supervisor of corporate banking. Afterward he took an assignment as an expat working for Bank of China in Luxembourg for 4 years. He was the manager of personal banking and later clearing department. He continues his career later in the Netherlands. As part of his responsibility, he communicates with internal and external stakeholders, including regulation authorities, financial institutions, media and service organizations.

He joined the MCC program in 2012 and expects to meet the best practice with grounded theories. For the master thesis, he had chosen internal communication as the topic, which in his opinion could bring the best add value to the bank.

Professional bureaucracy's: a different approach

If a good reputation is the goal, strategic alignment is the way to get there. This thesis describes how public organizations such as provinces, can benefit from business theories, creating strategic employee alignment with effective corporate communication.

The advantages of strategic alignment are numerous: an organization that is aligned is more successful, more flexible, better focussed and has employees who feel more engaged with the success of their organization. It's a fact that corporate communication plays a crucial role in the creation of strategic alignment.

The first step towards strategic alignment is to achieve long term relationships with the employees of an organization. It pays off to take your internal audiences seriously. Strategic employee alignment increases employees job satisfaction and commitment, which leads to better organizational performance. The bottom line is not whether employees feel satisfied with the work they do, but whether they will act in accordance with the company's strategic initiatives.

Over the last years the landscape and contours of government and public management have changed drastically. Our world faces political, economical, ecological and social crises, that challenge companies, governments and communities. Where traditional public administration assumes a context of relative political economic and social stability, new public management trusts the logic of free market competition. It trusts the complexity, volatility and uncertainty in the environment and believes public organizations should act accordingly. This has consequences for the way governmental organizations, professional bureaucracy's, can achieve more strategic employee alignment. If they want to strengthen their organization's stakeholder relations and license-to-operate, they will have to take those very complex changes in their environment seriously.

This thesis shows that, as in private organizations, creating an aligned workforce in a professional bureaucracy implies selling a clear vision by top management, rooted in supportive, integrated, long term managerial efforts in five key functional management areas (Finance, IT, Legal, HR and Corporate Communication). This will result in shared beliefs among the majority of the internal audiences about the necessity to act in line with the strategic intends of the organization. There are important differences that should be taken into account.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VAN RIELS OVERALL IDENTITY MODEL

The changes in the political, economic and social context that started in 2009 impact the dominant identity characteristics of governmental professional bureaucracy's. My research shows that the typology model that professor dr. Cees Van Riel developed to distinguish organizations in the overall nature of their identity characteristics should be tailored to professional bureaucracy's such as the province. The model is based on the traditional public administration and doesn't take the changed contours and new characteristics of those organizations into account. Recognizing the differences between private and public organizations and the way the crises have impacted these since 2009, will enlarge a successful achievement of strategic employee alignment.

This thesis shows that professional bureaucracy's such as the province experience much more external turbulence since 2009 and need to become much more accountable than these organizations were traditionally used to. It is not the question whether professional bureaucracy's want to change their organizational identity: the external turbulence has already changed so much that those professional bureaucracy's have already partly become Shared Meaning and Accountability organizations and need to further develop those identity characteristics.

BEFORE 2009

Figure 2 - Four overall organizational identity's before 2009, (Van Riel): professional bureaucracy's are characterized by a low amount of external turbulence and high centralisation and formalisation.

LESSONS LEARNED

Public Managers should be more open to employees and change the way they operate when it comes to supervision and delegation.

The creation of Public Value, an invention of Harvard professor Mark Moore and the public equivalent to stakeholder value in the private sector, can be very helpful when realizing strategic employee alignment. To create it organizations need to achieve an authorizing environment, necessary to achieve the desired public value outcomes, building and sustaining a coalition of stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors who s support is required to sustain the necessary strategic action.

It is necessary that top management builds the operational capacity needed for strategic alignment and the creation of public value, harnessing and mobilizing the operational resources in the five key functional management areas mentioned before.

Corporate communication should be able to help managers to find out what really matters to people, so corporate communication advisers can give them accurate information about the performance characteristics of their organizations in terms that matter to them. This will make public organizations such as the province more responsive and accountable, a necessity in these turbulent times. Corporate communication is first corporate and only then communication. This results in a different approach than the corporate communication department is used to.

Action points province of South-Holland

Specific points the province of South-Holland should work on to be more successful in creating strategic employee alignment:

➔ Recognize that due to a drastically changed environment and external turbulence the organization and employee needs have changed.

➔ Solve the vagueness and intangibility of objectives and criteria, by creating clear goals an inspiring vision and a clear strategy. Formulate what constitutes success for the province. The creation of public value can be helpful.

➔ Top management should organize a (better) dialogue with employees about the (new) strategy, as it's crucial for strategic employee alignment to succeed.

➔ Create a compelling organizational story with a holistic view on the position of the province that inspires and excites employees.

➔ Create an environment of trust in which employees feel taken seriously and are not afraid to speak out. This means managers will have to change their implicit beliefs about employees and will have to work on their fear of negative feedback.
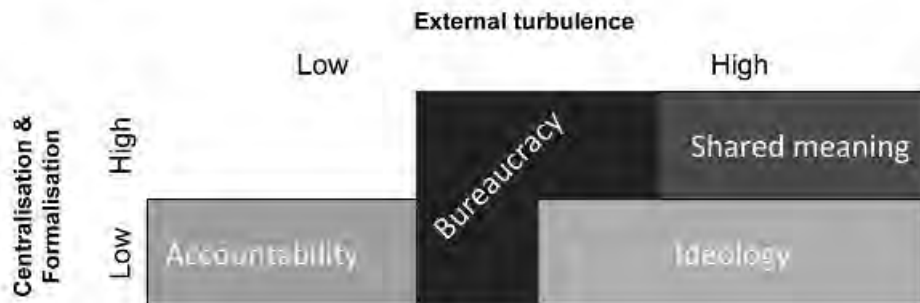
AFTER 2009

Figure 3 – The same four overall organizational identity's since 2009: increased external turbulence has forced professional bureaucracy's to change their identity into a combination of accountability, bureaucracy and shared meaning.

➔ Enhance capability development of top- and middle management to become more approachable and responsive. Make interaction, dialogue and trust key elements for leadership.

➔ Work on the discrepancy between the strategic direction and management behaviour.

➔ Get insight into the most important internal and external stakeholders - corporate communication specialists should be able to deliver insights to managers on similarities and differences in engagement and motivational drivers for internal audiences.

➔ Create more accountability by obligating management and employees to work on soft skills and performance such as internal communication and the achievement of strategic employee alignment. Clear and concrete KPI s could quantify those skills and make them measurable (for instance with the EcQ Alignment Monitor, figure 1).

➔ Improve personnel management by creating a better link between performance and pay, a new reward system that also recognizes other rewards such as public praise, public approval and the celebration of success.

➔ Build coalitions between the five functional key management area's to enhance employee alignment. Only co-operation will do the trick.

➔ Further improve corporate communi-cation by tailoring communication flow, content and climate and professionalizing the corporate communication department (from delivering messages, to becoming a trusted adviser. All communication employees should be aware that communication is first of all corporate and only then communication.

➔ Management can be supported more by the communication department and HR in their leadership communication.

➔ Take into account that professionals at this moment identify mostly with their profession and their direct colleagues - only an inspiring vision, taking them seriously and involving them with the (new) strategy can turn this around.

MARENTHE DE NIJS

Marenthe de Nijs (1974) is an all-round communication specialist with more than 16 years of international experience in journalism and corporate communication. Marenthe first studied Journalism and Public Relations in Utrecht. During her career she worked as editor and editor-in-chief for several Dutch magazines. In 2001 she started working as a communication consultant advising international company's such as Microsoft, Compaq and Intel on their press relations. As an internal communication specialist she worked for company's such as Casema and OPTA. In 2006 she started her own agency: PRima! With PRima! She worked for clients such as Fujitsu, ING, Dockwise, the city of Rotterdam and the province of South-Holland, offering clients services such as management of communication, effective leadership communication, employee communication and press relations.

Marenthe lives in Alphen aan den Rijn with her partner Dennis and daughter Olivia. The moment she finished her thesis and this biography, she was 9 months pregnant with her son. In her spare time Marenthe enjoys the company of her family and dear friends. She loves travelling, cooking, swimming, scuba diving, skiing, reading, writing and all those things that make life wonderful.

Contact: Marenthe@primacommunicatie.nl

The trust factor and its impact on Reputation

MARGRIET PAPMA

Margriet Papma works as a senior communication advisor at Vitens since 2001. Vitens is a water services company, which is active in five provinces in the Netherlands. Her focus is mainly on corporate communications including Vitens' customers fund Water for Life and an education programme. This programme focuses on primary and secondary schools and is aimed at making children and youngsters aware of the value of drinking tap water and introducing the water and sanitation sector as interesting for their future career.

Margriet graduated from the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht on English language in 2011 and studied at Dronten University of Applied Sciences where she obtained a bachelor's degree in business economics in 1998. Before joining Vitens, Margriet worked in health care as a public relations officer at a hospital organisation.

