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# QUO VADIS CORPORATE MARKETING

Klement Podnar & John M.T. Balmer
(Eds.)

# QUO VADIS CORPORATE MARKETING

SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

20th ICIG Symposium, June 5-7 2018, Gozd Martuljek, Slovenija

The abstracts in this book have been reviewed for the conference./Objavljeni povzetki so bili recenzirani ob prijavi na konferenco. Each author is responsible for the content and language of his/her contribution respectively./Avtorji so odgovorni za vsebino in jezikovno ustreznost svojih prispevkov.

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences
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# Quo Vadis corporate marketing? Reflections and directions on corporate identity, branding, image, reputation and communications

Editorial note

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Decades ago, in 1998, Balmer introduced the  corporate marketing notion (Balmer 1998) as an umbrella term that underpins the family of concepts such as corporate identity and branding, corporate reputation and corporate image, corporate and brand identification, organisational culture, employer and internal branding, stakeholder relations, corporate social responsibility etc. and this perspective has been reinforced in recent times (Podnar, 2015). As noted by Balmer (1998) at the end of the last millennium: "… what we are witnessing at present in the literature on corporate identity and corporate communications are the building blocks of what may be known in time as Corporate Marketing…" (Balmer, 1998, p. 989). Set as an umbrella term, corporate marketing explicates institutional focus: an organisational-wide stakeholder societal and CSR orientation that is enacted via a corporate- wide philosophy and strategically managed organisational culture based on identity (Balmer, 2011).

Corporate marketing as a concept has developed from the simple call for a need to integrate different aspects of organisation and its pursuits for competitive, distinctive and reputable identity, and goals to a holistic cross-functional strategic approach and philosophy. This holism helps the firm to compete on different "markets"; to pro-actively respond to challenges and opportunities within different environments and to build relationships with stakeholders. In the contemporary social, political, natural and economic environment, organisations, especially mid-sized and big ones, have little choice but to become corporate marketing based. For a long time now, they are much more than just means for production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. As organisational communities, organisations are forced to act as social actors within a complex networks of relations, expectations, demands, interests and responsibilities. Critical public with its environmental and social concerns, demands an organisational shift toward a more sustainable and holistic approach. A strategic management of organisation's being, doing and communication is a must if the organisation wants to keep its (social) costs low and income high.

Since 1994, when the first International Corporate Identity Group (ICIG) symposium was organised/founded by John Balmer and the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, the field of corporate identity & corporate communication developed tremendously and is now fully recognised among scholars and practitioners. Brief overview in the Scopus database shows, that up to date there are 169 scholar articles containing the term "corporate marketing" in the article title, abstract or keywords. (Of course there are 10 times as many published articles, if we extend our search to the full text and include corporate marketing-related topics.) The number of published articles on corporate marketing grows during the years, with peaks in 2007 (7 documents), 2009 (12 documents), and 2015 (28 documents). It may be predicted that an upward trend in the number of studies is likely to occur in the future. The most important outlets (included in SCOPUS) for this topic seems to be: the European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Brand Management, Corporate Communication: an International Journal, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Business Research, Management Decision, and Journal of Product and Brand Management, just to name the most important ones. All in all, manuscripts on "corporate marketing" indexed in Scopus were published in 120 different journals. Within the database of 169 articles, there was more than hundred different authors, with the leading author being John M.T. Balmer.

The aim of 20th ICIG Symposium was to make a step forward and provoke a debate on general and specific issues within the corporate marketing. As such this volume combines abstracts from papers presented at the

Symposium. All have been double blind reviewed before they were accepted for the presentation. However, each author is responsible for the content and language of his/her article respectively.
In this volume, abstract are divided into seven sections: corporate marketing, employer branding, organisational identity and identification, corporate social responsibility, corporate brand heritage; corporate branding in B2B context and corporate brands in digital era.

We believe that the papers of 20th ICIG Symposium – together with their research focus, methodology and approach and critical contribution – are not only representing the key areas of the corporate marketing, but are simultaneously pointing towards answering the question: Quo Vadis Corporate Marketing?
In our view 20th Symposium represents an important milestone not only for the ICIG but also for the corporate marketing territory. The ICIG has always been at the forefront of cutting edge research and scholarship in the territory and has been hugely influential in publishing special editions and books on the territory.

