CONFERENCE ON CORPORATE COMMUNICATION 2015

June 2 – 5, 2015
Baruch College/CUNY, New York, NY USA

ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

OFFERED IN ASSOCIATION WITH ...

Corporate Communications: An International Journal
Michael B. Goodman, Ph.D., Conference Chair & Director
CCI - Corporate Communication International at Baruch College/CUNY, USA
Regional Editor - North America
Corporate Communications: An International Journal, UK

Christina M. Genest, M.A., Conference Coordinator & Associate Director
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Corporate Communications: An International Journal, UK

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Published June 2015 by CCI - Corporate Communication International at Baruch College/CUNY, New York, NY. Please contact the authors for permission to reprint.
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(NOTE: This Introduction is an excerpt from Goodman and Hirsch, Corporate Communication: Critical Business Asset for Strategic Global Change. NY: Peter Lang, 2015, pp. 150 - 153.)

The way things are manufactured has changed dramatically over the last several decades since Toyota replaced the 19th-century industrial revolution assembly line process with the “just in time manufacturing” concept in the late 1970s auto industry sector. With these changes, which ushered in enormous increases in product quality as a result of the Total Quality Management movement, also came greater complexity of supply chains, which now involve multiple countries and multiple vendors.

With such complexity also comes the need to track the actions of each vendor along the supply chain. Even with advanced tracking and management techniques, there are many risks along the way.

Bob Lutz, former vice-chairman of General Motors and author of Car Guys vs. Bean Counters, wrote in response to the Horsemeat Scandal in Europe February 2013:

A complex supply chain is the organizational equivalent of a complex living organism in which each element, specialized in function, thrives symbiotically within the whole. But the number of elements increases risk. In the car industry, recalls are almost never caused by the manufacturer’s own engineering lapses, by deviation in some material or process at a supplier, sub-supplier or sub-sub-supplier.

Yet there is no viable alternative. In modern industry and agriculture, failure to capitalize on the efficiency of the global supply chain would render the enterprise uncompetitive in both cost and quality. The bottom line is that it is a calculated risk. (Lutz 10)

The supply chain for food is certainly full of risk. The manufacture of electronics would seem less so. Apple and almost every maker of computers and consumer electronics uses a global network of vendors and suppliers to make what customers want at prices they are willing to pay, but these complex supply networks come with risk.
Apple and the Supply Chain

In New York in early 2012 Mike Daisey performed his monologue, “The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs.” The monologue focused on the labor conditions at the Foxconn factory in China that assembles electronic products for almost all major manufacturers, but specifically for Apple products. His off-Broadway piece was successful and powerful in its verbal depiction of how these products are made almost entirely by hand. He was subsequently interviewed by Ira Glass on NPR’s “This American Life,” and performed an excerpt from his monologue. A scandal erupted over the “facts” Daisey had cited, and NPR retracted the show two months later.

On his blog, Daisey wrote,

> everything I have done in making this monologue for the theater was bent toward that end, to make people care. I’m not going to say that I didn’t take a few shortcuts in my passion to be heard. But I stand behind the work. My mistake, the mistake I truly regret, is that I had it on your show as journalism. And it’s not journalism. It’s theater. It uses the tools of theater and memoir to achieve its dramatic arc. And of that arc and that work I’m very proud. Because I think it made you care, Ira. And I think it made you want to delve. And my hope is it has made other people delve. (“Sunday, March 25, 2012”)

People had already begun to question the labor conditions at the Foxconn factory in China. Then, in the spring of 2010, several workers committed suicide by jumping from the dormitory tower, shocking the people of China into a national discussion of the conditions that brought this about.

In 2008 New-York-based China Labor Watch and its network of labor activists in mainland China began reporting on labor conditions in Shenzhen, Guangdong, at the Foxconn factories, a subsidiary of Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd, founded in 1974 by Taiwanese entrepreneur Terry Guo. After several suicides at Foxconn’s Shenzhen factory in 2010, the Chinese newspaper, Southern Weekend, decided to launch an underground investigation of the factory. Their full-time reporters who had tried to pose as job seekers were rejected by Foxconn for being too old. A 23-year-old intern applied and was hired. “His report, which appeared in full in both Chinese and English, provided a window on to the hopeless existence of Foxconn’s disheartened young workers” (Bauer).

Similar to the labor issues that confronted Nike in the 1990s, which spawned boycotts that forced changes in their manufacturing practices, Apple users were appalled. But they were not outraged enough to give up their Macs, iPads, and iPods. “The company was pushed to the point where its brand image was at risk and where
Apple’s customers were signaling loud and clear—without even having to utter the “B” word—that the behavior was unacceptable” (Bauer).

Major global corporations have been accused of falling short of their own labor and trade standards when operating far from corporate headquarters. How have they responded, and do their current practices now reflect who they say they are as well as meet emerging global social standards for corporate responsibility and good behavior? According to Jorge Perez-Lopez, executive director, Fair Labor Association (Profits and Politics), The FLA now works with businesses and governments more collaboratively to establish global standards for labor and workplace conditions.

If nothing else, the controversy Mike Daisey created with “The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs” shed a bright light on Apple and fanned the debate about how, and by whom, Apple products are made.

But what is old is new again. One hundred years ago the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in New York shocked the world. On March 26, 1911, The New York Times’ front page headline read, “141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire; Trapped High Up in Washington Place Building; Street Strewn with Bodies; Piles of Dead Inside.” The description was graphic:

Three stories of a ten-floor building at the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place were burned yesterday, and while the fire was going on 141 young men and women at least 125 of them mere girls were burned to death or killed by jumping to the pavement below….Most of the victims were suffocated or burned to death within the building, but some who fought their way to the windows and leaped met death as surely, but perhaps more quickly, on the pavements below….The victims who are now lying at the Morgue waiting for some one to identify them by a tooth or the remains of a burned shoe were mostly girls from 16 to 23 years of age. They were employed at making shirtwaist by the Triangle Waist Company, the principal owners of which are Isaac Harris and Max Blanck. Most of them could barely speak English. Many of them came from Brooklyn. Almost all were the main support of their hard-working families.

(“141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire,” 1)
An Introduction: Political Opportunities and Risks Within and Across Borders

Just over 100 years later at the Tazreen Fashions factory in Ashulia, Bangladesh, a fire killed at least 112 people on November 24, 2012. Garments were being made there under contract for Simco Bangladesh Ltd., which had contracted with Wal-Mart to produce 300,000 units of shorts for girls. According to The Wall Street Journal,

Many of the world's biggest brands have turned to Bangladesh as a low-cost production base, and Wal-Mart has become the largest buyer, sourcing more than $1 billion in garments annually, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. What happened with Wal-Mart's order illustrates the pitfalls of doing business here. Facing capacity constraints, Simco subcontracted the work to another company without Wal-Mart's authorization, the Simco executive said. Wal-Mart, which said it has strict rules for factories manufacturing its orders, declined to respond to specific queries about the shorts order. (Lahari and Zain Al-Mahmood)

Sean Ansett and Jeffrey Hantover in “Bangladesh Factory Fires—The Hidden Dangers of Subcontracting,” offered these solutions:

the 112 fatalities at Tazreen Fashions have put the spotlight on the problem of unauthorized and unmonitored subcontracting in the global supply chain. There is no silver bullet but there are practical steps that can be taken to address the pressures underlying unauthorized subcontracting.

- Longer-term trust based relationships between retailers and suppliers…
- Developing financial incentives for suppliers…
- Retailer consultation and financial support…
- Appropriate product pricing…
- The implementation of new communications technology…
- Greater communication between retailer compliance and design divisions to make sure the compliance consequences of design changes are understood.
- Improved protocols to monitor supplier production capacity.
- Full disclosure of supply chain production units and recalibration of buyer bonus plans…
- Retailer commitment not to accept any goods produced in unauthorized subcontractors regardless of impact on their seasonal product range.

References

“141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire; Trapped High Up in Washington Place Building; Street Strewn with Bodies; Piles of Dead Inside,” The New York Times. 26 March 1911, p. 1
http://mikedaisey.com/Mike_Daisey_TATESJ_transcript_2.0.pdf
[The Symposium explored ESG, the acronym which describes the three areas of focus used—environment, social and governance—when measuring and reporting on business sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Speakers included: Gary Sheffer, Vice President, Communications & Public Affairs, General Electric; Amy Davidsen, Executive Director, The Climate Group; Jorge Perez-Lopez, Executive Director, Fair Labor Association; Jeanette M. Franzel, Board Member, PCAOB.]
Corporate Communication International
Conference on Corporate Communication 2015

The annual Corporate Communication International’s Conference on Corporate Communication is an 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 The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Kowloon, Hong Kong to exchange information and explore communication from a global perspective.

CCI’s Conference on Corporate Communication 2015 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 papers in Corporate Communication: An International Journal.

The three-day conference features speakers joined by attendees from: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Turkey, UK and USA.

The papers published here were selected based on a peer review process. We are also grateful to the members of the CCI Conference on Corporate Communication 2015 Program Committee for their insight and expertise in making this conference a success. They are:

- Norm Booth, D Litt, Coyne Public Relations, USA
- Shui Duen Chan, PhD, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
- Wim Elving, PhD, Corporate Communications: An International Journal
- Jesper Falkheimer, PhD, Lund University, Sweden
- Finn Frandsen, Mag Art, Aarhus University
- Roger Hutt, PhD, Arizona State University, USA
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Pat Scott, PhD, University of Pennsylvania & Uhmms Corp., USA
Jo-ann Straat, MA, Daichi Sankyo (retired), USA
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Active Involvement of Citizens in Water Innovation
Challenges from a Corporate Communication Perspective

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How to facilitate citizen participation in the transition towards a robust water management system? Active involvement of citizens is expected to facilitate innovation processes that address complex water challenges. Although public participation has been a hot topic for the last decades, also among water professionals, actual experiences have resulted in mixed feelings and even negative outcomes. Good quality relations turn out to be the key to successfully involving citizens. In order to design corporate communication approaches that facilitate development and management of such relations in a water innovation context, several specific challenges need to be overcome: 1) citizens are traditionally very low-involved in water-related services, 2) high degrees of risk aversion with respect to water innovation exist among water utilities, decision-makers and citizens and 3) the diversity in perspectives on water, expectations of participative processes, motivations to get involved in water-related innovated processes is very high and do not necessarily match with existing segmentations of the general public. Addressing these challenges (activating low-involved citizens, lowering the degree of risk aversion, and dealing with great stakeholder diversity) is required to develop improved guidelines that effectively support water organizations to actively involve citizens in water-related innovation processes.
An Analysis of Internal Communication as a Key Driver of Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance
A Perspective on LG Electronics, South Korea

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This paper encapsulates the analysis of internal communication through two strategic functions at LG Electronics, namely the Jeong-do management philosophy and LG-way method. The two functions serve as the epitome of understanding how internal communication functions as a value-added contribution to engaged employees, and with emphasis on how feasible the management leadership philosophy is in driving organizational performance and the acceleration of engagement. A qualitative approach is employed and empirically verified through a sample of internal employees. Moreover, the two distinct approaches are examined to expose the theoretical conceptualization. The results of the analysis, among others, indicate the importance of applying two organizational functions that drive organizational success through internal communication. Furthermore, both the Jeong-do and LG-way are entrenched in the dominant coalition of traditional and cultural structures of LG Electronics through a bottom-up approach.