Today's trend is a growing concern among people about the erosion of social infrastructure. Globalisation processes have led to the reorganisation and blurring of boundaries in the duties and obligations of the government and business sectors in their relationship with society. Substantial transformations in government social policies and programmes, in conjunction with pressure from various activists and interest groups, have resulted in increasing pressure on business to take up more of the responsibility in meeting community needs.

The dominant sentiment is that many organisations have become big by doing wrong. We have lost our faith in decency and truth. The lack of trust is the real crisis because it throws sand in a running engine (TrendSpeech 2014).

The meaning of 'Trust'

Trust can be defined as 'a judgment that a person, group or company can be confidently relied upon. Whereas, trustworthiness means 'the characteristics that signal to us that people, groups and organisations can be relied upon' (Hurley, 2011). This, concerning the understandings competence, consistency, fairness, honesty, open communication, integrity and concern for others' (Hurley, 2011).

Study objectives

The aim of this study was to find out if a different crisis response strategy leads to a different perception among the general public when a company faces a crisis and its trust and trustworthiness are at stake. In a scenario study Nestlé's crisis response strategy in the making of the documentary *Bottled life* was examined in order to

---

How should a company gain and keep its trustworthiness during a crisis in which its trustworthiness is at stake?

---

find out if a different crisis response strategy leads to a different perception among the general public regarding the trust factor. A review on the literature was carried out with a fundamental research question in mind: how should a company gain and keep its trustworthiness during a crisis in which its trustworthiness is at stake?

The scenario study on 'Bottled Life'

In early 2012, the documentary film called *Bottled life* by the Swiss film makers Urs Schnell and Res Gehringer was released. Its purpose was to use the example of Nestlé's bottled water business to demonstrate that the privatization of water leads to the exhaustion of the most vital and scarcest of natural resources: water. A major part of the documentary was filmed in Pakistan, which is Nestlé's testing market for the large scale introduction of bottled water. The side effect of the industrial production by pumping up water has been that the ground water level drops dramatically and consequently water wells in the area fell dry.

The documentary shows that Nestlé is not willing to talk with the interviewers and forbids its employees to talk with the interviewers and does not give the film makers permission to enter Nestlé's production locations and offices. Nestlé is not willing to start a dialogue and confrontation with activists and interest groups and representatives from the local communities. Nestlé chooses to put a release on its website and chose just one newspaper and a statement on its website.

After the release of the documentary in 2012 a storm of negative media attention came up. In this crisis situation when its reputation was at risk, Nestlé's crisis response strategy was that it chose to address all allegations via its website on a page called Bottled Life our position. Hence, Nestlé did not show openness and transparency and after the release the company chose to keep quiet once more. Giving the impression to deny the problems and not being able and willing to address the media and the general public.

In a survey three scenarios were divided on 30 respondents in three groups. The scenarios are that Nestlé acknowledges the problems, denies the problems or does not give a reaction at all.

CONCLUSIONS

If Nestlé acknowledges that the gaining of water in vulnerable regions is a problem, this leads to a rise in trust, compared to 'denial' and 'no reaction'. Respondents feel that if Nestlé is in control of the problems, this does not mean that the company is more capable to deal with the cause of the problems. The degree of responsibility for the crisis attributed to Nestlé is lower when Nestlé acknowledges the problems than when it denies the problems or does not communicate. The extent to which the company takes responsibility for the crisis, is positively indicated in the situation that Nestlé acknowledges the problems.

Nestlé's positive intentions are indicated the same by respondents, the expectations are neutral. The remarks respondents have given on the questionnaire gave an insight in their emotions and thoughts on the three scenarios of the Nestlé's crisis response strategy options.

The remarks by respondents indicate that they expect that Nestlé will see that it is necessary to take responsibility and set steps in the direction of local communities and interest groups. This conclusion is based on the fact that there is a difference in opinion between respondents who have seen the documentary and those who have not seen the documentary and therefore show a lack of information.

The story in the scenarios made respondents aware of the problem on the water situation and therefore they would appreciate more information in order to judge Nestlé's reaction in a better way and because of caring for a sustainability issue.

Indignation is influenced by feelings of understanding, as the respondents' remarks show. Respondents would more likely recommend Nestlé's products to friends if the company acknowledges the problems. The remarks show that respondents will not judge Nestlé in the same way if other Nestlé products are involved. The literature survey shows that acknowledgement and apologies as part of a company's crisis response strategies will indeed establish trust in the ability of the organization to face the crisis and restore its trustworthiness (Coombs & Holladay 1996 and 2008) (Wessels 2011).

FedEx and Edelman state that transparency and an open approach towards stakeholders, also including activists and interest groups, will build up trust. A specific and detailed view and thorough picture of the risks involved with a company's reputation are a must. And as all indicate Stephen Covey is right: speed is necessary in acting and monitoring risks and effects of the crisis response strategies.

The degree of responsibility for the crisis attributed to Nestlé is lower when Nestlé acknowledges the problems than when it denies the problems or does not communicate.

Enabling Strategic Alignment at De Lage Landen: A case study investigating the road of DLL towards becoming a High-Performance Organization

In order to stay competitive in increasingly changing and challenging environments, companies are dependent on their stakeholders to help them achieve their ambitions and -through their actions and behavior - contribute to the achievement of its strategic objectives. This is described by the term 'strategic alignment', which can be summarized as a "mutual rewarding relationship between a company and its key stakeholders enabling the firm to realize its purpose". (Van Riel 2011) Especially internal stakeholder alignment, i.e. the support of a company's employees, is crucial in reaching the strategic initiatives that a firm seeks to achieve.

CATHARINA PULKA

Catharina Pulka is manager for Global External Communications at De Lage Landen International, a global provider of financial and asset solutions.
Before she joined De Lage Landen, Catharina was working for Nana Wall Systems Inc. in San Francisco, US, in the marketing department, where she was responsible for repositioning the NanaWall brand and helped the organization enter the educational market in Canada, the US and Mexico.
Having returned to Europe, she completed a Master of Science degree at the University of Maastricht, majoring in Strategic Marketing. Through her activities as editor for the university magazine she came into contact with De Lage Landen and joined the company shortly thereafter as an International Management Trainee in the domain of International Project Management. Having soon found her passion in communications through several projects she was involved with, Catharina took on the role of International Communications Officer at Athlon Car Lease International, a daughter company of De Lage Landen, where she became responsible for all international communication and coordinating the communication amongst all countries Athlon Car Lease is present in.
Since beginning of the year, Catharina has returned to De Lage Landen where she took on the role of External Communications Manager, and is now responsible for managing the company's PR and stakeholder communication efforts, as well as for the global roll-out of DLL's revised brand and the management of the company's reputation.

Like many other firms, De Lage Landen - a global provider of financial and asset solutions - has recently become more and more interested in and started measuring stakeholder engagement as an indicator of success. More specifically, the company has listed member engagement and member an enablement as two out of four factors they deem critical and aim to stimulate in order to reach their goal of becoming a high-performing organization. Since employee engagement only measures attitudes of organizational members, however, this paper argues that this simply does not suffice. It hypothesizes that in order to "focus the power of its individual members together towards a common strategic end to transform DLL into a living, breathing and ultra-competitive organism" (Van Riel 2012, 38) and embed the One DLL thought as a self-sustaining principle across the organization, the company needs to measure, stimulate and - if necessary - improve the strategic alignment of its members.

With this study, the author has thus set out to determine the level of alignment at De Lage Landen and provide recommendations on how to further fuel it.

Determining the status of alignment has been done by following Van Riel's (2012) framework for 'creating strategic alignment'. As part of this framework, the company's overall and specific identities were analyzed and compared and provided the basis for the roadmap and communication support recommended by the author.

Findings

With the goals of De Lage Landen of creating an internally well-connected organization that 'brings the best of the entire company to its customers' through increased efficiency, accountability and client focus, and creating full alignment across all business units operating under one overall strategy, it has become clear that the organization is moving towards a 'shared meaning' paradigm.

Through several hard-wired as well as soft wired tools introduced over the last couple of years, the company has already made big steps towards the 'shared meaning' paradigm, and the fit of the overall identity was thus rated at Medium/High (80 %).

In terms of specific identity traits, also the desired identity of the company shows to be in line with the new overall organizational identity. However, the projected and perceived identity, which were both analyzed through in-depth interviews with a cross-sample of DLL's members and thorough desk research, have not shown to be fully aligned yet and the fit between the projected and perceived identity compared to the desired identity was thus rated at Medium+ (60 %) and Medium- (40 %), respectively. Another findings was that the list of characteristics that further communication efforts needs to focus on should

"Companies need the full-hearted support of key stakeholders as it increases motivation among own employees, resulting in higher productivity and reduced transaction costs for the firm. This full-hearted support requires a firm to build and maintain alignment with all stakeholders they depend on."

Cees van Riel
Foundations of Corp. Communications Week 2011

center on the themes of partnership, solution focus and entrepreneurial spirit. Analyzing the behaviors of DLL's organizational members have confirmed these preliminary findings on the level of alignment in the company, and have resulted in the expected outcomes of a rather high awareness and support towards the strategy (rated at Medium+ and 60 %) but a rather low fit between the strategy and aligned behavior (25 %). Especially behavior on teamwork, customer focus and quality of customer support has shown to not be fully embedded across the organization yet.