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# CORPORATE MARKETING

# Reflections on Corporate Identity research: Yesterday, today and tomorrow

Abstract

**Helen Stuart**

**Purpose**
In my presentation I will give a personal and academic reflection on my journey as a corporate identity/corporate brand researcher since 1994. During this time, I have seen the academic field of corporate identity expand from its unpretentious beginnings at the 1st Corporate Identity Symposium at Strathclyde University entitled ‘Corporate Identity: towards the millennium’ which I was fortunate to attend in 1994.

**Findings**
From the initial emphasis on corporate identity and corporate image and the difference between visual and other identities. the concept of interfaces between identities was developed by John Balmer. The field expanded as more researchers became involved. Research interest developed in areas such as the corporate brand, corporate communication, reputation management, corporate marketing and the role of corporate strategy, organisational identity and image, corporate storytelling, corporate branding in Asian countries, employer branding, the role of employees in corporate branding and rebranding, and CSR corporate branding. Many researchers drew on theories from other disciplines such as management, sociology and phenomenology. Whereas case study research has been a favoured tool of researchers in the area, later research attempted to bring the findings of multiple research studies together to produce a coherent theory of corporate identity. This is a difficult task and one that faces researchers in the future.
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# I fear the man of one book: Inquiring into corporate brand paradigm bifurcation

Abstract

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**Purpose**
In examining the philosophical foundations of corporate brand (CB) research embedded in rival functionalist and interpretivist paradigms, this study inquiries into CB paradigm bifurcation (Balmer et al., 2016; Melewar et al., 2012) tensions using a multi-paradigmatic perspective to raise competitive paradigm awareness and to offer a third meta-theoretical view in bridging paradigm boundaries.

**Design/methodology/approach**
It presents a review of the research on social science philosophy and provides an overview of multiple paradigm research in the management and marketing fields of study (Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Davies and Fitchett, 2001; 2005; Hassard, 1991; Hunt, 1991, 1994, 2001; 2003; Lowe et al., 2004, 2005; Schultz and Hatch, 1996). Using the CB as a running theme, a multi-paradigmatic review (Lewis and Kelemen, 2002; Tadajewski, 2004) of the functionalist and interpretivist CB paradigms is presented. The study advances a meta-paradigm theory building (Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Kelemen and Hassard, 2003; Lewis and Grimes, 1999; Point et al., 2017) on CB research.

**Findings**
The review highlights that corporate brand theory has been studied on the basis of diverse ontological concerns, epistemological aims and methodologies, and that paradigms are grounded in fundamentally different philosophical stances. Taking ontological lenses, CBs have been conceived as objectified assets to be leveraged (i.e., functionalist paradigm) and symbols socially constructed (i.e., interpretivist paradigm), whereas from and epistemological point of view, this paper observes the explanatory and predictive nature of positivist research, and the exploratory and sometimes normative nature of interpretivist studies. Moreover, the study observes that despite fundamental ontological and epistemological differences of CB theory building in the functionalist and interpretivist paradigms, a theory of CB alignment emerges throughout both paradigms. Finally, the paper reveals a third meta-theoretical view of CB theory, framing both paradigms into a circular process.

**Originality/value**
This work contributes to theory building and provides scientific original (both incremental and revelatory) insights by fostering CB paradigm awareness and bridging boundaries across rival paradigms. It resolves the debate on CB paradigm bifurcation and reveals a new and more complete framework for CB theory by highlighting reciprocal relationships and mutual benefits stemming from the competitive paradigms' encounter. The emerging framework shows that CBs unceasingly swing between the stability embedded into unique features and dynamic symbolization processes enacted over time by multiple stakeholders.

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# Enabling Corporate Marketing through the development of marketing capability

Abstract

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**Purpose**
Although literature on corporate marketing is now well-established (Burghausen and Balmer, 2015), the nature of marketing capability required to support effective corporate marketing has received little attention in the literature relative to the well-developed field of organisational capabilities (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1999; Weerawardena and Mavondo, 2011). Extant frameworks of marketing capability are inconsistent, were not developed to be comprehensive, and have not been tested empirically (Day, 1994; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005; Day, 2011; Morgan, 2012). The purpose of this study was to empirically define the components of organisational marketing capability and to represent these in a single framework.

**Design/methodology/approach**
The researchers used data collected from four organisational case studies representing diverse business contexts to develop an empirically derived conceptual framework of organisational marketing capability.

