Dialogue

This commentary is intended as an amendment to Argenti's (1996) viewpoint, published in Volume 10, Issue 1, of *Management Communication Quarterly*. Van Riel provides an overview of research in corporate communication, focusing on achievements found in the international academic literature in both communication and business school disciplines. In the author's opinion, there are three key concepts in corporate communication research: corporate identity, corporate reputation, and orchestration of communication. International corporate communication research actually is richer than one might conclude by reading the Argenti article. It requires an interdisciplinary approach to find adequate answers to questions vital for both corporate communication practice and academe.

RESEARCH IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION
An Overview of an Emerging Field

Cees B. M. van Riel
Erasmus University, Rotterdam

Management Communication Quarterly recently published articles of distinguished authors differentially positioning *management communication* (Smeltzer, 1996), *business communication* (Reinsch, 1996), *organizational communication* (Mumby & Stohl, 1996), and *corporate communication* (Argenti, 1996). These contributions underpin Reinsch and Reinsch's (1996) conclusion about the nature of the above-mentioned areas of communication: "It is a diverse and evolving field" (p. 41). Corporate communication seems to have a different connotation in various professional groups. Some see it as synonymous with public relations (e.g., Grunig, 1992), whereas others see it as corporate advertising (e.g., Garbett, 1988). Argenti (1996) concurs that corporate communication is composed of these specialised areas of communication but

Management Communication Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 2, November 1997 288-309

adds corporate advertising, media relations, financial communication, employee communication, and crisis communication. In his view, research in corporate communication logically falls within the boundaries of these specialised areas.

In my view, research in corporate communication has to focus the consequences of our key object of research, that is, the "mutual interdependency between organisational performance" on one hand and "corporate identity, corporate reputation, and orchestration of communication" on the other hand (van Riel, 1995, p. 1). However, I agree with Argenti (1996) that a second characteristic of corporate communication research centers on the interdisciplinary nature of the field and integrates varied communication practices (i.e., the know-how) with management knowledge, especially that offered in business administration programs. In my opinion, exploring these two characteristics can help us to elaborate on and create sophisticated answers to questions that are crucial to corporate communication research, such as (a) Which valid and reliable techniques are available to measure the *identity* of an organisation? What is the impact of specific corporate identity characteristics on reputation and performance? Is corporate identity a single, dual, or multiple concept? (b) Which valid and reliable methods are available to measure corporate *reputation*? Given the dynamic character of corporate reputations, which antecedents affect reputational consequences most? What is the impact of reputation on performance? (c) What is the benefit of consistency in all *internal and external communication*? Which circumstances contribute positively to effective and efficient orchestration of all internal and external communication?

Questions such as these can be summarised in three clusters covering the main areas of research in corporate communication. The interactions among the three clusters, and their mutual impact on organisational performance, are shown in Figure 1. In the next sections, I provide an overview of knowledge already available in academic research that can enable both practitioners and academics to answer questions about corporate identity, corporate reputation, and orchestration of communication.

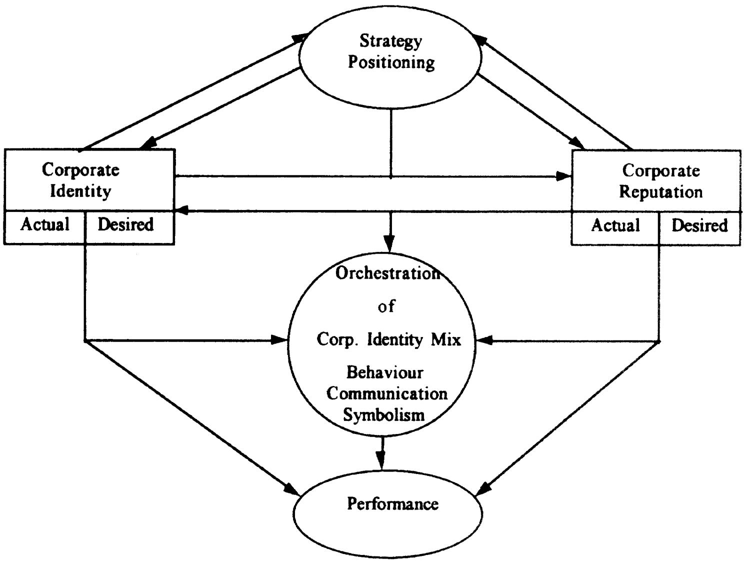

Figure 1: Interaction Between Three Central Areas of Research in Corporate Communication

CORPORATE IDENTITY

Originally, corporate identity was synonymous with naming, logos, company housestyle, and visual identification used by an organisation. American practitioners, such as Selame and Selame (1975) and Chajet (1989), as well as their European colleagues, Olins (1978) and Birkigt and Stadler (1986), gradually have broadened the concept. Now corporate identity indicates the way in which a company presents itself through behaviour, as well as through symbolism, to internal and external audiences. In recent years, academic authors have made important contributions in defining the concept (e.g., Albert & Whetten, 1985; Balmer, 1996; Larcon & Reitter, 1979; Ramanantsoa, 1989; van Rekom, 1992; van Riel, 1995). Through their efforts, we now can define corporate identity as the self presentation of an organisation, rooted in the behaviour of individual organisational members, expressing the organisation's "sameness over time" or continuity, "distinctiveness," and "centrality." Whereas distinctiveness comprises features that differentiate the organisation from other organisations, centrality consists of features that are perceived as the essence of the organisation and that are spread over all organisational units.