With these findings serving as the input for path ahead, the author recommended a roadmap balancing and combining negotiation and confrontation techniques aiming at unavoidably exposing DLL's organizational members to the intentions of corporate leadership.

In order to provide more customized advice on the communication support DLL will need to further stimulate internal stakeholder alignment, an analysis of the current managerial efforts on informing, motivating and capability development was performed, where the company scored a Medium+ (60 %) on media and messaging as well as on recognition & rewards, and a Medium- (40 %) on cascading as well as on dialogue. The company's capability development efforts were rated as High (85 %).

Recommendations

To strengthen its informing efforts, the author recommended reviewing and simplifying DLL's strategic messaging by introducing a corporate story using the compelling vision and inspiring brand promise of the company as well as proof

To strengthen its informing efforts, the author recommended reviewing and simplifying DLL's strategic messaging by introducing a corporate story using the compelling vision and inspiring brand promise of the company as well as proof points collected from the organization.

points collected from the organization. Exposing its members to such key thematic messages and introducing a consistent look & feel in its communication messages and means will impact the image members have of the organization and change their beliefs about it, which his likely to also affect their behavior in a positive way.

Additionally, it was recommended to more or better use lower and middle management for the cascading of these key thematic messages and to better and more frequently use parallel media to strengthen the communication on DLL's strategy. On motivating efforts, it was recommended to increase dialogue on strategic topics across the organization by using all levels of management to specifically discuss the overall strategy and how members can support it.

This will further improve awareness and supportive attitudes towards the strategy and also directly impact behavior through an increased feeling of accountability, boost motivation and morale and further enhance the presence of an open communication climate.

With all initiatives currently on-going and planned on capability development, the author has concluded that the company is well on track. However, the paper recommends increasing communication of ongoing initiatives and developments by explaining the what, the why and how it fits into the overall strategy. Concrete initiatives that were suggested by the author that could help De Lage Landen in increasing internal stakeholder alignment included the revision of its messaging, the strengthening of its parallel media, a 'see what counts' workshop, round table meetings, target setting workshops, 360° reviews, 'better together' meetings or 'DLL's next best idea'.

Corporate Silence: Speaking up or remaining silent in a military organisation

Corporate silence is defined as a condition under which employees, regardless of their position, do not speak-up and remain silent, e.g. the intentional withholding of relevant knowledge (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Scientific research indicates that not reporting significant issues and remaining silent negatively influences the organisation's performance and strategy (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Scholars like Pinder and Harlos (2001) or Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin (2003) postulate that certain contexts and environments could possibly foster employee silence. Furthermore in their analysis of employee silence, Milliken et al. (2003) conclude that hierarchic structures intensify the situation of hesitating to deliver bad news to others. Pinder and Harlos (2001) moreover argue that the military environment can be regarded as a fertile setting that has a propensity to nurture silence. Consequently, this study investigates the influence of communication climate on employee silence in a military context.

Hence, a quantitative study (n = 168) is conducted by surveying two international military headquarters out of the NATO chain of command. The online survey has been circulated at both NATO Joint Force Commands, one in Naples, Italy and the other one in Brunssum, the Netherlands. In the questionnaire, employees were asked about their opinion on the communication climate and on their perception regarding employee silence within each command.

Results of the empirical analysis indicate an influence of certain dimensions of the communication climate on specific forms of employee silence. Although, scientific literature suggests an influence of Trust and Openness on speaking up (Edmondson, 2003; Detert & Burris, 2007; Knoll & van Dick, 2013; Schlosser & Zolin, 2012), a correlation with Acquiescent and Quiescent Silence was not evident.

The empirical analysis also revealed that employees who perceived the climate of communication supportive were less likely engaged in ProSocial Silence. No empirical evidence could be found for the claim that a supportive communication climate leads to less Opportunistic Silence. However a significant tie between Perceived Participation and Acquiescent

> There were no significant characteristics that would let one suggest that the military context is more favourable for organisational or employee silence.

Silence as well as Perceived Participation and Quiescent Silence was empirically supported. With regards to the influence of Rank on employee silence the empirical analysis supported the claim of a positive relation between Rank and Quiescent Silence, but could not confirm a significant relation between Rank and ProSocial Silence.

Concerning the second research question, which sheds light on the military context, it can be concluded that there were no significant characteristics that would let one suggest that the military context is

more favourable for organisational or employee silence. Although the review about the military culture suggested a different direction and personal experiences of the author supported this impression, the gathered data showed that silence within the two presented commands were not a present issue.

The thesis further diversifies the concepts of employee silence in regards to silence in different application contexts, and hence contributes to the overall scientific discourse of different forms of silence in organisations.

FLORIAN RAMSPOTH

Florian Ramspoth (1982) served in the German Armed Forces for 12 years and studied, as part of his military education, educational science (Pedagogic) at the University of the Armed Forces in Munich. After spending a semester at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa he finished his academic education with a diploma and completed his officer military training at Fort Bliss, El Paso Texas. Serving initially as an operator at the ground based air defence weapon system PATRIOT. Gaining more experience he became a leader of a team of highly trained specialist's in chemical warfare, protection measures and reconnaissance.

For the last four years he was handpicked to become a spokesperson for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) at the Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum, Netherlands. In his role as a Staff Officer for Media Relations he got the opportunity to serve in countries like Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. International trainings in Bern, Switzerland and Berlin, Germany further shaped his communicational skills. To round up his practical experiences he started the Executive Master Program in Corporate Communication in 2011.

After leaving the German Armed Forces in June 2013 he joined the family company (Trend-Design) to work as communication specialist and with the clear aim to take over the business in near future.

Florian Ramspoth is married to Tina. Together they have two children Anton (2) and Pauline (3 months).

Understanding Corporate Career Websites An analysis on content in Corporate Career Websites

A corporate career website offers an organization huge potential in terms of its usage as a medium of communication. Since the content on the website is entirely controlled by the organization, there exists a possibility of showcasing the organization at its best.

NAMRATHA RAO

Namratha Rao is a communications professional with experience spanning seven years across the advertising and marketing communication industry in India. After small stints in PR and Market Research, she moved on to working as a brand consultant in the advertising industry for three years where she served as the client interface and worked on building brands in segments like fashion, lifestyle and FMCGs.

She later moved on as a marketing coordinator for the Indian operations of a Swiss-German multi-national organization called AMC. At AMC, she grew up to the level of Manager - Marketing and was responsible and accountable for marketing and communication activities at the organization directed mainly at 4000+ freelance consultants, customers and the media across 63 locations pan-India. Her belief that marketing and communication activities should generate measurable results and her efforts in making this possible, earned her accolades from the AMC leadership team both in India and the Asia Pacific region.

Namratha moved to the Netherlands after marrying a Dutch Citizen in 2011 and enrolled for the Executive Masters Program in Corporate Communication to update her existing skills to complement a career in communications in the Netherlands.

She hopes to find a working environment that challenges her, gives her the right kind of spark to succeed in the field of communication and helps her put to practice all the valuable lessons learnt during the program.

Even though these websites primarily cater to prospective employees, one must not forget that the current economic scenario demands organizations to show positive results consistently by using the most effective combination of resources available to them. In such a scenario, ensuring the organizations attract and retain the best employees (human resource) is seen as a strategic advantage. In most cases, the corporate career website is amongst the first places a prospective employee would look for information regarding his/her prospective employer.

Corporate career websites provide prospective employees a dynamic, richer and vivid experience and encourage more active interaction from them (Coyle and Thorson, 2001). The most significant advantage of a corporate career website in comparison to other e-recruitment platforms (e.g., job boards, specialized job sites, newsgroups) is that corporate career websites cost relatively less and can allow the exchange of more information about both the employee and the employer-a vital factor for establishing and maintaining a positive relationship between them.

Various studies have been done to understand the form and content of a career website and the person-organization fit achieved through it. There are hardly any studies that focus on understanding the differences that exists in the content of

corporate career websites of organizations headquartered in different countries.

The study done as part of the thesis compared the content on websites of organizations headquartered in India and in The Netherlands, operating in the Information Technology industry. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954) has been used to help in categorizing content. An attempt has been made to understand the differences in what is communicated through these websites and what needs are met through this communication.

The study could be seen as the first step where information is gathered towards understanding how communication in recruitment practice works in different geographic and cultural settings. Since organizations compete at a global level for resources including human resources, the study intends to help in further understanding the role of communication in multicultural settings.

To better understand the contents of career websites and the differences that exist, the following research questions guided this study.

RQ1: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF CONTENT ON CAREER WEBSITES FOR IT ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA AND IN THE NETHERLANDS?

RQ2: WHAT NEEDS DO THE WEBSITES ATTEMPT TO MEET/SATISFY THROUGH THEIR COMMUNICATION?

RQ3: WHAT ARE THE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN NEEDS ADDRESSED BY INDIAN IT ORGANIZATIONS IN COMPARISON WITH IT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS?