Keywords: Internal communication; Employee engagement; LG Electronics; Jeong-do management philosophy; LG-way and Organizational performance.
Anatomy of an Earnings Call

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**Purpose:** The role of the quarterly earnings call as a medium of corporate communication is analyzed and discussed. Of particular interest is the degree to which management discusses issues and initiatives beyond the operational and financial results for the most recent quarter.

**Approach:** A corporation’s earnings call transcripts were examined using text analysis procedures.

**Findings:** In addition to factors impacting earnings in the quarter, management discussed extensively the corporate strategy and supporting details for upcoming significant changes in the company. The potential impact of participants’ questions on the content and length of the call was also noted.

**Research implications:** Research questions and topics for future research are recommended.

**Practical implications:** Quarterly earnings calls function as communication media and should be integrated into the planning and execution of the corporate communication strategy.

**Key words:** Corporate communication, Quarterly earnings call, Strategic management

**Paper type:** Case study
Applying Ethical Theories to the Corporate Communication Decision-Making Process

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Despite making considerable progress toward becoming ethical advisors in management, modern corporate communication professionals battle the profession’s tarnished history in its quest to infuse the ethical decision-making process into its counseling role. Furthermore, the profession’s reliance on persuasion and propaganda add to public sentiment that corporate communication by its very nature cannot be an ethical profession.

The authors will explore value conflict resolution between moral obligations that are difficult to reconcile and require moral reasoning. In particular, the researchers will explore how practitioners apply theories of ethical decision-making to address corporate dilemmas.

The authors will conduct a series of focus groups using a case study approach. Respondents will discuss ethical decision-making using Aristotle’s Golden Mean, John Rawl’s Veil of Ignorance, Mills’ Utilitarianism, Kant’s Categorical Imperative, and the Judeo/Christian Principle. The researchers will create a Potter model analysis to compare the results across the focus groups.

Keywords: Ethical, Persuasion, Propaganda, Potter model, Rawls, Aristotle, Mills, Kant, Judeo/Christian Principle

Paper Type: Research in progress
Barriers of Internal Communication and Information Sharing

A Qualitative Approach

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Internal communication is an important tool for information sharing related to task effectiveness as well as it plays a role in building relationships. Unfortunately, internal communication is often underplayed due to time constraints. Relying on phenomenological data collection approach and analysis driven by grounded theory a qualitative study was conducted to better understand barriers to communication and information sharing in a consulting organization. Employees of a diverse consulting organization were asked to answer open-ended interview questions in relation to the study focus. Findings indicate an excessive workload, “hall talk,” and self-serving behavior appear to impede internal communication and information sharing within the organization. Findings suggest a need for intervention strategies designed to overcome the identified barriers.
A Big Gamble on the Future Workforce

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Jeanette Wing’s seminal talk on computational thinking has led to millions of dollars in funding to promote the development of computational thinking and prepare students for the future economy. This paper provides an overview of the rise of computational thinking, the various ways of assessing computational thinking abilities, and current research on its implications in business—specifically in the field of communication. Current scholarship assumes that it is desirable to develop computational thinking abilities in students for future business success in any field. Investigating computational thinking research reveals that this assumption is not substantiated by data. Future research could test this theory by investigating the possible correlation between computational thinking abilities and career advancement in various non-STEM fields.

Category: Corporate culture and employee engagement, Strategic corporate communication management

Key words: Computational thinking, Knowledge economy, Information literacy, Creative class

Paper Type: Research
Breaking Bad News with CONSOLE

Toward a Framework Integrating Medical Protocols with Crisis Communication

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Purpose: This paper develops the CONSOLE (Coherence/ Orientation/ Nuance/ Support/ Ongoing/ Leadership/ Empathy) framework to guide practitioners on how to break bad news effectively to stakeholders during crises.

Approach: The CONSOLE framework is applied on four aviation crises to examine the manner in which practitioners had broken bad news on social media platforms, which are increasingly used to communicate with stakeholders (Siah, Bansal & Pang, 2010). Data was obtained during the height of the crisis (Vasterman, 2005) from official Twitter and Facebook pages of Malaysian Airlines, Air Asia and Asiana Airlines.

Expected Findings: The airlines’ communication of bad news to stakeholders appeared to suffer from emotional deficit.

Research limitations/implications: It is arguably the first study integrating well-established medical protocols such as SPIKES (Baile et al., 2000) and COMFORT (Villagran et al., 2010) with crisis communication literature.

Practical implications: Practitioners can use the framework to break bad news in a holistic and empathetic manner during crises.

Keywords Breaking bad news, Social media, crisis communication, Medical protocols

Paper type: Research
Capturing the Intangible

The Added Value of Internal Communication

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If internal communication is to be a topic worthy of study one needs to know which goals it serves within the organization. A total of 50 companies, each with 1,000+ employees, were selected from a list of the 250 biggest Belgian employers. In depth interviews with the professionals responsible for internal communication were transcribed verbatim and analyzed with the qualitative data analyze software package Atlas ti. Based on our extensive data we can define the role of internal communication as to deliver “official” corporate messages, facilitate internal communication flows, support the achievement of HR goals, and act as an internal customer service. However none of our interviewees was capable of stating clearly how internal communication added tangible value to the organization’s activities. Therefore research is needed to further develop a scientific body of knowledge, which can be used as a means to professionalize internal communication in the future.

Keywords: Internal communication, Professionalization, Body of knowledge, Added value

Paper Type: Research
Communicative Complexity and the Presence of Chief Communication Officers in Top Management Teams

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This paper investigates under which communicative conditions firms include a chief communication officer (CCO) in their top management teams, based on the argument that CCO presence is associated with the firm's desired differentiation, its media presence, the extent of its physical presence, its diversification, and its size. A total of 634 firm-year observations from 228 companies from the years 2005, 2008, and 2011 were analyzed. CCOs were present in about 29% of top management teams. The findings of a t-test suggest that desired differentiation, media presence, diversification, and firm size are associated with the presence of a CCO, while physical presence is not. No significant regression model of the data could be built, which suggests that it is not necessarily always the combination of these factors together that contributes to the decision to add a CCO to the executive team. Rather, the interplay of factors that contribute to the appointment of a CCO seems to vary from company to company and may be tied to particular events.
Conceptualizing Knowledge Communication for Project Management

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In the field of project management, the search for better ways to manage projects is ongoing. One of the more recent trends in the literature focuses on the integration of knowledge management in project management environments. Advantages of integrating knowledge management into projects can be seen by the 2007 Project of the Year, where the Project Manager used knowledge management and transparent communication with stakeholders, resulting in a project that finished years early and was substantially under budget. (Hildebrand 2008) Knowledge management relies on communication practices. Seely Brown and Nonaka, among other scholars, imply that communication is central to knowledge management; however, concepts related to how communication about project knowledge works at the operational level are implicit or out of focus. To place communication more centrally in our understanding of project knowledge for project management, this paper focuses on extending Knowledge Management to include concepts related to communicating knowledge from the fields of rhetoric, knowledge communication, and corporate communication.

Keywords: Knowledge communication, Knowledge management, Project management, Internal communication

Paper Type: Technical Concept
Corporate Brand Personality and Consumer Purchases

The Mediating Role of Social Media

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Purpose: Past research indicates that brand personality positively influences consumer choice. Furthermore, due to the increasing use of digital technology by consumers, the consumer’s voice is becoming more influential in the formation of a brand’s personality pre- and post-purchase of a brand. This paper proposes that corporate brand personality, communicated through the social media can influence consumer purchases because the social media possesses referent power.

Approach: A triangulated research approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods is used in the study.

Findings: There are indications that the agreeableness dimension of corporate brand personality plays a role in the referent power of the social media and that the social media mediates the relationship between corporate brand personality and consumer purchases.

Research implications: This paper advances corporate brand personality literature by demonstrating that the personality concept has origins in psychology and law. In addition, managers are provided with insights into the communication of specific personality traits via the social media.

Keywords: Corporate branding, Corporate brand personality, Brand management, Social media

Paper Type: Research
Corporate Communication and Online Impression Management

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Association for Business Communication (ABC)
Special Panel Presentation

Originally applied to the behaviors of individuals, impression management theory maintains that verbal and nonverbal practices of persons are often consciously or unconsciously selected in order to influence the perceptions of others. During recent decades, impression management has also referred to the practices of corporations and other organizations to create public images that enhance or sustain institutional reputations. Interactive websites and social media offer promising opportunities for the effective management of public perceptions by professional communicators. In this presentation, three members of the Association for Business Communication (ABC) offer studies intended to identify the great potential - and also the hazards - of online corporate and professional impression management.
Crisis Management in Government

A Study of the Chibok Girls Crisis in Nigeria

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The aim of this research is to investigate the role that crisis communication plays when a government is facing a crisis.

In performing this research, content analysis of international print media coverage and social media comments (Twitter & Facebook) was carried out to determine the public’s perception of the handling of the crisis and the reasoning behind it.

Interviews were conducted with five experts; whose responses served as indicators for the type of questions to be directed to a wider audience of respondents via survey questions. 202 people responded to the survey.
The findings revealed that many crisis communication theories discussed in this dissertation are applicable to government crises.

It was discovered that the reputation of the organisation and its leader suffered a hit as a result of the crisis, and that the first response of an organisation plays a large role in the way a crisis will play out.

The importance of action to back up communication and public relations during a crisis was established.

