ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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An Introduction to the
Proceedings of the CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2012

Transformation and the Corporate Communication Profession

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

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

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

Ethics

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

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

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

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

Technology and the Social Network

The transformational impact of social media and Web 2.0 requires corporations to cultivate media and technology expertise. Successful corporations adapt to this rapidly changing technological, mediated, and ethical environment. Sustainable corporations focus on information relevant to
their success, and on being thought leaders in their business sectors through a tenacious pursuit of intellectual competence in the field. The complexity of operating in a multinational business environment with numerous constituencies also calls for professional expertise and familiarity with research tools and techniques.

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

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

**Political Opportunities and Risks Within and Across Borders**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Communication executives continue to see their primary role as “counsel to the CEO” and “manager of the company’s reputation.” Reputation management continues to grow in importance and in budget allocation. Strategic communication counsel has been cited as the primary role for corporate communication offices since the first CCI Study more than a decade ago. Reputation management requires a strategic partnership with the CEO.
Corporate communication’s responsibility for the management of Investor Relations has dramatically decreased. It is the lowest responsibility for the management of the IR function (15.7%) and budget (7.8%) since the first CCI Study and this reflects corporate uncertainty. However, corporate communications is overwhelmingly engaged with the Annual Report function (70.6%) and budget (60.8%). Communication with shareholders, the capital markets, and other stakeholders during a weak economy remains essential in maintaining positive relationships. Such uncertainty offers an opportunity to develop and communicate strategic understanding of the volatile business environment.

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

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

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

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

These findings offer a clear picture of the dramatic transformation of the corporate communication profession over the last four to five years as a result of the three powerful forces...
globalization, web 2.0, the networked enterprise (corporate business model) -- that have transformed the principles and practices governing the relationship between the corporation and its stakeholders:

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

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

The CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2012

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

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

The CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2012 is intended to:

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

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

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

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

Keywords: Philippines, Annual reports, Corporate personification, Television, Critical discourse analysis
Between Global and Glocal

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

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

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

The Use of Social Media by Public Relations Agencies in Nigeria

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

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

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

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

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

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

Keywords: Corporate communication, Public relations, Social media, Communication management, Strategic communication
Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) to Work
Does it Result in Increased Employee Productivity?

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

Keywords: BYOD, Employee productivity, Smartphones, Tablet computers

Paper type: General review
Building a Conceptual Framework in Image Reinvention
A Case Study of SWISS, Switzerland’s National Airline

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

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

Keywords: Inoculation Theory, Crisis communication, Persuasion, Corporate communication.
A Case Study of Corporate Public Relations in China
Will China Follow the Same Path As Other Industrialized Nations?

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

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

The authors explored public relations activities in China through a series of qualitative interviews with corporate public relations professionals with first-hand knowledge of China. Following these interviews, the authors developed a model of public relations to forecast China’s path as an emerging public relations presence.
Characteristics of the Economically-Successful Yet Often Ignored Middle Market

Implications for Corporate Communication

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paper type: General review
Communicating Change in Public Organizations

The Discursive Construction of Managerial Legitimization

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paper type: Research.
Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility within the Organisation

Perceptions of Internal Stakeholders

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

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

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

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

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

**Stream:** Corporate responsibility

**Paper type:** Research
Communication Is Not a Two Way Street
Flattening the Mental Speed Bumps on the Road to Effective Communication

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

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

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

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

The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place. ~George Bernard Shaw
Corporate Communication and PR Practice in South East Asia
Seeing the World through Local Eyes – Selected Research Findings and Conclusions

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

A Case Study

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

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

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

This paper will trace the historical shifts that marked IBM's move from a corporation whose CSR was a discretionary gesture of its CEO to its current, variegated status within the larger structure and functions, within IBM the mega-corporation. It will explore if and how these changes have affected the corporation itself, in terms of corporate communication's involvement in the programs themselves, as necessary to sustain the CSR arm, and through generating publicity about them. In addition, how are decisions about CSR programs made and what, if any roles, do corporate leadership and employees play in that process? What kinds of communication has been necessary, given the company's shift in emphasis from "private" philanthropy to corporate citizenship as a company imperative and as a mandated but largely self-directed area of employee engagement? Finally, the paper will explore the extent to which IBM, as a global technologies innovator, has influenced CSR programs in its own industry and in others.
Despite the fact that there appears to be at least one point in time during which the company's business choices may have been, in retrospect, questionable, Mr. Watson's overarching legacy of concern for others has been operationalized into a highly-targeted set of community-and-educationally-centered CSR programs. These initiatives warrant closer examination, as the technology and talent involved in them may serve as models for the non-profit sector and other corporations. Non-profit executives present at Litow's lecture intimated that IBM's programs were both significant sources of potential corporate funding for them and also models in terms of researching, planning, and implementing community-based programs. This modeling may also involve sharing knowledge about the programs themselves, including the role that effective corporate communication plays in planning and implementing CSR initiatives. For these reasons, if not for the others mentioned here, IBM represents an important case study.
Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in Hong Kong 2011-12

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nature, Characteristics and Implications for the Organization

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

The Norway Attacks on 22 July 2011

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

Illustrative Examples of Interactional Problems in Raising a Crisis

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

Keywords: Hidden crisis, Crisis communication, Discourse analyses, Interaction, Crisis entrepreneurs
CSR Initiatives of Private Sector Companies in Turkey

Main Approaches, Issues and Motivations

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become one of the most important agenda for private enterprises in Turkey in the last decades. The aim of this paper is to examine CSR initiatives (programs, activities, and projects) of public sector companies in Turkey by focusing on main approaches, themes, motivations, stakeholder dialogue, and engagement. With this purpose, I analyzed the corporate web sites of 22 companies to seek information on CSR and identified 43 CSR projects still in place at the time this research was conducted. Findings of the study revealed that private sector companies have some shortcomings to sustain multidimensionality in CSR conceptualizations and a comprehensive approach to CSR initiatives.
Corporate social responsibility (CSR), marketing communication and cause related-marketing (CRM) are placed under pressure by new market characteristics. Markets are characterized by cynicism and skepticism as consumers question organizational motivation for and commitment to CRM and CSR initiatives. Consequently, organizations are challenged to rethink how their social responsibility engages their markets. Based on an analysis of the Pepsi Refresh Project, the purpose of this paper is to address and discuss an emerging CRM practice which re-conceptualizes the interrelations between company, consumer and cause. The new practice, moreover, re-defines the notion of CRM from brand-driven to community-driven, and from an overt to a covert marketing strategy. In a marketing communication perspective, CSR becomes a joint value- and identity constructing practice that transforms consumer skepticism and cynicism into brand involvement and community commitment. Our paper thus contributes with insight into new developments within CRM practice.