The first step in conducting the content analysis was to explore the career websites and determine what they contained. In the present study, career websites of 15 Indian and 10 Dutch IT organizations were independently coded on a word frequency and sentence-by-sentence basis. Word frequency was used to check the recurrence of a particular subject/theme and sentences were these words featured were analyzed since they represent complete thoughts as well as provide the common structure desired. A detailed coding manual was developed to catalogue content on the websites, the occurrence of the content and ease of usability of the vacancies available. Furthermore, a categorization was done with five additional subheads that correspond with content representing different needs as stated in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954).

The overall generic content in the career websites of Indian IT organizations and Dutch IT organizations had very few marked differences in terms of the presence of the attributes. The main ones being:

➔ Indian IT organizations mentioned and elaborate upon the facilities available at the office campus much more than the Dutch IT organizations.

➔ The career websites of the Dutch organizations gave a lot of prominence to attributes like including a message from the CEO or the leadership team and corporate videos/audio visual presentations whereas the Indian organizations didn't.

There may not be a one size fits all approach to communicating on corporate career websites.

The study could be seen as the first step where information is gathered towards understanding how communication in recruitment practice works in different geographic and cultural settings.

Differences were also observed in the approach taken by Indian IT organizations and Dutch IT organizations on their career websites to communicate the vacancies available in the organization. The most important difference being:

➔ Almost all the Dutch IT organizations researched had their vacancies listed and the vacancies were easy to access. Furthermore, they also had clearly defined roles and scope of work expected from employees under the vacancies. In comparison, fewer Indian IT organizations researched had vacancies listed and clearly defined roles and scope of work

The most noteworthy differences among the needs addressed through communication on the career websites of Indian IT organizations and Dutch IT organizations were belongingness needs and self-actualization needs. The differences are:

➔ On an average, twice the number of Indian IT organizations researched addressed belongingness needs as compared to the Dutch IT organizations with the Indian organizations researched elaborating on belongingness needs more than twice the as much as the Dutch IT organizations.

➔ A similar number of Indian IT organizations and Dutch IT organizations researched addressed self-actualization needs. However, the extent to which these needs were addressed differed largely. The Dutch IT organizations elaborated on self-actualization needs close to twice as much as the Indian IT organizations.

These differences observed could be attributed to cultural differences that exist between India and The Netherlands. These aspects encourage us to consider that since the economy is global and talent (prospective employees) can come from any part of the world, organizations may need a more neutral global approach to what they communicate on their corporate career websites and how much of it they communicate. This can definitely be challenging since there may not be a one size fits all approach to communicating on corporate career websites.

Coyle, J. R., & Thorson, E. (2001). The effects of progressive levels of interactivity and vividness in web marketing sites. Journal of Advertising, 30(3): 65–77.

Maslow, A H (1954). Motivation and Personality. New York. Harper

Identity and Identification & (communication) behavior in the Roman-Catholic Church in The Netherlands

Alignment The Catholic Church in The Netherlands is becoming smaller, meaning less human resources and less financial resources. This leads to all kinds of challenges. Like decreasing the number of church buildings, attracting good personnel, keeping up a certain level of service (liturgy, catechesis, caritas). In this situation alignment is very important. Employees are asked to work harder, to do less, to do different things, and to do the same things with less people.

DAPHNE VAN ROOSENDAAL

Daphne van Roosendaal (1975) studied Literary Criticism at the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen) (1993-1998). She is employed in (Church) communications since 2000. Because of her interest in the public domain and how to effectively manage organizations, she studied Bestuurskunde/Overheidsmanagament at Avans Hogeschool 's-Hertogenbosch (2001-2005).

In 2006 she became head of the communications department of the Diocese of Breda. In order to get more theoretical background for things seen and learned in practice, she joined the Master of Corporate Communication Program in 2010. This taught her many new insights, and strengthened her professional approach of Church communications. Since 2012 she works for the Dutch Bishop's Conference for the issue of sexual abuse of minors. Since 2013 she also works as a communications professional at the Diocese of Rotterdam.

Daphne van Roosendaal combines academic thinking and practical thinking. She loves her work as a communication professional and has a great drive to convince others (colleagues and management) of the importance of communications for managing the organization.

She lives in Drunen, Noord-Brabant, with her husband.

Organizational identity is important in times of uncertainty and when there are complex problems, in times of threat and ambiguity. It is also important as an intrinsic motivation for behavior. The Church in general doesn't work with sticks and carrots (punishing and rewarding). As a normative organization it's much about voluntary commitment of people to organizational goals.

Identity and identification matter for the Dutch Catholic Church. Identity and identification facilitate functioning. More identification leads to more participation. Identification with the organization leads to more consistency in external communications.

Research questions

In order to be able to answer questions about better aligning employees, this thesis asks: With which level of the organization do employees identify most? What are the differences between employees in local-global identification? Is the answer to the question 'who are we' clear? And how does identification relate to (communicational) behavior of employees? The thesis sheds light on which level of the organization works best with which group, and can be put to use in church communications.

The Year of Faith

This thesis is written in the Year of Faith (2012-2013). The Year of Faith celebrates the 50th anniversary of the start of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which addressed relations between the Catholic Church and the modern world. Secularization, individualization, rationalism are 'setbacks' for the Church in the present day. Secularization leads to less Church participation, and to retrenchment in Parishes and Dioceses, and on a national level. Together with individualization and the rational-scientific paradigm it leads to less understanding ('religious analphabetism') and public support for the (teachings of the) Church and how people should live their lives, although there still is support for the Church when its people are socially active and doing good deeds.

The research

For practical reasons the data are collected from respondents in the Diocese of Breda. Except for the students for the priesthood and deaconate. In order to have a sufficiently large group they also come from other Dioceses. For practical reasons 'ordinary believers' are no part of this research.

The research focusses on:

Three groups of employees
1 Current Parish professionals: priests, deacons and pastoral workers
2 Future Parish professionals: students for the priesthood and deaconate
3 Parish board members (lay people)

Three organizational layers from local to global
1 Local Parishes
2 The Dutch Roman Catholic Church
3 a. The Vatican
   b. Pope Francis

Identification
1 Identification
2 Ambiguous identification
3 Disidentification
4 Construed image
   (Perceived External Prestige)

Communication behaviour
1 Task performance (communications)
2 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)
3 Church participation involvement

Multiple identities
1 Community-individual
2 Central-decentral / global-local
3 Clerical-non-clerical
4 Organization-evangelization
5 Incarnational-augustinian
6 Rational-emotional

The thesis presents a literature study on identity and identification. Projected identity was researched through looking at Church communications in the Year of Faith. Perceived identity was researched through 15 interviews. Then multiple identities were described. And finally a survey was sent to the three groups of employees. A total number 189 surveys were received.

Research findings

We have measured the organizational identification with different levels in the organization and have found that in general the students for the priesthood and the deaconate have a more central focus, while Parish board members, and also professionals, have at certain points a more local focus.

Parish board members really feel that their Parish is a unity (organizational identity strength). For them, and also for the professionals, the Central-Decentral identity traits (projected statements such as "Bishops and Pope being the keeper of tradition") score lowest of the six sub-themes. Together with the professionals

The students for the priesthood and the deaconate have a more central focus, while Parish board members, and also professionals, have at certain points a more local focus.

the Parish board members think that Vatican II is well implemented in their Parish. This illustrates a more local focus of the Parish board members, and professionals.

The students are the only group that feels that there is a sense of unity in the Vatican (organizational identity strength). From the identity traits, the subtheme Central-Decentral (all projected statements) comes second place for the students, with a relatively high score. Students are more susceptible to projected statements than the other two groups. While professionals and Parish board members think that Vatican II is well

implemented in their Parish, students believe that Vatican II is only well implemented in in the Vatican. This illustrates a more central focus of the students, who furthermore think opposite from Parish board members and professionals when it comes to ideological orientation, and regard themselves more conservative than the other two groups.

We have described multiple identities and have found no conflicts between the multiple identities. In general all identity traits score positive. We have seen that the respondents find the Community-individual identity traits most characteristic for the Church. We have found that there are

differences between the three groups respondents, but we have no indication that these differences lead to inaction, intraorganizational conflict, inconsistent action. We have found that there is a sense of unity in the organization: low organizational identity incongruence, positive organizational identity strength.

We have measured how identification relates to different kinds of behavior. We have found that organizational identification with Pope Francis was most often significant for communicational behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and Church participation involvement.

Managerial implications
The findings of this thesis give some indication of things that can be put to use in such a strategic program. Two points in particular: 1) the organizational identification with Pope Francis, 2) the Community-individual identity traits, that were found most characteristic by all three groups of respondents.

A communications strategy that integrates the two can focuss on building a community around Pope Francis, making people feel part of the community around the Pope, also showing how the poor and the needy are part of this community.

Thought leadership: Shaping novel points of view

Increasingly, organisations and individuals claim to be thought leaders, publishing ideas or opinions under a banner of thought leadership. Numerous corporate websites now link to thought leadership initiatives within the organisation and bloggers are quick to share their opinions - three steps to becoming a thought leader and five ways to enhance your thought leadership. While thought leadership looks to be gaining prominence, due to the many ways the term is applied, it is not always easy to distinguish thought leadership from the mere expression of an opinion. The true potential of effective thought leadership is often not realised.