Keywords: Crisis, Crisis management, Reputation, Social media, Public relations, Government communication, Stakeholders, Opinion leaders, #BringBackOurGirls
Culture through Crisis

How Organizations’ Missions, Cultures and Resources Shaped Employee Communications on 9/11

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This case study is an audit of how various organizations and companies handled employee communications on the day of, and shortly after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The paper compares communications strategies between three different public and private industries (the first responders, the travel industry and the financial industry). The study analyzes how different cultures, missions and resources within these three industries impacted employee communications. In addition to providing a snapshot of the realities faced by corporations and organizations on 9/11, the report synthesizes four recommendations for crisis planners to consider when crafting employee communications plans. Select companies in the audit include: Verizon, Merrill Lynch, Cantor Fitzgerald, as well as the New York Police Department (NYPD), the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and the Fire Department of New York City (FDNY). Research includes communications studies, quotes derived from oral histories, media clips, as well as first person interviews.

Keywords: Employee communications, 9/11, Company culture, Employee behavior, Crisis planning, Crisis communications, Terrorism, 9/11 attacks, First responders, Organizational culture.
Developing E-HIMM
A Qualitative Exploration of How Online Information Seeking and Sexual Health Perceptions Influence Efficacy and Communicative Action

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The purpose of this study is to explore young adults’ meaning construction of sexual health, sexual health campaigns, and online sexual health information through 50 in-depth interviews and five focus group sessions. Themes emerged regarding sexual health perceptions, online information seeking, and campaign development. Findings suggested that young adults were aware of the issue of poor sexual health, but faced a number of constraints that prevented them from reaching their optimal health potential. These were alleviated by the benefits of searching for information online. This study demonstrates the utility of an integrated theoretical framework in campaign planning, which was explicated through the development of the E-Health Information Management Model (E-HIMM). The findings revealed that the integrated constructs of E-HIMM were readily present in the knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions of the participants, which could provide useful evidence for campaign developers when constructing messages for the young adult audience.

Keywords: e-health, Sexual health, Communication campaigns, Online information seeking

Paper Type: Research
Developing a Thematic Categorization System for Leaders’ Web-based Communication in Greater China

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Web-based messages posted on corporate websites have emerged as a primary mode of communication between corporate leaders and stakeholders for Chinese corporations in the Greater China region. However, research investigating the prominent themes embedded in leaders’ messages is lacking. The present study, therefore, aims at developing an up-to-date thematic categorization of Chinese corporate leaders’ communication intended for different groups of stakeholders. By analyzing the web-based messages of leading corporations in Greater China with WordSmith 6.0 and corroborating the findings through interviews with corporate communication professionals, this study has identified six prominent themes in leaders’ communication with their stakeholders. These themes include, in order of importance, company development, operating philosophy, company profile, business environment, performance, and products and services. This study informs prospective stakeholders about the focus of business and highlights the communication practices of leaders in Greater China, and therefore, has a potential to offer value to academics and practitioners.

Keywords: Leader communication; Web-based messages, Corporate leaders, Thematic categorization system, Communication practices, Greater China
Different Perceptions of a Crisis Dependent on the Public’s
Reaction to Crisis's Predictability and Controllability and Public's
Brand Loyalty

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The issue of evaluating crises was widely studied in the last decade, with work examining, for
instance, the crisis type and previous relationship to reputation to predict the level of
reputational threat to an organization and public’s perception of that organization (Coombs,
2007) and more recently, the impact that crises have on publics’ emotions and their behavioral
tendencies according to their appraisals (Jin, 2010).

This study aims to answer the following question: How public perceive a crisis differently
according to their existing brand loyalty and crisis’ controllability and predictability and how
their brand loyalty is changed after the crisis. A 2 (predictability: high and low) x 2
(controllability: high and low) x 2 (brand loyalty: high and low) between-subjects experimental
design with 240 undergraduate students will be used. At first, students’ brand loyalty with the
chosen brand will be measured before they are exposed to experimental stimuli. The results of
their pre-exposure brand loyalty will be used to dichotomize participants into two groups: higher
brand loyalty group vs. lower brand loyalty group. Then, each student, from each of the two
brand loyalty groups, will be randomly assigned to one of the 4 different types of stimuli to read
(i.e., high predictability and high controllability, high predictability and low controllability, low
predictability and high controllability, low predictability and low controllability) about one real
existing brand in a hypothetical crisis scenario. After reading the crisis scenario, their opinion on
what type of crisis this is, how they feel about this crisis and this brand, how their behavior will
be changed towards this brand’s product, as consumers will be measured. Data will be analyzed
to detect whether there is a different supportive behavior according to different types of crises.
Post-crisis brand loyalty will be measured as well.

This is an ongoing study. The results have the potential to make recommendations concerning
how organizations can anticipate public sentiments and behaviors toward the organization in
different crisis situations in order to respond to crises effectively.

**Keywords:** Risk communication, Experiment, Crisis predictability, Crisis controllability, Brand
loyalty, Public’s emotion, and Consumer behavior

**Paper type:** Research
References


A Discourse Analysis of Transnational Business Oaths

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Since the financial crisis of 2008, lack of public trust in industry, government and the banking sector has redoubled calls in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Canada for oath-taking by executives and managers as proof of their commitment to accountability and ethical practice. Business oaths, like oaths more generally, are performative utterances with binding moral force (Sulmasy, 1999; de Bruin, 2014) and a growing place in trust-building and image-repair aligned to corporate ethics, social responsibility, and respect for stakeholder interests. Through the lens of image restoration theory and rhetorical and linguistic analysis, this paper explores the concept of the business oath, the role of oath-taking in business ethics, and the relationship of business oaths to a colony of value-declaring genres that includes codes of conduct, mission statements and corporate social responsibility reports. The results of this analysis of transnational oaths from business, the banking industry and MBA programs will contribute to an understanding of the conditions and criteria such oaths typically satisfy and how they capture the spirit of related genres while retaining distinct rhetorical structures.

Keywords: Business oaths, Professional oaths, Discourse analysis, Image restoration, Ethics

Paper type: Research

References

The DNA of Change

The Code for Effective Organizational Change

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Many organizations fail when implementing change. Effective change demands employee engagement and strategic communication.

By examining the connection between employee engagement and strategic communication in organizational change together with the findings in the case study, “New Health”, a conceptual model for the DNA of change has emerged. The model is used to further an effective change process and to ensure the primary strategic goals of change in the case study.

The conceptual model, ‘The DNA of Change’, shows employee engagement and the values, vision, identity and leadership in the organization as being the unique alphabet of the DNA string. Thus, the model offers an understanding of the process of change, which can be made operative and contribute to its success.

A large project, like ‘New Health’ (a visionary building project), that in everyday life is primarily seen as a building project (1, 3 bill. Dkr.) rather than a project of change, can easily miss the strategic goals of change if these are not communicated and prioritized.

Employees must be focused on the process of change, and the strategic communication and actions must be described in relation to the goals of change. Furthermore, the communication and the actions must also be in line with the values, vision, identity, and leadership in the organization. ‘The DNA of change’ is a way of seeing the organization during the change process, guiding it effectively through it.

Keywords: Change, Strategic communication, Employee engagement, Culture, Strategic goal, Effective change, University

Paper Type: Case study
Doing the Right Things or Doing Things Right?
Paradoxes and Swedish Communication Professionals’ Roles and Mission

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Corporate or strategic communication is essentially defined by its contribution to business goals. However, many communication professionals still seem to struggle with doing the right things rather than just doing things right. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on and analyze the roles, missions and practices of communication professionals in Sweden. The paper is based on survey results from The European Communication Monitor 2014 and qualitative interviews with communication managers. First, we present the ECM data and the Swedish interview material, i.e. we depict the practitioners’ perceptions of what they understand as important work tasks and roles. The interviews focus on the actual practices of linking communication goals to business goals. Second, the results are challenged from a reflexive perspective, using theories from the paradox turn within organization studies and questioning the “taken-for-granted thinking” in corporate communications.

Keywords: Communication professionals, Roles, Mission, Corporate/strategic communication, and Paradoxes

Paper Type: Research
**Dress Responsibly**

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in China’s Textile and Clothing Industry**

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore the development of CSR in China during the last decade and to shed light on the current challenges and future opportunities. The textile and clothing industry is selected as the context of study due to its relative maturity in CSR practices.

**Approach:** The primary data collection method is semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews with experienced practitioners who are responsible for CSR. Secondary data sources, including companies, industry and government documents, databases and statistics deemed to be reliable provide a holistic view.

**Findings:** Despite developing at a slower pace than overall economic progress, the outlook for the evolution of CSR in China is positive. Increases in companies engaging in CSR and in consumer awareness are evident, with explicated examples of diversified CSR programs. Key challenges and trends from the perspective of industry practitioners have been brought together in the study.

**Implications or applications:** Implications for allocating resources and making specific adaptations to this unique territory are discussed. The study suggests that in this fast developing country with a highly competitive talent pool, effective local use of CSR will enable significant advantages in employee recruitment and retention.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility, Sustainability, Corporate communication, textile and clothing industry, China.
Effective Media Relations Across the Crisis Lifecycle

Media Influencers’ Perspectives for Online and Offline Engagement

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Media relations are paramount during crises. Yet, little is explicated on how organizations should conduct relations with both online and mainstream media before and after the crisis. This paper examines the key tasks and thrusts of media relations throughout Wilcox & Cameron’s (2009) four-staged crisis lifecycle. A framework of effective media relations is constructed based on existing literature. Since it is the onus of organizations to understand how journalists operate (Pang, 2010), journalists are interviewed to see if their needs are met in the framework. The results show media relations more or less remained reactive. Most of the organizations place little emphasis on developing relationship with the media and engaging them before and after the crisis, which rile journalists. This framework provides a staged approach to enable and maintain media relations for any organization.

Keywords: Effective media relations, Crisis lifecycle, Crisis, Media influencers

Paper-Type: Research
Effects of Listeners’ Cognitive and Emotional Characteristics on the Success of Question Evasion by International Corporate Communicators

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At an infamous press conference in 2013, CEO Shantanu Narayen did not answer why Adobe charges Australians much more for online supplies of its traditional software than US customers. He preferred talking about Adobe’s new Creative Cloud software, where prices were harmonized. We investigate which cognitive, emotional and linguistic factors make listeners fall for evasion strategies by “artful dodgers” in international corporate communication. In a 2x2x2 experimental design, a fashion retailer’s spokesperson made the same statement about the wages of garment factory workers to a question that was about wages (correct) or about child labor (similar) – in the local language or international English. Evasion was generally successful and unaffected by individual differences in working memory and emotionality in both languages with 38% to 75% of the dodged listeners being unable to recognize the original question asked. This suggests that the success of evasion largely depends on a corporate spokesperson’s communicative skills.
Employer Branding vs. Employer Branding
Taxonomy of Employer Branding Practices in Large Companies

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Purpose: To explore the employer branding practices in large companies in Denmark. The academic conceptualization of employer branding did not yet reach a consensus and based on the cross-disciplinary nature of the concept, there are fundamentally different definitions and understandings of, not only what employer branding is, but also what its principles are and how can this be implemented in organizations.

