



**CORPORATE COMMUNICATION INTERNATIONAL** at Baruch College/CUNY  
*A global center for information and knowledge on corporate communication*

# Conference on Corporate Communication 2010

June 4–7, 2010

Wroxton College • Wroxton, England

## Abstracts of Conference Proceedings

OFFERED IN ASSOCIATION WITH ...

*Corporate Communications: An International Journal*







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**Wroxton College • Wroxton, England**

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*Corporate Communications: An International Journal*

Michael B. Goodman, Ph.D., Director  
Corporate Communication International at Baruch College/CUNY, USA  
Associate Editor - North America  
*Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, UK

Christina M. Genest, M.A., Associate Director  
Corporate Communication International at Baruch College/CUNY, USA

Wim J.L. Elving, Ph.D., Editor  
*Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, UK

Nicholas D.J. Baldwin, Ph.D., Dean  
Wroxton College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, UK

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**ABSTRACTS**  
**Conference on Corporate Communication 2010**

Editors

Christina M. Genest

Michael B. Goodman

Corporate Communication International  
at Baruch College/CUNY

and

Roslyn Petelin

and students and alumni of the

Writing, Editing & Publishing Program

University of Queensland

Cathy Arnold, Nina Atkinson, Elise Bianchi, Lucy Butcher, Peter Griffiths

Amber Gwynne, Rebecca Harris, Courtney O'Brien, Sarahanna Spencer,

Rebecca Stafford, Penelope Teasdale and Rosalind Wilson

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## Introduction

Michael B. Goodman, Ph.D., Conference Chair  
Director, CCI – Corporate Communication International at Baruch College/CUNY, USA  
cci@corporatecomm.org

### Corporate Communication in Times of Stress

Peter Hirsch and I have written (*Corporate Communication: Strategic Adaptation for Global Practice*) that the direction of the global economy is likely to be murky at best for some time to come. Three powerful forces have transformed the principles and practices governing the relationship between the corporation and its stakeholders:

- **Globalization** -- a quantitative shift in the globalization of the world economy that has created a qualitative change in how businesses need to communicate;
- **Web 2.0** -- a transformation in the adoption, use and consumption of information technology;
- **Corporate Business Model – The Networked Enterprise** -- an evolution in the nature and purpose of the public corporation that is both influenced by, and at the same time, influences the other two forces at work.

The first of these was the emergence of a truly integrated global marketplace in which the business supply chain operates not only around the world but in a single time zone -- now. Complementing and enabling this integration was the rise of emerging markets, not only those markets in the first tier – Brazil, Russia, India and China, but also was the next eleven: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, The Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, and Vietnam.

The second major force was the transition of the Internet towards Web 2.0 in which massively greater bandwidth has facilitated a wide range of new communications media from blogs and podcasts to YouTube and Twitter. We explored how the technology transition has created a newly connected, networked and transparent web of social media which has had a profound impact on the speed and extent to which stakeholders could interact with the corporation and with each other in ways that have both positive and negative implications for the corporation.

Both of these major transformations have taken place against a backdrop of a long running decline in the reputation of corporations and other institutions such as religion, the justice system, organized sports and the media with the general public. In the developed economies, this skepticism about corporations has been given additional force by the emergence of the Millennial Generation whose lack of faith in and loyalty to the corporation were so expertly conveyed in Ron Alsop's *The Trophy Kids Grow Up*.

The combination of these trends combined with the most perilous economic environment since the 1930s has created conditions of unprecedented volatility for global corporations. Public opinion and political opinion in different parts of the world, about how corporations should behave is likely to shift more quickly than at any time in recent history. From one day to the next, public expectations on subjects such as corporate governance, social justice, environmental stewardship or data privacy could move 180 degrees. Sovereign governments, struggling to find the solution to intractable economic conditions may seek convenient scapegoats in the form of

large corporations, both tying their hands through new regulations and simultaneously blaming them for failing to create more jobs. Economic nationalism, whether in the form of “Buy China” or “Buy America” further complicates the conditions in which corporations need to operate. Finally, the hyper-transparency made possible by Web 2.0 and demanded by an anxious public raises public scrutiny to a new level.

The global financial crisis of 2008 and the economic turmoil it created in the years following have forced a transformation in fundamental business models, beginning with the evaporation of almost an entire industry sector – investment banking. In 2010 the self-inflicted global crisis of Toyota, has been replaced in the headlines by Goldman Sachs, the impact of Iceland and Greece on the global economy, and the environmental disaster in the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the explosion in April of 2010 of the BP off-shore oil drilling platform.

Paradoxically, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century also witnessed an unparalleled increase in the social demands being placed on the corporation. In less than a decade, the expectation that corporations would place corporate social responsibility at the core of their activities has moved from the periphery to the middle of the opinion spectrum. Sustainability, which grew out of the concept of environmental stewardship, came to embrace social justice and a wide variety of micro- and macro-economic issues including “fair trade” and community building. To a greater or lesser extent, corporations have responded positively to the concept that ending poverty and healing the planet belong in their job description alongside providing jobs, inventing new products and services and offering shareholders a return on their investment.

It is too early to predict confidently which of these transformational shifts will have the greatest long-term impact, but what is clear is that the consequences of human exploitation of natural resources have not been abolished merely because economic development has slowed or reversed itself. If anything, the consequences of global climate change and industrial production have made it more important than ever that we find collective solutions to the challenges of hunger, access to clean water and breathable air, as well as sustainable practices in energy production, construction and packaging to name just a few areas.

In this context, the successful management of corporate communication in a global environment requires considerable skill and capability, as well as the most finely tuned judgment, wisdom, understanding, and integrity that the corporate communication professional can muster.

### **Focus on Recent Research**

The CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends Study 2009 (See the CCI website for the report at: [www.corporatecomm.org/studies.html](http://www.corporatecomm.org/studies.html)) included in-depth interviews in addition to the series of survey questions, for the corporate communication officers who chose to participate in the interviews. One of the open-ended questions asked:

“What are the **top three critical issues** in corporate communication today?”

One executive at a global financial services corporation said the issues are: “how to use communication as a tool to help achieve business goals, how to achieve high performance with restricted resources, and how to stay ahead of today’s militant populism.”

An executive at a global pharmaceutical corporation said, “building trust internally and externally, reputation management, transparency,” and in the context of the U.S. debate on healthcare reform, “positioning the CEO.” In addition to rebuilding trust between front-line workers and management, another executive added engaging and addressing multiple

stakeholders on issues and plans in a world where there are multiple venues for dialogue and in which anyone can be an “expert, as well as demonstrating leadership in a complex and rapidly changing world.

