Corporate Communication and the Corporate Brand

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The first years of the 21st century have been hard on companies and their brands. It is predicted that Firestone is dead as a brand as a result of its defective tires used on Ford SUVs, which tipped over causing loss of lives. Arthur Anderson is feverishly trying to find partners for its many clients as it takes its last breath. The anti-globalization movement is targeting companies from McDonald's to Starbucks to non-governmental organizations. Today, no organization is safe from public scrutiny of its actions and what it stands for. In many cases, it is not the product that gets organizations in trouble; often it is the action of its managers that directly causes the problem or exacerbates it. In fact, in many cases, products are not an issue at all. Customers continue purchasing from companies while other interest groups attack the company. It is naïve, however, to believe that organizational actions do not in the long run impact customer response. Both the organization and its products and services have images, and it is important that both are carefully nurtured and protected. This is true for any organization, whether for profit, non-profit or governmental sector.

The relationships and concepts discussed in this chapter are complex and are based on theory from a number of disciplines, including strategy, organizational theory, psychology, sociology, and ethics, just to name a few. Some of these are explored in greater detail in other chapters. Here the point is to continue the discussion from Chapter 3 on the elements that lie behind the notion of the organization as a brand, otherwise referred to as the corporate brand and normally expressed as corporate image.

The basic message here is that everything about an organization communicates. Everything. Failure to recognize this can result in serious headaches for organizations if they concentrate on their customer-related communications while ignoring the many other contact points that are not part of planned communication. These 'unplanned' points of contact may include the people answering the phone, the accounting personnel handling billing information, the service personnel, or the check-out person in the visitors' dining room.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of identity followed by a definition of corporate image with a look at some researchers' argument that reputation is not the same as image. The attributes normally associated with the corporate brand, as developed by Keller (1998), are then discussed. I then argue for the importance of anchoring identity and image in corporate mission and vision. This is important because it appears most firms have a difficult time doing this.

Looking at how organizations communicate their image follows this, a process that becomes extremely complicated the more complex the organization is. Some examples of communication activities that organizations may use to market their corporate brand are then given.

Identity versus Image

It is necessary to start the discussion on corporate image by making perfectly clear the difference between corporate identity and image. This section looks at a number of researchers' views starting with van Riel, who uses the Birkigt and Stader (1986) model, Figure 1, which defines corporate identity in terms of the cues offered by an organization both internally and externally through symbols, communication and behavior. He refers to this as the corporate identity mix and implies that the corporate personality is manifested through this mix. Dowling (2001) defines corporate identity as the symbols and nomenclature used by an organization to identify itself to people. According to Dowling, corporate identity helps people find or recognize an organization. Ind (1997) refers to identity as the outward manifestation of an organization. The most well known examples are McDonald's, Disney, Nike, just to name a few. Nike doesn't even need to use its name anymore; the "Swoosh" is sufficient.

Hatch and Schultz (2000) differentiate between corporate identity and organizational identity. They view corporate identity as the *idea* of the organization and how it is represented to different audiences, in this case primarily external stakeholders. Here, identity is defined by top managers and their advisers and communication channels are mediated, i.e., are delivered, in most cases by the mass media, or non-personal channels such as newsletters, annual reports, etc. In contrast, organizational identity is *how* an organization's members perceive and understand it: "who we are" and "what we stand for." The organization's identity is seen from the perspective of all members of the organization, who are also the recipients of messages. Interpersonal communication is the dominant communication channel.

Due to the overlap of internal and external stakeholders, however, there may be no clear lines between the two definitions, and employees' impressions of corporate identity are likely to carry over into their direct experiences with organizational identity. It is easy to see that organizations that don't realize the distinctions between these two concepts by focussing too much on corporate identity, i.e., externally, can find themselves with problems. For instance, organizations can alienate employees when they allow their customers to define who they are, forgetting that it is the employees that have to live, so to speak, the identity, and that perhaps they should be included as a major actor here.