Methodology: After conducting a review of the relevant literature on employer branding conceptualization and characteristic elements, the results from qualitative interviews with employer brand managers in fourteen large companies in Denmark were presented.

Findings: Based on the different approaches to employer branding, a typology will be developed based on the fundamental principles applied in the organization which are primarily based on the ownership of the employer branding responsibility in the company.

Research implications: Further research is needed to explore employer branding practices in other contexts with the intention of leading towards a consensus.

Practical implications: Companies should understand the employer branding concept and its fundamental principles in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

Keywords: Employer branding, Managers, Typology, Principles

Paper type: Research
Engaging Alumni Mindfully

Building Organic Connection Between Capacity, Communication Quality and Donor Relations

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With the constantly changing and growing vehicles of communication and the desire of individuals to focus their support on things that matter to them, the need and difficulty of getting alumni actively involved with their alma mater is greater today than ever before. Grounded in relationship management and stakeholder theories, this study looks at alumni’s overall confidence in the school and education received, identification with the school, reputation of the school, and issues of affinity to determine if alumni support the school as well as their past giving behaviors and intentions to give in the future.

The findings provide a deeper look at capacity of giving and indicators of capacity, which will help universities and academic units better communicate with their constituents and understand how likely alumni are to support the school and how to engage them more effectively.

Keywords: Alumni engagement, Donor relations, Support, Communication quality, Organic connection, Capacity, Intention, Relationship management, Stakeholder

Paper Type: Research
Expectation and Satisfaction Towards Digital Media as Predictors of Brand Relationships

A Tentative Framework

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This is a conceptual paper funded by Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) under the Research Acculturation Collaborative Effort (RACE) Grant (File No: 600-RMI/RACE 16/6/2(20/2013)) that proposes a new tentative framework for predicting brand relationships when conducting mass communication research by providing predictions about gratifications and continuance intentions. The paper discusses Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and later suggests the insertion of Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) represented by conformity and disconformity, in predicting brand value, reputation and potential from the use of digital media. The paper goes on to analyze a number of theoretical paradigms that are suitable for the theoretical framework proposed, and in greater detail discusses the positivism paradigm. The uses of Partial Least Squares as a statistical procedure for the proposed theoretical framework is later discussed. The paper ends with recommendations to consider EDT as mediating variables in future research as it has the ability to predict brand relationships by foreseeing consumer behavior.
From Evert to Sharapova 1970-2014
How Has the Portrayal of Female Athletes Evolved in Print Advertising

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The aim of this paper is to investigate how the portrayal of female athletes has evolved, focusing particularly on top-ranking and popular female tennis players by analyzing both photographic images of these athletes featured on covers of Sports Illustrated and their respective endorsement deals. Using focus groups and content analysis, the paper attempts to investigate ‘To what extent has the portrayal of female athletes evolved in print advertising?’ Early endorsement opportunities for female tennis players focused on the players’ stereotypical female roles rather than their athletic abilities. More recently, advertising has celebrated athletic competence, but also focuses on self-objectification and attractiveness. This study found that consumers’ reaction to the use of feminine attractiveness in print advertising seems to be one of acceptance. The constant bombardment of female attractiveness seems to have allowed society to be more receptive of these images.

Keywords: Advertising, Female athletes, Magazine cover

Paper Type: Research paper
From Output to Impact

How to Increase the Accountability of a Communication Department by Making Use of Available Data within the Organization

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Purpose: Currently, there is little insight into how Chief Communication Officers (CCOs) perceive accountability in communication and how they make use of data to increase accountability in their organizations. The aim of this paper is to identify the problems CCOs face in this context and to find ways to solve them.

Approach: A literature review, expert interviews, in-depth interviews and a survey, were the tools used to identify problems related to accountability and data use in communication departments. In response, the Accountability Cylinder, a 3D model to visualize the concept of accountability, was developed.

Findings: The problems revealed a need to discuss accountability within organizations, and to strengthen the analytical skills of communication practitioners, allowing them to interpret and use available data effectively.

Practical and research applications: The Accountability Cylinder helps to improve understanding of accountability and can be used to critically reflect on the accountable role of communication departments.

Keywords: Accountability, Data, Corporate Communication, Professionalization

Paper Type: Research paper
Governmental Intervention in Corporate Crises

An Asian perspective

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Purpose – Governments are expected to intervene in national crises like natural disasters (Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). Less clear are corporate crises. In recent years, there have been several corporate crises in Asia where governments have intervened to restore confidence. The paper seeks to examine the roles and extent of Asian government intervention in corporate crises.

Approach - Five high profile Asian corporate crises were analyzed through Winkler’s (1977) theory of corporatism. Impact was analysed through Boin and ‘t Hart’s (2010) nine crisis response performance indicators.

Findings - Government intervention is necessitated by crisis severity and urgency, the organization's crisis history, the inability of the organization to manage, and when national interests are threatened.

Research implications – Examines the impact Asian governments, which are paternalistic based on Confucian values (Shin & Sin, 2012), have on corporate crises.

Practical implications - Help government practitioners understand the issues and challenges of government intervention

Keywords: Corporate crisis, Government intervention, Asia

Paper Type: Case studies
Hispanics and In-Store Cell Phone Use to Acquire Shopping-Related Information in the US

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This research investigates how Hispanic consumers use mobile phones to acquire product-related information used to assist with purchase decisions while in the store. Data was acquired from the Pew Foundation, and with the use of the statistical survey package, R, researchers incorporated the sampling weights to estimate population statistics and standard errors. Findings indicate 75 percent of Hispanic individuals use a mobile phone. These users are more likely to use phones in the store to acquire product-related information by looking up product reviews and by comparing prices online. This presents a valuable marketing opportunity in terms of attracting a growing population who use mobile phones as way to assist with purchase decisions. Discussion of the findings and recommendations for mobile marketing strategies are addressed. Assumptions are based on the Uncertainty Reduction Theory.
How Can Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Gain Relevance in Internal Communication?

A Network Perspective on Communication Processes

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Employees act as multipliers of CSR actions in society. Hence, it is increasingly important to focus on the inner workings of firms and to examine how CSR can become more relevant in internal communication processes. The theoretical framework of this study understands communication not as a straightforward process between transmitter and receiver, but rather as a dynamic network process with special structures highlighting the mutual dependencies between different actors. A social network analysis of a mid-sized firm reveals important actors, their positions, and their power in communication processes as well as their formal and informal ties. In addition, qualitative interviews are used to examine actors’ perception of and attitudes toward CSR issues to a greater extent. By the use of sensemaking/sensegiving concepts, this study explains how firms can ensure CSR information flow, and it identifies ongoing dynamics in communication processes. These insights can help firms to improve the internal relevance of their CSR engagements.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Internal communication, Social network analysis

Paper type: Case study
How Decision Tools Support Corporate Communication Managers in Dealing with Uncertainty in Strategic Decisions in Innovation Practice

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Purpose: To support collaboration between all involved actors during innovation processes. Corporate communication managers from research organisations and high-tech industry deal with ill-defined communication challenges. We have developed decision tools to support communication managers when making complex and uncertain innovation processes.

Approach or Methodology: Tool development is based on design-based research, combining the development of decision support systems with theoretical insights into collaboration for innovation.

Findings: First user tests show that well designed decision support tools enhance system thinking, design thinking, and scenario thinking in the complex daily reality of the corporate communication manager.

Research Implications: In a Communication for Innovation Laboratory (CI-Lab, is an organisational learning community that sustains the professionalization of corporate communication practices), processes and tools are co-researched, co-designed, and tested by a multidisciplinary team of corporate communication managers, social designers, and researchers.

Practical Implications: The innovation processes in science and high-tech industry are improved by considering corporate communication as an inherent part of the innovation process, and particularly, at the uncertain front-end of the process.

Keywords: Decision support tools, Strategic corporate communication processes, Corporate communication management, Innovation management, Collaboration, Social design, Communication for innovation lab.
How Decision Tools Support Corporate Communication Managers Dealing with Uncertainty

**Paper Type** — Conference proceeding / full paper
How Stakeholder Characteristics Influence the Perception and Evaluation of CSR Communication

A Mixed-Method Approach to Communication Reception

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Aiming to tailor CSR communication to the specific needs of stakeholders, previous studies have identified different stakeholder characteristics that influence communication reception. At this point, it is, however, unclear how these constructs interact. This study empirically examines how stakeholders’ attitude towards a given company, their involvement, and their knowledge levels simultaneously interact and influence the reception of CSR communication. 21 participants were asked to read the CSR report of the fashion brand H&M and to think-aloud. Afterwards, semi structured interviews were conducted. A mixed-method approach (content analysis and correspondence analysis), which considers the relationship between the different stakeholder characteristics, identifies two clusters of stakeholders:

1. Interested, well-informed stakeholders who are very critical concerning CSR activities.
2. Stakeholders with low involvement and knowledge levels, but positive attitude towards H&M and their CSR activities.

In the framework of communication these findings contribute to a better understanding of reception and can be applied in practice to develop target-group specific CSR communication strategies.

Keywords: CSR communication, Involvement, Reputation, Correspondence analysis

Paper type: Research, Case study
Impact of the Concept of a Common Communication Picture on the Corporate Communication of the Dutch Police

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In a world where collaborative communication is the standard, the Dutch police acknowledges the importance of monitoring and analysing on- and offline conversations. Monitoring and analysis can lead to a common communications picture (CCP), which gives the Dutch police a better understanding of the communicative needs and demands of the public and gives the Dutch police an opportunity to adapt and adjust its corporate communications into a more effective way. In order to come to a real time CCP, the Dutch police and communications and research agency EMMA developed a framework of analysis that can be used by every communications professional within the police. This framework helps Dutch police communication professionals to gather knowledge on emerging online or offline conversations about specific issues or on the police in general. In this paper we will elaborate on the ins and outs of the CCP framework.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Issues management, Digital communication strategy, Social media practices, Online monitoring

Paper Type: Introduction of a framework of analysis
The Impact of the Cultural Values of Turkish and British Consumers on their Preferences for TV Advertising

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This study examines whether cultural values impact the preferences of the Turkish and British nationals for TV advertising. The paper has applied Hofstede's cultural values and Pollay’s advertising appeals theories. Using a quantitative research method, data has been collected through 239 questionnaires and the results have been analysed by SPSS software. The research suggests that there is a relationship between cultural values and consumer preferences for TV advertising. It is generally believed that the world is a ‘global village’, and because of modern technology people have similar preferences for TV advertisements. This study demonstrates that this is not always the case, as people coming from collectivistic and feminine cultures are more likely to prefer family and frail appeals, instead of independence and productivity appeals like individualistic and masculine countries, such as Britain. As a result, it is recommended that advertisers attempt to adapt TV advertisements for different cultures instead of opting for a standardization strategy.