Others noted the need to build credibility and trust to mitigate reputational risk – assessing, protecting, and measuring reputation. Adding strategic value and demonstrating the function’s value in driving business performance is another concern. Another issue is the ability to develop important relationships with investors, media, NGOs, and investing the time to focus on relationship building.

For another executive the issues are: “Responding to a changing workplace; relating to a changing employee body. Younger people are coming in and expecting social media. In corporate communication it is authenticity; keeping the creditability of your firm high; operating in an authentic, transparent manner. Keeping employees motivated and keeping your constituents happy in today’s economy.” For another “skepticism of what we’re saying and the sincerity of the message is a major concern.

One executive indicated the concern we have addressed in this book for strategic adaptation, saying there is “a yearning for the path,” noting that there “is a refusal to acknowledge when things are changing.”

And for another the issues are: a changing media landscape, turning employees into advocates, and the need for authenticity.

Research on corporate communication practices indicates the Chief Communication Officer, and paths toward solutions lie in the strategic functions of corporate communication. Recent research studies by CCI Corporate Communication International (CCI) focused on corporate communication practices and trends in the South Africa, China, United States, and the European Union:

*CCI 2009 Corporate Communication Practices and Trends – United States;*

*CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: South Africa Benchmark Study 2007 - 2008;*

*CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: A China Study 2008 – Phase II;*

*CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: A European Union Benchmark Study 2008 – 2009*

These four studies, taken together, form the first global benchmark for corporate communication practices and trends. They can be found on the CCI Website at [www.corporatecomm.org/studies.html](http://www.corporatecomm.org/studies.html)

## **The CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2010**

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 in Wroxton, England from June 4 – 7 to exchange information and explore communication from a global perspective.

The CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2010 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 twelve countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, Italy, the Netherlands, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States

The papers and presentation summaries that follow reflect the discussion of these essential issues:

- corporate communication theory and practice
- strategic corporate communication leadership
- corporate communication management
- cross-cultural communication & stakeholder relations
- corporate governance, policy, and practice
- corporate communication policy and strategy
- language use in a global context
- corporate social responsibility
- corporate culture and identity
- integrated communication
- global corporate relations
- reputation and identity
- crisis communication
- issues management
- corporate branding
- investor relations
- new media

The papers published here were selected based on a peer review process. They were edited for the Proceedings by Christina Genest, CCI Associate Director, and Roslyn Petelin, Ph.D., Convenor of the Writing, Editing and Publishing Program, School of English, Media Studies and Art History, University of Queensland, Australia and students and alumni of her program: Cathy Arnold, Nina Atkinson, Elise Bianchi, Lucy Butcher, Peter Griffiths, Amber Gwynne, Rebecca Harris, Courtney O'Brien, Sarahanna Spencer, Rebecca Stafford, Penelope Teasdale and Rosalind Wilson. We appreciate their hard work and support. We are also grateful to the members of the CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2010 Program Committee for their insight and expertise in making this conference a success. They are:

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Christina M. Genest, MA, Conference Coordinator, CCI at Baruch College/CUNY, USA  
Michael B. Goodman, Ph.D., Conference Chair, CCI at Baruch College/CUNY, USA  
John Leipzig, Ph.D., University of Alaska Fairbanks, USA  
Roslyn Petelin, Ph.D., Conference Proceedings Co-Editor, University of Queensland, Australia  
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Don Swanson, Ed.D., Monmouth University, USA

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**Employer Branding as Sustainable Relationship Building and  
Value Creation:  
Combining Branding, Human Resource Management, and Corporate  
Social Responsibility Perspectives**

Helle Kryger Aggerholm, Sophie Esmann Andersen, Christa Thomsen  
Centre for Corporate Communication, Aarhus School of Business  
Aarhus University, Denmark  
hag@asb.dk, sea@asb.dk, ct@asb.dk

**Purpose:** *The purpose of this paper is to change the way of conceptualizing employer branding away from the functionalist perspective and create a new understanding of the concept within a social constructivist tradition.*

**Approach:** *The paper offers a re-conceptualization of employer branding as a holistic and processual discipline encompassing the theoretical fields of branding, human resource management, and corporate social responsibility.*

**Findings:** *We introduce a redefined conceptualization of employer branding and the related premises and processes. The paper also reflects on challenges and questions related to the employer branding processes influenced by varying organizational environments that call for recruitment, retention, and dismissal.*

**Implications:** *The key point of the paper is that employer branding is pertinent at any time, and it should be an integrated part of the organizational mindset –a business discipline and a strategic practice.*

**Paper type:** *Conceptual paper.*

## **Mapping and Leveraging Influencers in Social Media To Shape Corporate Brand Perceptions**

Norman Booth  
Coyne Public Relations, USA  
nbooth@coynepr.com

Julie Ann Matic  
Communications Specialist, USA  
julieamatic@gmail.com

*The emerging new influencer community is wielding significant power over the perceptions of brands and companies, largely driven by the rapid expansion of social media channels through which influencers communicate. The “nobody’s” of the past are now the new “somebodies” demanding the attention of communication professionals who seek continuous engagement with targeted consumers throughout the various channels of the social Web. This paper reviews a customizable valuation algorithm created to identify the “new somebodies” which are the influencers creating a revitalized level of brand awareness for companies. The index valuation algorithm measures a cross-section of variables that numerically rate influencers in the social media conversation about a particular company, product or service. The index also identifies the “conversation points” that should guide engagement with each individual influencer, determining aspects such as subject, and tone, and identifies who these influencers are. This information helps us understand how these “somebodies” influence traditional target audiences, and help communications professionals establish strategies to reach these new influencers. Integrating the influencer index data into a holistic social media strategy provides a comprehensive social media approach for optimizing brand equity.*

## **Petrobras' Study of Publics: A Step Towards Achieving the Company's Strategic Vision for 2020**

Eraldo Carneiro, Marcos André Costa and Mário Mendes Neto  
Petrobras, Brazil  
marioneto@petrobras.com.br

*A challenging study of publics was conducted by the Corporate Communications Department of Petrobras, a Brazilian integrated energy company, one of the 10 largest in its sector worldwide. Petrobras' strategic vision for 2020 includes the goal of becoming the preferred company among its publics of interest. To achieve this, Petrobras had to conceptualise the role of each group, considering its relationships –established or potential – with the company. The aim was to discover a unique approach to the concepts of publics and their categories, previously used by the company. It involved the analysis of theories related to stakeholders and publics; and data gathering from company representatives in workshops. During the process, the needs and issues of each public were identified; and areas of overlap were recognized, thus providing useful detail for future communication planning. This study, requested by the Executive Board, represents an important contribution to Petrobras' Strategic Planning.*