Corporate identity media encompass many different things. Gregory and Weichmann (1991) list seven categories: stationary, literature, transportation, packing, architecture, signs and marketing/sales. They then list nearly 100 specific things encompassed by these categories. According to Hatch and Schultz (2000) sound, touch and smell (The Body Shop, for example) have recently been added to this list. One item that Gregory and Weichmann do not include, and this is critical, is the behavior of the people within the organization. This chapter does not take up this theme specifically but the chapter on ethics does. Suffice it to say that most agree that behavior is the most important element in the identity mix. Optimally, organizations should not choose these elements in a haphazard manner. They are core to the organization, and it is extremely important how the identity mix is chosen. It is not unusual, however, for management to take a top down approach to corporate identity. They decide who and what the organization is and then hire a design agency to create a new logo. Hatch and Schultz (2000), however, see a positive trend in decision-makers taking internal and external stakeholders' perceptions and reactions into consideration when formulating identity. van Riel (1992) provides a comprehensive review of techniques for measuring corporate identity in his book *Principles of Corporate Communication* (1992).

Identity is important for a number of reasons. According to Dowling (2001), the primary roles of identity are to create awareness, trigger recognition of the organization, and activate an already stored image of the organization. van Riel (1992) believes that a strong identity can help raise motivation among employees by creating a "we" feeling, allowing people to identify with their organizations. A purposeful identity communicated with consistent symbols can also inspire confidence among stakeholder groups because they will have a clearer picture of the organization. He believes that it can inspire customer confidence, which can be the basis of long-term relationships. Finally, it can inspire confidence in the financial community, among the suppliers of capital. It does so by improving the likelihood of identifying with or "bonding" with the organization. Schmitt and Simonson (1997) believe the tangible benefits of identity are increased productivity, loyalty, premium pricing, cost savings, protection from competition and the ability to cut through information clutter. These authors refer to the aesthetics of identity where product and design include function and form, communication includes central as well as peripheral messages, and spatial design has structure as well as symbolism or experiential aspects.

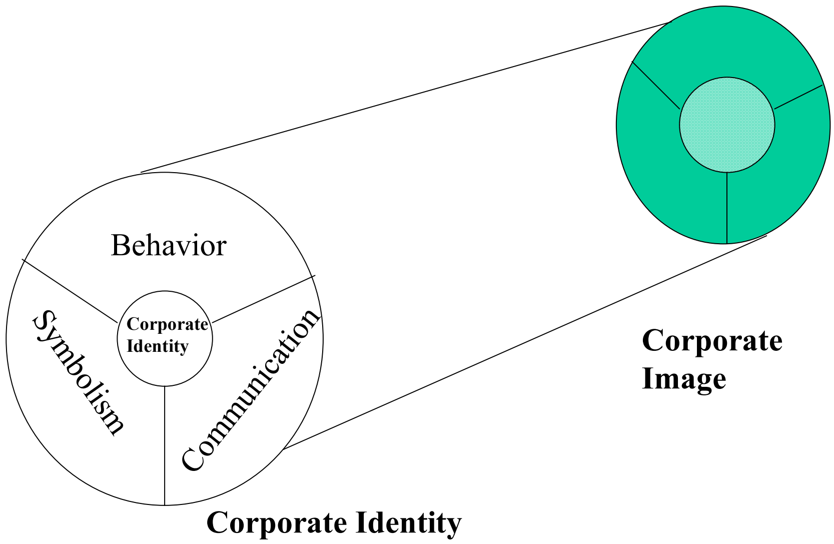
Olins (1989) suggests three kinds of corporate identity: monolithic, endorsed and branded. These are sometimes referred to by other authors as brands or branding (Ind 1997; Keller 1998). Monolithic identities are associated with organizations where the entire company uses the same visual style, logo, etc. Everything in the identity mix is the same for all products and divisions, with perhaps some slight variation, and the parent company is instantly recognized. Such companies include BMW and Shell.

An endorsed identity is associated with organizations whose subsidiaries have their own style and distinction but the parent company is still visible in the background. Some examples here are General Motors, which owns, among others, Chevrolet (Corvette, Impala), Oldsmobile (Cutlass), and Pontiac. L'Oreal with its Studio Line hair products and Paris Plénitude skin care products is another example.

A branded identity might be seen as the opposite of monolithic. Here, the organization has a number of brands, or products, and it is nearly impossible to know who the parent company is. This includes such companies as P&G, Unilever and, in Norway, Orkla, Scandinavia's largest fast moving consumer goods company. L'Oreal may fit somewhat under this heading as well since it also owns Biotherm, Helena Rubinstein, Redken, Giorgio Armani and Ralph Lauren, among others.