**Keywords:** Cultural values, Turkey, Britain, TV advertising, Survey

**Paper Type:** Research paper
Impact of the Upper Echelon

The Effect of Dominant Coalition Members’ Values and Perceptions on Public Relations Participation in Organizational Decision Making

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This study seeks to understand the extent to which dominant coalition members’ values and perceptions influence public relations participation in organization-level strategic decision making. Research in this area has largely focused on the relationship between practitioner roles and decision-making inclusion, with few studies examining the impact of the dominant coalition. Data were collected through a national survey of a purposive sample of 201 dominant coalition members of for-profit, government, and non-profit organizations in the United States. The survey had a response rate of 58.71%. Results indicate that dominant coalition members’ values of organizational openness to the environment and perceived substantive autonomy of the organization had a positive effect on perceived public relations participation in organizational decision making. Additionally, the perceived manager potential of the public relations department had a positive effect on perceptions of public relations participation in organizational decision making.
Implications of Strategic Communication Practice for Sustainability of Client-Agency Relationships

A South African Case Study

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Business to business service provision in the communication industry is increasingly under scrutiny as agency service providers struggle in complex and unpredictable business environments, to sustain and enhance existing relationships with clients. While agencies try to maintain sustainable client relationships, many clients are terminating their relationships with their agencies, with some clients such as Apple even setting up their own stand alone agencies. Cost based compensation models that have dominated client-agency relationships for many years, are being challenged because it misaligns incentives on both client and agency side by focusing on efforts, activities and costs, instead of on outputs results and value (Williams & Baker, 2007). The Association of National Advertisers survey indicates that both client systems and agency’s have an interest in exploring how to align economic interests of both parties by creating a shared value-based mindset with the goal of creating better business benefits realization for both parties. Landor (2012) suggests that deeper relationships and greater understanding of the client’s business context result in more sustainable client-agency relationships. According to a White Paper on Agency Relationship Sustainability (Bedford Group, 2015) these are difficult times for client-agency affairs. Already complex relationships are put under increasing strain by poorly performing economies and a decline in consumer spending, resulting in a decline in client agency tenure from 7.2 years in 1984 to a current average that is estimated to be less than three years. Even long-standing client-agency tenures are at risk - Chevrolet parted ways with their agency Campbell-Ewald after tenure of 88 years. Paul Price, GEO of Omnicom (2010) summarizes the situation as follows:

“[There’s] impatience for efficiency and effectiveness with little or no compromise towards delivering either. There are higher expectations of accountability from clients driving the need for more rigorous and relevant creativity. This is an enormous force for change in marketer-agency relations because of its impact on the way both do business”.

Given these challenges, it is clear that the industry will have to capitalize on the opportunities that change can bring. It is also abundantly clear that the relational context of the communication and public relations agency is undergoing a process of major change that requires a rethink of agency business models and relationships. A true value-based model should pursue opportunities, and allocate resources based on a new vision of what constitutes value in a client-agency relationship, as this will inform what constitutes value-based price and value-based compensation.
Implications of Strategic Communication Practice for Sustainability of Client-Agency Relationships

*Paper type: Research, Case Study*
Is Reputation a Unidimensional Construct?

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Reputation is an important concept in corporate communication and strategic management. Although there is no universally accepted definition, the dominant paradigm proposes it to be a multidimensional concept. The main purpose of our study was to explore potential multidimensionality of reputation and to develop and test an instrument to measure it. This paper aims to determine whether stakeholders perceive an organization’s reputation in a homogenous way. To do this we used a large-scale qualitative and quantitative approach consisting of 25 in-depth interviews with members of key stakeholder groups. We then administered a questionnaire, consisting of 26 items representing 8 dimensions of reputation, to 3 key stakeholder groups of an academic institution.

The results did not support the theoretical assumption of an eight-factor solution; only one main dimension emerged. Theoretically, this implies there is a general factor that determines overall reputations across stakeholders. Practically, that means a robust and general questionnaire could be developed to be used across organizations and their stakeholders. We propose a unidimensional, six-item measure of reputation.

Keywords: Reputation, Academic reputation, Dimensions of reputation, Reputation measurement

Paper Type: Research paper
Is the War for Talent a White Collar Thing?

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The importance of social capital to the effectiveness and the success of organizations have been shown in studies from various disciplines (Cable & Judge, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). In order to be effective and successful in the future organizations not only attract employees because of their functional knowledge, but also because of the compatibility between the organization and the (prospective) employee. In a previous study (Elving, Westhoff, Meeussen & Schoonderbeek, 2013) we found that Employer Branding is seldom used in the Netherlands in job advertisements, the focus in these are on the tasks and responsibilities of the prospective employee, not on the unique characters of the organization or its employees. An experiment revealed the superiority of branded advertisements, in which emphasis was made on the unique aspects of the organization, the development of the employees within the organization, compared to the regular job advertisements.

In the current study we are replicating this first study. Whereas we had Master students as respondents in the first study, with the help of a commercial database we are able to include blue collar workers, but also administrative job vacancies, for individuals with lower degrees (professional education). Since the first study had a focus on white-collar workers, the second study enables us to truly establish the value of Employer Branding, by including blue-collar jobs as well.

To establish this we constructed several different job vacancies, one for a technical operator and an administrative vacancy, both with vocational education, a technical manager and an administrative manager, both with education at the Applied University. All these four vacancies have been offered in an Employer Branded version and a normal version. These vacancies were tested with a panel of experts on Employer Branding.

In a field experiment the jobs were randomly offered to a database of respondents, who were selected for this study. The respondents were selected on their education (maximum vocational education or applied University) and were asked whether they were looking for a job, and what kind of job (technical versus administrative). The experiment will run in January 2015.

With the results of this field experiment we can judge the value of Employer Branding and can establish the value for bleu-collar workers as well.
References


A Look at the Repositioning of the Knitting Industry and the Lack of Current Knitting Representations in the Media

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The purpose of this research is to examine the current repositioning of the knitting industry in comparison to its depictions in mainstream media and the public’s perception of the craft. Despite the media’s clichéd imagery of knitters that has persisted for years, the knitting industry is reaching diverse audiences, and utilizing modern business practices which includes engaging on social media and the implementation of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) strategies, to progress and satisfy stakeholder interests.

Drawing from current media representations of knitting, existing data on knitters, responses from interviews conducted with both knitters and non-knitters, and research on media consumption and influence, this qualitative research found that media portrayals and public perceptions of knitting are not reflective of the true culture of the knitting industry. Findings indicate that the knitting industry is gaining in popularity and operating like many other goods industries in terms of adapting to meet consumer needs, but the media is holding steadfast in its tendency to propagate outdated ideals, while failing to represent the reality of behaviors within the group.

Keywords: Fiberarts, Knitting, Stereotype, Self-identity, Repositioning, Rebranding

Paper Type: Research, Case Study
A Micro-Ethnographic Perspective on Strategy Change Communication

Framing Downsizing as an Institutionalized, Strategic Practice

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Following the practice turn in strategy research (Golsorkhi et al., 2010) and the call for a debate of the concept ‘strategy’ in corporate communication (Steyn, 2003, Tibble, 1997), our paper studies empirically the role of management discourse in the framing of downsizing as a legitimate, institutional practice. We thereby link the actor process activities, e.g. organization-wide meetings at the micro-level, to the institutional field practices at the macro-level within an organization, e.g. budgeting, planning (Johnson et al., 2007) and corporate communication strategy (Steyn, 2003).

The paper advances our understanding of the role of communication in strategy change work. The findings question the assumption that discourses grounded in broader, institutionalized strategy practices or tools such as e.g. LEAN, business re-engineering and budgeting can simply be enlisted by managers as a salient and underlying logic in their communication in order to gain acceptance and support for the downsizing strategy (Sonenshein, 2006).

Keywords: Legitimation, Discourse, Micro-level analysis, Corporate communication, Strategic change, Institutionalized practices.

Paper Type: Research paper.
Motivations and Choices for Information Seeking and Sharing on Different Social Media Platforms

A Comparison of Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook

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Grounded in the uses and gratification theory and the media choice model, this study examines the motivations of consumers in choosing which social media platforms to use in different situations. A survey will be conducted among active users of Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook. Their general motivations for social media use (i.e., information seeking, entertainment, social networking, and diversion), social media platform use patterns, and information seeking and sharing behaviors will be measured. Special attention will be paid to different types of information and different primary emotional states that might be associated with different platforms. Additional questions on how, if any, consumers’ social-mediated information seeking and sharing behaviors might vary in non-crisis situations versus crisis situations will be explored. Insights from this study will help brands and corporations enhance their social media strategy making by tailoring not only the content but also the social media vehicles for different situations.

Keywords: Social media, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Brand promotion, Motivation, Information seeking, Information sharing, Crisis

Paper Type: Research
Multiple Voices in Social Media on “APEC Blue”

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The delegates to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference and Beijing residents had enjoyed a clear blue sky during the meeting (November 5-11, 2014). The rare sight in the smog season in Beijing was given a name “APEC Blue” by netizens. There have been different opinions and comments on a series of environmentally friendly measures taken by the Chinese Government to reduce the Beijing smog. This article is aimed at analyzing the public opinions on “APEC Blue” within the frameworks of intertextuality and engagement. A content analysis approach to relevant postings about “APEC Blue” on Sina Weibo is adopted to analyze the themes and strategies communicated in social media and reveal the diversity of social media users’ attitudes towards this issue. The research findings may provide insights into social media communication studies with the practical implications for the dissemination of public opinions on social media.

Keywords: APEC blue, Intertextuality, Engagement, Social media, Sina Weibo

Paper Type: Research
Narrating Corporate Values and Co-Creating Organizational Change

A Case Study on the Use of Social Media to Engage Employees

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When management introduces a change in corporate identity and values, companies risk experiencing a disconnection from the actual organizational identity and narratives felt and shared among employees. The main challenge therefore is making sure that corporate identity is rooted in organizational identity and shared by employees by facilitating dialogical and sensemaking processes. After a review of relevant literature on corporate identity, organizational identity and internal social media, this paper presents main findings from a large Italian company that has used internal social media to engage employees in making sense of the new corporate values in an open and dialogical manner. Activities encompassed digital storytelling on corporate values and organizational change projects aimed at translating these values into concrete behaviours and organizational processes. Critical areas in the use of social media for internal communication and future research avenues are highlighted.