METHODS REVEALING THE DESIRED AND ACTUAL CORPORATE IDENTITY

During the last decade, several methods have been developed to explain the actual corporate identity. The majority of the available methods come from traditional consumer behaviour research, methods that integrate the following survey techniques comparable to conventional external reputation research (e.g., Poiesz, 1988) but that are used within the organisation (e.g., de Cock et al., 1984); qualitative semistructured interviews (e.g., Bernstein, 1986); ethnography (e.g., Balmer, 1996); and heuristic analyses of historical sources to describe and understand the nature of the company roots (e.g., Ramanantsoa, 1989). Furthermore, one can use measurement techniques originally developed in organisational communication (i.e., communication audits; Goldhaber, 1986; Greenbaum, Clampitt, & Willihnganz, 1988) and in organisational behaviour (i.e., organisational identification scales; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; van Riel, Smidts, & Pruyn, 1994) measuring the actual knowledge of, and attitude toward, relevant corporate issues, specifically the degree of identification with the organisation among employees.

A simple but rather objective start to describe the behaviour of organisational members (the key "source" of cues transmitting identity characteristics) is the implementation of auditing techniques in corporate design (Napoles, 1988). These design audits describe the use of corporate symbols in actual situations by posing questions, such as Which symbols exist? Are these symbols used consistently? Which outlets are used? Besides design audits, consultants and researchers employ several more sophisticated methods to gather data on day-to-day behaviour of organisational members. Consultants often use open interviews that are qualitative, semistructured, and limited in number (i.e., around 15 oral interviews) with top management. Researchers use heuristic approaches in which they explore the historical roots and areas of conflict within the organisation (Larcon & Reitter, 1979; Ramanantsoa, 1989). For instance, Balmer's (1996) Affinity Audit provides a specialised method combining open interviews with observations over time in organisations. The Laddering Technique, a means-end interview methodology constructing Hierarchical Value Maps, originally was developed to determine the image of products (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988) but was transformed by van Rekom (1992) to serve the area of corporate identity. He applied the original principles backed up by an extensive survey. This interview format focused on two primary areas with corresponding question sequences: concrete attributes (What is your job? What exactly do you do?) and consequences (Why do you do it in this way? Why is this important to you?). The question, "Why is this important to you?" determines employees' feelings and perceptions about the value of their membership. "Why is this important to you?" is repeated at every stage, until a chain of meanings is built that leads through levels of increasing abstraction from the concrete attribute, via its consequences, to the underlying values. All the meaning chains corresponding to the specific outcome under investigation can be combined into one Hierarchical Value Map. This map charts members' associations across the different levels of abstraction.

DETERMINING DESIRED CORPORATE IDENTITY CHARACTERISTICS

In defining the desired (as opposed to actual) corporate identity characteristics, one has to match internal preferences with external demands and expectations. A sophisticated method acquiring data focusing on the *outside-in approach* is the IDU-method of Rossiter and Percy (1997). An outside-in approach is one in which managers primarily react to external cues by transforming them to appropriate internal responses aimed at an effective achievement of company goals. The IDU-method is aimed at the discovery of internal cues, perceived by external audiences as benefits (or as Important, I), as being delivered by the organisations (D), and as unique or, preferably, distinctive (U) in comparison with other organisations. A method that centers on the *inside-out approach* is the Cobweb method of Bernstein (1986). An inside-out approach is one in which managers primarily react to internal cues, followed by an adaptation of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of these internal signals to appropriate responses toward external stakeholders (again aimed at an effective achievement of firm-specific goals). Both of these approaches provide relevant information confronting internal preferences with external demands.

As an example of a pragmatic and less time-consuming way of finding desired corporate identity characteristics, the Cobweb method provides a qualitative technique based on a group discussion with key representatives of the organisation (see Figure 2, adapted from Bernstein, 1986). During the first stage in the Cobweb method, an external consultant leads the discussion, stimulating participants to describe their organisation first in general terms (i.e., How do you describe your company during an informal occasion?), to be followed by more specific questions (e.g., How do you describe your organisation in an interview with a candidate for a high management position? How do you describe your company when you have to compete with another firm trying to acquire a major account?) resulting in an increased degree of elaboration in which participants describe their company. These descriptions then are summarised in an individual formulation of concrete company characteristics. The individual formulations result in a large number of attributes (an average of seven characteristics per person).