John Smyth (1983) currently works at Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, in the Netherlands. In almost six years at Hanze UAS, John has worked in several communication functions. He played a fundamental role in setting up a joint master programme for six universities across Europe, under the Geert Hofstede Consortium. Working directly with the chair of the consortium, he managed both internal and external communication. John currently works for the international corporate communication and marketing team at Hanze UAS and is responsible for student recruitment and building strategic partnerships across several countries, including China, Colombia, Russia, the UK and Ukraine.

Studying at the University of Newcastle, in Australia, John graduated with a double major in public relations and journalism in 2006. His first job out of university was at Ogilvy Public Relations Australia, in Sydney, where he worked on several clients including Verizon Business and Citrix, before moving to the Netherlands.

John has a keen interest in the evolution of the communication profession and the changing nature of journalism. Studying the MSc. in Corporate Communication has underscored for him the importance of research-backed decision-making.

In simple terms, thought leadership can be defined as the process of promoting a unique perspective on a particular issue, that triggers the target audience to reframe their view of the issue in question, creating a change in behaviour, thinking and/or actions. Within thought leadership lies the potential to engage stakeholders, challenge assumptions, claim territory and build brand value.

Why do some thought leadership platforms take off while others fail? Narrowing down on the critical success factors that influence the success of a novel point of view (NPOV) will help organisations develop stronger thought leadership platforms, built on viewpoints that are understood, accepted and supported by internal and external stakeholders. There is more to a successful novel point of view than a great idea.

A framework is needed to identify the mechanisms that help shape successful novel points of view - hence the following research question:

WHICH MECHANISMS SHAPE SUCCESSFUL NOVEL POINTS OF VIEW?

Theoretical background and conceptual framework
The existing body of work on thought leadership confirmed that, to date, the majority of research has focused on defining the fundamentals of thought leadership, broadly setting the foundation for success and challenging organisations to consider the many factors involved. While both novel point of view and trust are believed to be key elements of successful thought leadership, little is known about what makes certain novel points of view successful.

To foreshadow my assumptions about the critical factors at play when shaping a successful NPOV, we developed a conceptual framework. The model assumes that several key factors play a part, including: (1) the NPOV must be linguistically framed in a persuasive manner, (2) the NPOV must connect to a greater purpose, (3) it must be novel but not too far removed from reality, (4) organisational culture must support change and, thus, minimise resistance, (5) the NPOV must be aligned with the organisation's identity, (6) the NPOV must be backed by in-depth market insight, and (7) the organisation must be able to identify future trends in order to predict potential opportunities.

This study highlights that shaping successful novel points of view takes considerable investment and should not be entered into lightly.

Methodology
To ensure useful data was collected, a purposive sample of 12 interviewees was chosen based on extensive experience and/or interest in thought leadership.

The interview guide was divided into three key areas, including (1) thought leadership defined, (2) the process followed to pursue thought leadership platforms and (3) successful mechanisms behind successful novel points of view.

Each interview was transcribed and all transcripts were read in full as one complete document. During further readings, each transcript was examined and coded under five categories, including: linguistic framing and visuals, organisational, psychological and contextual. Finally, the codes were examined to reveal emerging themes and their relationships.

All interview transcripts were re-read in search of emerging themes, looking for any themes that may only be evident after the initial reading and coding of the transcripts.

Findings
Several mechanisms must be taken into consideration when shaping novel points of view, including language and visual presentation factors, psychological factors, organisational factors and contextual factors. Senior management must play a central role.

Implications and conclusion
This research contributes to the limited body of work on thought leadership. In particular, this research has aimed to give insight into the mechanisms that shape successful novel points of view.

When shaping novel points of view it is recommended that the following points be taken into consideration:

→ **Language and visual presentation:** It is recommended that particular attention be paid to both linguistic and visual elements of a campaign.

→ **Greater purpose:** Attaching NPOVs to a greater purpose will help increase engagement, but, ultimately, it will depend on the nature of the thought leadership platform and its objectives.

→ **Novelty vs. reality:** Decision makers must have a clear understanding of the market and target audience to ensure the NPOV strikes the right balance between novelty and reality.

→ **Organisational identity:** An organisation's identity is a good starting place when shaping an NPOV but decision makers should be cautious of sticking too close to an organisation's identity if the NPOV is moving in the direction of desired identity.

→ **In-depth industry/market insight:** Decisions makers must know the industry. What are competitors doing? Where is the industry headed? Some industries may be more difficult than others when launching thought leadership platforms.

→ **Identifying future trends:** Decision makers should look to identify what is likely to shape the future when developing NPOVs.

→ **Leadership:** An NPOV should be driven by senior management to help drive it across the organisation and bring credibility to the platform. It is not purely a task for the communication department.

Before shaping novel points of view it is suggested that three points be met, including: (1) considerable research must be done to identify stakeholders, what competitors are doing/saying and where the market is headed, (2) the right people are needed to implement the programme and (3) enough resources must be put aside for a three-to-five-year investment.

Both academic and professional circles still have much to explore across the many facets of thought leadership. This study highlights that shaping successful novel points of view takes considerable investment and should not be entered into lightly. In order to establish a solid platform when shaping successful novel points of view, multiple factors must be taken into account. This thesis provides a framework to follow when shaping novel points of view, to help create and/or identify the ideal conditions needed to drive engagement and trigger stakeholders.

While thought leadership looks to be gaining prominence, due to the many ways the term is applied, it is not always easy to distinguish thought leadership from the mere expression of an opinion.

Language and leadership: the influence on employee engagement

Businesses that deliver exceptional business results year-on-year cite their ability to satisfy customers and their relationship with employees as the key drivers for their success (Brown et al., 2008). Becoming a peak performing organization means increasing the level of employee engagement. Maslach and Leiter (1997) define employee engagement as "energy, involvement and professional efficacy" (Maslach and Leiter, 1997 quoted in Bakker, 2009:3-4). This expands into work engagement, defined as "a state of vigor, dedication and absorption in one's work" (Schaufeli et al., 2002:74). Building employee engagement in organizations creates competitive advantage (Bakker, 2009).

Amy Stapleton is a communications professional with diverse international communications experience. For over a decade, she has worked at a range of public and private sector companies in the banking, pharmaceutical, IT, retail, building, agrochemical and advertising industries. Having worked across the communications spectrum, she considers herself a generalist, able to design strategies and tactics that target a variety of internal and external channels and audiences, producing great results.

Amy works well under pressure delivering results for clients. An experienced writer and editor, she understands the importance of corporate identity and the value of delivering communication with creative flair. A collaborative team player who enjoys building strong working relationships in cross-functional working environments, she is a proactive self-starter with strong interpersonal skills, high enthusiasm and motivation.

Originally from Wellington, New Zealand, Amy is currently based in Basel, Switzerland, working in the Global Corporate Affairs team of Syngenta, a Swiss multinational company. Studying at Erasmus University has been a privilege and a pleasure for her; she looks forward to using what she has learned in the years ahead, as she continues to build her career in communications.

To contact Amy, please visit her LinkedIn profile.

Communication plays a vital role in creating engaged employees. To build engagement, it is important that employees understand the link between their daily work and how it contributes to the organization's strategy and goals. It is the role of leaders at all levels of the organization to create this relationship by communicating with employees across the organization (Brown et al., 2008).

Leaders play a critical role in communication, not only in what is communicated, but very importantly, through the way they communicate. Communicating well helps people do their jobs more effectively - both rationally and emotionally - and deliver business results. Leadership language and communication act as a sensemaking mechanism that enables employee engagement. Sensemaking is the process by which people give meaning to experience (Weick, 1995). Language provides a context within which employees understand the organizational reality

and can orient their actions. Through language, leaders can use a range of characteristics to enhance sensemaking.

This thesis seeks to answer the following question: to what extent and how does leadership communication drive employee engagement? Prior research has focused on different types of sensemaking characteristics: that is, language tools that can influence people's sensemaking of an organization in a desirable direction. It is, however, less clear to what extent these language tools enhance employee sensemaking and, in turn, employee engagement. My research will discuss the most important sensemaking characteristics mentioned in the literature and hypothesize their impact on sensemaking and employee engagement.

Sensemaking characteristics

Four sensemaking characteristics are the independent variables for my research: Symbolism, Framing, Storytelling and Rhetoric. Symbolism is measured by two hypotheses: house style and events. Framing is measured by two hypotheses: opportunity focus and ascribing successes to internal factors. Storytelling is measured by one hypothesis. Rhetoric is measured by two hypotheses: values-based rhetoric and teleological rhetoric.