Each form of identity has its plusses and minuses. For example, it might be an advantage to be a branded company in the case of product failure, as it is difficult to immediately identify the parent company. The product may develop a negative image, but the parent company may not. Of course, the opposite is true when a parent company cannot reap the differentiating benefit in the marketplace from a strong corporate identity because they are unable to attach it to their branded products. P&G as a company promises that they "make every day better." They do this through their products but also through educational programs in the Third World, commitment to the community, relief programs and environmental initiatives. None of P&G's products, however, benefit from these efforts as the name P&G on products is often not obvious to the consumer.

Exhibit 1. Corporate image as a reflection of corporate identity. (Adapted from van Riel 1992



Image

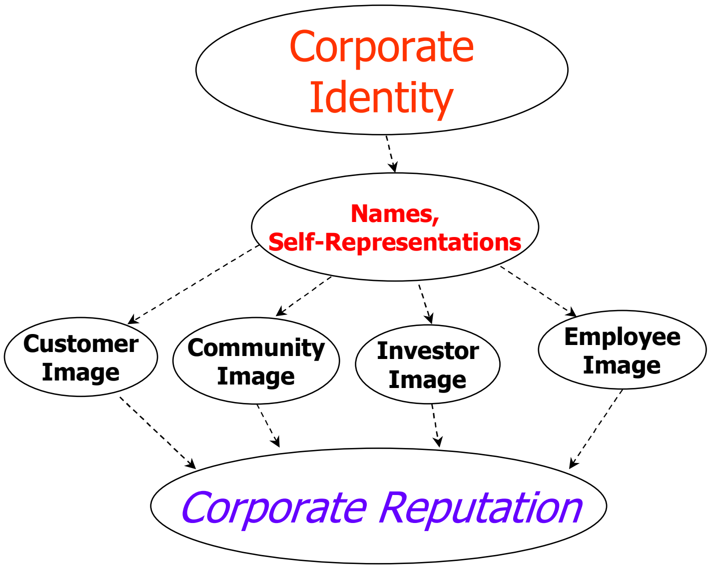
In Exhibit 1, image is seen as a reflection of corporate identity. We experience (directly or indirectly) the organization through its symbols, behavior and communication, and through a very complicated process, develop a set of impressions of it. Image, according to many researchers is described as being in the eye of the beholder, i.e., it is in people's minds. Dowling (2001) defines image as "the set of meanings by which an object is known and through which people describe, remember and relate to it. That is the result of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about an object." Marken (1994/95) describes image as the perceived sum of the entire organization – its objectives and plans. It encompasses products, services, management style, communications activities and actions around the world.

In most literature on image, the terms reputation and image are used interchangeably. Dowling (2001), however, distinguishes between corporate image and corporate reputation. According to him, corporate image is the "global evaluation (comprised of a set of beliefs and feelings) a person has about an organization" (p. 19). Corporate reputation is "the attributed values (such as authenticity, honesty, responsibility and integrity) evoked from the person's corporate image" (p. 19). Dowling explains that a good corporate identity can affect corporate image in two ways. People make the association between the company and its identity, i.e., they recognize the organization. The identity elements can help them recall their image of the organization, which may include a mental picture (an actual picture of a building, perhaps) and/or sensory feelings (for example whether or not the interaction with the organization was pleasurable). Thus, for Dowling, corporate image has a cognitive or logical aspect and an emotional or feeling aspect. Together they form an overall corporate image. To understand how this works, think of a company you recently visited, a café perhaps or boutique. Visualize your surroundings, remember your experience and see if you have pleasant or not so pleasant memories of the encounter. If it was pleasant you now may associate that feeling with the visual cues of the shop, as they act as a cue and recall this image. This is explained in marketing through the behavioral learning approach where there is a stimulus-response orientation, expressed in this case through classical conditioning (Fill 1999).

Dowling then contends that if a person's beliefs and feelings about a company (its image) fit their personal values regarding proper corporate behavior, then the person will attribute a good reputation to that organization. There must be a "fit" between the image of the company and what he refers to as the person's "free-standing" value system. Dowling insists that it is critical that the definition of image and reputation be kept separate, but the complicated nature of trying to explain the differences is daunting.

Fombrun (1996) makes a distinction between image and reputation when he describes an organization's reputation as the sum of various stakeholders' images of the organization. Fombrun raises an extremely important element in the discussion on corporate image by stating that organizations should never believe that they have only one image. In fact, they have as many images as they have stakeholders. And each of these images is dependent on the stakeholder's relationship to the organization. Organizations that focus their attention on the customer, for example, and ignore the effect of their activities on other groups, are in for a big surprise when the other groups start influencing customers' images. In most organizations, stakeholders also overlap. For example, an employee may be a shareholder, a member of the local community, and a customer. This same employee has a different impression of the organization in each of those roles.