During the next stage of the Cobweb method, participants individually have to choose the eight most important characteristics of their company from the attribute listing that combined responses of all group participants. Once the eight characteristics are selected individually, all participants fill out a form rating their eight characteristics according to the perceived actual and the perceived desired corporate identities. The aggregated average group score is presented in a wheel with eight spokes, representing a 10 point scale, with the 0 value in the middle (center) and the maximum 10 value at the end of each spoke. This wheel and values create the cobweb (see Figure 2).

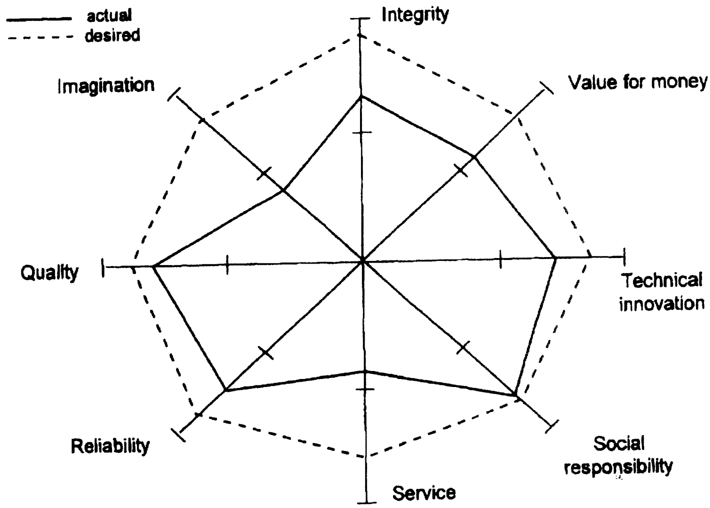

Figure 2: Cobweb Method

IMPACT OF CORPORATE IDENTITY ON PERFORMANCE

Every organisation is supposed to have a specific set of characteristics describing its identity in terms of centrality, sameness over time, and distinctiveness. Logically, we assume that the nature of the organisational identity characteristics set will affect performance positively if the characteristics are appealing to internal audiences (i.e., management and/or employees) and to external audiences with different stakes in the organisation (i.e., financial stakeholders, individuals/groups concerned with clients, and audiences concerned with social responsibility). Although there is relatively little academic literature on the relationship of identity sets and outcomes for different stakeholders, Whetten (1997) and van Riel et al. (1994) suggest that the stronger the employees' identification with their organisations, the more supportive and/or accepting they are of organisational premises and the more they make decisions that are consistent with organisational objectives.

CORPORATE REPUTATION

Reputation is an overall evaluation of organisational achievements (Fombrun, 1996). Reputation assessments indicate levels of esteem in the eyes of external stakeholders, based on the combined evaluations of separate images attributed to firm activities in areas including finance, human resources, social responsibility, or product quality.

A positive reputation affects marketing by improving positions in the evoked set, finance by improving the firm's attractiveness as an investment object, and human resource management by attracting new employees (Gatewood, Gowen, & Lautenschlager, 1993), increasing involvement of employees with their company (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994), and reducing costs of litigation (Grunig, 1992). A good reputation gives signaling power to competitors (Heil & Walters, 1993). Signaling power means that a firm can orchestrate both the timing and the intensity of cues that transmit the benefits of its reputation to audiences that also are relevant for competitors. By orchestrating cues, firms consequently can decrease the reputational value of these competitors in the eyes of external stakeholders.

Like corporate identity, research in corporate reputation can be found in several disciplines. Fombrun and van Riel (1997) distinguish six academic disciplines that pay attention to reputation: *economics* (e.g., companies have specific character traits that distinguish them from other types of firms; Weigelt & Camerer, 1988); *strategic management* (e.g., reputations are assets circumscribing firms' actions and rivals' reactions; firms' actions are difficult to duplicate because they arrive from unique internal features that create distinctiveness and that promote firms' competitive advantages (Fombrun & Zajac, 1987; Freeman, 1984); *marketing* (e.g., personal characteristics of a subject result in information processing chunking cues in memory that create networks of meanings about an object depending on the subject's involvement and the object's persuasive capabilities and efforts; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Poiesz, 1988); *organisational behaviour* (e.g., reputation is rooted in sense making of organisational members; perceived external prestige of the company strongly affects organisational identification; Dutton et al., 1994; Porac & Thomas, 1990); *sociology* (e.g., reputational rankings are social constructs created by the interaction between a firm and its stakeholders in a shared institutional environment; Granovetter, 1985; Shapiro, 1987); and *accounting* (e.g., financial value of the company; Deng & Lev, 1997; Fombrun, 1996).

Familiarity with the nature of corporate reputation has become a necessity for strategic competitive advantage. Reputation enables firms to anticipate developments resulting from shifts in public opinion that result from changes in grading (i.e., evaluating) the company on environmental actions. Companies can depend solely on public opinion leader research surveys, including the *Fortune* 500 and *Financial Times* surveys, but they risk missing information that describes firm-specific trends. Firm-specific trends can be acquired only by applying measurement methods designed specifically to meet the needs of a particular company, such as Q-Sorting, Natural Grouping, Kelly Repertory Grid, and Photosorting. Although varied methods can be employed, firms still lack information on trends and on the specialised use, as well as advantages and disadvantages, of these methods.