**Keywords:** Cause-related marketing, Corporate social responsibility, Marketing communication, Consumer cynicism and skepticism, Community
Developing Internal Crisis Communication

New Practices of Communication Professionals

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The primary purpose of this empirical paper is to discuss and clarify the role of communication professionals in relation to internal aspects of crisis communication. Crisis management is often considered as an area where communication professionals have influence and can prove their value for the organization. Even so, we have found that the role of communication professionals is still strongly associated with media relations and text production in the acute crisis phase. In this paper, we try to develop what it means to take a managerial role and how to work more strategically with internal crisis communication. The paper is based on 20 interviews with communication professionals, managers, and employees within Skåne University Hospital in Sweden.

Keywords: Communication professionals, Communication roles, Internal communication, Crisis management.
Dialogue Strategies via Social Networks and Organizational Performance

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This study aims to examine social media dialogue strategies employed by 30 of the largest international companies, and to evaluate the relationship between dialogue strategies and organizational financial performances. The research uses a mixed-method approach by combining statistical analysis, based on a specific coding procedure, and conversation analysis (Zemel, Xhafa, & Cakir, 2009). Online dialogue strategies have been established within management and organizational studies. Each strategy has been operationalized through specific indicators and will be tested through conversational analysis methodology. The research appraises the social media usage to sustain dialogic organization-public relationships. Additionally, common patterns can be identified between high-performance organizations and dialogue strategies. The study provides valuable insights concerning the conceptualization of dialogue as a managerial process, which can be run differently by organizations. This paper provides a practical tool to approach online dialogue strategically according to organizational aims and context.

Keywords: Web 2.0; Social media; Online dialogue; Dialogue strategies.
Differences in Perceived Effectiveness of Upward Dissent Strategies between Employees and Managers

Evidence from Singapore

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Effectively communicating dissent in the workplace is important for successful internal communication. Previous literature on organizational dissent has primarily identified different upward dissent strategies and compared the perceived competencies of these strategies only through employees’ self-reports. This study, however, compares the perceived effectiveness of upward dissent strategies from both managers’ and employees’ point of view in a Singaporean context. We conducted a survey among managers and employees to investigate whether these two groups perceived the effectiveness of dissent strategies differently. Through a scenario-based questionnaire, we asked participants to rate how each dissent strategy would bring about a specific desired outcome in various scenarios. While managers and employees rated factual appeal and presentation of solution as effective dissent strategies in different scenarios, both groups consistently rated the threat of resignation as the weakest strategy. Overall, managers rated all dissent strategies higher than employees did, which suggests that management seemed to take employees’ dissent seriously. These findings provide evidence for organizations to facilitate their employees’ dissent in internal communication.

Keywords: Dissent, Employee feedback, Internal communication

Paper type: Empirical research
Do Internal Communication Efforts Aimed to Generate Trust Always Produce Employee Engagement

A Research Study at Micron Technology Italy

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Purpose: to investigate the relationship between employee trust towards the company and their commitment to it. For this reason, this study questioned if certain levels of trust presented in each department at Micron Technology Italy corresponded to the same high levels of commitment.

Approach: a survey involving 892 employees at Micron Technology Italia, according to the “Casual relationships model between organizational properties” (Bolognini, 2003) and the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

Findings: the research findings show that for departments where trust values are below 6.8, the commitment level follows the trust value: there is a positive relation between these two factors. However, departments where employee trust reaches values higher than 6.8, commitment does not correspond with the same high trust values. The system tends to reach a “satisfaction point”.

Research Implications: the results are only partially coherent with previous studies. Further research is needed to determine whether these reports hold true under different situations/companies.

Practical Implications: internal communication managers should reflect about communication strategies aimed to generate trust as commitment does not seem to be continuously increasing. After a certain point it is not cost-effective for the company to implement communication strategies aimed at increasing employee trust in a non-targeted way. The need for customized communication strategies emerges as does the importance of understanding internal communication as integrated with other human resource management levers.

Keywords: Commitment, Trust, Internal communication

Paper type: Case study/research
The Dynamic Interplay of Visual and Textual Identification Strategies in a Corporate Context
A Multimodal Analysis of Grundfos Employees’ Magazines

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This paper explores how corporate identity is communicated through texts and images in Grundfos employees’ magazines.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary methodological framework related to organizational identification theory and social semiotics, it proposes a multimodal analysis model through which several identification strategies are explored at the level of each semiotic mode and at the level of the modes’ interplay. The paper explains how corporate identity is communicated in accordance with the potential and constraints of texts and images. It claims that by exploring how these semiotic modes reinforce, complement or subvert each other, the identification strategies can be more thoroughly addressed.

This paper expands the existing research work by examining the semiotic modes’ complex interconnectivity and functional differentiation in corporate identity communication, extending the usual textual focus to a multimodal one. Shedding light on how the multimodal interplay contributes to communicate corporate identity, this model can be employed by communicators in order to nuance and improve their communicative practice.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Identification strategies, Semiotic modes, Multimodal interplay
Framing Press Releases: An Analysis of the Use of Topics in Crisis Communication

Examples from a Large-scaled Crisis Management Exercise

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The aim of this study is to answer the question: “How do press releases in crisis situations communicate to different audiences?” ‘Topics of crisis’ are studied through text analysis using a rhetorical approach and focusing on the topics of the texts.

Empirically, this study focuses on press releases produced during a large-scale crisis management exercise in Sweden involving a nuclear power plant. One finding is that the press releases could be categorized into three themes, each with different aims: those that focused on the crisis, those regarding the handling of the crisis, and those with a direct focus on the public (such as exhortations and local information). With its qualitative approach, this study contributes to the field of crisis communication by showing how the use of different topics in press releases can frame a crisis. To crisis communicators it gives examples on how the press release can address different audiences.