# New Tensions and Challenges in Integrated Communications

Lars Thøger Christensen  
The Department of Marketing and Management,  
The University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

A. Fuat Firat  
University of Texas – Pan American, USA

Joep Cornelissen  
Leed University Business School, Leeds, UK  
J.Cornelissen@leeds.ac.uk

**Purpose:** *The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how tensions and challenges associated with the implementation of integrated communications in practice have intensified in recent years under the impact of two conflicting trends: new social and organizational “drivers” towards integration; and the appearance of savvy and sophisticated audiences.*

**Design/methodology/approach:** *Taking the point of departure in now classical discussions of structural “barriers” to integration, today more fundamental difficulties limit the implementation of integrated communications – difficulties rooted in epistemological issues of organization and communication are argued.*

**Findings:** *Integrated communications present a paradox to contemporary communication management. On the one hand, integration seems to be the most logical and sensible way of managing communications in a complex world of multiple and critical audiences. On the other hand, its prescriptions are essentially at odds with what is known today about organization and human communication. While representing a significant communication ideal, integration in communications is simultaneously beyond reach – at least if the full process of communication is taken into proper consideration.*

**Originality/value:** *The paper usefully makes the claim that it needs to adapt the ideals of what integrated communications is to what integration can possibly do to an organization and its communications.*

**Article Type:** *Conceptual paper*

**Keyword(s):** *Corporate communications; Integration; Communication management.*

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# **Public Diplomacy and Image Management: How the US Government Repaired its Image After the 2008 Financial Crisis**

Andrea. A. Chua, Sim See Leng and Augustine Pang  
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
oneway\_street@yahoo.com, sim0022@ntu.edu.sg,  
Augustine.Pang@ntu.edu.sg

*With the rise of globalization, the growth of communication interdependence amongst countries has intensified significantly. Therefore, the need to foster goodwill and cooperation among nations is made more pertinent. The vehicle responsible for the relationship-building process among nations is public diplomacy. However, building good relationships is never an easy task, especially in crisis situations. Using the US Financial Crisis 2008 as an example, this study seeks to examine the dynamics of image repair strategies as a tool to repair, rebuild, and restore goodwill among nations. It also addresses the call from Signitzer & Coombs (1992) to undertake more such empirical research. At the practical level, this paper can offer insights to communication practitioners on how the image-rebuilding rhetoric through the media can be used as a precursor to lay the foundations for subsequent diplomatic efforts in the face of diplomatic rows.*

# **Revealing Corporate Identities: The Annual Report as the Company's Business Card**

Marianne Grove Ditlevsen  
Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Denmark  
mgd@asb.dk

*The annual report is known as the “calling card” (e.g. Preston, Wright & Young, 1996) of a company and thus inevitably reflects its corporate identity (cf. Cornelissen, 2004). The annual report is also a statutory document used by companies to meet legal requirements concerning their financial statements. However, from a communication perspective, the annual report is a complex genre with two potentially conflicting communicative purposes: to give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs and to provide a positive image of the company (Ditlevsen 2006).*

*On the basis of a visual analysis from a communication perspective, it is the aim of this paper to discuss the communicated identities (cf. Balmer & Greyser, 2003) in a corpus of six Danish annual reports from different branches of business and industry. The analysis seeks to demonstrate how and to which extent the annual report as a statutory document allows companies to express their corporate identity and to use it strategically to position the company as attractive to investors and other stakeholders.*

**Key Words:** *Corporate identity, corporate reporting, Investor Relations, Public Relations, annual report, visual communicatio*

**Paper Type:** *Research*

# **CSR and Skepticism: The Influence of Fit and Reputation on Skepticism Towards CSR Communications**

Wim J. L. Elving,  
Department of Communication/  
Amsterdam School of Communications Research (ASCoR)  
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
W.J.L.Elving@uva.nl

**Purpose:** *Consumers, at times, tend to be skeptical of CSR outlets or communication of companies. In this experiment a Cause Related Marketing advertisement was shown to consumers to test the influence of fit and reputation on their skepticism.*

**Design:** *In a two (fit versus no fit) by three (bad reputation, unknown reputation and good reputation) between subjects experimental design, 160 respondents were offered different versions of an advertisement of a virtual toilet paper brand.*

**Findings:** *The results of this study show that the lowest levels of skepticism were found when we manipulated a good reputation and a good fit between the company and the CSR domain.*

**Research limitations:** *In this experiment, we used a virtual brand and organization. Reputations are most frequently formed by various impressions; we had only one manipulation of reputation with a newspaper article.*

**Practical implications:** *Companies are increasingly involved in CSR activities, and since doing good needs to be made public, they often use various forms of communication to convey their information. With this experiment we show that organizations need to be careful when communicating their CSR.*

**Originality:** *Most frequently, current studies on fit involve controversial manipulations. In this study we wanted to test the influence of fit and different levels of reputation of a company on skepticism, purchase intentions, and attitudes towards the company.*

**Keywords:** *CSR, Skepticism, Reputation, Purchase Intention, CRM*

# **The War for Talent? The Relevance of Employer Branding in Job Advertisements for Becoming an Employer of Choice**

Wim J.L. Elving Jorinde J.C. Westhoff, Kelta Meeusen, and  
Jan-Willem Schoonderbeek  
Department of Communication  
Amsterdam School of Communications Research (ASCoR)  
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
W.J.L.Elving@uva.nl

**Purpose:** *Organizations need high quality employees to fulfil the needs of their stakeholders and be successful. The purpose of the paper is to argue that employer branding might be a powerful tool to attract high potential employees.*

**Method:** *This paper presents theoretical background on employer branding and the results of two studies. The first analyzed 100 online job advertisements to determine if and how employer branding is currently used in recruitment practices in the Netherlands. In the second study, we conducted an experiment where a job advertisement with elements of employer branding was compared to an advertisement without employer branding.*

**Findings:** *The paper finds that employer branding is not commonly used in recruitment communication in the Netherlands. The experiment showed that respondents were more attracted to the advertisement with employer branding.*

**Research Limitations:** *This is one of the first empirical studies on effects of employer branding.*

**Practical Applications:** *The results show that the application of employer branding has many benefits for organizations. A branded identity might give an organization the advantage in the war for talent.*