Measurement of reputation can focus on information gathering, or describing "pictures" in the minds of individual external stakeholders about the company (e.g., Q-Sorting, Natural Grouping, Kelly Repertory Grid, Photosorting); and information evaluating consequences of pictures in the heads of individuals on an aggregated level (signalling, financial valuation, and perceived external prestige). Each method has advantages and disadvantages depending on the specific needs of a company.

To ascertain the optimal method, three aspects need to be considered. First, *strategic* reasons for using a method center on the firm's reasons for evaluation. What does the company want to know? Does the company want spontaneously generated attributes in an open-question format? Does the company need qualitative (rich in information, but poor in representativeness) or quantitative (presenting grades about perceived strengths and weaknesses) findings? Does the company want to compare its own reputation scores with those of competitors? Besides identifying the reasons for strategic reputation studies, managers also need to clarify the level of analysis on which they want to evaluate organisational reputation—namely, the firm as a whole; or the perceptions of the company as an investment object, as an employer, and as a social responsible citizen; or the competitive advantage of a company.

Second, *academic* reasons for using a method center on understanding respondents' choices. In selecting appropriate methods, researchers would consider individuals' levels of elaboration about organisational information and how this information is chunked in memory. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Petty and Cacioppo (1986), information processing by a subject about an object can be distinguished by three different layers of elaboration: high, low, and medium. A high degree of elaboration results in a complex network of meanings chunked in memory, to be revealed by measurement methods uncovering deeper associations, such as laddering (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988) or natural grouping (Sikkel, 1991). A low degree of information elaboration results in a set of attributes simply describing an object in terms of bipolar qualities, such as *good-bad* and *attractive-unattractive*, to be measured by multidimensional scaling techniques asking respondents to rate similarities and preferences (i.e., comparing A and B in branch C). A medium degree of elaboration creates a set of attributes in memory enabling an individual to describe an object in terms of salient beliefs and importance evaluations, to be measured by Likert-type or Osgood scales, according to the Fishbein and Azjen (1975) model.

Third, *pragmatic* reasons for using a method involve management's preferences. Does management want to have company-specific data? Would management find that readily available and free generic data (e.g., *Fortune* 500 lists) suit organisational needs? Are managers prepared to accept qualitative results (e.g., findings from photosorting), especially if the results are disappointing?

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORPORATE REPUTATIONS

A favourable corporate reputation is not an isolated objective. This reputation is a vital condition for, and means of, creating a sound commercial basis from which the success (in the widest sense of the word) of the company eventually stems. Contemporary empirical evidence points to a positive relationship between a company's achievement and its reputation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Profit appears to have the greatest effect on reputation, followed by risk (negative influence), and the market value of the organisation. Other factors that influence reputation are the visibility of the organisation in the media, the extent to which institutional investors hold shares in the organisation, the dividend pay-out ratio (i.e., a high ratio has a negative influence), social concern, size, and the extent of advertising. Financial evaluation and reputation interact strongly (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Higgens & Diffenbach, 1989; Sobol & Farelly, 1989). Fryxell and Wang (1994) state that "the higher the financial performance, the higher the reputation ranking will be" (p. 13). Research conducted at the Corporate Communication Centre of the Erasmus University has shown that three additional antecedents tend to be important for reputation evaluations: familiarity (*conditio sine qua non*), branch characteristics, and economic climate (Maathuis, 1993). High familiarity (e.g., companies like Philips, Unilever, Shell) results in a more favourable, but also in a more sophisticated, reputation. In other words, when there are conditions of high familiarity, people tend to have a complex network of meanings through which they evaluate both positive and negative aspects about the organisation. Companies with a below average degree of familiarity (e.g., mostly business-to-business firms and/or small companies) appear to be evaluated primarily by economic climate and by branch characteristics.

EFFECTIVE CORPORATE IDENTITY PROGRAMMES

Organisations have to narrow the gap between reality and desire. To narrow this gap, organisations take into account the findings from both identity and reputation research (i.e., reality), comparing these results to their strategic intent (i.e., desire). This means that organisations have to implement a corporate identity strategy that effectively orchestrates the three corporate identity mix instruments (i.e., behaviour, symbolism, and communications) in an effort to achieve a positive starting position in relation to the target groups with which the company has dependency relationships.

Researchers have directed attention to ideal ways of setting up an effective corporate identity programme (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994; Dowling, 1994; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). These researchers provide various checklists, action plans, and so forth that can be helpful in making the correct decisions. These models contain more commonalities than differences. All of them can be divided broadly into four distinguishable stages: defining the problem, planning and programming, implementing, and evaluating the programme. An often applied technique in these multiphase plans is *branding*, which originally was developed in marketing and applied to product branding (Aaker, 1991; Murphy, 1992), but which recently was extended to the level of the organisation as a whole (Dowling, 1986; van Riel, 1995).