In addition to the independent variables, there are two moderating variables: Leadership authenticity and Charismatic leadership. The following research model demonstrates the hypothesized relationships between the variables and where they intersect.
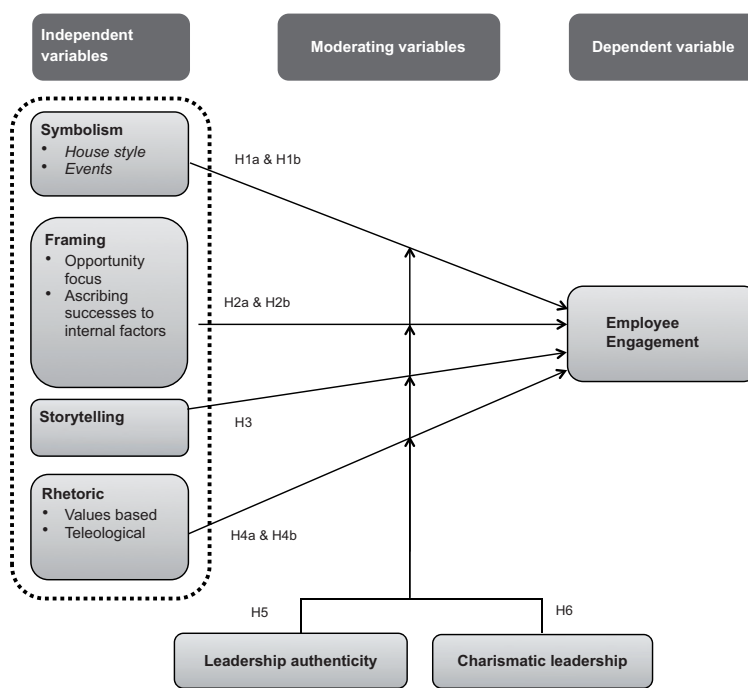
Methodology

A quantitative study was conducted to investigate how the sensemaking characteristics of leadership communication influence employee engagement. The research starts with the assumption that if an organization has leaders who put time and effort into their communication and use the sensemaking characteristics, they will have high employee engagement. To collect the needed data to test the hypotheses, a 47 item survey was designed to test the dependent, independent and moderating variables. All measurements were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The final survey was distributed via email and social media to approximately 260 people working in various organizations. 168 people completed the survey which represents a response rate of 67%. Some surveys were incomplete which reduced the total number available for the final analysis. This lowered the response rate to 53%; 132 surveys were used as the sample for the final analysis.

Communicating well helps people do their jobs more effectively - both rationally and emotionally - and deliver business results.

Results

My research found a positive relationship between three of the four independent variables - symbolism, framing and rhetoric - and the dependent variable employee engagement. The results showed that the relationship between the independent variable of storytelling and employee engagement was not statistically significant. Overall, these findings reinforce the role of leadership language in the internal communication process; the language of leaders matters because it helps employees make sense of their work environment. Their communication acts as a sensemaking mechanism that enables employee engagement.

Engaged employees work both harder and smarter (Lawler, 1992). The results show that leadership language is positively related to building engagement. In their communication, leaders must help employees understand the link between their daily work and how it contributes to the organization's strategy and goals (Brown et al., 2008). This will allow leaders to build peak performing organizations that achieve exceptional business results due, in part, to an engaged workforce. Given the results, it is recommended that to build the desired levels of engagement in their teams, leaders incorporate elements of symbolism, framing and rhetoric into their communication. To incorporate symbolism, leaders can ensure that they use the house style for all written communication. This builds credibility for their messages.

Events, such as team meetings and team building events, are important ways to build relationships and share and reinforce important messages. To incorporate framing, leaders can show employees the

> Given the results, it is recommended that to build the desired levels of engagement in their teams, leaders incorporate elements of symbolism, framing and rhetoric into their communication.

opportunities that are inherent in the work they are doing and how this contributes to the organization's purpose and goals. Communicating how their roles play a part in the organization's success, through praise and sharing success, will also help build engagement. To incorporate rhetoric, leaders can use teleological rhetoric to communicate the vision that the organization wants to achieve and show the role of their team within that. Values-based rhetoric can be used by leaders to provide context for company-wide, big-picture messages.

Conclusion

The research outlined in this thesis provides insight into the importance of the sensemaking characteristics of leadership language in building employee engagement in organizations.

As such, it contributes to the understanding that leadership communication does increase employee engagement. This relationship is driven by the sensemaking characteristics of leadership communication in the organization. The statistical analyses show that if leaders use the sensemaking characteristics of symbolism, framing and rhetoric in their communication, employees will feel higher levels of vigor, dedication and absorption in their work and therefore the organization will have higher employee engagement.

The findings also show that further consideration needs to be given to other variables that create sensemaking and impact leadership communication and employee engagement.

This paper concludes with the inference for future research to check, and possibly strengthen, the outcomes of this research.

The Power of Words
On the use of persuasive language in speeches by CEOs

Introduction

A speech made by an organisation's CEO is a powerful instrument, and one that is crucial to the organisation's success. But what makes a speech a good and a persuasive one? It is important that your organisation's CEO makes speeches that are as efficient and effective as possible, because you want to achieve the best possible results with that speech, and above all results that will also have a positive impact on your organisation. Indeed, information that is incorrect or misinterpreted could end up costing your company millions.

Main question

I refute that speeches are simply about the speaker's talent and charisma; great content is also an absolute must. I have therefore examined the following question: what makes a CEO's speech a persuasive speech? Once you know the answer and apply it well, you, as communication manager, can use it to ultimately manage the reputation of your organisation.

Case study

In this study, I have focused on language, and in particular the Dutch language, by looking at speeches made by CEOs. The speeches I used had to be about internal change processes taking place in an organisation, and they had to be intended for their own staff. I wanted to focus particularly on the persuasive language used in those speeches. How did the CEOs make their speeches persuasive? Which elements of the speech made it persuasive? And how did this come across to the audience, to the 'receivers'?

In his book, 'The Dynamics of Persuasion', Richard Perloff (Perloff, 2010) describes various studies in the field of persuasive

In the Master module ' Language and Reputation', we focused on the reputation of organisations. An organisation's reputation is of paramount importance. What is the best way to manage this reputation with respect to your organisation's primary stakeholders? How do you do this as effectively as possible?

The outside world keeps a watchful eye on you as an organisation and one of the ways it distinguishes itself is through your CEO's speeches.

language used in speeches. This includes elements such as speed of speech, powerful versus powerless speeches and language-intense speeches, but also figures of speech such as metaphors, contrasts and alliteration. Richard Perloff describes three categories into which persuasion within language use can be grouped: structure, content and language.

For this study, I collected 20 speeches made by Dutch CEOs for their own staff on the subject of internal change processes. The speeches were all quite recent, most having been made in 2013 en end 2012. Based on the analysis of speeches from the Netherlands' largest companies and organisations from the commercial sector,

government, semi-government and non-profit organisations, I can conclude that we in the Netherlands use mainly alliteration, triads, which involve a comparison or summing up of things in groups of three, and metaphors. Anecdotes and personal stories, however, are also used, enabling the CEO to show staff a more personal side of his/her character. The Dutch also use many emotionally-charged words, as well as information that proves their point adds power to their narrative.

Experts

I showed these research results to four professional speech writers who further highlighted my findings. The speech writers consider it important that all persua-

**LESS PERSUASIVE/
IMPACT ON STAFF:**

**Statistics and figures,
rhetorical questions**

**MORE PERSUASIVE/
MORE IMPACT:**

**Examples requiring imagery,
personal story, adjusting the
audience directly, first person,
variety in sentence rhythm,
key message, positively
charged words,
relevant anecdotes,
call to action**

**LESS PERSUASIVE/
LESS IMPACT:**

**Emotionally negatively
charged words, no call to
action for staff, no 'what's
in it for me?'**

**MORE PERSUASIVE/
LESS IMPACT:**

**Figures of speech such as
alliteration, triads, use of
metaphors**

sive speeches should include a key message. The audience must be able to remember and reproduce this message if asked at a later stage what the speech was about. That key message should be easy to find in the structure of the speech. The speech writers made use of varying sentence lengths, creating a kind of rhythm, a cadence, but also giving the speech a certain vitality. This helps enormously with regard to making the message persuasive. A persuasive message reaches the audience, certainly if the speaker has made the text entirely his own. The power of the use of associations, images and comparisons is that it allows the audience to come up with thoughts and ideas they had not considered beforehand. This often has a surprising effect on the receiver.

Powerful and powerless speeches
My follow-up research consisted of testing two types of speech, powerless and powerful speeches. I knew in theory which elements could make a speech powerful, and I knew which persuasive elements are regularly used in the Netherlands among CEOs in speeches for internal staff about internal change processes.