**Keywords:** *Employer Branding, Corporate Branding, Corporate Identity, Job Advertisements, Content Analysis, Experiment.*

## **Social Media Marketing**

Wendy K. Flanagan  
Brand4Market, New Jersey, USA  
wendy.flanagan@brand4market.com

*Social Media is changing the nature of marketing and lead generation. It enables you to bring one-to-one relevancy to your communications and still maintain marketing pillars and legal requirements. This paper will:*

- *Review statistically significant indicators that drive marketing dollar investment*
- *Enjoy active discussion focusing on the Voice of Employee as Voice of Company: building brand through individuals' personalities.*
- *Stimulate Voice of Customer for positive brand building*
- *Understand and integrate your Social Media Plan in relation to other marketing and PR initiatives*
- *Discuss Social Media appropriate to lead building*

**Keywords:** *Social Media Marketing, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter*

## **Employee Dissent Federal Government Organizations: Lessons for Managing Reputation and Fostering Employee Loyalty**

Heather Hamilton  
Environment Canada, Canada  
heather.hamilton@ec.gc.ca

*How do various policies limit the rights of Canada's federal government employees to express dissent about their employer as private citizens? How do they perceive and react to these limits? In this study, policy was reviewed, and qualitative interviews were analyzed by inference to explore themes for further research to improve and inform professional practice in addressing employee dissent. The relevant policies were complex and apparently conflicting. Internalized organizational values, workplace culture, employee experience, tone, and career and relationship risks were more influential than formal policy, training, or legal consequences. Respondents valued their right to public dissent, but were willing to yield it to honour a voluntary moral contract and to support a perceived higher cause (public service). This challenges the traditional research theory, which views employee dissent as largely self-interested. This means that organizations – especially mission or value based organizations -- might better manage reputation and minimize public employee dissent by fostering an overtly value-driven organizational culture that fosters internal expressions of dissent, rather than limiting public dissent through formal controls or policies.*

*NOTE: This paper is based on research conducted in graduate studies at the University of Alberta. Views represented in this paper are those of the author, and are not intended to represent those of the Government of Canada or Environment Canada.*

# Visual Identity and IPRs in Corporate Brand Management

Pia Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, Professor,  
Department of International Business  
Mari Juntunen & Saira Saraniemi  
Department of Marketing  
University of Oulu, Finland  
pia.hurmelinna-laukkanen@oulu.fi  
mari.juntunen@oulu.fi, saila.saraniemi@oulu.fi  
and  
Wim J.L. Elving  
Dept of Communication / ASCoR,  
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
W.J.L.Elving@uva.nl

**Purpose :** *Intellectual property rights (IPRs) can influence corporate brand management. In this study we consider not only trademarks – the most common form of IPRs in connection to branding – in a different light, and also adopt a wider approach and consider the roles and features of trademarks, trade names, copyright, and design rights.*

**Approach:** *Corporate brand management and visual identity play an important role because of their connection to identity, image, and reputation management. However, visual identity, like corporate brand management in more general, lacks profound combining of IPRs – that are increasingly important in the turbulent business environment – into its elements.*

**Findings:** *We assert that in relation to corporate brands and visual identity, a combination of IPRs is relevant. This means that companies need to improve their readiness and awareness in terms of obtaining and strategically utilizing various means of legal protection.*

**Research implications:** *As far as we know, IPRs have not been studied extensively within corporate communication or in marketing.*

**Practical implications or applications:** *Frequently, both in practice and research, only trademarks have been considered, and the differences between product vs. corporate brands have been often neglected. Our study fills this gap by discussing the role of aligning IPRs and visual identity in brand – and image – management.*

**Paper type:** *general review*

**Keywords:** *Corporate visual identity, Intellectual property rights, Brand management, image*

**Theme:** *Image, identity, and reputation management*

## **Managerial Earnings Forecasts: Does the Use of Hedging Strategies Increase or Decrease the Credibility of These Disclosures?**

Kristian Hursti

Aalto University School of Economics, Finland

kristian.hursti@hse.fi

*Every business phenomenon which has the potential to disrupt the global economy is worth subjecting to a multidisciplinary investigation. The credibility of managerial earnings forecasts should be no exception. While most studies have looked at the phenomenon from the perspective of accounting and finance, this paper adopts a communicative perspective. This paper applies a model presented by Toulmin (1958, 2003), designed for analyzing arguments, to examine on a case-by-case basis the association between a forecast's argumentative strength and its eventual failure/success. The data consists of forecasts that led to some of the largest earnings surprises in 2008. The findings suggest that since managers have private information about the company's operations, their use of hedging devices such as qualifiers and rebuttals in their narrative forecasts may serve as a reliable measure of forecast credibility. The results should be useful to investors attempting to determine the credibility of an individual earnings forecast.*

**Keywords:** *earnings forecasts, credibility, Stephen E. Toulmin, rebuttal, qualifier*

## **Looking for Social Capital Initiatives Amid the Downturn: An Analysis of CEOs' Annual Report Letters**

Roger W. Hutt

W.P. Carey School of Business/Arizona State University, USA

roger.hutt@asu.edu

**Purpose:** *What were CEOs saying to their stakeholders during the 2008 financial downturn? Annual report letters were examined to identify initiatives to increase or create social capital with stakeholders*

**Approach:** *Annual report letters (2006–2008) for twenty of the world's largest producers of consumer packaged foods were analyzed using text- and content-analysis procedures.*

**Findings:** *Preliminary analyses indicate the downturn had minimal measurable impact on social capital initiatives. Some changes were observed but few significant differences were identified.*

**Research implications:** *The industry was the unit of analysis; a single industry was studied. Broadening the set of industries could provide additional insights, as would including additional media.*

**Practical implications:** *Distilling meaning from CEO communications, and methods to analyze results, are offered. Contexts for future studies of company-stakeholder initiatives are suggested.*

## **Strategic Stakeholder Dialogues: A Discursive Perspective on Relationship Building**

Trine Susanne Johansen and Anne Ellerup Nielsen  
Centre for Corporate Communication, Aarhus School of Business  
Aarhus University, Denmark  
tsj@asb.dk, aen@asb.dk