Companies can increase the value of their components through the mechanism of horizontal and vertical brand value transfer. In marketing literature, this process is called *image spillover* effects (Sullivan, 1990) and occurs with line and brand extensions of one product toward another product (Aaker & Keller, 1990), products complementing each other (cobranding; Rao & Ruekert, 1994), or linkage of organisational associations to product associations (Belch & Belch, 1987; Keller & Aaker, 1992). An endorsement will be more successful if consumers perceive similarity between the core brand and its extension (Boush & Loken, 1991). Transfer of brand value also is found in country of origin studies, in which a favourable country reputation has a positive influence on the perception of products from those countries (Han, 1989; Johanssen, Douglas, & Nonaka, 1985).

Corporate branding is successful if (a) the information asymmetry between buyer and seller creates an incentive for service providers to capitalize on a firm's reputation and to introduce new services for existing customers (Nayar, 1990), (b) consumers perceive a high degree of risk acquiring the product/service, and (c) the endorser's attributes are highly relevant in the image transfer context (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Keller, 1993).

ORCHESTRATION OF COMMUNICATION

Organisations increasingly are becoming aware of the fact that communication is not being fully exploited internally or externally. The magic words for promoting effective corporate communication seem to be *integration of communication*. This integration can be achieved in various ways. The longest tradition in this respect can be found in corporate design, also known as common housestyle. In addition to design, one also can think of *integrated marketing communication*, which works with common starting points, common operational systems, and cooperative structures in decision making in communication.

General notions about orchestration /coordination are found in organisational behavior (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; March & Simon, 1958; Ouchi, 1979), with more specialized notions found in public relations (Grunig, 1990, 1992) and marketing (Nowak & Phelps, 1994; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1994). Grant (1996) recently reviewed literature on formal and explicit coordination that pointed to four mechanisms integrating specialized knowledge, such as communication knowledge: rules and directives (i.e., procedures, rules, standardized information, and communication systems); sequencing (i.e., organisation of the primary process in a sequence so that each specialist's input occurs independently through assignment of a separate time slot); organisational routine (i.e., application of professional actions in a relatively automatic fashion, or implicit protocols); and group problem solving and decision making (i.e., when complexity increases, a more personal and communication-intensive form of integration is required). When this typology is applied to communication coordination, a matrix results that can enable communication specialists to categorize orchestration mechanisms within one of Grant's (1996) four categories (see Table 1).

Coordination is not a goal in itself, but a means of finding a solution for problems of efficiency and effectiveness in organisations. The logical counterpart of coordination is differentiation, a process stimulating entrepreneurship between individuals and/or their business units. Differentiation enables these individuals or

TABLE 1: General Organisational Principles and Orchestration of Communication

Rules or Directives	*Sequencing*	*Routines*	*Group Problem Solving*
• Common housestyle (parent visibility) • Common starting points (content coordination) • Guidelines for working with external agencies internal budget responsibilities	• Organisation of communication function: tasks, responsibilities, budget • Linking communication to commercial life cycle	• Training and education of protocol to be used for press contact campaign presentation and implementation investor relations and so on	• Steering committee • Annual quarterly reviewing processes • Ad hoc meetings

units to be responsible for their own decisions in a variety of commercial and noncommercial areas. In spite of the popularity of decentralized (differentiated) decision making in organisations, it still is necessary to define some basic agreements among most members about the way organisations profile their *sustainable corporate story*. A sustainable corporate story describes the what, why, and how of the firm, to be used, in varying lengths and elaborations, for internal and external stakeholders on which a company depends. The key message in this story is an explanation of the organisational *raison d'être* for internal and external audiences. This message should be clear and consistent. To assist organisations in developing a positive story, corporate communication specialists have developed several methods of managing ambiguities in communication. These methods entail use of concepts such as common starting points, common operational systems, and a cooperative decision making structure.

COMMON STARTING POINTS (CSPs)

CSPs (van Riel, 1995) are considered central values that function as the basis for undertaking any kind of communication envisioned by an organisation. Establishing CSPs is particularly useful in creating clear priorities (e.g., to facilitate an eventual control and evaluation of the total communication policy). A successful balance of communication between the corporate and the Business Unit (BU)-level on one side and between BUs among themselves on the other, does not occur by adhering strictly to the CSPs. Rather, this balance is achieved by adapting the CSPs on which the various company divisions wish to base the starting points of their own communication policy.