The powerful speech, called New York, was written in the first person. The CEO figured clearly in the narrative, and the speaker addressed the audience with rhetorical questions. The CEO addressed the audience literally and metaphorically with texts such as: 'In creating the new organisation, we need city guides like Dutch journalist and US correspondent Max Westerman. You are those guides. I need you, to get every one of you to the Statue of Liberty in a good, safe and orderly fashion.'
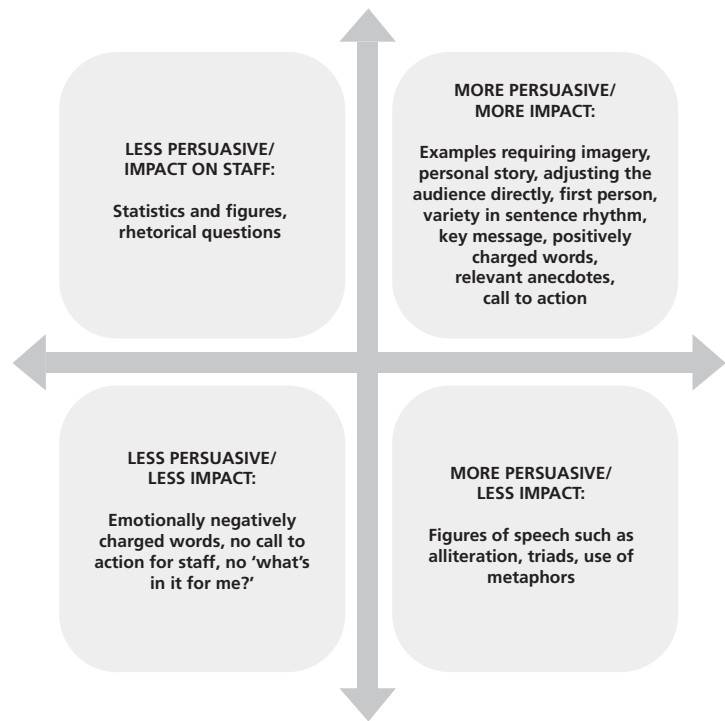
The positive, emotionally-charged words such as 'offering perspective, target scenario, dot on the horizon' ensured that the 'New York' speech was more convincing than the powerless, 'Request for Advice' speech. A little over half of the respondents said that the use of metaphors made speeches more persuasive, but that it was not the most important persuasive component in the speech.

Recommendations
When persuasive language is used in speeches, it is best to focus on examples using imagery, relevant personal stories and anecdotes, and positively-charged words that evoke power, imagery and the future. By writing the speech from the speaker's perspective, in this case the CEO, he or she appears highly interested and seems to take genuine responsibility for what is being said. Clearly varying the sentence length creates a kind of rhythm or cadence in the speech. Speeches addressed to the speaker's own staff, like those about internal change processes as used in my study, must include an obvious call to action. What does the CEO expect from his/her staff, and what action are they being called to take?

Imagery matrix
Furthermore, the Dutch are not particularly sensitive to rhetoric, such as appealing figures of speech. This is a very minor element used in speeches, and one that Dutch people are not used to. On the basis of my research analyses, the following matrix can be generated by comparing the less persuasive with the more persuasive elements, and, on the vertical axis, comparing less impact on staff against more impact on staff.

Follow-up research
In my opinion, useful follow-up research would include a greater focus on the receivers. What are their circumstances, and what is their frame of mind?

Moreover, if you were only to look at staff who actually work for the organisation (staff to whom the speech applies), you could also examine whether persuasive language works on people who are emotionally involved with regard to the message.

Viola Walsma-Wijnands

The positive, emotionally-charged words such as 'offering perspective, target scenario, dot on the horizon' ensured that the 'New York' speech was more convincing than the powerless, 'Request for Advice' speech.

VIOLA WALSMA-WIJNANDS

Viola Walsma-Wijnands (1970) is a communications professional with a strong background in retail and innovation. Viola is currently employed as manager Corporate communication at Syntens Innovation center. This organization helps entrepreneurs in The Netherlands to innovate and grow. Viola has over 18 years experience in communications, driven by the simple joy she finds in solving all kinds of issues in the field of corporate communication and PR. She started her career at retailer C1000 in Amersfoort, where she had the responsibility of the communication of smaller supermarket chains. Later she became the spokesman of this retailer.

Viola studied HBO Cultural and Social education in the Recreation, Tourism and Culture industry, with the specialization Policy, Marketing and Communication. Followed by additional courses in PR, communication, coaching, media training and advisory skills. The International Master of Corporate Communication was a wonderful experience in new insights. She found the study trip an honor to visit such large and interesting organizations.

violawijnands@rocketmail.com

Building trust in the transparency era: How hospitals try to acquire trust and legitimacy through communication

The necessity of trust and legitimacy in hospitals

During the last decade the insight into the achievements and the functioning of hospitals has increased. Due to the 2006 introduction of the mandatory requirement to make hospital care more transparent and to greater media attention to mistakes, hospitals can no longer rely on the image that all doctors and nurses are inherently good. More than ever do they need legitimacy for their existence. This research reveals how hospitals use communication in their attempt to acquire trust and obtain legitimacy.

INGE WEEL

Inge Weel (1972) is owner of Frederikson Communicatie, which she started in 2007 after having worked for a decade for large companies. As the world is always more complicated than it initially appears from a personal perspective, Inge was pleased that her entrepreneurship also gained her consultancy work for government institutions. Defining and maintaining a communication strategy in demanding situations is something she loves to do.

At the Ministry of Health, Wellbeing and Sport Inge gained knowledge of the Dutch health care system. It was here that she was communication advisor for the creation of the National Institute for Quality in Health Care and for the program Transparent Care. The latter offered assistance to health care professionals in making their quality of care transparent and it inspired Inge to do research on how transparency affects the communication of Dutch hospitals as part of her master's degree in Corporate Communication at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

Previously, in 1996, Inge finished her Master in Dutch Linguistics at the University of Amsterdam. Before that, she investigated how children use cognitive strategies in their writing processes. In 2006 she graduated as a Bachelor in Political Science at the University of Leiden. Inge lives in Den Haag with her husband and their two children.

Organisations can create trust at an individual level by showing their ability, benevolence and integrity (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995). This trust is the basis for acceptance which an organisation can attain if their actions meet the acceptance of their environment, if it is faithful to social norms and to expectations. (Suchman, 1995; Zimmerman en Zeitz, 2002; Deephouse en Carter, 2005). For public organisations legitimacy is of vital importance in order for the citizens to be willing to provide the necessary funds (Suchman, 1995; Zimmerman en Zeitz, 2002; Deephouse en Carter, 2005) - these days more than just a little important in care provision.

Twenty interviews and desk research
To be able to evaluate if hospitals' communication creates sufficient trust to acquire public legitimacy, I did qualitative research and desk research. Qualitative research was done by interviewing communication professionals in twenty general hospitals in the Netherlands. A general hospital provides patient care and tuition for future doctors and nurses. Of these twenty, twelve are 'topclinical' which means that they have special focus on tuition and innovation. Together, the twenty hospitals represent 24% of all general hospitals in the Netherlands.

The desk research supports the comments in the interviews, where possible with examples and specific data. To this purpose I have used, among others, the hospitals' press releases, their corporate magazines and their twitter accounts. Through their participation, interviewees and their hospitals can become vulnerable. They therefore participated to the interviews anonymously. I want

Reaction to an issue is a perfect opportunity to reduce anxiety in the target group and to show that a hospital takes the outside world seriously.

to prevent, as much as possible, that they provide just socially acceptable answers.

Conclusions
The research indicates three conclusions. The first is that hospitals employ five communication strategies to influence the trust among citizens. These are 1) exposure of professionalism, 2) showcasing satisfied patients, 3) making expertise available, 4) the creation of warmth and dedication and 5) exposure of the world inside.

The second conclusion is that hospitals spend most attention on the trust factors ability and benevolence of Mayer, Davis en Schoorman's trust model. Communication departments can have different thoughts on which of the following to emphasize to their target groups: benevolence of the hospital, expressing aspects such as patient focus, hospitality and approachability, or its ability.

The third conclusion is that hospitals hardly employ a communication strategy that actively answers dubious, sector wide issues, although it are these issues that get so many media attention. They surround themselves in silence when delicate aspects become newsworthy and in public debate such as fraudulent practices in declarations of treatment to health insurers. By doing so, hospitals miss an opportunity to adjust their perceived integrity.

Suggestions for further research
Qualitative research with the public can show if the hospitals' communication strategies actually result in more trust. It would give insight into how perceptions of ability, benevolence and integrity in the daily practices of hospitals are established. The trust model of Mayer, Davis en Schoorman can be enriched by researching what conditions are needed for the communication strategies. Would the exposure of the world inside apply in an equally much criticised sector such as banking?

Such research can establish if the strategies in other sectors apply more, less or not at all.

Recommendations for hospitals
This research indicates that hospitals especially weigh up the ability and the benevolence. There are two ways in which hospitals can also display their integrity more in order to increase trust and legitimacy.

Firstly, hospitals should be more visible in showing their management of dubious sector wide issues. It is understandable that the desire to react is lower where the rank table score is low and where there is negative news more than where successes are achieved, but Mayer, Davis en Schoorman indicate that consistency is an important driver in acquiring integrity. Reaction to an issue is a perfect opportunity to reduce anxiety in the target group and to show that a hospital takes the outside world seriously.

Secondly, hospitals ought to normalise the central role of the patient. Normalisation of this role is necessary to coincide with the social norm that if people wish to use public services, it is expected that they have a proactive approach. In their communication, hospitals should not so much talk of patient central care, but care in which the treatment relationship and everyone's responsibilities are central.

The positioning of an equal relationship between patient and doctor might well become the next communications' phase in the transparency era.

In their communication, hospitals should not so much talk of patient central care, but care in which the treatment relationship and everyone's responsibilities are central.