*Societal developments and stakeholder awareness place responsibility and legitimacy high on corporate agendas. Increased awareness heightens focus on stakeholder relations and dialogue. Our purpose is to establish a framework for the strategic management of such dialogue, arguing that stakeholder orientations of CSR and corporate identity can aid in handling societal challenges by strengthening dialogical communication. Dialogue is a key aspect in CSR, corporate identity, and communication, but the question remains about how dialogue can be initiated and maintained. Through a review of CSR, corporate identity, corporate communication, and stakeholder relations literature, the framework is developed taking into account the different stakes held by various stakeholders. Based on the discursive terms, form and script, we argue that different stakes condition different dialogical types. Our contribution is to expand the notion of dialogue within communication research and to provide organizations with a framework for strategically engaging stakeholders in identity relevant issues of responsibility and legitimacy.*

**Key words** – corporate communication, corporate identity, corporate social responsibility, stakeholder relations, discourse theory

# **On the Discursive Construction of Knowledge Deficits in the ‘Alter’: An Instance of Organizational Communication as a Strategic Instrument of Management**

Peter Katsberg and Marianne Grove Ditlevsen  
Department for Language and Business Education  
Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Denmark  
pk@asb.dk, mgd@asb.dk

*This paper explores a particular instance of a discourse of deficit (e.g., Sarangi/Roberts 1999), namely the construction of knowledge deficits in the ‘alter’ within an organizational communication setting (Cheney et al. 2004). Taking my point of departure within the field of corporate communication (e.g., Cornelissen 2004), I isolate a single communicative event, i.e., an interview with the CEO of a company published in an in-house magazine (e.g., Kounalakis et al. 1999), in order to conduct a mixed methods (Johnson/Onwuegbuzie/Turner 2007), in-depth textual analysis of how knowledge deficits in the ‘alter’ may be textually realized and what qualities of knowledge deficits may discursively be constructed. I conclude by pointing to strategic motives for such discursive constructions (e.g., Gatley 1996).*

**Keywords:** *Internal corporate communication, strategic corporate journalism, discourse of deficit*

# **New Communication Models for Danish Museums: How to “Do” Corporate Communication the Museum Way**

Anna Karina Kjeldsen  
Center for Corporate Communication  
Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Denmark  
annakk@asb.dk

*Danish museums are changing their communication focus. From solely communicating objects, collections and knowledge; they are now beginning to communicate and conduct themselves as organizations, brands and even for-profit corporations. However, they enter the field of corporate communication with great hesitation, encountering many obstacles (Bysted-Sandberg & Kjeldsen, 2008). This paper explores how Danish museums respond to and apply corporate communication in their organizations. The aim of the project is to develop scenarios, or ideal types, for the implementation of corporate communication in Danish museums.*

*The project is twofold. First, it opens up a new field of research via a multi-faceted and empirically based overview of communication approaches in the Danish museums. Second, it proposes tools that practitioners within the field can use in order to identify and change approaches and practices within their own organization.*

*The project combines neo-institutional theory, especially the definition of different organizational reactions to new ideas and practices (cf. Røvik, 2009); first, with a mapping of communication understandings and practices within the field, and secondly, of communication understandings within museology (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, Sandel & Janes, 2007) and corporate communication theories (e.g. Cornelissen, 2008, Christensen et al., 2009).*

**Keywords:** *Corporate communication, museums, interdisciplinary research, neo-institutionalism, museology, methodology*

**Paper type:** *Research paper*

# Benefits of Process Thinking in Corporate Communication

Nina Korhonen and Anne Kankaanranta  
Aalto University School of Economics, Finland  
anne.kankaanranta@hse.fi, korhonen.nina@gmail.com

*Corporate communication is often regarded as a hectic, ad hoc process, but maintaining its consistency in an organization is of utmost importance, in order to project a strong, coherent image to various stakeholders. In their pursuit of greater consistency of operations, other business disciplines have turned to Business Process Management for decades; they have standardized their operations by defining and documenting them. The rationale is simple: standardization contributes to consistent quality. Despite such augmentation, corporate communication has not traditionally been a process-oriented discipline and related research is very limited.*

*Our study argues that since communication is an integral part of business, it would benefit from process thinking. We aimed to determine what these benefits might be, to identify the core communication processes, and to investigate the functions of these processes in corporate communication. Our findings show that the identified corporate communication processes involve both benefits and risks but that, overall, they improve the efficiency and quality of communication.*

## **Coalition Building in Perspective: A Sociopolitical Strategy and its Corporate Impact**

Rachel Kovacs  
Department of Media Culture  
College of Staten Island, CUNY, USA  
rkovacs@mail.csi.cuny.edu

*Coalitions have existed for hundreds of years as a vehicle for gaining and maintaining power and influencing decision-making processes and outcomes. They may have a direct impact on political systems, cultural agendas, corporate goals and objectives, public policies, and the success of social movements whose actions and dynamics affect government, business, and society. In contemporary society, coalitions are formed by and interact with international agencies, institutions, voluntary groups, governments, and many other entities. They may have a tangible effect on legislation, regulation, and other matters of vital importance to corporations.*

*In the digital age, coalitions may develop spontaneously, as, for example, on the Internet, ad hoc, or as spinoffs from existing bodies. Those focused on single issues may disband when that issue is resolved. Other groups may ally for the long haul, as permanent coalitions calling attention to a full range of issues. They may become politicized, or even co-opted, by those they seek to change.*

*Recent public relations scholarship on coalitions includes studies by Wilson (2000), Hallahan (2001), Pien (1994), and Tucker and McNerney (1992). Nevertheless, there is relatively little research that focuses on coalitions from an interdisciplinary perspective. This paper will explore any overlap and interdependence among writings on coalitions in the communication literature and in other disciplines (e.g., politics, international relations, and social movements). It will adopt a global view of coalitions and provide examples of recent cases of significance to communications theory and professional practices.*

*Given that coalition building has become a powerful contemporary strategy and a tool in the broader world of power dynamics through lobbying and other forms of political, social, economic, and cultural influence, the study will provide examples of coalitions' practices drawn from case studies in the corporate world, government, and not-for-profit agencies and organizations. Thus, the study will consider the impact of coalitions on processes and publics at both societal and organizational levels.*

**Keywords:** *coalitions, advocacy, ad hoc alliances, social movements, lobbying, power dynamics*

## **Guiding the Next Generation of Practitioner: Helping Students Define and Apply Norms for CSR**

Rachel Kovacs  
Department of Media Culture  
College of Staten Island, CUNY, USA  
rkovacs@mail.csi.cuny.edu