**Keywords:** Rhetoric, Crisis communication, Press release

**Paper type:** Research
Google Doodles As Corporate Communication
An Exploration of Extrinsic and Inter-media Agenda Setting

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Through its Doodles, Google highlights ideas, personalities and events on its home page. Doodles, once clicked, reveal search results for their topics, which, because of Google’s primacy as a search engine, get extensive traffic and attention. Though there are no criteria about which topics get the Doodle treatment, patterns among the Doodles can be surfaced, as is done in this study. This research identifies what Doodles communicate about Google as a corporeal entity and how this framing extends to the print new media. Guided by agenda setting theory, this content analysis covers Google Doodles and the attendant print news media coverage about them in 2011 using the Press Display database. Contrary to popular estimation, correlation between the patterns across Doodles and the nature of print coverage about them is limited. Findings thus inform inter-media agenda-setting from an online non-news media outlet to traditional print media.

Keywords: Agenda-setting, Inter-media agenda-setting, Internet, Media agenda building
A Holistic Corporate Identity Communication Process

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Purpose of paper: This paper seeks to address the holistic corporate identity communications process. Specifically, it aims to examine the meaning of informal corporate identity and the process through which this phenomenon develops. It examines the nature of corporate identity when an informal corporate identity and the formal lines of corporate identity are combined and how this results in an aligned or misaligned corporate identity system. Similarly, this study also seeks to highlight the risks inherent in the exhibition of a misaligned corporate identity and how they can be managed.

Design/method/approach: A thorough review of theoretical literature involving a conceptual and analytical framework of the meaning of informal corporate identity and its process of development together with the outcomes of integrating formal corporate identity with informal corporate identity communication were drawn. A review of literature incorporating the risks associated with the development of a misaligned corporate identity in business organizations was also highlighted and conceptualized. Importantly, two diagrammatic models highlighting how the informal corporate identity develops and the stage-by-stage processes through which the total corporate identity communications process works were drawn and established.

Findings: A definition, which underscores the role of employee behavior as a critical factor in the meaning of informal corporate identity was developed. A six-stage development process for informal corporate identity includes (1) corporate personality appraisal; (2) appraisal melding and positioning; (3) communications; (4) assimilation of corporate personality and corporate identity; (5) informal expression of corporate personality and corporate identity and (6) development of a corporate image. A similar model highlighting how a total corporate communications process works was advanced. The potential risks resulting from the development of a misaligned corporate identity were identified. Similarly a three point advisory guide of how these risks can be curtailed or managed was put forward. These include a coercive, radical management and soft (mindset) management approach.

Theoretical implication: Existing literature on corporate identity communications process has focused mainly on the formal aspects of corporate identity. There is little or no literature addressing the concept of informal corporate identity and its effect on the total corporate identity communications process. This paper attempts to fill this gap. This study will add to the existing literature of corporate identity and create a better, in-depth understanding of this phenomenon.
**Practical implications:** The development of a conceptual definition and management process of informal corporate identity will provide managers with an understanding of how corporate identity communications can be better managed.

**Limitation of study and future research direction:** This is a conceptual study. There is a lack of empirical evidence to support the arguments presented in this study. The absence of an empirical analysis, presents an opportunity for future research.

**Originality and value of paper:** This paper provides an original contribution towards the field of corporate identity by providing insight into how informal corporate identity expressed through employee behavior can derail the total corporate identity communications process. Insights into this process allow managers to circumvent a possible derailment in the total corporate identity communications process by developing preventive measures that will avert such problems. A work of this nature is highly limited within the literature and it therefore makes this study unique, useful and original in all ramifications.

**Type of paper:** Conceptual

**Keywords:** Corporate identity, Corporate communications, Informal corporate identity.
The Impact of New Media on Public Relations

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Every once in a long while, the times and technology significantly impact the way that people receive and distribute news. The 20th century brought television, radio, and the Internet. Just as these media channels defined their times, so the rise of new media will also define the 21st century. In modern society, all public relations practitioners are confronted with a startling series of new communications channels and struggle with the impact of new media. This “new media” gives rise to a new style of marketing that is characterized by conversation and community. Internet-based social media tools include blogs (WordPress); podcasts; online video (YouTube); and social networks like Facebook, which is the most widely used, free-access social networking site and now has 400 million users worldwide; and MySpace (www.myspace.com), which has about 200 million users. The Internet affords a particular chance for public relations practitioners to gain information, monitor the public’s opinion, and directly enter into dialogue with the public about various issues. This indicates that public relations practitioners need to realize the importance of the mainstream, new media in the dissemination of information.

This paper aims to draw attention to the rising influence of new media on the process of public relations, and to discuss what extent the media influences the publics. The paper will address three areas: the first discusses what “new media” is, and how it differs from traditional media; the second part focuses on new media’s impact on current conventional thinking in public relations; finally, I will discuss how new media affects the public.
Implementation of the Project Management Office Within Petrobras' Corporate Communications Department – Brazil

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Our case describes the structuring process for integrated project management, implemented within Petrobras' Corporate Communications Department through assisted operationalization by the Project Management Office (PMO), and how it has contributed to spreading the project management culture throughout Petrobras's Corporate Communications area. The Project Management Office methodology was based on the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) approach, which was developed by the Project Management Institute (PMI®).

Keywords: Organizational change, Integrated process management, Management culture
An “Inside-Outside” Perspective on Corporate Branding
A Systematic Analysis of the Role of Communication

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Purpose: Corporate branding (CB) academic and managerial literature appears varied and heterogeneous. Our paper is aimed, first, at exploring and interpreting the semantic links between CB and strategic intangible assets such as corporate culture, identity, image and reputation; second, at highlighting the role communication plays in CB efforts.

Approach: This study develops a systematic analysis of the current academic and managerial debate on CB through a software-assisted content analysis.

Findings: CB appears as a crucial crossroad between the “inside” and “outside” of a company acting as a “bridge” among key intangible assets. CB emerges as a managerial philosophy and a communication-based process capable of strengthening and spreading corporate culture, identity, image and reputation. It also emerges as an “inside-outside” interface between the company and its stakeholders.

Research implications: Thematic and comparative analysis of literature corpus sub-sets on CB allows the systematic exploration of significant relationships among crucial themes related to CB and communication.

Practical implications: The paper advances the knowledge on CB and provides guidelines for CB strategy design and implementation highlighting an effective use of corporate communication.

Keywords: Corporate branding; Corporate brand; Communication; Corporate culture; Corporate identity; Corporate image; Corporate reputation
Insights on CSR Strategy Influence
Who, What and How

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A given characteristic of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs is that they reflect stakeholder expectations and preferences for corporate behavior. This study examines the process of developing CSR strategy, focusing on who and what influences this strategy, and whether the process reflects traditional issues management, or the presumably more enlightened practice of stakeholder engagement.