**Findings**
The framework depicts corporate marketing capability as a singular functional capability comprising four categories of marketing sub-capabilities each with components, supported by two categories of organisational capabilities.

**Practical implications**
While the new framework builds on those suggested by previous researchers, it provides a practice-based perspective of corporate marketing capability and its associated sub-capabilities.

**Originality/value**
This study is the first to empirically derive a comprehensive framework of marketing capability.

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# Measuring corporate image: Applying social network analysis

Abstract

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**Purpose**
Image is an individual's perceptions or sets of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions of an object, which are created in the mind when the individual thinks about a particular organization or its products and services (Podnar and Golob, 2017, p.187). Corporate image refers to what people believe about us (Dowling, 2016). There are many image measurement techniques including association, completion, construction, closed (Liker scales) method and social network analysis (Podnar, 2015). This study aims to do an application of social network analysis in corporate image measurement.

**Design/methodology/approach**
This study set out to identify image association sets for Apple and Samsung Companies. Data was collected from 202 participants by utilizing a mind mapping survey. A mind mapping survey sheet was designed and respondents are instructed to fill in certain number of associations regarding the two companies in the five boxes provided in the sheet. After listing associations respondents were instructed to draw a connection among each pair of associations if they thought there were any (Guo, 2012: 622). With this survey, not only associations were explored, but also connections between them were explored. A total of 202 survey forms were distributed and 103 completed forms were used for analysis. Respondents were chosen by convenience sampling method. In the first stage of analysis, each mind mapping survey was content analyzed. The unit of analysis in the survey was each association filled in by the respondents. Associations explored in the content analysis were accepted as nodes and connections between association were accepted as ties for the network analysis. A symmetrical matrix was then created. Network analysis matrices, depending on number (N) of predefined attributes under the study, include N rows x N columns. Seventeen associations for Apple and twenty-one associations for Samsung were identified.

**Findings**
UciNet Software was used for network analysis. Results shows that most central associations are “quality” “high prices” and “prestigious” for Apple and “competitive” “innovative” and “low prices” for Samsung. Visual representation contributes to better understanding the network and two association networks was visualized via NetDraw Software.

**Practical implications**
According to the results, social network analysis has strong advantage to show the associations related to the company in the consumer mind and the connections between them. But, on the other hand free association technique has limitation because consumer recall everything about not only company but also the leading product or brand of company.

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# EMPLOYER BRANDING

# Employer branding and multiple identities in the hotel Industry

Abstract

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**Purpose**
Service employees have long been seen as the interface between an organisation and its customers. This is particularly the case in the hospitality industry where the actions of the employees are often seen as the manifestation of the brand and the major contributor to the reputation of a hotel. Employees have become the most valuable asset of hotel companies, a company's success will depend greatly on building a work environment that attracts, meets and exceeds employees' expectations. (Franek and Vecera, 2008).

Corporate brand management requires the total commitment of all staff within an organisation (Balmer, 2001) to deliver the brand promise to the stakeholders and create a strong corporate reputation. Employer branding is key to this commitment and is an increasingly important topic for research and practice in multinational enterprises because it plays directly into the corporate reputation, talent management and employee engagement agendas (Martin et al. 2011). In particular employer branding can play a strategic role in 'future-proofing' corporate reputations (Martin 2009; Burke et al. 2011).

In the hotel industry, employer branding is more complex than in most other types of organisation as employees are often performing there work tasks under the direction of three different stakeholder groups. There is the hotel brand such as Hilton or Holiday Inn involved in setting the brand standards and marketing the hotels; the management company retained by the property owners to run the hotel and employ the staff; and finally there are the property owners. Corporate reputation is important to all three but particularly to the hotel brands and the bigger management companies that manage many hotels.

This raises questions as to who do the hotel employees identify with and which corporate identity is important for recruitment and does this alter once they are employed. A programme of qualitative research was undertaken with hotel brand managers, management company executives, hotel general managers and hotel employees to explore this are further.