*This paper explores the pedagogical processes involved in teaching ethics and corporate social responsibility in public relations and corporate communication courses over more than a decade. It focuses on my curricula and on how students interpreted and applied theoretical concepts and readings to real-world situations and standards for ethical practice and CSR. Student evaluations suggested that even hypothetical class projects provided insight into the complex demands made on them as future practitioners and the need for careful research. Speakers and public relations professionals who evaluated student work affirmed that theories are indeed practiced. Based on these outcomes, I discuss the need to intensify and vary ways in which the study of ethics and CSR can be enhanced and strengthened within the public relations and corporate communication curricula and the extent to which students with limited worldviews and life experience can extrapolate and segue from the classroom to the public relations workforce.*

*This paper traces how students identified, evaluated, extrapolated, and applied norms for ethics and corporate social responsibility issues in public relations and corporate communication courses at several institutions over more than a decade. It explicates the curricula taught by the professor and focuses on how students integrated these norms into their planning of real and hypothetical campaigns. It discusses class exercises and homework assignments meant to strengthen students' understanding of ethics, reviews term projects and the guidelines that drove them, and considers student project evaluations. It begins with a review of academic and professional writings about the place of ethics and CSR in the curriculum. It also refers to professional and industry bars for ethics and CSR, some of which were tapped for her teaching.*

## **Communicating Crisis: How Culture Influences Image Repair in Western and Asian Governments**

Yvonne Siew-Yoong Low, Jeni Varughese and Augustine Pang  
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
yvonnelow2104@hotmail.com, jeniallen88@gmail.com, Augustine.Pang@ntu.edu.sg

*Few, if any, studies on Benoit's image repair theory have addressed the role of culture in strategies used. This study seeks to understand the differences in image repair strategies adopted by two governments that operate in the Western and Asian societies when faced with similar crises. Textual analyses of two case studies are examined, Hurricane Katrina (US) and Typhoon Morakot (Taiwan). Faced with similar accusations of slow response, the Asian culture, represented by the Taiwanese government, used predominantly shifting the blame, denial, mortification, and corrective action strategies. The least used was bolstering. The Western government, represented by the US government, used predominantly bolstering, corrective action, attacking the accuser and defeasibility. The least used were mortification and shifting the blame. Insights from Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory were analyzed to examine the use of different strategies. Strategies reflected Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance and power distance dimensions. Such strategies should be integrated with strategies to be culturally-sensitive and relevant.*

## **Manager-Employee Communication During a Crisis: The Missing Link<sup>\*</sup>**

Alessandra Mazzei and Silvia Ravazzani  
IULM University of Milan, Italy  
alessandra.mazzei@iulm.it, silvia.ravazzani@iulm.it

**Purpose:** *To investigate the effectiveness of internal communication during a crisis by comparing how Italian companies communicated to employees during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis and how employees interpreted these efforts.*

**Design/methodology:** *Interviews with internal communication managers and employees; two focus groups and a survey involving internal communicators.*

**Findings:** *Results indicate a misalignment between what communicators meant to communicate and what employees perceived. Companies planned excellent communication, widely used official instruments and depicted the crisis as an opportunity, while employees complained about clarity of messages and listening, disliked hierarchical communication and accused their companies of opportunism .*

**Research implications:** *Further research is needed to explore the antecedents of effective manager-employee sensemaking process during a crisis.*

**Practical implications:** *To reduce misalignment companies should reinforce trust relationships before a crisis occurs and should focus on open and continuous listening during a crisis.*

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<sup>\*</sup> The research was supported by the Laboratory of Internal Communication, founded at IULM University in partnership with ASCAI, Henkel Italia, IBM Italia, *illycaffè*, Indesit Company, Iper, la grande i, NH Hoteles, and Porsche Italia.

## **Refining the Concept of Corporate Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach<sup>\*</sup>**

Alessandra Mazzei

Associate Professor, IULM University of Milan, Italy  
alessandra.mazzei@iulm.it

**Purpose:** *To better understand the concept of communication through the comparison of definitions given by scholars from different disciplines: Marketing, Public Relations, Organizational Communication and Corporate Communication.*

**Approach:** *Literature review of prevalent definitions in the four mentioned disciplines; discussion of communication aims, communication categorizations, theoretical background and innovations of each of these disciplines; and finally analysis of convergences and differences.*

**Findings:** *All considered disciplines look at the entire communication of a business, adopt a relational perspective, value some intangible resources as outcomes of communication.*

**Research implications:** *Higher value to research in the communication field results from considering multiple points of view because each discipline contributes specific connotations to the comprehension of communication.*

**Practical implications or applications:** *To broaden the theoretical background of Corporate Communication research.*

**Key words:** *Corporate Communication, Public Relations, Organizational Communication, Marketing, multidisciplinary approach.*

**Paper type:** *General review.*

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<sup>\*</sup> A previous version of this paper can be found in: Mazzei A., “Un approccio multidisciplinare alla comunicazione d’impresa”, *Working paper, Istituto di Economia e Marketing*, n. 15, 2006. (“A Multidisciplinary Approach to Business Communication”, Working Paper, Institute of Economics and Marketing, IULM University, Milan, n. 15, 2006)

## **Complying with Plain Language Guidelines in the Corporation: If Not, Why Not?**

Caroline McKinnon and Roslyn Petelin  
University of Queensland, Australia  
r.petelin@uq.edu.au

*The question driving the research on which this paper reports was why, when the economic and relationship benefits of plain language in the corporation have long and widely been acknowledged, workplace writers do not necessarily adhere to its principles.*

*A case study of seven employees whose daily workload in a large government organization (8,000 staff in 63 branches) is writing-intensive revealed many reasons for non-compliance with plain language. An analysis of the transcripts generated by extended interviews with the participants revealed three broad categories of reasons for non-compliance by the writers: they lacked the knowledge and/or capacity to produce plain language, they worked under unrealistic time constraints, and/or they were unconvinced of the efficacy of plain language and deliberately chose not to produce it.*

*This paper will examine these categories in detail via the observations made by the research participants. The practical implications of the findings are profound in relation to hiring, deployment, and training of employees.*

*Further research that widens the study in the case organization to a larger scale and/or research that replicates the study in other organizations in which the hiring and training ethos differs from the case organization could generate alternative responses and would build on the rich data generated in the original research.*

## **Developing the Culture of Trust in which Large-Scale Gains Become Possible**

Rod Miller

Executive Institutional Advancement Exchange Inc, USA

rod@ExecIAE.com

**Abstract: Purpose:** *An important challenge for corporate leaders including corporate communication professionals in the new economy involves building trust with stakeholders. The strengthening of stakeholder relations requires the right analysis, strategic repositioning, adjusted procedures and new behaviors for the development of a culture of trust in which large-scale gains become possible. The purpose of the paper is to suggest perspectives and approaches for analyzing culture and communication and steps to incorporate and improve best practices in communication for the large-scale gains needed for enterprise superiority.*