Communication Strategy in Social Media for B2b Businesses

Social media is seen by many practitioners as both a great opportunity and a great challenge for corporate communication, especially for B2B companies. Many consider social media as the Holy Grail, that will solve all corporate problems, communications related or not. Social media provides an opportunity to establish relationships with stakeholders, getting into back-and-forth dialogues (two-way communication), increase brand recognition and revenue, improve customer advocacy and their ability to generate consumer insights, and also reduce market research costs.

ALSU ZIANSHINA

Associate Director, Head of marketing and corporate communications department Cushman & Wakefield of Russia

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES
Alsu Zianshina is responsible for internal and external marketing communications of Cushman & Wakefield, Russia, including PR, social media, event management, exhibition activities and advertising campaigns. She works closely with Cushman & Wakefield headquarters to insure brand consistency and support of global strategy and stratigcly oversights marketing communication activities of Russian office.

WORK EXPERIENCE
Alsu has joined Cushman & Wakefield in 2010 and was promoted to Associate Director and Head of Marketing and Corporate Communication Depatment in 2013. Before she was heading PR department of Magazin Magazinov. Alsu has more 10 years experience in marketing communications with residential and commercial real estate.

EDUCATION, MEMBERSHIPS AND AWARDS
Alsu has degree in Advertising and Marketing of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of MFA of Russia. Cushman & Wakefield Best Support Team Member in 2011. One of TOP 20 real estate PR specialists in 2012, 2008 ratings. Cushman & Wakefield Director Awards in 2010

At the same time, social media is still a "black box" for many practitioners, who are facing difficulties in finding a business case that justifies investments in social media and recognize the threats such as spreading of criticism and difficulty in control of brand image. Social media is especially challenging to B2B companies, that only recently began to explore effective ways to engage with social media.

This thesis provides a snapshot of social media activity of B2B companies working in the business consulting sphere - Goldman Sachs Group, McKinsey&Co, Ernst & Young, Deloitte, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers. During research, the current strategy of surveyed companies was assessed to answer the following questions that are raised during the normal course of work:

➔ What goals are companies are trying to achieve in social media? What topic or competitive advantage are they trying to promote? Is it thought leadership, customer care, reputation, or brand recognition?

➔ What is the role of the company leader (CEO) in different social media channels?

➔ What social media channels do the companies use and are they targeted at different audiences?

➔ What tactics do they use?

➔ Do companies use social media to differentiate themselves from their competitors?

The thought leadership comments seem to attract a steady and significant stream of traffic and interest in the Company's different social media channels.

The research showed that B2B companies do engage social media in every aspect of communication. They identify and integrate new social media tools and have dedicated in-house teams to support social media activity. There is still a long way to go before professional service firms stop considering social media as simply a communication tool, and rather see fundamental business value in it.

The conducted analysis showed that the social media activities of all companies are somewhat similar to each other. They utilize social media primarily as another communication channel to cascade their corporate message. Twitter is the most frequently used channel, followed by Facebook, in terms of activity volume. Although all six companies utilize LinkedIn, they tend to utilize it less frequently than other mediums at the

moment (particularly Twitter - which tends to be the most heavily utilized channel, at least in terms of pure posting volume on a broad range of subjects).

Thought leadership is the key "selling" point for most professional services, and the providing companies. The thought leadership comments seem to attract a steady and significant stream of traffic and interest in the Company's different social media channels.

The second most popular subject is social responsibility. Companies do pay special attention to providing stakeholders and the general audience with extra information about social responsibility programs. But the ways companies address their respective CSR agendas is very different. Generally, some companies are more (or less) responsive to news events or outside

factors and are not focusing on a single agenda or using that agenda as a marketing tool for the Company.

HR issues are another important topic for B2B companies. In their HR message, the companies target both current employees and new entries into the workforce - although the tools used for each segment may be different. In the long-run, social media activity might help build employee alignment, but more frequently, it is used for potential employee recruitment.

Most of the posts and tweets have direct links to the Company's corporate website, which is quite understandable – social media is used to drive traffic to the website. But, the thesis results also raised questions about if the quality of the page truly generates additional traffic for the company or if traffic is generated by overall brand awareness.

In terms of promoting particular people, most companies do not seem to have an explicit policy. Some companies have selected other members of the senior management team (non-CEOs) to serve as the more active "front" person for these campaigns. This situation, however, might change very quickly as the majority of C-level executives come to recognize the role that social media can play in customer engagement, branding, and innovation.

The research showed that marketing still dominates professional service companies' response to social media channels. Companies do not engage with their intended audiences. They still use social media as a one-way communication channel. This is supported by the fact that for all of the companies incorporated in this analysis the level of re-tweets or shares are surprisingly low (and are even lower for some of the considered companies). The companies do not seem to get involved in communications, though attempts have been made to do so. This means that the audience is not engaged with what the company is trying to convey via social media.

There also seems to be a lack of strategy in how companies tackle different channels and their potentially diverse audience. The analysis indicated that only a few of the B2B companies attempted to tailor their message to each particular channel. Most use platforms that allow posting one message on each channel. On the one hand, this is time effective. However, on the other hand, it decreases the efficiency and impact of each individual posting.

Although social media is actively used by B2B companies, the real understanding of power, advantages and disadvantages is only now beginning to form. Social media dramatically changed the way people interact with each other and will change in future the way companies operate. This thesis showed that B2B companies are still on the early stage of using opportunities and addressing questions that rise with usage of social media. Social media could bring down the wall between business and other organizations. The question is are B2B companies prepared to take this challenge?

Companies do not engage with their intended audiences. They still use social media as a one-way communication channel.

Thesis coaches

DR. GUIDO A.J.M. BERENS

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

DR. MIGNON D. VAN HALDEREN

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

PROF. DR. CEES B.M. VAN RIEL

Cees B.M. van Riel (1951) is professor of Corporate Communication at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He is director and founding father of the Master of Science in Corporate Communication programme (MSc degree programme) at the same business school. Further he is the co-founder of the Reputation Institute (www.reputationinstitute.com) in New York. In 2011 Cees van Riel has received the Pathfinder Award, the highest academic 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) and Essentials of Corporate Communication (2006), The Alignment Factor (2012).

Master of Science in Corporate Communication

The Programme consists of four Building Blocks

PROGRAMME CURRICULUM

Part I begins in January and introduces the Foundations of Corporate Communication.

Part II offers a wide range of Advanced Elective Courses in which participants have the opportunity to choose a further specialisation in a specific area of Corporate Communication.

Part III is an international exchange trip to a cosmopolitan city, such as New York.

Part IV involves writing a thesis in which participants apply their acquired skills. Two prizes are awarded each year. The Shell Netherlands Stimulation Award for Excellence in Corporate Communication is awarded for the best thesis, and the Andreas Award is presented for the most innovative thesis.

PART ONE – FOUNDATIONS OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Part I is delivered during a four-day session in January. It focuses on the latest developments, insights and models in corporate communication and business administration, and becomes the base for the rest of the programme. The first part covers the following subjects:

➜ Trends in reputation management, branding, positioning;
➜ Organisational identity, stakeholder analysis, strategic management theory;
➜ Research-based solutions for managing corporate communication;
➜ Workshops on applying competitive analysis, academic models and co-ordination mechanisms.

Successful completion of Part I, Foundations of Corporate Communication is required to obtain the Master of Science in Corporate Communication degree. Alternatively, RSM's Corporate Communication Executive Summer Course, listed in RSM's Executive Education courses on www.rsm.nl/summercourse, is interchangeable for Part I.

PART TWO – ADVANCED ELECTIVE COURSES

Each Advanced Elective Course (AEC) takes an in-depth look at one aspect of corporate communication from a business administration perspective. Each course starts with a day of lectures on the latest academic research and insights. They are followed by two days of applied sessions which train participants in the application of this knowledge in the day-to-day business environment. After these three-day courses, you will complete an assignment at home, based on selected academic literature. Day sessions are from 9:30am to 5:30pm and include lunch.

Participants must take a minimum of six AECs in order to be eligible for the RSM Master of Science in Corporate Communication degree. Each AEC is taught by expert consultants and lecturers from prestigious schools and universities such as Erasmus University Rotterdam, INSEAD (France), Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), Bocconi University (Italy) and the Stern School of Business (New York).

AECs are taught from February until June, and from September until December. If participants show particular interest in a specific subject, it may be possible for RSM's Centre of Expertise, the Corporate Communication Centre, to organise an AEC dedicated to it.

PART THREE – INTERNATIONAL STUDY TRIP

This international immersion experience is central to the programme and takes place each spring. The one-week trip will take you to an exciting city such as New York, Madrid or Vancouver for an intense programme which includes lectures by renowned faculty from local academic institutions and visits to well-known companies where you will discover and debate their corporate communication challenges. The exchange is hard work but a lot of fun, and will allow you to cement the friendships you have built with fellow participants during the programme. On your return, you will write a group paper that integrates the insights gained from the lectures and visits.

PART FOUR – MASTER THESIS

All participants are expected to write a master thesis to demonstrate their analytical ability and accumulated knowledge. The thesis is assessed and evaluated according to the same standards as the master theses of full-time MBA students. Your thesis will focus on a practical corporate communication issue in a real-life setting. Participants often choose to research a problem within their own organisation. Past subjects have included brand leadership, corporate stories, effective communication strategies, and the use and abuse of propaganda.