The degree to which an organisation wants to coordinate the content of its key messages (content coordination) has a strong impact on the type of corporate communication policy the organisation constructs. Corporate communication policies can be uniform, varied, or endorsed.[1] Also important is the extent to which one wishes to reveal parent visibility, or the parent behind the brand, by using the company name or its housestyle. A combination of content coordination and parent visibility in Figure 3 shows that, in principle, it is possible for one company to position some business units within the uniform model, both visually and with respect to content, whereas other business units in the same conglomerate might be placed within an endorsed or variety type of model. Figure 3 illustrates this with an example of ING Group. ING Group is a Dutch-based financial conglomerate, offering all financial services on a global scale through its operating companies, like Nationale Nederlanden, Postbank, ING Bank, ING Barings, and Life of Georgia. ING is one of the 10 largest financial players in the world.

COMMON OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS

It is accepted practice to introduce a uniform operational system in management fields, like techniques for financial reporting and, to a lesser extent, the application of planning techniques within functional management areas such as marketing and human resources. Some current communication practices already use common operational systems. For example, communication specialists have more or less generally accepted protocols for setting up campaigns.

Usually, uniformity is introduced into communication operational systems by applying explicit directives, such as those located in a housestyle manual or those associated with routines. A housestyle manual enables organisational members to control parent visibility in uniform ways, whereas routines provide consistency through on-the-job training and education. A more sophisticated means of making protocols explicit is to introduce a computerized decision support system for vital communication decisions. These systems already are available in marketing (e.g., Marketing Decision Support Systems) and in marketing communication. Recently, Communication Decision Support Systems (CDGG) have become available for media planning, advertising strategy, and corporate communication (e.g., Communication Planning System; van Dijk & van Riel, 1996).

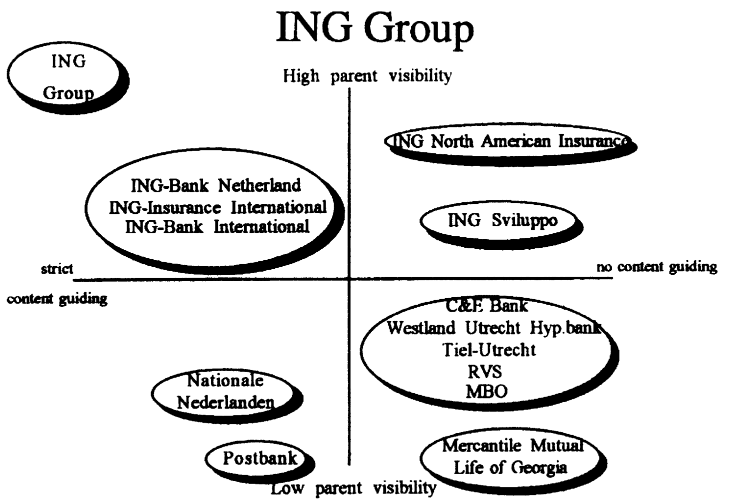

Figure 3: Illustration of Content Coordination and Parent Visibility for ING Group

COORDINATING DECISION MAKING IN COMMUNICATION

A study by van Riel and Nedela (1989) showed that large American and European financial institutions are using several different forms of coordination to orchestrate their total communication output. In practice, there appear to be numerous ways of coordinating organisational and marketing communication. The current company preference seems to be the introduction of a coordinating body, consisting of communication department managers, that would be responsible for coordinating the various communication projects (Smythe, Dorward, & Lambert, 1991; Troy, 1993). Until now, the main task of this body has been to oversee communication projects—not to set priorities. The body can only perform its planning task successfully through regular consultation with commercial and policy managers. Not only does regular consultation keep communication problems permanently on the agenda of senior management, but also the members of the coordinating body are kept informed of current policy decisions within the company.

CONCLUSION

The interdisciplinary research presented in this commentary can assist communication professionals in improving the quality of their work as long as they are willing to be open-minded and not succumb to NIH (not invented here) thinking. This overview clusters around three focal responsibilities in corporate communication: identity, reputation, and orchestration of communication. The term corporate should be interpreted in the context of the Latin word *corpus*, meaning *body*, or, in a more figurative sense, *relating to the totality*. In other words, specialists working in areas of identity, reputation, and communication orchestration relate their work to, and are guided by, the needs of the organisation. In the next decade, our corporate communication research agenda needs to focus on questions that derive from both qualitative and quantitative data analyses and that provide understanding of corporate communication processes. In the long run, this theorizing and research will enable communication practitioners to professionalize their daily decision making and improve the internal accountability and external effectiveness of their communication efforts.

NOTE

1. A uniform corporate communication policy occurs when the company uses one symbol, name, or logo and one basic message/content throughout all constituent parts. Variety in communication policies means that the company operates through a series of product brands, business unit brands, and a corporate brand. These brands apparently are unrelated, both to one another and to the corporate brand. Communication policies are endorsed when a conglomerate of companies, controlled financially by one headquarters, design communications to be perceived either as visual (logo, colour, reference to similar name) or as verbal (written, comparable payoff) endorsement, or part of that group.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a corporate brand name*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, D. A., & Keller, K. L. (1990). Consumer evaluations of brand extensions. *Journal of Marketing*, *54*, 27-41.

Albert, S., & Whetten, D. (1985). Organizational identity. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 7*, 263-295.