Exhibit 2. Corporate reputation as the sum of various stakeholders' images of the organization. (Adapted from Fombrun 1996)



One last note on image; it is important to remember that it exists at several levels. Knecht (1986) defines seven: product class, brand, company, sector, shop, country and user. It can be argued that for an organization these levels are not mutually exclusive. An organization may experience every single one of these levels in that they often overlap. The importance of each level to each organization is dependent on the organization itself. For example, Rolex on the country, shop and user levels is associated with Swiss watch making, high-end luxury shops, and wealthy people. In Norway, an example of the user and product levels is that some luxury car dealers are concerned about the purchase of their vehicles by customers associated with gangs. They believe the negative image of gangs and all that they represent to some people can impact the image of the brand on their target consumers.

Corporate Image/Brand Associations

Keller (1998) discusses a number of images that are associated with the organization as a brand. These are shown in Eexhibit 3 and discussed below.

Exhibit 3. Some Corporate Image Associations (Keller 1998)

1. Common Product Attributes, Benefits or Attitudes
   Quality
   Innovativeness
2. People and Relationships
   Customer/Stakeholder Orientation
3. Values and Programs
   Concern with Environment
   Social Responsibility
4. Corporate Credibility
   Expertise
   Trustworthiness
   Likability

The first image association has to do with product attributes, benefits and attitudes that people associate with the organization. One such association is high quality, the perception that the company makes products of the highest quality. Proof of this claim may be such things as the Malcolm Baldridge Award for high quality or high ratings in consumer publications. Another product association is innovativeness; the organization develops new and unique marketing programs, especially with respect to product introduction and improvements. Examples here include 3M, which claims that 30 percent of sales come from products introduced in the last four years. Thus, you can rely on their slogan, Innovation Working For You. In the case of organizations where the product carries the same name as the company, this association becomes key. However, with highly branded firms like P&G, Unilever and Norway's Orkla, product quality associations are not easily transferable to the parent company.

A second image associated with the organization is that of people and relationships. This may include a customer-focused corporate image orientation, where the company is seen as responsive and caring about their customers; they will be heard and the company will not take advantage of them. Sometimes, corporate image associations may reflect characteristics of employees. IBM, for example, has used their employees in advertisements for the company where the employee is seen to embody the values that the company claims to have. Dave Thomas, the late head of Wendy's, was a powerful spokesperson and symbol for the company and personally stood for the values of the organization. I would urge that this image attribute be expanded beyond this narrow focus on employees and customers to include a full-scale stakeholder-focused image orientation. This is particularly important in light of the fact that Keller defines social responsibility (see below) as an image association. Normally, the stakeholder approach and corporate social responsibility go hand in hand.

A third image association is values and programs. These can include concern with the environment; the company works to protect and improve the environment and to use natural resources more effectively. Social responsibility is another area under values and programs. In this connection the company is perceived as contributing to community programs, supporting artistic and social activities, in general trying to improve the welfare of society. P&G’s activities mentioned earlier are examples of this.

The last association with a corporate brand is corporate credibility. Credibility, according to Keller, encompasses expertise, trustworthiness and likeability. The organization is seen as expert when it is skilled in making or selling its products or carrying out its services. Trustworthiness has to do with the extent to which an organization is honest, dependable and sensitive to stakeholder needs. Lastly, likeability is whether or not the organization is viewed as likeable, attractive, prestigious, dynamic, etc. Credibility is perhaps the most abstract of the organizational image associations.

Mission and Vision

van Riel (1992) writes that the identity and image of an organization are anchored in its strategy. Since strategy is anchored in the mission or vision of an organization, this implies that identity and image are also anchored in its mission and vision. The mission and vision represent the basic who and what of the organization; how it wishes to be perceived (image) and through what identity media (symbols, behavior and communication). This is illustrated in Exhibit 4

Exhibit 4 The link between mission/vision, strategy and identity and image. (Adapted from van Riel 1992)

Defining mission and vision is always difficult. Chakravarthy and Lorange (1991) define vision as an articulation of top management’s strategic intent. Stacy (1993) defines strategic intent as achieving some “relatively distant future state relating to posture, position and performance” (p. 24). In particular, vision focuses the organization’s managers toward a common purpose. It also specifies the values of the organization. These values determine the framework on which decisions are made. Vision is enduring and it should seldom be changed.