Answers are based on an in-depth analysis of interviews with CSR managers from 16 industry-leading, Danish companies.

Results indicate that although there is a wide range of influencers, customers and company managers have a relatively strong influence on strategy. Also, not all influencers are stakeholders per se, as networks and consultants also have influence. CSR managers tend to adopt an issues management approach; they are keener on gaining insight into potential CSR issues than on forming relationships in the strategy-making process.

If stakeholder engagement is indeed a modern managerial ideal, these findings point to the need for more awareness of its benefits, or greater commitment to practice it. This study, however, suggests that issues management still has much to offer practitioners, and therefore should continue to receive attention in the CSR strategy literature.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility; Stakeholder management; Stakeholder engagement; Issues management

Paper Type: Research
Internal Communication

Communication Strategies As a Tool for Mediation - A French Study

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“Strategy” is a word that has escaped from its military background and has been adopted at all levels of organizations. Through our study of a large industrial group, we demonstrate how internal communication can be conceptualized through a framework of military strategy. We conducted a qualitative survey to measure the perception of the company’s internal communication circuit and communication tools. We also set up a mediation strategy to solve malfunctions, such as compartmentalization and lack of involvement. We defined the issues of mediation within the organization and determined employees’ expectations. Finally, we defined a strategy known as "staking" that corresponds to the organization of a network of internal relay to internally de-multiply communication tasks. This involves everybody in the company's strategy and generates real cohesion. Following this research, we can distinguish a methodology that resolves recurrent problems of internal communication.
Internal Communication Crisis and its Impact on an Organization’s Performance

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The aim of this research is to study whether and how internal communication inefficiency can lead to an organizational crisis. An answer to this question was found through the study of previous empirical research on internal communication and organizational crisis. For the purpose of this paper, a case study of one particular organizational crisis was carried out by applying a combined research methodology – in-depth interviews and a survey. As a result of a detailed analysis of theory and a study of a case, a new concept – “internal communication crisis” – was coined in the master’s thesis from which this paper is derived. The study established that an internal communication crisis is a result of asymmetrical formal internal communication, a lack of leadership, weak organizational culture and lack of values, as well as active grapevine communication. This research found that internal communication crises are directly related to organizational crises in which alternative decision-making processes, are established due to the failure of established internal communication channel and resulting in employees attempting to solve organizational problems by involving external stakeholders. Such attempts to involve external stakeholders lead to the very high risk of negative publicity and damages to reputation, which gives the national policy decision-makers an opportunity to expose the organization to threats of liquidation or resource reduction.

Keywords: Internal communication, Leadership, Organizational culture, Informal internal communication, Organizational crisis, Internal communication crisis.
Internal Communication Strategies for Employee Communicative Actions
A Qualitative Analysis in American and Italian Companies

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Purpose: To understand if, and how, internal communication strategies can promote strategic employee communicative actions such as to disseminate positive information that enhances the company’s reputation. These communicative actions sustain the competitive advantage of a company.

Approach: Interviews with: internal communication experts; internal communication managers in 10 American companies and 22 Italian companies. A focus group comprised of internal communication managers and experts.

Findings: Employee communicative actions have been categorized as: exploration, interpretation, sharing and acting. Internal communication strategies enable employees to be effective communicators.

Research implications: To investigate the link between employee communicative actions and internal communication and relationship quality by means of a survey among employees.

Practical implications: Internal communication managers are expected first, to become enablers towards employees and line managers; and second, to facilitate sense-making processes and the quality relationship building.

Keywords: Employee communicative actions, Enablement, Internal communication.

Paper type: Research paper.
Investor Relations on the Internet

Dialogical Communication Capacities of the Top 100 ISEM (IMKB/Istanbul Stock Exchange Market) Companies for Investor Relations in Turkey

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Investors are one of the most significant stakeholders for private corporations. Investor relations is a relatively new phenomenon, which looks to share information and building relationships with the company’s present and potential investors, economic analysts, economics correspondents, the general financial community, and several others. In the last two decades, expansion of the Internet offers private companies a strategic and dynamic tool for communicating and building with these groups. This paper is methodologically based on dialogic communication principles of Kent and Taylor (1998), and examines top 100 ISEM companies’ investor relations links in their corporate webpages by operationalizing these principles in terms of identifying the relationships of these companies with their publics. We conclude that, although the Internet serves as a great opportunity for investor relations by creating dialogical communication, companies use it only for sharing limited information that they are legally obligated to.
In the Wake of the Deepwater Horizon

BP's Development and Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility As Core Business

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The motivation for this research was to understand why BP’s Corporate Social Responsibility program failed so dramatically following the catalyst of the Macondo blowout in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010. The research aims to address the development and evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility as part of core business strategy at BP as a method of facilitating this understanding and developing recommendations for CSR at BP as it endeavors to rebuild its reputation. This research undertakes a thorough literature review as well as contributing unique insights through primary research. The paper particularly recommends the use of blue ocean strategy with a focus on becoming the new energy ‘super major’ focusing on alternative energy. This suggestion is based on the belief that Bob Dudley is moving the company forward and making the difficult decisions concerning change culture to address stakeholder desire. The paper concludes that CSR will have to become a reality for every company in the long run and if BP focusses on it now they will gain a competitive advantage, regain reputation, and become a sustainable, transparent, and genuine company that will thrive in the future.
Just-in-Time Research
An International Comparison of Media Coverage of Internet Corporation for Assigning Names and Numbers (ICANN) Control and Change Issues

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Purpose: Framing and central resonance analysis offer a model for generating reliable solutions to the challenge of managing multiple information streams and strategic communication.

Design: I focus on control and change issues related to international media coverage of ICANN. CRA (centering resonance analysis) software processed natural language and generated neural network models. Factor analysis identified relationships among main themes and chronological developments in media coverage of the topic.

Findings: News media employed various frames to represent ICANN in terms of control and change. Some variation of the main themes appeared in every newspaper but bore clear local markers in the form of specific choices for including players and events.

Practical implications: Identifying local and international concerns in media coverage of stakeholder dialogue is a continuously negotiated process. News coverage accurately reflected ICANN’s goals and role. However, non-U.S. media accepted as often as they contested ICANN’s ability and authority to exert control and effect change around the world.

Originality/value: This paper provides a working model that can be adapted for working with increasing amounts of information about a company and coverage in multiple media markets and outlets.