Keywords: Internal communication, Internal social media, Identity, Corporate values, Sensemaking, Co-creation

Paper Type – Research
Online Complaining
Motives, Personality and Evaluations of Corporate Responses

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The Internet and especially its social media applications have empowered Internet users to voice their opinions about entities such as companies, products and brands with only limited effort. If these opinions voiced online are negative, the reputation of the attacked entity is threatened. Three empirical studies inquired into the phenomenon of online complaining behavior. The research expands previous findings on people’s motives to complain online and to refrain from it, highlighting the role of the public nature of online complaining. Analyses also reveal that online complainants are more open and higher on opinion leadership than others with a low propensity for online complaining. Finally, the effectiveness of accommodative corporate responses to online complaints could be demonstrated.

Keywords: Complaining, Motivation, Personality, Electronic word-of-mouth, Internet, Social media

Paper Type: Research
Paul Garrett and Peter Drucker

The Institutionalization of Corporate Public Relations

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This paper will explore the earliest use of public relations as an integral part of the policymaking process, and ultimately the management discipline, in the first modern corporation, General Motors under Alfred Sloan. Through comparison and contrast the characteristics of corporate public relations will be distinguished from the role of the outside public relations counselor, and the qualities that made the public relations counselor effective inside the corporation will be delineated from the processes of communications. In time the interaction, both written and verbal, between Garrett and Edward L. Bernays (sometimes outside counsel to GM) would greatly influence the thinking of Peter Drucker about the corporation, management, society and public relations as discussed in in his seminal book on the new form of “organization” and its discipline “management, The Concept of the Corporation (1946).

Alfred P. Sloan, the CEO of General Motors, sought out Paul Garrett, then the Financial Editor for the New York Evening Post, to come on board as the Director of Public Relations in 1931 (he was made a Vice President in 1940, which Fortune noted made him the first person to hold such a title in a large industrial corporation). Over the next 25 years Garrett would make significant contributions to institutionalizing public relations, and operating according to principles of “enlightened self-interest,” a significant part of the culture of General Motors, which had become the world’s largest corporation. Garrett’s philosophy of public relations in a company is set out in 74 speeches now in the GM archives, but especially in a speech before the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 1938: “Public Relations—Industry’s No. 1 Job,” a pamphlet copy of which is in the archives of the Museum of Public Relations. The cogent and easily understandable presentation can be summed up: If business is to survive it must interpret itself by deeds and words that have meaning to those outside the company.
The Process of Convergence Between IFRS and US GAAP

Current Status and Open Issues

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This paper provides an updated picture of the convergence process between International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP), with IFRS clearly emerging as a global financial reporting benchmark. Since markets became increasingly global, the comparability of financial statements is required to enable better corporate communication and transparency to the advantage of all stakeholders. This study is aimed at evaluating the main benefits but also some significant issues arising from the adoption of a single set of accounting standards. The IFRS adoption by the United States is also discussed. The main examples of theoretical and empirical literature for and against IFRS implementation are analyzed. The study’s implications are to emphasize the practical obstacles to resolving the issues of financial communication through a uniform set of standards, by highlighting the importance of taking into account other dynamics in improving the corporate disclosure domestically and globally.

**Keywords**: Accounting regulation, Convergence, Harmonization, IFRS, Standard setters, US GAAP.

**Paper Type**: Research.
Public Broadcasters CSR Partnerships on Behalf of Communities

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This paper explores how British broadcasting organizations have engaged in outreach with diverse publics and undertaken initiatives in order to fulfill the public service obligations that are part of their remit. Given that publicly-funded institutions, such as the BBC, are governed by mandates, they may be termed obligations rather than corporate social responsibility (CSR). Regardless of the terminology, broadcasters have sought to represent those communities on and off-screen within their walls, and to help sustain them in a variety of ways beyond those walls. This greater involvement with broadcasting publics may be in part an outgrowth of Thatcherite accountability, but the larger climate that drives organizations to be part of and contribute to sustainable environments has also moved broadcasters to build sustainable, viable communities, within which they operate. Their CSR extends to economic assistance, education, and training and job opportunities for community residents, technological literacy and assistance, diversity in hiring practices, and similar efforts. Local broadcasters may focus on other needs, such as arts and creative endeavors, based on the specific needs of their communities. Broadcasting institutions may benefit from the CSR benchmarks of non-broadcasting “rubric” organizations, such as the Global Compact, as they create, implement, and evaluate their own CSR programs.
The Reputation Costs of Misfit

The Influence of Regulatory Focus on Corporate Communication

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Purpose: Corporate values are mostly communicated in promotion (vs. prevention) terms, such as “innovation” and “self-enhancement”. We argue that this only leads to favorable evaluations of corporate reputations for recipients with a promotion (vs. prevention) focus, who can experience fit between the message and their regulatory focus.

Approach: The experiment employed a 2 (recipients’ regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) x 2 (corporate video in promotion terms vs. control video) between-subjects design. A total of 179 participants were randomly assigned.

Findings: We found a significant interaction-effect between the regulatory focus of the recipients and watching the corporate video $F(1,175)=4.106, p<0.05, \eta^2=0.023$. Respondents with a promotion focus rate the corporate reputation higher after viewing the corporate video, compared to those that saw the control video. Respondents with a prevention focus rate the corporate reputation lower, after viewing the corporate video, compared to those who watched the control video.

Research implications: (Mis)fit between the corporate message and the regulatory focus determines the evaluation of the corporate reputation.
Reputational Damage in Twitter #Hijack
Factors, Dynamics and Triggers of Crowdsourced Campaigns

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Purpose: Twitter has afforded organizations a platform for crowdsourced campaigns using hashtags. However, unknown entities may instigate hashtag hijacks (Roncero-Menendez, 2013), compromising the campaign and resulting in reputational damage. This paper seeks to examine the factors, dynamics and triggers for such hijacks.

Approach: Five cases which generated media interest were analyzed: #AskBG (UK); #McDStories (US), #qantasluxury (Australia); #SunnySideOfLife (Maldives); and #fap2012 (Philippines).

Findings: Preliminary results show public anger, wrong timing and weak hashtags lead to hijacked campaigns. Hijacks tend to peak within hours of the launch, triggered by influential Twitter users, Internet activists and online media interest.

Research implications: Studies on Twitter have largely focused on the messages and its users (Williams, Terras & Warwick, 2013). This paper is arguably the first empirical study examining the risks of Twitter hashtag campaigns.

Practical implications: Provides insights on the factors to consider when managing Twitter hashtag campaigns and how organizations should respond.

Keywords: Social media, Hashtag hijack, Brand activism

Paper Type: Case studies
Setting the Standard

An Exploration of How Internal Social Media Platforms Augment Employee Engagement

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This study examines employee engagement and how internal social media can facilitate employee engagement. Despite the progress scholarship has made in defining employee engagement, its influencers and value, more research is needed to address the lived experiences of professionals who are responsible for employee engagement (Taylor & Kent, 2014). As a concept in its infancy, not enough attention has been dedicated to the meaning, measurement and the theory behind employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Additionally, there is a lack of in-depth understanding of how employee engagement is fostered through engagement activities like internal communication and internal social media and the role internal communication experts play in impacting employee engagement (Reissner & Pagan, 2013; Mirsha, Boynton, & Mirsha, 2014). Therefore, this study builds on previous research to examine employee engagement and its relationship with internal social media. Data collection involved in-depth interviews with public relations practitioners who oversee or consult organizations on internal communication and employee engagement and have a strong working knowledge of internal social media platforms. Allowing experts to share perspectives and experiences through open-ended, interview questions gave participants the chance to express how they experience employee engagement. Data collection determined the unique aspects and challenges associated with engaging internal audiences and the training and resources needed to realistically integrate employee engagement strategies like intranets. The findings provide insight into the factors that lead to successful implementation of employee engagement programs, as well as recommendations for public relations practitioners tasked with employee engagement and internal communication on how to harness internal social media as a means to foster employee engagement.

Keywords: Public relations, Employee engagement, Internal communication, Internal social media, Practitioners

Paper Type: Research paper
Showing Your Social Side

The Antecedents and Consequences of Diffusion of Corporate Responsibility Messages on Facebook and Twitter

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Organizations increasingly make use of social media such as Facebook or Twitter to provide information about their products, and to engage in dialogue with consumers and stakeholders. Earlier research indicates that consumers regularly share these messages with their friends on Facebook and Twitter (via retweets) especially when they contain a lot of information and are combined with emotional cues.

Some organizations have also begun to post about their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives on social media. It is, however, unclear, if and why stakeholders or consumers decide to share these messages with their friends. Moreover, research is yet to explore whether reading CSR messages shared by others influences someone’s attitudes towards the organization.

Our study fills this gap by exploring the motivations that social media users have to share CSR messages, and the impact that this sharing of messages has on others. Using a sample of active Facebook and Twitter users (n = 410), we investigate how personality characteristics are associated with the likelihood of sharing CSR messages. In particular, we explore the effects of personality characteristics previously found to influence self-disclosure on social media, namely: the Big Five Personality Traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism and Openness), Need for Popularity and Online Opinion Leadership. We also test, using an experimental design, the impact of reading organizational messages shared by others.

Preliminary results indicate that consumers or stakeholders are more likely to share messages containing CSR information than messages containing product information or conversational/emotional content. When it comes to personality characteristics, consumers or stakeholders with higher levels of Need for Popularity, Agreeableness and Online Opinion Leadership are the ones that more frequently share CSR messages. Moreover, reading CSR messages shared by others tends to improve one’s evaluation more than other types of messages especially when a close friend rather than a celebrity or information broker is the one who shares the message.

In our presentation, we will discuss earlier findings regarding sharing organization and brand content in general, and provide the results of our study motivations for and effects of sharing CSR messages. We will include recommendations for practitioners and future research.
Keywords: Social Media, Information Diffusion, Corporate Social Responsibility
Situational Behavior of Public Relations Leaders in Relation to their Decision-Making Positions in Organizations

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Most public relations (PR) leadership studies identify leadership attributes without contextualization to the profession. The purpose of this study is to investigate specific functions and behaviors of PR leaders in relation to their situations (i.e. routine or non-routine) and positions (i.e. decision-making or not). Three online focus groups were conducted with 12 PR leaders in Singapore. Findings revealed that leadership for PR decision-making positions included being proponents of their organization’s values and mission under routine circumstances, and effective, empathetic, and ethical spokespersons enforcing a consistent message under non-routine circumstances. Leadership for PR in non-decision-making positions included serving as advocates of the PR profession, bridging communication gaps, under routine circumstances, and organizational supporters ensuring a consistent message under non-routine circumstances. The results yielded from this study indicate a growing need for PR leaders to be active in dominant coalitions, holding no less power than leaders of other corporate functions.