Argenti, P. A. (1996). Corporate communication as a discipline: Toward a definition. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 73-97.

Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity and the organization. *Academy of Management Review, 14*, 20-39.

Balmer, J. (1996). *The nature of corporate identity: An explanatory study undertaken within BBC Scotland.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK.

Belch, G., & Belch, M. A. (1987). The application of an expectancy value operationalization of function theory to examine attitudes of boycotters and nonboycotters of a consumer product. *Advances in Consumer Research, 14*, 232-236.

Bernstein, D. (1986). *Company image and reality: A critique of corporate communications.* Eastbourne, UK: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Birkigt, K., & Stadler, M. M. (1986). *Corporate identity.* Grundlagen, Funktionen, Fallspielen, Verlag Moderne Industrie, Landsberg am Lech, Germany.

Boush, D., & Loken, B. (1991). A process tracing study of brand extension evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research, 28*, 16-28.

Brown, T. J., & Dacin, P. A. (1997). The company and the product: Corporate associations and consumer product responses. *Journal of Marketing, 61*, 68-84.

Chajet, C. (1989, May/June). The making of a new corporate image. *The Journal of Business Strategy, 10*, 18-20.

Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (1994). *Effective public relations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

de Cock, G., Bouwen, R., de Wilde, K., & de Visch, J. (1984). *Organisatieklimaat en-cultuur: Theorie en praktische toepassing van de Organisatie klimaat index voor Profit Organisaties (Okipo) en de verkorte vorm (Vokipo).* Amersfoort, The Netherlands: ACCO Leuven.

Deng, Z., & Lev, B. (1997). *Flash-then-flush: The valuation of acquired R&D in process.* New York: Stern School of Business, Accounting Department.

Dowling, G. R. (1986), Managing your corporate images. *Industrial Marketing Management, 15*, 109-115.

Dowling, G. R. (1994). *Corporate reputations: Strategies for developing the corporate brand.* London: Kogan Page.

Dutton, J. E., Dukerich, J. M., & Harquail, C. V. (1994). Organizational image and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 39*, 239-263.

Fishbein, M., & Azjen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School.

Fombrun, C. J., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*, 233-258.

Fombrun, C. J., & van Riel, C. B. M. (1997). The reputational landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review, 1*, 1-15.

Fombrun, C. J., & Zajac, E. J. (1987). Structural and perceptual influences on intraindustry stratification. *Academy of Management Journal, 30*, 233-250.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach.* Boston: Pitman.

Fryxell, G. E., & Wang, J. (1994). The *Fortune*'s corporate "reputation" index: Reputation of what? *Journal of Management, 20*, 1-14.

Garbett, T. F. (1988). *How to build a corporation identity and project its image*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Gatewood, R. D., Gowan, M. A., & Lautenschlager, G. J. (1993). Corporate image, recruitment image, and initial job choice decisions. *Academy of Management Journal, 36*, 414-427.

Goldhaber, G. (1986). *Organizational communication*. Dubuque, IA: Wm C. Brown.

Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology, 91*, 481-510.

Grant, R. M. (1996). Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal, 17*, 109-122.

Greenbaum, H. H. , Clampitt, P., & Willihnganz, S. (1988). Organizational communication: An examination of four instruments. *Management Communication Quarterly, 2*, 245-282.

Grunig, J. E. (Ed.). (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Grunig, L. (1990). Power in the public relations department. In J. E. Grunig & L. Grunig (Eds.), *Public relations research annual* (Vol. 2, pp. 115-155). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Han, M. C. (1989). Country image: Halo or summary construct? *Journal of Marketing Research, 26*, 222-229.

Heil, O. P., & Walters, R. G. (1993). Explaining competitive reactions to new products: An empirical signaling study. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 10*, 53-65.

Higgens, R. B., & Diffenbach, J. (1989). Communicating corporate strategy: The pay-offs and the risks. *Long Range Planning, 12*, 133-139.

Johanssen, J. K., Douglas, S. P., & Nonaka, I. (1985). Assessing the impact of country of origin on product evaluations: A new methodological perspective. *Journal of Marketing Research, 22*, 388-396.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing, 57*, 1-22.

Keller, K. L., & Aaker, D. A. (1992). The effects of sequential introduction of brand extensions. *Journal of Marketing Research, 29*, 35-50.

Larcon, J. P., & Reitter, R. (1979). *Structures de pouvoir et identite de l'entreprise*. Paris: Editions Nathan.

Lawrence, P., & Lorsch, J. (1967). Differentiation and integration in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 12*, 1-47.

Maathuis, O. (1993). *Corporate image, performance, and communication*. Delft, Holland: Eburon.

March, J., & Simon, H. (1958). *Organizations*. New York: John Wiley.

Mumby, D. K., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 50-72.

Murphy, J. M. (1992). Developing new brand names. In J. M. Murphy (Ed.), *Branding a key marketing tool* (pp. 86-97). London: MacMillan Academic and Professional LTD.