Keywords: ICANN, International media discourse, Corporate communication, Reputation management, Centering resonance analysis, Framing analysis

Paper type: Applied research paper
Managing Workplace Romance and Its Implications for Corporate Communication

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Romance in the workplace could pose some challenges as it may lead to awkwardness, injustice, favoritism, or harassment. This paper seeks to understand workplace romance within a corporate communication context by examining how people feel about it and what their underlying reasons are. Our study extends current research on this topic to an Asian culture, Singapore, where traditional norms and rituals on dating are changing to increasingly follow the Western tradition. An in-depth qualitative study of workers’ attitudes toward workplace romantic relationships was conducted through semi-structured interviews to allow the research team to glean past histories of workplace romances and expectations of relationships. The ultimate goal for this study is to suggest a set of guidelines for policies to properly manage sexual attractions in the Asian workplace. Romantic relationships are neither part of an organization’s formal structure nor formally sanctioned by management. It is, therefore, crucial for managers to establish a set of guidelines that serve as internal communication between organization and employees to avoid awkwardness when romance arises in the workplace.

Keywords: Workplace Romance, Internal Communication, Employee Relations

Paper type: Empirical Research
Negotiating Crisis in the New Media Environment

Evolution of Crises Online, Gaining Legitimacy Offline

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This study examines how crises originate online, how different new media platforms escalate crises, and how issues become legitimized offline when they transit onto mainstream media. We study five social media crises, which includes United breaks guitars and Southwest Air’s too fat to fly. Crises are triggered online when stakeholders are empowered by new media platforms that allow user-generated content to be posted online without any filtering. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter emerge as top crises breeding grounds due to their large user base and the lack of gatekeeping. Facebook and blogs are responsible for escalating crises beyond the immediate stakeholder groups. Mainstream media, legitimizes issues offline when there are inherent news values like, human-interest, policy-making, celebrity or novelty factors present. This study suggests recommendations to manage reputational impact on organizations and instruct practitioners on how they can use different new media tools to counter crises online and manage the transition of crises to mainstream media.
Nothing Succeeds like Success
An Analysis of Causes of Negotiation Success and Failures in China

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This study aims at identifying Chinese negotiators’ views of the causes of failure in intercultural negotiations. 86 Chinese negotiators were asked to scale the most frequently causes of failure, and 36 of them were further interviewed to testify about one case of successful and one case of failed business negotiation with international counterparts, and to identify the causes of failure. The questionnaire pre-cursors to business negotiation failure were identified as not equipped with enough information about the other party; not taking the initiative in negotiations; revealing one’s own bottom line too early; extraneous factors; no alternative plans or emergency measures, and being impatient. Interestingly, the most frequent pre-cursors to failure revealed in the interviews were Chinese negotiators’ lack of communication skills, especially inadequate proficiency in English, lack of cultural awareness and the use of inappropriate business behavior and protocols, and failure to compromise on price, delivery deadlines or payment terms. The study concludes that negotiators should focus more than just on the negotiation process, as other elements contribute to the success of the business negotiations.
Nuclear Power after Fukushima
The Swedish Case

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The Fukushima disaster in March 2011 presented both Tokyo Electric Power Company and the Japanese authorities with a crisis, but it even constituted a potential crisis in all other countries with nuclear reactors. It led to a crisis for producers and/or authorities in many countries, but in Sweden, the public continued to have a high level of trust in nuclear power. This paper looks at the communication from different stakeholders, mainly the industry and the authorities, in order to explain why there never was a crisis for Swedish nuclear power. The conclusion draws upon the notion of rhetorical arena, and the socio-political context as key factors in the crisis communication.

Keywords: Crisis communication, Nuclear power, Rhetoric, Rhetoric arena, Socio-political context

Paper type: Case study
Organizational Blogging
An Explorative Case Study of a Corporate Weblog from an Employees’ Perspective

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The purpose of this paper is to address and discuss implications of blog usage in a corporate communication context from an employees’ perspective by analyzing the local context and the underlying motivations of corporate blogging as they are being discursively constructed by a group of organizational bloggers. The paper presents findings from a case study of a government agency’s corporate blogging activity, traced through focus group interviews with the organizational bloggers. Based on an empirical investigation of the organizational bloggers using situational analysis and thematic network analysis, central contextual elements and implications are unfolded and discussed, providing a documented, nuanced and deep insight and understanding into blog usage in a corporate context from the perspective of the employee bloggers. Insights and further understanding about blogging from inside an organization is as critical to our understanding of blogging and social media in a corporate context, as it is to our understanding of transparent and participatory organizational culture. The findings are useful for managers to get insight into the implications of corporate blogging, i.e. the challenges and resources, barriers and opportunities, which employees experience when acting as bloggers, as well as when acting on other transparent Web 2.0 mediated communications platforms for corporate purposes.

Keywords: Web 2.0; Social media; Corporate blogging; Organizational blogging; Corporate communication; Discourse analysis.

Paper type: Case study
Organizational Disruption and Corporate Communication Leaders Intervening as a Coach

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Corporate communication leaders in contemporary organizations face unexpected episodes of disruption stemming from interpersonal conflict between persons who work in their unit. Most conflict episodes don’t appear to be so serious that they require the intervention and expense of formal dispute resolution procedures. Consequently a leader must attempt to coach each of the parties individually in an effort to manage the ongoing situation. Leaders should be trained to conduct conflict coaching. This essay overviews the employment of a one-on-one coaching model that focuses on the essential dimensions that are relevant in each conflict coaching intervention. A group of thirty one human resource managers, who took a seminar on this topic with the author, were surveyed to determine the relevancy of the model, the efficacy of the concepts, and the ease of launching the approach. Several case studies, drawn from actual cases, are employed to illustrate concepts and applications.
Pre-crisis Intelligence to Mitigate Corporate Risk
A U.S. Study at Georgetown University

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Risk management is a continuous function in the corporate C-suite, recognizing that risk is created or attracted by change, innovation and competitive initiatives that drive business momentum. The purpose of this research project is to test a regime and method by which corporate communicators can enhance their role and value in risk/crisis management. Approach was through online “listening station” systems monitoring of social media/stakeholder communication and qualitative analysis. Findings indicate an orderly means of corporate communicator professional grasp of risk/crisis potential useful in corporate risk mitigation. Keywords: crisis, risk, prodromes, social media, leadership, mediation, communication, C-suite
Repairing an Organization’s Image in times of Crises
What Strategies to Use When?