Mission, according to the Ashridge mission model (Campbell and Tawady 1990), includes an inspirational definition of what the organization is there for and the organization’s strategy. It also includes its policies and behavioral standards, which define how managers and employees should behave; and the beliefs that constitute the organization’s culture and underpin its management style. In my several years of working with image audits it is very rare, if ever, to come across an organization with anything approaching a mission statement of this type. It is obvious, however, that organizations with clear missions are clearer about who they are (or are not) and are therefore more realistic about their desired image.

Most researchers agree that Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has one of the best vision/mission statements in the corporate world. First formulated in 1948, its credo is published in the native language of every country it operates in and provides the guiding principles for most decisions made in the company. As noted by Dowling (2001), statements like Johnson & Johnson's often contain many of the elements of the organization's ideal corporate image. For instance, the J&J credo identifies the organization's stakeholders, its key corporate image attributes and the importance of community values. In short, this document provides the basis on how J&J chooses to represent itself through its identity elements and the image they wish to have in the marketplace. In 2001, Reputation Institute named them for the third straight year as having the best corporate reputation in the US. You can find Johnson & Johnson's credo on their website at www.johnsonandjohnson.com.

Diageo, the world's leading premium drink business headquartered in London, has an equally impressive mission/vision statement. Their brand portfolio includes Jose Cuervo, Smirnoff, Bailey's, J&B and Guinness, just to name a few. They are obviously in a much different business than Johnson & Johnson. The company recognizes this and does not shy away from the fact that they earn money from the sale of alcohol, a product that is damaging when abused. The company's commitment to a stakeholder approach and to their role in society in general, however, is impressive, and they can back up their statements with fact. An excerpt from their view of themselves is shown in Exhibit 5.

Diageo is an integral part of society. Our business activities directly affect the lives of millions of people around the world, as customers, employees, community neighbours, business partners and investors. Diageo is a corporate member of society - a citizen - and as such we enjoy certain rights to conduct our business; we fully recognize that also entails meeting certain responsibilities, too.

Our overriding objective as a corporate citizen is to make a positive contribution to the well-being of our stakeholders and to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the world. In so doing, five essential features distinguish Diageo's approach:

1.
Integrity: we base our approach on clearly laid down principles, such as those set out in our Code of Business Conduct, and seek to adhere to them at all times and everywhere.

2.
Employees: our people are at the heart of Diageo’s success as a business and as a corporate citizen. That is why we have identified four core values and encourage consistently high standards of behaviour as employees seek to live them out.

3.
Responsible drinking: as the world’s leading alcohol beverage company, we have a special duty to take a lead in promoting the responsible use of our products. For example, our detailed Marketing Code defines the policies we follow, with a clear compliance mechanism. The Employee Policy sets out the high standards we expect from employees.

4.
Community involvement: through our worldwide operations, Diageo is a part of countless local communities. We commit 1% of pre-tax profits as a community contribution and have set up the Diageo Foundation to support our grass roots involvement, not least by employees who wish to volunteer.

5.
Assessing impact: our commitment to be a corporate citizen is reinforced through regular appraisal of our impact on society. We are preparing our second in-depth report of performance against our Environmental Principles, with external benchmarks. Together with other companies, we have developed more effective evaluation tools for our community investment. In consultation with stakeholders, we have devised a framework for social auditing, to measure and report our impact at country level.

Exhibit 5. Parts of *Diageo’s vision/mission statement*

The case of Ikea below illustrates a situation where a company allowed its marketing function to create a funny and sexy campaign that hit its target market dead center. Unfortunately, the TV commercial is totally at odds with the organization’s espoused mission.

The Case of Ikea

A recent case in Norway is an advertisement run by Ikea, the Swedish furniture manufacturer. Ikea can be safely characterized as having a strong image regarding product quality and corporate social responsibility. They have strenuous policies when it comes to environmental issues and their value chain. Further, they support numerous projects heavily focused on women and children in the Third World, helping them with education, birth control, etc. The home office in Sweden coordinates all of these projects.