Napoles, V. (1988). *Corporate identity design*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Nayar, P. R. (1990). Information asymmetries: A source of competitive advantage for diversified service firms. *Strategic Management Journal, 11*, 513-519.

Nowak, G. J., & Phelps, J. (1994). Conceptualizing the integrated marketing communications phenomenon: An examination of its impact on advertising practices and its implications for advertising research. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising, 16*, 49-66.

Olins, W. (1978). *The corporate personality*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Ouchi, W. (1979). A conceptual framework for the design of organizational control mechanisms. *Management Science, 25*, 833-848.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. New York: Springer Verlag.

Poiesz, T. B. C. (1988, August). *The image concept: Its place in consumer psychology and its potential for other psychological areas*. Paper presented at the 24th International Congress of Psychology, Held in Sydney, Australia.

Porac, J., & Thomas, H. (1990). Taxonomic mental models in competitor definition. *Academy of Management Review, 15*, 224-240.

Ramanantsoa, B. (1989). *Strategor, strategie, structure, decision, identite: Politique generale d'enterprise*. Paris: InterEditions.

Rao, A. R., & Ruekert, R. (1994). Brand alliances as signals of product quality. *Sloan Management Review, 36*, 87-97.

Reinsch, N. L. (1996). Business communication: Present, past, and future. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 27-49.

Reinsch, N. L., & Reinsch, J. W. (1996). Some assessments of business communications scholarship from social science citations. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 10*, 28-47.

Reynolds, T. J., & Gutman, J. (1988). Laddering theory, method, analysis, and interpretation. *Journal of Advertising Research, 28*, 11-31.

Rossiter, J. R., & Percy, L. (1997). *Advertising & promotion management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schultz, D. E., Tannenbaum, S. I., & Lauterborn, R. F. (1994). *Integrated marketing communication*. Chicago: NTC Business Books.

Selame, E., & Selame, J. (1975). *Developing a corporate identity: How to stand out in the crowd*. New York: John Wiley.

Shapiro, S. P. (1987). The social control of impersonal trust. *American Journal of Sociology, 93*, 623-658.

Sikkel, D. (1991). *Natural grouping*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Computerprogramma Research International Nederland, Research International Nederland.

Smeltzer, L. R. (1996). Communication within the manager's context. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 5-26.

Smythe, Dorward, & Lambert Consultants, Ltd. (1991). *The rise to power of the corporate communicator: A study of the current and future role of the UK's inhouse PR professionals* [brochure]. London: Author.

Sobol, M. G., & Farelly, G. (1989). Corporate reputation: A function of relative size or financial performance? *Review of Business and Economic Research, 24*, 45-59.

Sullivan, M. (1990). Measuring image-spillovers in umbrella-branded products. *Journal of Business, 63*, 309-329.

Troy, K. (1993). *Managing corporate communications in a competitive climate*. New York: The Conference Board.

van Dijk, R. J., & van Riel , C. B. M. (1996). Communicatie planning systeem: geautomatiseerd hulpmiddel bij planmatig werking in communicatieprojecten. In C. B. M. van Riel & W.H. Nijhof (Eds.), *Handboek corporate communication* (pp. 221-229). Houten, The Netherlands: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum.

van Rekom, J. (1992). Corporate identity. In C. B. M. van Riel & W. H. Nijhof (Eds.), *Handboek corporate communication* (pp. 85-121). Houten, The Netherlands: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum.

van Riel, C. B. M. (1995). *Principles of corporate communication*. Hemel Hempstead, UK: Prentice Hall.

van Riel, C. B. M., & Nedela, J. (1989). *Profiles in corporate communication in financial institutions*. Delft, The Netherlands: Eburon.

van Riel, C. B. M., Smidts, A., & Pruyn, A. (1994, March). *ROIT: Rotterdam Organisational Identification Test*. Paper presented at the first Corporate Identity Conference, held by the Department of Marketing at Strathclyde University, Glasgow, Scotland, UK.

Weigelt, K., & Camerer, C. (1988). Reputation and corporate strategy: A review of recent theory and applications. *Strategic Management Journal, 9*, 443-454.

Whetten, D. (1997). Theory development and the study of corporate reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review, 1*, 31-45.

Cees B. M. van Riel is professor of corporate communication at the Business School of Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Netherlands. He is director of the Corporate Communication Centre, a research institute at the same university. He obtained his PhD at Erasmus University in 1986, published several academic articles and books (Profiles in Corporate Communication in Financial Institutions *and* Principles of Corporate Communication, *also translated in Spanish). He is a member of the Steering Committee of the International Corporate Identity Group (ICIG), and, together with Charles Fombrun (Stern Business School, New York), is editor of* The Corporate Reputation Review *and member of the Editorial Board of* Corporate Communication: An International Journal. *He is a visiting professor at several European business schools, participating in PhD programs and executive programs of these schools (e.g., Copenhagen Business School, Strathclyde University in Scotland, U.K., HEC in France).*