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The image repair theory has been described as the “dominant paradigm for examining corporate communication in times of crises” (Dardis & Haigh, 2009, p. 101). While the theory, which posits five major strategies and 14 sub-strategies, has been applied extensively, a fundamental question remains: What strategies should be used when? Through meta-analysis of the image repair studies, we examine the persuasiveness/effectiveness in the use of different strategies. This study addresses the call by Haigh and Brubaker (2010) to conduct more studies to understand the use of strategies across different crisis types with a view to providing a template to equip practitioners on what strategies to use during crises.

Keywords: Image repair, Crisis, strategy, Reputation

Paper type: General review
Resistance to Change in Process Management

The Petrobras Case

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This paper is based on an exploratory case study on the implementation of a Business Process Management (BPM) project within the Corporate Communications area of Petrobras (Petróleo Brasileiro S.A.), which is headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The main goal was to identify the causes and manifestations of resistance to the implementation of BPM projects and share findings that may be useful to other organizations in similar situations.

Keywords: Organizational change, Resistance to change, Process management.
A Retrospective on Reputation and Safeguarding "The Public Interest" During Crises

Lessons Learned from Johnson & Johnson

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Until recently, Johnson & Johnson (J & J) had a stellar reputation among its own industry competitors, the larger corporate world, and its various publics, with consumers first and foremost among them. The spate of recalls beginning in 2008 fueled speculation among consumers, regulators, government investigators, and others as to whether that reputation had been tarnished. At the very least, this recent turn of events for J & J has perplexed many observers, who are wondering what accounts for this perceived shift in behaviors. As a global company, it earned the trust of consumers worldwide when it responded to a string of deaths from Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide in the early and mid-1980s. Yet J & J’s (and CEO William Weldon's) handling of the current crisis, stemming from the above recalls, lawsuits over allegedly toxic hip implants, and other matters, appears to be the polar opposite of how James Burke, its CEO in the 1980s, handled the Tylenol poisonings. The swiftness, forthrightness, and overriding concern for public welfare that characterized J & J’s responses to the original Tylenol and copycat crimes became benchmarks for corporate communication during times of crisis. So why the glaring discrepancy between J & J, a la 1980s and the contemporary genesis of the company, between which lie less than 30 years?.

Although the cyanide deaths and their aftermath in 1982, and the copycat crimes several years later could have brought financial ruin to the company, its public relations, which prioritized the need for accurate information, transparency, and proactive measures to protect public safety, and elicited good media relations, averted this outcome. The same cannot be said of the more than 20 recent recalls of, over-the-counter medications manufactured by McNeil Laboratories, J & J’s pharmaceutical division, which have engendered public outrage, prompted a House of Representatives investigation.

In addition, globally, numerous lawsuits involving hip replacements manufactured by De Puy, also a J & J division, received coverage in the mainstream press and elsewhere. In New Zealand, the implants allegedly leached toxic chemicals into recipients’ bodies. Other allegations point to J & J as funneling kickbacks to pharmaceutical suppliers for nursing homes for stocking those homes' pharmacies with J & J products. Further, J & J allegedly hired an outside contractor to strip stores of over-the-counter medications (a "phantom" recall of them before the FDA could mandate a formal recall).

The House investigative committee mentioned above called William Weldon, J & J's CEO, to testify about J & J's actions. It doesn't end there, though. On Nov. 1, 2011 a boycott of J & J's Baby Shampoo was launched by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, which represents environmental and health organizations in the U.S. and abroad. The coalition claimed that the shampoo contains two carcinogens (Johnson, 2011). Responses to reports of this reflected
emerging concerns about J & J's reputation going forward. Silverman (2011) cited blogger Pearl's comments: "Weldon drove a stake through the heart of the J&J Credo years ago. Why should this latest issue surprise anyone? Load up the board with your cronies and drive the company into the ground. It’s a shame to see what has become of a once great company."

The totality of negative comments, when combined with the lawsuits, boycotts, and public testimony from the FDA and others, including J & J's CEO, intensify speculation as to whether J & J's reputation is really "on the line" and the public interest is a vestige of the past. Do the challenges for J & J of the last four years and the averse public reaction to the company, mean that its reputation is on the decline? Can the company rally and retain its global footing?

This paper will explore how J & J's has engaged in corporate communication during the three decades since the first Tylenol crisis. It will examine the company's public relations track record and its relationship with the media. The retrospective will cover crisis communication during the 1980s, when J & J voluntarily recalled potentially-tainted products, at enormous expense, was fully transparent, and acted in "the public interest," beginning with public relations that preceded the Tylenol episodes and in the interim period between the crises. What, if anything, has changed in J & J's public relations, and why? What other factors might account for its alleged behaviors and possible impact on the company's reputation? In tracing the company's public relations history perhaps factors related to leadership changes, overriding financial concerns, or senior management decisions, may prove to have a significant impact on the company's corporate communications choices.

The seemingly dramatic changes in a company that has set standards for so many others may present a set of lessons for corporate communication practitioners. For global companies have to deal with savvy publics who have a range of social media at their disposal. These publics can communicate their grievances and can get back at them with a vengeance when they perceive corporate misdeed. This case study and retrospective raises questions for public relations that hopefully practitioners can begin to answer. Perhaps this study will generate more dialogue among practitioners about accepted norms and the safeguarding reputation by adhering consistently to critical CSR benchmarks, thus retaining public trust.
Save Our Seafarers

How the Shipping Industry Is Using a Corporate Communication Campaign to Combat Piracy

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This study examined how the global shipping industry used a corporate communication campaign to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden near Somalia. The website for the campaign, www.saveourseafarers.com, and related social media pages were assessed to determine whether they were communicating effectively with targeted publics. Website assessment criteria was developed by combining the dominant website assessment approach in public relations with website assessment approaches used in health communication, risk communication, and related fields. An assessment of the main website revealed that it excelled at providing information in an easy to understand manner. However, it faltered at encouraging debate among visitors to the website. Assessment of the social media pages revealed that new criteria need to be developed for assessing whether social media websites are communicating effectively with publics. Older criteria for assessing websites pose challenges when used to assess newer social media websites.
Social Behavior Engages Motivation 3.0

How Attributes of Social Media Are Changing Corporate Performance Systems and Re-inventing Trust.

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Social Behavior has neuroscience professionals studying brain patterns to draw emotional correlations with activities including shopping, alcohol, romance, and more. Studies have mobilized big-brand marketing to universally reallocate media dollars to Social Media.