In the years 2001–2002 Ikea regularly ran an advertisement on Norwegian television that portrayed two young people meeting at a bar, getting drunk and returning to her apartment where they had sex. The next morning he leaves but gives her a note perhaps with his contact information. It becomes clear that they had engaged in unprotected sex as she feels a slight movement in her abdomen and a symbol of gender appears in a bubble over her head, indicating that she is pregnant. But this is ok, because she can purchase reasonably priced furniture at Ikea for this unexpected family addition. When asked to respond to this commercial, the public relations director for Ikea International replied that she had never seen it and was unaware of it so did not care to comment. The marketing manager for Ikea Norway admitted that the commercial had been created for the Norwegian market and therefore the headquarters office would not have seen it.

This commercial is not consistent with Ikea's mission and vision, but is rather an attempt to use sex and humor to hit their target group, young adults. Because the commercial was aired in Norway, where there is little history of consumer activism, the firm was able to get away with it. In the US, I can only speculate what the reaction might have been, but it is only reasonable to assume that HIV activists at the very least would have been outraged. Recent research shows that Norwegians have the lowest condom use of all young people in Europe and that they very often are drunk when engaging in casual sex. Calls to local agencies dealing with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases uncovered a real regret that they had not paid more attention to the Ikea ad. The company obviously hit their target market, but at the cost of contradicting their own corporate image. The consequences for Ikea have been slight; some small embarrassment for their PR director at a seminar, the case discussed in the classroom and now written up in a book. In other circumstances their credibility and trustworthiness may have been damaged, two attributes they have used years to develop.

Marketing the Corporate Brand

Corporate branding is defined as the sending of cues to create a favorable reputation (Maathuis and van Bruggen 1998). Marketing is defined as the processes involved in selling goods. This can be broadened to include selling the organization, the corporate brand. In this section we very briefly look at some communication tools that are used in marketing the corporate brand. There appears to be a great need for more literature in this area. There are very few books for organizations looking for information on how to market the corporate brand, and the literature that does exist varies in quality and usefulness. There is, of course, a great deal of literature available in public relations and since most corporate brand marketing deals with communicating to the stakeholders of the organization that are non-customers, this is a good source.

Brand building activities aimed at special stakeholder groups include government relations, community relations, financial relations, etc. Organizations may have specialists who deal with these stakeholder groups and use a broad range of communication options such as brochures, annual reports, lobbying, personal communications and so on. Corporate outreach programs are also part of these activities. McDonald's is particularly good at community outreach programs, but this is a not very well known part of their corporate branding. Considering the constant attacks suffered by this organization from anti-globalization groups, it would seem that these activities, if known, could help the reputation of the organization.

Corporate advertising is a term given to paid-for messages placed by the organization telling about the organization, not necessarily its products. These may include image advertising, advocacy or issues advertising, and cause related marketing. Examples of image advertising are general image or positioning ads that announce plant openings, new identities, innovations, etc. This area also encompasses sponsorships of sports, broadcasts and music. Rolex sponsors golf tournaments such as The Masters and The British Open and regularly advertises that they do so. Although the product is often pictured, the advertisement is about their sponsorship. Recruitment ads for employees also fall into this category. Deloitte & Touche have as a goal to be the most preferred company to work for by graduating business school students. They therefore use considerable resources marketing the company toward this market, including advertising in student newspapers and sponsoring different events at schools. Similarly, advertising toward the financial sector is a way to release information on financial results, to generate investment and is often used as a defense against a takeover.

Advocacy advertising is a way for organizations to communicate their position on public issues that are connected with their business activities. This may include taking a position on social or business issues, resolving misunderstandings or countering a negative editorial. In the 1970s this was a popular method used by energy companies to try to persuade the American public not to listen to the government who wanted to institute regulations and environmental controls. Nike and other companies use this type of advertising today to defend themselves against accusations of producing their products in sweatshops. Shell and its Profits and Principles campaign is currently probably one of the largest campaigns of this type. The company would like consumers and other groups to believe that the company does its utmost to protect the environment, work with local populations, and have an open dialogue with their stakeholders. Ford and Rolex take a slightly different tack. Both organizations give out awards to individuals for personal excellence, either for environmental work or helping humankind. Ford has its Heroes for the Planet award and Rolex has an award titled Spirit of Enterprise. The companies then advertise the granting of these awards in the media that features the recipient of the award.

A growing area in corporate branding is cause-related marketing (crm). In this case, companies communicate their association with non-profit groups or causes through a variety of media, including labeling on packaging, affinity/co-branded credit cards, licensing agreements, sponsorship, advertising or sales promotions. Sales promotion may include assistance in raising donations, purchase-triggered donations, etc. The point is to associate the organization's name with a good cause such as Red Cross or Save the Children. This relationship works both ways, in that the non-profit organization gets financial support and the organization is seen as being endorsed by the non-profit organization.