**Methodology/approach:** *The paper proposes an approach to planning and executing corporate communications, including the identification of values and world-class communication practices to serve stakeholders while benchmarking competitive communication processes.*

**Findings:** *The paper affirms the corporate communication function as uniquely positioned to serve as a business catalyst in the new economy. With access to stakeholder intelligence and a commitment to communication as understanding, the communication leader is specially positioned to help empower corporate culture and stakeholder confidence.*

**Research implications:** *This is an exploratory study to help integrate an approach to build trust using communication strategies, processes and behaviors.*

**Practical implications:** *Useful as a leadership guide for both corporate communications professionals and CEOs. It helps the leaders of an enterprise to frame a specific approach for large-scale gains with stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** *Trust, Culture, Stakeholder engagement, CEOs, Communication leadership, Large-scale gains.*

**Paper type:** *Article/conceptual paper.*

# Communicating in Meta-Organizations: The Structure of Corporate Communication in Trade Organizations

Martin Nielsen and Poul Erik Flyvholm Jørgensen  
Centre for Corporate Communication, Aarhus School of Business  
University of Aarhus, Denmark  
mn@asb.dk, pj@asb.dk

*The purpose of this research paper is to find out to what degree the corporate and organizational communication of a meta-organization, like a trade organization (e.g. the Danish Brewers' Association), differs from the corporate and organizational communication of a traditional corporation. The methodological approach consists of a literature review of "classic" corporate communication, textual analysis of trade organizations' communication, triangulated with in-depth personal expert interviews of selected trade associations. Preliminary findings show that a trade organization acts and communicates in many ways like a private corporation; but there are also substantial differences in their communications, which reveal fundamental organizational, cultural, and functional differences between private corporations and trade organizations. One of the main implications for further research is the focusing on the structural difference between a meta-organization, like a trade organization, whose members are other organizations (corporations), and a traditional organization, whose members are individuals (human beings). Part of the practical implications would be recommendations for the corporate communication of trade organizations.*

**Keywords:** *meta-organizations, trade organizations, corporate communication, organizational communication*

## **Non-Verbal Communication Norms in Corporate Contexts: A Hong Kong Perspective**

Patrick P.K. Ng and Daniel S.W. So  
Department of Chinese & Bilingual Studies  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
cpat@inet.polyu.edu.hk, ctdaniel@inet.polyu.edu.hk

*Non-verbal communication, according to Edward Hall's (1959) classic definition, is referred to as "meta-communication, paralinguistics, second-order messages, the silent language, and the hidden dimension of communication." Simply put, symbolic messages can be conveyed by means of intonation, tone of voice, vocally produced noises, body posture, body gestures, facial expressions or pauses (Besson et. al., 2005). As Dou (2005) opines, non-verbal communication is important because people deploy or refer to the action of others to learn about their affective or emotional states, and that sometimes non-verbal signs play a more decisive role than verbal messages in determining communicative effects, albeit such effects may vary across cultures. While there are studies linking intercultural business communication practices to cultural value variations in a Western context (e.g. Clyne, 1994), or studies that placed emphasis on the intercultural value comparisons in Asian and Chinese contexts, e.g. Bond (1986, 1991); Hu (1944); Hwang (1982, 1985), norms of non-verbal communication in corporate contexts and the difference between the West and Asia in such normative values remains an area that has been neglected and requires focused research (Dou, 2005).*

*This pilot study attempts to identify what constitute effective non-verbal communication skills in performing corporate functions in Hong Kong and to examine if East-West differences are in evidence. The target participants are corporate executives in related fields like marketing and event management; the sample size is targeted to be around 15. The study will take the form of face-to-face interviews with an incorporation of artefact-examinations. Specifically the subjects will be first asked, via a protocol of communicative norm statements about non-verbal communication behaviors adapted from Wood (2006), (1) to rank these statements according to effectiveness, and then (2) to examine categories of corporate artefacts in the form of video clips capturing different Hong Kong or Greater China based corporate events highlighting non-verbal communicative signs exhibited by corporate spokespersons. Afterwards, with reference to both (1) and the non-verbal communicative signs embedded in (2), the signs perceived to be more preferable by the subjects will be identified, and the findings will be discussed within an East-West framework.*

## **Strategic CORCOM: Concepts and Context**

Sandra Oliver  
Thames Valley University, UK  
sandra.oliver@tvu.ac.uk

*Core strategic organisational elements of corporate communication (CORCOM) in university courses are often neither recognised nor understood and are missing from programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level. This issue continues to have a negative impact on the reputation and sustainability of the CORCOM industry and its qualifying membership.*

*In research terms, it is critical to recognise conceptual links that underpin the economic, social, political, and philosophical elements of an accelerating global body of knowledge in a way that speaks to business leaders, politicians, management consultants, and others. As a focus for curriculum design and CORCOM governance, an eight-factor strategic communication model links current academic theory to real world best practice.*

*By applying behavioural concepts to models of corporate strategy, the Chief Communication Officer (CCO) works with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in the execution of organisational aims and objectives.*

# **Managing the Information Vacuum During Crisis: Explication, Elaboration and Implication for the Organization**

Augustine Pang

Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Augustine.Pang@ntu.edu.sg

*In a crisis, an information vacuum in the media is immediately generated (Coombs, 2007; Heath, 2006). However, little is elaborated on how it works and the role the media play in the vacuum. This paper seeks to comprehensively explicate and elaborate the nature, characteristics and effects of the vacuum with a view to managing it. Insights from crisis, media relations, journalism, framing and agenda-setting literature are drawn and the dynamics and dynamism of the vacuum are illustrated by recent cases in the US, Singapore, and other countries. Findings showed that organizational failure to fill the vacuum can exacerbate the crisis. However, an active engagement allows the organization to narrate the crisis on its terms, frame public consciousness of the crisis, and proactively engage the media, often regarded as the messenger of the crisis, to help the organization document the crisis favorably.*

# **An Ethical Black Hole Called James Hardie**

Fred Robins  
Business School  
The University of Adelaide, Australia  
fred.robins@adelaide.edu.au

*This business history documents corporate wrongdoing of an unethical but legal kind.*

*The paper highlights issues that are likely to arise more frequently as globalisation gathers pace. The most important of these is the ease of international 'relocation' as a means of evading corporate social responsibility. Another is a directors' duty with regard to commissioned reports. A further issue is whether it is desirable to add 'social responsibility' to the legal definition of directors' duties.*