Lessons learned from consumer behaviors are helping corporations capitalize on employee behaviors in self-motivated, peer-driven participation. For example, “Farmville” has permeated Facebook, where participants build farms, collect points to achieve farm animals and objects, and share points to help friends. Marketing leaders are taking a hard look at how they can go beyond the free platform to sell products. From a scientific perspective, we are witness to the largest and most measurable instance of combined intrinsic/extrinsic motivation of self-driven recognition and engagement.

Like motivation behaviors seen in Farmville, corporate recognition, rewards, and incentive programs are the unsung pioneers of ‘social points’ activity. Those mechanisms, described editorially as Motivation 3.0, are adopted as ‘next-gen’ principles towards re-building trust, stimulating participation, and actually changing employee behaviors.
Social Media Challenges and Opportunities for Corporate Communication in Southeast Asia

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This paper examines how corporate communication professionals in Southeast Asia utilize social media strategies as they increasingly engage in online communication with various stakeholders. The research builds on previous studies of trust and distrust in corporate communication (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Tsetsura & Luoma-aho, 2010) to conceptualize how everyday social media practices can aid or hurt corporate communication. This research also contributes to a growing literature on the Internet’s influence on sociability (Peng & Zhu, 2010) in the context of corporate communication. A survey, conducted among 120 corporate communication practitioners who work in the region and use social media strategies, revealed several major challenges professionals face in everyday communication with top management and clients. Building on the survey results, this paper discusses why the growing power of online media in Southeast Asia is often questioned by corporate management as a legitimate strategy.
Spot the Difference

The Dynamics of Political Communication in a Weak Democracy

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Purpose: In this paper, I propose to examine the challenges of the dilemma and unique communication constraints of political communication consultants in a developing democracy, where ballot wholesaling and retailing, violence and coercion rather than majority support most often determine electoral victory.

Approach: This paper explores factors that create variation between political communication management methods and streetwise strategies with the purpose of advancing the scope of existing studies and practices as applicable in a weak democratic environment.

Findings: By examining the peculiar field experience from a practitioner perspective, this paper shows the limitations of the concepts and theories of persuasion and behavioral change as drivers of political communication and election victory.

Research Implications: The outcomes of this exploratory paper will open up new areas of studies in the field of political communication and enhance the capacity of communication consultants in executing political campaigns, especially in developing democracies.

Practical Applications: Understanding the peculiarities practitioners must deal with in developing democracies will equip professionals with the expertise required to successfully execute political campaigns.

Keywords: Political communication, Ballot wholesaling and retailing, Persuasion, Behavioral change.

In this paper, I explore the peculiarities of the political environment of developing democracies, using the author’s personal political campaign consulting experience in Nigeria to illustrate the constraints communication consultants face in executing political campaigns. The paper demonstrates that votes winning, election winning, and majority support do not always have the same meaning. I posit that vote winning (vote purchase), election winning (coercion and violence), and majority support (voters education and persuasion), represent dynamics of political communication in a weak democracy. Staying true to ethical standards and achieving the objectives of candidate-client require bookwise and streetwise strategies.
A Study of How Online Social Networking Influences People’s Involvement in Humanitarian Work

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This study examines how online social networking sites (SNSs) influence people in getting involved in humanitarian work. Surveying 195 members of SNSs, the study found that they had received an increasing number of messages urging them to get involved in humanitarian work. SNS members had a positive attitude toward being approached through SNSs for humanitarian work. Also, the research found a correlation between being active on SNSs and the likelihood that people would get involved in humanitarian work through online calls for donations or help. These findings can be useful for PR practitioners and communication officers working in the humanitarian field.
Taking Plain Language Seriously? “That’s a Really Big Ask”.

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This paper presents the recommendations resulting from a research project that investigated the extent to which a large Australian local government organization has been able to implement plain language in their correspondence with their customers. Our qualitative-research approach included collecting customer correspondence sent out by the organization over a one-week period in February 2011; a survey of staff within the organization, along with follow-up interviews with those who volunteered to be interviewed; and a series of focus-group discussions with customers of the organization. The customers rated the writing samples on a scale of 1–10; the samples averaged 4.73 out of 10, indicating that the principles of plain language are not well understood nor practised by staff within the organization. Other findings revealed that the organization has relied on an ineffective writing-training model and that much of the writing is done by inappropriate staff. We suggest ways in which the organization might alter their current hiring and writing practices to enhance the quality of their correspondence and their relationship with their customers.

Keywords: Organizational writing practices, Plain language, Training.

Paper Type: Research paper
The Study of Internal Crisis Communication
Towards an Integrative Framework

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Purpose - Previous crisis communication research has primarily examined the external dimension of crisis communication, i.e. the crisis response strategies applied by organizations to protect and/or restore their image or reputation among external stakeholders in a crisis situation. The purpose of this paper is to set up an integrative framework for the study of internal crisis communication in private and public organizations.

Design/methodology/approach - The paper takes a theoretical approach reviewing the literature on crisis management and crisis communication and discussing the concept of internal stakeholder and the implications of a staged approach.

Findings - An integrative framework for the study of internal crisis communication is developed based on two assumptions: first, that internal crisis communication research must start with a detailed study of the relationship between an organization and its internal stakeholders (in this case: the employees) to clarify to what extent internal crisis communication differs from external crisis communication; and second, that internal crisis communication research can best be systematized applying a staged approach (precrisis stage, crisis event, postcrisis stage) as an heuristic method.

Originality/value - Apart from a few exceptions, the internal dimension of crises, crisis management, and crisis communication has, by and large, been unexplored.

Keywords - Corporate communications, Employees communications, Employees relations, Crisis communication, Integrative framework, Internal communication. Internal stakeholder

Paper type - Research paper

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The Varied Roles of Stakeholders Initiating Digital, Humor-based Employer Brand Communication

The Perspective of a Start-up Company

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The purpose of this study is to describe the varied roles of stakeholders in a humor-based employer branding process initiated by viral recruitment advertising. The nature of viral advertising in the particular context of digital recruitment advertising is rarely studied. The study’s methodological approach involves qualitative content analysis with textual data. Data were gathered from discussion forums, blog writings and email contacts with stakeholders during 17 days viral spreading of recruiting advertisement. Our findings demonstrate certain roles that stakeholders can take during the viral advertising process and thus emphasize their role in humor-based employer branding. The findings also suggest that utilizing viral forms of humorous recruitment advertising is an unconventional but a powerful managerial branding tool. As such, the described approaches are especially suitable for start-up companies and creative high-tech industries in an early phase of their stakeholder dialogue.