Some corporate communication included in crm is based on an organization's corporate social responsibility; that is, the firm's vision that they have something to contribute to society over and above profit maximization. This might include statements regarding value chain decisions, environmental compliance, women and minority issues, investment guidelines, support of local community and so on. Tanqueray Gin had a bicycle ride for AIDS; HSBC has sponsored TV programs on the subject on CNN; UPS supports an Athlete Training Assistance Program to develop Olympic athletes it hires; Swissair once had a cooperation project with the United Nations on a variety of projects; and State Farm Insurance gives out their "Good Neighbor Award," just to name a few. There is a large list of companies who are involved in causes or support non-profit organizations based on their vision of their corporate social responsibility. These types of associations generally receive a lot of scrutiny and many consumers are skeptical to them (Mohr et al. 1998). Therefore, organizations (on both sides) must be very careful when entering into these alliances. Companies must be extremely careful that they "walk the talk," as a legitimacy gap in this area can be disastrous for the non-committed firm.

Brand Heaven

Jesper Kunde (2000) argues that organizations with a corporate religion have a better chance of getting into what he refers to as "brand heaven." Brand heaven is a place where the product itself has somehow lost its importance and the firm and its values have become the focus. For example, McDonald's has come to represent the fast food industry, not just hamburgers. Of course some could argue that this distinction is actually brand hell, as the concept fast food has negative connotations for some, but most would agree that McDonald's has all the markings of a truly successful brand.

Kunde maintains that Harley-Davidson is the ultimate dweller in brand heaven. This is a product that probably has the most loyal customers on the planet. Some tattoo the company logo on various parts of their bodies; they stayed with the firm when the product itself was arguably the worst motorcycle on the road (at one point there were more

Harleys in the repair shop than on the road); and they were instrumental in saving the firm from collapse. What it boils down to, says Kunde, is not the product itself, but the belief in the company. The product's characteristics become subordinate to the organization. People ride Harleys because of their belief in the values of the company, not only because they believe it is a superior product. It is the concept of the organization as embodied in the Harley-Davidson motorcycle that dominates the purchase decision.

Kunde suggests that to reach brand heaven, organizations need a concept that binds them and their brand together into a single consistent unit. As product characteristics become less important, the concept becomes more important. What Kunde refers to as concept is, in my mind, the corporate brand, i.e., what the entire organization stands for. The concept of Harley-Davidson is constantly cultivating non-material values (Kunde 2000). Family members are back in the organization and top level management is highly visible at events sometimes with 100,000 loyal fans in attendance.

What we see happening is more and more attention being paid to the organization behind the product or service. More and more organizations are "selling" organizational attributes as the added value as opposed to any added value that product characteristics may have. After all, at one level, a motorcycle is nothing more than a means of transportation. Most perform reasonably well, and most are available at comparable prices. Therefore, the added value becomes the association with the organization. For some, a Harley-Davidson represents a Hell's Angel image, whereas a BMW may represent a trouble-free high-class yuppie image, equally desirable or repugnant, depending on the perceiver. Both machines will get the driver to their destination, one arguably more comfortably than the other, but get them there nevertheless. It is the associations or perceptions over and above the utilitarian values that determine the purchase.

Kay (1993) believes that there are four distinctive capabilities that give organizations competitive advantage. Corporate reputation is one of them. It provides competitive advantage because it is valuable' rare, inimitable and nonsubstitutable (VRIN) (Eisenhardt and Martin 2000). According to Kay, reputation is the "most important commercial mechanism for conveying information to consumers" (p. 87). I argue that consumers be changed to stakeholder groups, but the point remains that the capabilities that provide competitive advantage need to be protected. They give the organization an edge that has financial value.

This chapter has discussed the concepts of identity and image and why they are so important to organizations, any organization. As we shall see later in the book, particularly in the chapter on internal marketing, by far more resources are applied to consumer communication than to communication directed at other stakeholders, including employees. We need to reaallocated resources. Consumers are undeniably one of the most important stakeholder groups ,. Nevertheless, managers must realize the importance of building relationships with other groups who can have a profound impact, both positively and negatively, on their organizations. They must broaden the scope of their organization's communication, and in connection with this, they must also focus on it in more depth. As stated earlier, everything about an organization communications, the unplanned at times more loudly than the planned.

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