Keywords: Public relations, Leadership, Routine, Non-routine, Dominant coalition, Legitimacy

Paper Type: Research
Social Acceptance of Sustainable Issues
A Discourse Analysis of How People Speak About Bio-Digestion

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For successful energy transitions, social acceptance of innovative technologies is essential. In order to determine the contributing factors, the acceptance of bio-digestion in The Netherlands was analyzed. A discourse analysis of 200 newspaper articles was conducted to answer the question: how do different parties speak about bio-digestion? Discourse analysis is suitable for making underlying concerns and dilemmas of people more explicit. Thus, one can be more in line with people’s sensitivities in communication and policy, both of which play a crucial role in facilitating transition.

The results show that there is little support for bio-digesters in residential areas. The relation between municipalities and residents is poor and asymmetric. The municipalities emphasize their role as experts, thus reinforcing incomprehension. Furthermore, they do not take responsibility and avoid confrontations, contradicting research on the significance of discussions when dealing with innovations (Leeuwis & Aarts, 2011).

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Asymmetry, Sustainability, Social acceptance, Energy transition.
Social Awareness Messages
Impact of Empathy and Social Media

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Purpose: This paper explores the relationship between individual empathy, individual social media platforms and the cognitive and affective reaction to social awareness messages. RQ1: What are the cognitive and affective reactions to social awareness messages by higher and lower empathy individuals? RQ2: What is the relationship between empathy and individual social media platform use including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Vine, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Google Plus?

Approach: A sample of 376 university students completed an online instrument including questions on social media usage and a 40 item Baron-Cohen Empathy Quotient. They also completed scales measuring reactions to 20 public awareness visual and text messages selected by an expert panel to attract people’s attention or encouraging them to act.

Practical implications: Corporate communicators increasingly use social media to link their organizations with various social change initiatives. We explored whether individual differences in empathy have a significant impact on communicating social awareness messages and in selecting the mix of social media platforms.
A US/Belarus Comparison of For-Profit and Educational Organizations’ Use of Twitter, Facebook, and Blogs

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Rapid growth of new media technologies allows organizations to communicate with consumers in immediate and interactive ways via blogs and social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Consumers, companies, and organizations bypass mass media gatekeepers and engage in direct communication exchanges. This study examines social media efficacy from the perspective of corporate and educational organizations in the United States and Belarus. Using the Delphi method, authors administered iterative surveys to a panel of sixteen experts, seeking consensus points. Access to financial, staff, and technical resources allow corporations to make intensive and effective use of social media. Non-profit and education organizations are interested in ability to relate to stakeholders by low-cost, stories, and personal connections. US organizations valued appropriateness for target audience as the most important factor in evaluating the best use of social media. Belarusian organizations valued effectiveness of the channel itself or ease of use.

Keywords: Social media, Delphi study, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Belarus, US
S.O.S.: Send Our Stuff?

Analysis of Social Media Strategies of Big European Companies

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Digital media provide tools that have the potential to truly revolutionize public relations and stakeholder engagement (Grunig, 2009, p16). PR or Corporate Communication professionals should push for more transparency, more stakeholder input, since the best decisions are challenged, and are made through consultation with outsiders and experts (Kent, 2013).

Operating ethically and the adaptation of CSR should be designed in harmony with stakeholders. The fast evolution of social media in the recent years and the adoption of social media by many companies for marketing and service purposes (webcare), make it relevant to study the strategies organizations use for stakeholder dialogue and engagement. How are top ranked European companies using social media for, interaction, dialogue and engagement? Do they use Social Media News Rooms (Zerfass & Schramm, 2014), to monitor, respond and engage in dialogue?

The ten highest ranked European firms mainly use social media for product information and marketing purposes (Elving, 2013). Opportunities for engagement on social media with stakeholders occurred for less than 1%, for CSR related issues and even less (0,1%). We used the results to examine the barriers these top ranked organizations face in their use of social media for stakeholder dialogue and engagement.

To what extent organizations use social media to enhance reputation, and what barriers do they examine for actual dialogue and engagement? By exploring the strategies organizations use for stakeholder dialogue, CSR and CSR communication, we are able to develop theoretical insights for PR and stakeholder management with social media. To what extent can social media help in creating transparency, generate trust and involvement of stakeholders, to increase and protect their reputation? Social media can be beneficial for this, if organizations understand these and are able to process these.

Previous studies (Zerffass & Schramm, 2014; McCorkindale & Distasio, 2014) have emphasized the need for engagement and dialogue, but no studies have been found that actually discussed what the actual barriers (Etter, 2014) for two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Grunig, 1992) or stakeholder involvement (Morsing, Schultz & Nielsen, 2008) organizations experience. With this research we contribute to knowledge about the limitations of dialogue and the engagement of organizations.
References:


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Strategic Communication During Front-End Development of Innovative Projects

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Purpose: Communication about project complexity aspects, particularly early in project management, can determine eventual project success. Yet tools and methods enabling relevant communication are lacking. We investigated the effect of explicitly stimulating communication about complexity during innovation project front-end development.

Approach: We used Midstream Modulation (MM), a method from the social sciences and humanities, together with a complexity framework that distinguishes technical, organizational, and external (TOE) aspects. Three project leaders in engineering and construction within the Dutch process industry communicated regularly with a critical outsider, following MM protocols, while discussing relevant TOE aspects.

Findings: Our method proves useful in assessing project managers’ considerations about project complexity aspects, and helps broaden and deepen project managers’ considerations regarding such aspects.

Practical and research applications: The method and findings show the possibility and utility of the involvement of critical outsiders during early phases of innovative project management, in a supportive and appreciable way for professionals.

Keywords: Project management; Strategic communication; Decision support; Critical outsiders
The Strategic Communication of Corporate Heritage Identity Implementation in a Hypermodal Context

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Purpose: This paper explores how corporate heritage identity implementation strategies are communicated by Grundfos, a 70-year-old global company from Denmark, in their internal history references.

Approach: Drawing on an interdisciplinary methodological framework related to heritage identity communication, hypertextuality and multimodality, it proposes a multileveled analysis model through which communicative strategies are explored at the level of four semiotic modes (written text, speech, still image, and moving image) and at the level of their hypermodal interplay.

Findings: This paper explains how corporate heritage identity implementation strategies are communicated in accordance with the potential and constraints of semiotic modes and hyperlinking affordances.

Research implications: By examining the semiotic modes’ interconnectivity and functional differentiation in a hypermodal context, this paper expands existing research by extending the multimodal focus to a hypertextual one.

Practical implications/applications: This study advances knowledge of how corporate heritage identity implementation strategies can be communicated from management to employees.

Keywords: Corporate heritage identity implementation and communication, History, Hypertextuality, Multimodality

Paper Type: Case study
Strategic Communication

A Planning Model Applied Across Four Cases

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The purpose of this study was to develop and analyze strategic communication for Multi-National Forces Iraq, a U.N. military force comprised of 40 countries, during the period of 2007 and 2008.

This was a multiple case study including documents, participant observation, and direct observation in strategic communication planning. Public affairs staff developed and partially implemented four plans for each command. Staffs included personnel from Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Australia, and England, and joint forces personnel from the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines. Developing and implementing these plans relied on strategic communication theory related to the military and the civilian academic public relations field. Theory included strategic communication and planning, leadership and negotiation, and evaluation of the relationship strategies of trust and transparency to the appropriate elements of a strategic communication plan.

Keywords: Strategic communication, Planning, Leadership, Negotiation, Trust, Transparency

Paper Type: Original research
Strategic Predisposition in Corporate Communication

Understanding Organizational Propensity towards a Behavioral, Strategic Management Approach

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Purpose: This study attempts to identify factors influencing an organization’s predisposition to bridging strategy, and tests relationships between those factors and bridging strategy.

Methodology: An online survey was conducted in South Korea. Hierarchical regression was used.

Findings: Identified factors include environmental complexity, upper management attitude toward stakeholders, analysis orientation, and authoritarian culture.

Research implications: By adopting the concept and measures of the bridging strategy as an organization’s public engagement strategy, this study was able to capture an organization’s strategic approach for problem solving in corporate communication management.

Practical implications: Participatory culture and strong analytical capability allow organizations to look into problems affecting their performance and their key stakeholders before deciding on strategies. As a result, they are more likely to reduce problems and to improve their performance.

Keywords: Analysis orientation, Authoritarian culture, Corporate communication, Environmental complexity, Public relations strategy, Strategic predisposition

Paper Type: Research
Strategy for Promoting Corporate Engagement

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*Human resources surveys consistently include the category of “engagement.” Consequently this term of art has evolved to refer to the acts of human communication and motivation in organizational discussion and trade literature. Unpacking “engagement” requires seeing that an operational dimension of it is “communication” and “listening” and that it exists in a milieu of emotionality. It is a major popularized concept in employee development. It is best expressed in examining the positive psychology dimension of gratitude. This dimension is considered in light of recent action research.*
Surviving the Scrutiny
An Examination of Organizational Responses as Collegiate Athletes Attempt to Avoid Falls from Stardom

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The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) serves student athletes from more than 1,000 colleges and universities across the United States. Most athletic departments have a few high-performing “standout” athletes who often become the faces of their programs. Many athletes rise to the occasion while others find themselves struggling to adjust to their newfound celebrity and public figure status. Recently, several universities have been faced with the challenge of defending the poor choices or actions of their star athletes. The present study was a content analysis that used the misdeeds and performance history concepts from Coombs’ (1995) study to examine online news coverage surrounding the misdeeds of collegiate star athletes. A coding scheme was developed based on Coombs’ matrix of prescribed crisis response strategies as well as Benoit’s (1995) image repair strategies. The present study compared and contrasted the news coverage surrounding the misdeeds of various athletes as well as the accompanying organizational response strategies from the football programs involved.

Keywords: Crisis, Misdeed, Transgression, NCAA, Football, Cam Newton, Johnny Manziel, Jameis Winston

Paper Type: Research

References:

Towards More Smart Rural Areas

A Discourse and Online Analysis to Study the Struggle of Introducing High-Speed Internet in Rural Areas

This article is a co-production of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Groningen, The Netherlands) and EMMA Research (The Hague, The Netherlands).