Keywords: Employer branding, Viral recruitment advertising, Role of stakeholder, Humor

Paper type: Case study
The Virtual Construction of Kiva

A Relational Identity Perspective

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The non-profit sector is a growing industry developing new types of activities and organizations. Micro-lending, as a non-profit activity, is an alternative tool of alleviating poverty in developing countries. Kiva is the world’s largest web-based platform for funding loans to small entrepreneurs. A significant number of volunteers, field partners, and lenders give voice to Kiva and contribute to its identity. The question is how to define and study the identity of organizations that are social and virtual. While traditional theories of corporate identity are unable to capture organizational fluidity, some scholars demonstrate that the identity of organisations is relational. The central questions are: What is the corporate identity of Kiva? How is it constructed? And by whom? Through an analysis of Kiva’s identity construction on the web, the paper’s purpose is to illustrate how societal constituents construct corporate identity as fluid, complex, and fragmented. The analytic focal point is a concrete debate faced by Kiva in 2009 ignited by the organization’s decision to offer loans in the U.S. The analysis provides insights into the complexity embedded in corporate identity construction.

Keywords – Non-profit organisations, Organisational (and individual) identity, Virtual organisations, Societal constituents
Voices in Conflict? The Crisis Communication of Meta-organizations

A Multiple Case Study

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Meta-organizations such as industry trade associations are organizations whose members are other organizations. Meta-organizations differ from individual-based organizations in important ways. On one hand, meta-organizations are complex organizations serving as an intermediary between its members and their external social environment. On the other, they are searching for consensus between their members trying to avoid inter-organizational conflicts. When a private company finds itself in a crisis situation, the news media often contact a spokesperson of the corresponding industry trade association(s) asking him or her to comment on the situation. Based on Ahrne and Brunsson’s (2008) theory of meta-organizations, and on a multi-vocal approach to crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010), the aim of this paper is to examine how meta-organizations communicate in a crisis situation affecting one or more of their members, or the industry as such. The following research questions will be addressed: (1) How do meta-organizations work with crisis management and crisis communication? (2) How do they define their role in a crisis situation? (3) How do they communicate, externally and internally, when one of their members is in crisis? (4) What kind of expectations do their members have when it comes to gaining communicative support from their meta-organizations? The research design consists of a multiple case study. Three organizational crises, taking place within three different industries in Denmark, have been subjected to empirical study (combining interviews, archival studies, and rhetorical analysis).

Keywords: Conflict, Crisis communication, Meta-organization, Multi-vocal approach.

Paper type: Case study.
We Hear What They Say

The Local Museum in the Media

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The purpose of this paper is to question whether the notion of organizational legitimacy can be utilized when analyzing external stakeholders' expectations in a qualitative media analysis. Here themes are used to categorize stakeholders’ expectations to a city museum as depicted in local media. Organizational members mirrored external perceptions of the museum but external stakeholders also mirror other external stakeholders images of the city museum. Therefore, stakeholder management theory should account for the dynamic relations between external stakeholder groups. Managing stakeholders based on themes is presented as a strategic approach for small museums. From this, the legitimacy framework could be used to select and display a “yes we hear what you say” approach towards external stakeholders.

Keywords: Stakeholder management, Organizational legitimacy, Qualitative media analysis, City museum.
What Came First: The Chicken or the Egg?
On Social Media Use in Internal Communications

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Purpose: In this study we view the effects of social media use in internal communication. Many studies have focused on the presence of organizations on social media, counting whether they have an account on various forms of social media. In this study we will study the effects of the frequency of use of social media on organizational commitment and the intention of sharing knowledge.

Method: Via a call issued within social media (Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) old media (newspaper and breakfast TV) we asked people to complete a questionnaire on the effects of social media. The questionnaire contained questions about social media use in private life, among colleagues and with business partners and, in addition, included as variables affective commitment and the intention to share knowledge.

Results: Respondents who indicated that they frequently use social media with colleagues and business relations showed higher affective commitment and higher intention to share knowledge compared to respondents who indicated that they less frequently used social media in their professional life.

Implications: Social media appears to facilitate the relationships people engage in enabling sensemaking. It might be that social media is like a virtual coffee machine by which information and knowledge is shared more easily than by other media. Our results show that social media may help the building of relationships within the company and with business partners, and seems to help / create conditions for sensemaking.

Limitations: It might be that respondents who already were committed to the organization and always shared knowledge extensively find within social media the tools to do this virtually. This might be due to personality traits. There might also be a selection bias, in the sense that in our sample only social media enthusiasts and addicts were present.
Women’s Protests in the Revitalization of Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies by Oil Companies in Nigeria

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This paper examines the role of women’s protest in the revitalization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a core corporate communications and business survival strategy for multinational oil companies operating in the Niger-Delta area of Nigeria. This is an empirical paper utilizing the method of case studies of two oil companies and content analysis of the media coverage of the protests and the impact the coverage had on the response of the oil companies to the demands of the protesting women as well as subsequent CSR strategies adopted by the two companies in their relationship with the community of focus. Key findings from this study indicate that the oil companies were reported to be receptive to the demands of the protesting women. Also, findings show that the women’s protest had an impact on Chevron’s corporate social responsibility activities in the communities as the company changed its community relations strategy.

**Purpose:** In this paper, we propose to examine the role of women’s protest in the revitalization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a core corporate communication and business survival strategy for multinational oil companies operating in the Niger-Delta area of Nigeria.

**Approach:** This is an empirical paper utilizing the method of case studies of two oil companies and content analysis of the media coverage of the protests and the impact the coverage have on the response of the oil companies to the demands of the protesters as well as subsequent CSR strategies adopted by the two companies in their relationship with the community of focus. The two companies are Shell Oil Company and Chevron Oil Company.

**Findings:** Key findings from this study indicate that the oil companies were reported to be receptive to the demands of the protesting women. Also, findings show that the women’s protest had an impact on Chevron’s corporate social responsibility activities in the communities as the company changed its community relations strategy.

**Research Implications:** The findings from this study help to shed further light on the paradigm shift in CSR practice from a top down to a bottom up approach in community relations. The study also highlights the importance of contexts in the application of concepts such as CSR outside the areas where they originated from and are widely applied.

**Practical Applications:** This study will be useful for professionals working in the areas of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility who are interested in how contexts mediate the effectiveness of corporate communication strategies that have global appeal.

**Keywords:** Corporate Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility, Community Relations, Reputation Management
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