*The case of James Hardie highlights what can happen when regulation of corporate social responsibility is absent. The legal and ethical responsibilities of this company were open to disagreement. To avoid new and undesirable regulatory arbitrage, greater international alignment of corporate law may well be necessary. In a world where closer scrutiny is given to business behaviour than in the past, social responsibility may need to become more explicit in company law.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Business Ethics, Corporate Law.*

## **Consumers and Corporate Social Responsibility Communication: What Do They Really Want?**

Line Schmeltz

Centre for Corporate Communication, Aarhus School of Business,  
Aarhus University, Denmark  
lsg@asb.dk

*This paper questions and discusses whether the currently recommended way of communicating CSR to the increasingly important stakeholder group consisting of consumers will also be the optimum way to represent corporate values and behaviour in the future? Maybe it is time to challenge current thinking within the field of CSR communication suggesting that companies should apply a very subtle, implicit and sometimes even endorsed way of communicating CSR in order to inhibit scepticism and enhance persuasion. Perhaps the young consumers- the consumers of the future - are ready for another approach because they have a different understanding and awareness of CSR than we have seen so far? The question is, then, how companies can accommodate this understanding and awareness rhetorically in their communication of CSR. In this paper, a new conceptual model for communicating CSR to consumers is presented along with the theoretical background for a consumer survey aiming to test and develop the model further.*

## **Getting a Squirrel to Focus: How to Communicate with and Persuade Today's Listeners**

Patricia B. Scott, Ph.D.  
Lecturer, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, USA  
Founder, Uhmms  
patscott@uhmms.com

*Getting your message across is harder today than it has ever been. More information, more distractions and shorter attention spans provide competition for every message you create. It is hard to get your audience to listen and they jump from one thought to the next very quickly. This jumpy and sporadic listening behavior reminds me of the squirrels I see in the yard. They are constantly moving and seem unfocused. The only thing that seems to gain and hold their interest is an acorn.*

*Through my years of experience in research and teaching, I have found that squirrels are much like today's audiences. We need a way to get our audience's attention and keep it. The ACORN strategy presented in this article is an efficient and academically proven communication strategy to get your audience focused on your message.*

## **Exploring and Categorizing Employer Branding TTools Implemented in Italian Companies**

Alfonso Siano, Maria Palazzo, Carmela Tuccillo  
University of Salerno, Italy  
sianoalf@unisa.it, mpalazzo@unisa.it, ctuccillo@unisa.it

*The purpose of this paper is to identify and analyse the Employer Branding (EB) tools that some Italian organizations use to attract, recruit, and retain highly skilled employees. To reach this aim, we conducted a brief literature review. This paper includes an analysis of three Italian firms involved in three different sectors. We collected data about these companies via an e-mail survey. We propose a classification of EB tools of the surveyed Italian companies, using a checklist to analyse the existing literature on EB objectives and tools. The main finding is that there are some tools that these companies use to interact with their employees and potential employees.*

*The paper offers useful information about EB objectives and tools for managers and practitioners who implement EB strategy. Moreover, it could be considered a first step in a stream of research, different aspects of which are yet unexplored. The topic is a key factor in an under-researched field of study. The paper maps the most important tools involved in the implementation of EB. However, the small sample analyses the tools used by only three Italian companies.*

**Type of Paper:** *Research paper*

**Keywords:** *Employer branding, employers, internal and external marketing, branding*

# **Alignment or Bust -- A Case Study in Communicating Through a Crisis: How Strategic Communications Helped Tenneco Survive the Great Recession**

Jim Spangler  
Tenneco Inc., USA  
Jspangler@Tenneco.com

## ***Case Study Summary:***

*Tenneco Inc. entered 2009 unsure it would survive the first quarter, let alone be around to celebrate its tenth birthday (Nov. 5, 2009) as a global automotive supply company. Its three primary stakeholders – employees, customers and investors – shared these concerns, especially given the crushing impact the global financial crisis was exerting on the automotive industry. Rather than changing strategic course, Tenneco’s management team quickly reprioritized its near-term business plans to focus on cash generation and cost management, without sacrificing its long-term global growth imperatives. The Global Communications team was charged with developing and implementing an integrated strategic communications campaign to address stakeholders’ concerns and drive alignment, buy-in and execution around the company’s response plans. This case study will cover the globally applied corporate communications practices that helped drive Tenneco’s business success in 2009, validated by improved operating results, increased employee morale, significant new business wins, and strengthening investor confidence.*

# **Examining the Effects of Over Communication of Crisis Preparedness Messages by Governments: Testing the Crisis Message Processing Model**

Kester Tay, Rasiah Raslyn Agatha,  
May O. Lwin, Augustine Pang  
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
tayy0025@ntu.edu.sg, razzybabe@mac.com  
tmaylwin@ntu.edu.sg, Augustine.Pang@ntu.edu.sg

*While some scholars have advocated a balance between under- and over-communication in crisis messaging (Sandman, 2001), what remains unclear is what are the adverse effects of excessively intensifying and repeating such messages, and how a balance can be achieved. This study answers the call by scholars to understand audience reactions to crisis messaging (Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2007). Adapting from EPPM and crisis literature, we developed a model to examine how preparedness messages using threat appeals can cause both desirable and undesirable psychological effects. This second stage of testing utilized an experiment with a pandemic scenario to test the model. The findings strongly supported our model, which we believe provides a useful framework for practitioners to understand the effects of crisis messages and consequently how to communicate in the recommended most effective, efficient and ethical manner.*

## **Staff Attitudes to Talking Openly about Ethical Dilemmas: The Role of Business Ethics Conceptions and Trust**

N. Leila Trapp

Department of Language and Business Communication  
Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Denmark  
ltr@asb.dk

*To ensure ethical employee behavior, companies often use several forms of mostly one-way communication such as codes of conduct. The extent to which these efforts, in addition to informing about the company stance on ethics, are able to positively influence behavior is disputed. Research on business ethics communication and behavior reveals that open workplace dialogue about ethics can be a good predictor of ethical conduct. Therefore, in this paper I address the question: What influences employee attitudes about open discussion of ethical issues? I present answers discovered in focus group interviews at the healthcare company Novo Nordisk.*

*I found that two main factors influenced interest: employee conceptualizations of business ethics and the level of inter-collegial trust, credibility, and confidence. In this paper, by examining these phenomena, I aim to provide insight that can help managers in their attempts to promote open workplace dialogue about ethical issues.*

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