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In this digital era, connecting citizens and companies to high-speed Internet is crucial for economic development; however, this is not self-evident in many remote rural areas, where technical innovation often meets resistance. Creating support for a technical innovation within a community is difficult once the community has rejected that innovation; however, behavior can be influenced through everyday conversation. A discourse analysis and an online analysis will be carried out to study the concerns and interests of involved parties. Discourse analysis is a way of making underlying dilemmas, doubts and sensitivities explicit. The online analysis researches a broad spectrum of everyday conversations, narrowed down to themes that are related to the use of high-speed Internet, for example, conversations about video-on-demand services and smart health solutions; and conversations about social themes such as social efficacy. The results will contribute to corporate communication strategies that align with local views and sensitivities.

Keywords: Broadband, Corporate communication, Discourse analysis, High-speed Internet, online analysis, Smart rural area
Understanding Social Media Governance
Seizing Opportunities, Staying out of Trouble

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Purpose: The rise of social media such as Facebook and Twitter has provided employees with means to share work-related information. Increasingly, social media governance policies are implemented to negotiate the risks and opportunities of such behaviors. The aim of the present study was to unveil the motivations behind managers’ attempts to govern these behaviors.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten communication managers of various Dutch companies. Higgins’ regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) was used to examine (1) whether managers adopted a prevention or promotion focus to social media, and (2) whether regulatory focus affected the measures taken towards social media governance.

Findings: Prevention and promotion foci were both observed among managers, and this focus differed with communication model: Managers who employed dialogic models of stakeholder communication primarily employed a promotion-focus and emphasized the opportunities to improve stakeholder relations. However, managers who predominantly used one-way models were more prevention-focused and highlighted the risks of social media, for instance the risk of employees publishing messages that contradict corporate communication and confuse stakeholders. Social media governance differed depending on regulatory focus: In the prevention scheme managers usually attempted to regain control by restricting social media to private use only, while in the promotion focus managers trained and facilitated employees to use social media to share work-related messages.

Originality: By examining the interplay of regulatory focus, communication models and governance this paper sheds light on the rationale behind social media governance policies that are implemented in organizations.

Keywords: Social media governance, Employee communication, Reputation management, Strategic communication management

Acknowledgement: The authors thank Vivianne Eckl, Chris Peters and Sander Spoelstra for their assistance in data collection.
Understanding the Role of a Medium as a Mediator in the Strategic Corporate Communication Process

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The study examines the mediation effect of a medium in relationship to messages sent in strategic corporate communication (SCC) and the desired communication impact. Questionnaire data from 227 working executives from the service sector were collected, and measures of the message, the medium, and the SCC impact were derived through Factor Analysis. Presence of the mediation effect was tested using statistical technique suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). Different categories of media were found to be significant mediators, supporting the view that the ‘how’ of communication is important in SCC. For instance, a virtual medium, mandatory reports, and a personalized medium, such as corporate gifts, greeting cards etc., mediated almost all types of message and impact relationships; while advertisements & social networks mediated only a few message and impact relationships. Practitioners can apply research findings to design the appropriate combination of message-media for obtaining the desired SCC impact.

**Key words:** Medium, Mediator, Message, Corporate Communication, Communication Impact,

**Paper Type:** Research
Virtual Knowledge Broker as an Advocate of Trust

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Purpose: This paper aims to propose a complementary channel for organizational knowledge creation and to demonstrate how virtual knowledge brokers increase organizational trust.

Approach/methodology: This qualitative case study draws on a comparative review of the literature on knowledge creation and communities of practice, taking a communicative perspective.

Findings: Virtual knowledge brokers facilitate knowledge creation and enhance organizational trust.

Research implications: Adding to the extant literature on knowledge creation this study highlights the role of knowledge brokers in internal knowledge creation by bringing two approaches together.

Practical applications: This research indicates that internal social media provides a good platform for collaboration and open conversations throughout the organization, especially when facilitated by virtual knowledge brokers.

Originality/value: This paper contends that not enough research has focused on the centrality of virtual knowledge brokers in building organizational trust.

Keywords: Trust, Knowledge creation, Virtual knowledge broker, Communities of practice, Internal communication

Paper Type: Case study
“Visual Press Release”

A Qualitative Analysis of Public Relations Infographics as Brand, Reputation, and Crisis Management Tactics

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As the communication landscape continues to evolve, PR practitioners continuously search for innovative ways to communicate with publics. One of the newest methods of communicating is through the utilization of infographics—a visual-text combination—as visual press release tactics. Employing qualitative methods, researchers analyzed 31 PR infographics produced by various organizations to highlight ways in which the medium is useful to the communication sector. Findings highlighted that infographics utilized as press materials are an innovative complement to an organization's brand, reputation, and crisis management strategies, which allow the opportunity to position an organization as knowledgeable, accessible, transparent, and entertaining. Research on infographics used as press release tactics in communications strategies could potentially prove to be an effective method of penetrating the digital realm by sparking conversation with engaging content.

**Keywords:** Public Relations, Infographics, Visual communication
When a Cuddle Toy Gets at the Heart of a Political Crisis

An Illustrative Case Study on How IKEA Mediates Communication via Traditional and Social Media to Turn a Political Crisis into an Opportunity

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Through a case study, this paper describes how a political crisis transcends into the corporate arena, and investigates how a corporation responds to an externally induced corporate crisis on social media. In 2013-2014 the IKEA cuddle toy, Lufsig (a wolf), was connotated by the anti-government activists as the symbol of the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, which prompted the corporation’s stakeholders to make negative associations about it. Even though IKEA had a weak attribution of crisis responsibility in this situation, as would be suggested by the Situational Crisis Communication Theory, it had to respond promptly to prevent the escalation of the reputation threat (Coombs, 2007). Empirically, the paper analyzes the discourse of related media reports to uncover the emergence of crisis. Special attention was placed on how IKEA mediated communication via traditional media and Facebook to interact with its stakeholders, and, in so doing, turned a crisis into an opportunity. A corporate communicator from IKEA was interviewed to reveal the rationale behind the response strategy and practices adopted.

Keywords: Crisis response strategy, Traditional media, Social media, IKEA, Political crisis, Hong Kong
When Internal Communication Becomes Multi-Vocal

A Study of Coworker Communication on Internal Social Media

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The aim of this paper is to present the findings of an exploratory case study of communication on internal social media within the Danish bank, Jyske Bank. The study involved an analysis of staff interaction on internal social media over three months, as well as interviews with 17 of the bank’s employees. The study not only answers questions about who participates in internal social media and the content of their communication, it also shows that when organizational culture and management support coworker communication, internal social media becomes a multi-vocal rhetorical arena where coworkers are likely to converse about how to solve product and customer-related challenges, and to discuss working conditions. In addition, this study shows that coworkers co-construct organizational identity when they discuss questions such as: Who are we as an organization? Which products should we provide for the customers? And how do we distinguish ourselves from the competitors?

Keywords: Internal social media, Coworker, Organizational identity, Internal communication

Paper Type: Exploratory study, Research paper
CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Engaging Your Audience with Your Message and Your Slides

The purpose of this workshop is to understand and apply the elements necessary to create and deliver an engaging slide presentation. The ability to communicate data is a specialized communication skill. The communication strategy for using data is not just about deciding what content needs to be transferred. More importantly, it is about deciding what strategy will allow the audience to understand, remember, and have the ability to apply the information. In this workshop, we will focus not just on delivery, but also on how to use strategic communication to develop messages, so they are memorable and useful (not just a "data dump").

Patricia Scott, Ph.D,
President & CEO, Uhmm's
Lecturer, Communication Program
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Creating Credibility in Your Academic and Corporate Writing

In the time-starved Internet world, where everyone’s a writer and everyone’s a reader, the demand for literacy is more intense than it has ever been. The ability to articulate ideas in smart, tight writing is crucial for scholars working in academic and corporate contexts. This workshop will cover the conventions of scholarly documents such as papers for academic journals along with workplace genres such as reports and e-mails. The workshop will provide you with pointers about how words work so that you can write the concise, lucid, nuanced, and compelling prose that is so valued by readers. It will sharpen your writing and enhance your editing competence and self-confidence.

Roslyn Petelin, Ph.D.
Writing, Editing, and Publishing Program
School of Communication and Arts
The University of Queensland, Australia
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CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Form the Classroom to the Board Room ...
The Professional Development of the Corporate Communicator

Thomas L. Buckmaster  
Vice President, Corporate Communication (retired)  
President, Hometown Solutions  
Honeywell, USA

Robert DeFillippo  
Corporate Vice President and Chief Communication Offier (retired)  
Prudential Financial Inc., USA

Moderator

Ellen Murphy  
Vice President, Corporate Communications  
The New York Times Company, USA


Michael B. Goodman, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director  
CCI – Corporate Communication International  
MA in Corporate Communication  
Baruch College, City University of New York, USA

Where Chief Communications Officers Lead and Why It Matters

Gary Sheffer  
Vice President, Strategic Communication  
General Electric Company (GE), USA

The Years at the Helm of Corporate Communications: An International Journal

Wim J.L. Elving, Ph.D.  
Editor, Corporate Communications: An International Journal, UK  
Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Amsterdam School of Communication Resaerch (ASCoR), The Netherlands
CONFERENCE SPECIAL PANELS

Big Strategy and Little Strategy …
Their Place in Corporate Communication and Communication Management

Sponsored by
CCI – Corporate Communication International at Baruch College/CUNY

Convenor & Moderator
Kenneth D. Plowman, Ph.D., Co-Editor, Journal of Communication Management

Panelists
Mohd Syuhaidi Abu Bakar, Faculty of Film, Theatre and Animation, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM

Christopher Wilson, Ph.D., Department of Communications, Bringham Young University, USA

Soojin Kim, Ph.D., Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University, Singapore

Helle Kryger Aggerholm, Ph.D. and Birte Asmuß, Ph.D., Department of Business Communication, Aarhus University, Denmark

Kenneth D. Plowman, Ph.D., Department of Communications, Bringham Young University, USA

Corporate Communication and Online Impression Management

Sponsored by
Association for Business Communication (ABC)

Convenor & Moderator
Peter W. Cardon, Ph.D. President, Association for Business Communication (ABC),

Panelists
Sam DeKay, Ph.D., Vice President, Technical Communications, BNY Mellon Corporation, USA & Chair of the Business Practices Committee, Association for Business Communication (ABC)

Jana O’Keefe Bazzoni, Ph.D., Professor & Chair, Communications Studies Dept., Baruch College, City University of New York, USA and Member, Association for Business Communication (ABC)

Peter W. Cardon, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Southern California, USA
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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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CCI – The Hong Kong Chapter, Department of Chinese & Bilingual Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

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