**Findings**
The research found that the corporate reputation of the management company and to a lesser extent, the property owner was critical to the management team when considering job opportunities. Whereas, lower level employees were more concerned about the corporate reputation of the hotel brand when joining the organisation with retention being influenced more by the reputation of the management company. The hotel brands build their "employer reputation" around tangible cues such as: the employee travel programme; a distinctive logo; training programmes; reward programmes; career development portals. Whereas the "employer reputation" of the management company are built around a more "local" personal culture revolving around the general manager and his support team. Overall success is dependent on the alignment of the vision and values of brand, management company and property owner.

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# Employer branding in the digital age – How does utilizing social media in recruitment advertisement influence employer attractiveness?

Abstract

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**Purpose**
The value of utilizing social media in corporate branding has been examined extenstively in recent literature. Despite so, its influence on employer branding and corporate recruitment is rarely investigated. Little empirical research is available on how to best utilize social media for recruitment and optimize corporate social media activities to attract the best talents. In this study, we set out to examine two important factors with respect to corporate recruitment utilizing social media – the usage of informative and interactive content online – to enhance perceived employer attractiveness and the intention for job application. We also set out to investigate the moderation role of brand awareness and job applicants' country of residence (US vs. China) on the relationship of utilizing social media in corporate recruitment and employer attractiveness, respectively.

**Design/methodology/approach**
An online survey experiment will be conducted among the participants constituting the job applicants of an organization.

**Findings**
The findings intend to demonstrate the importance of information richness (informative vs. non-informative) and engagement (interactive vs. non-interactive) of the recruitment advertisement on social media. We are also interested in how brand awareness (well-known vs. unknown) and country of residence (US vs. China) moderate the relationship of utilizing social media in corporate recruitment and employer attractiveness.

**Research implications**
Organizations need to be cognizant of the value of utilizing social media in recruitment advertisement, as well as aim to reap opportunities offered by these new tools for employer branding. Also, corporate recruitment through social media needs to be tailored towards the interest of job applicants, which may vary depending on the country of residence.

**Originality/value**
By comparing the role of the two factors (informative and interactive content) with respect to recruitment advertising through social media, the study contributes to the literature of corporate branding and social media marketing.

# The influence of employees' personal branding on corporate branding and reputation

Abstract

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**Orientation**
Over the past years scholars have defined and contextualised concepts such as corporate identity, corporate image, corporate branding and corporate reputation. Podnar and Balmer (2013) called for more research with regards to the integrity of the people behind the creation of these concepts.

**Purpose**
The purpose of this research was to contribute to the personal branding debate by investigating the correlation between the personal brand of an employee, the corporate brand (including the corporate identity and image) and corporate reputation.

**Design/methodology/approach**
The study was conducted amongst 315 respondents, representing eight different industries from the Top500 company list in South Africa. Exploratory research design was used and a computer aided self-administered web-based survey was employed as data collection method. The study incorporated descriptive statistics, Exploratory factor analysis; Cronbach Alpha and Pearson's correlation coefficient in the statistical analysis of the data.

**Findings**
The results indicated that employees' personal branding has a strong correlation with corporate branding (0.72) and corporate reputation (0.64). There was a strong correlation (0.82) between corporate reputation and corporate branding. This is a compelling indication that the manner in which employees portray themselves visually, verbally and non-verbally through various mediums, has the potential to influence stakeholders' perception of the organisation.

**Practical implications**
Management in organisations should understand that the personal brand of every employee has a direct influence on the organisation's corporate brand and reputation. As the values, mission and vision of the organisation resonate with that of the prospective and current employees, these issues, should be clearly explained in the induction program of new employees. All employees should be constantly reminded of the brand promise and their impact on corporate identity and image.

**Originality/value**
This paper expands on previous research reporting on employees' personal branding in relation to corporate branding and corporate reputation. The research furthermore encourages the utilisation of employees' personal branding in decision-making to the benefit of the organisation.

# ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY & IDENTIFICATION

# Brand identification modes of frontline employees through the social identity lens: The Corporate Brand Perspective

Abstract

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**Purpose**
This paper adopts the Social Identity theory (SIT: Tajfel and Turner, 1979) to explore different modes of frontline employees' corporate brand identification and the differences of their cognitive and affective responses to human resources (HR) practices as part of internal branding.

**Design/methodology/approach**
This paper consists of two studies. Study 1 involves two stages. Study 1a involves an exploratory research: an in-depth interview with 39 frontline employees from different retail organisations in the UK reveals four modes of frontline employees' corporate brand identification (corporate brand enthusiasts, conformists, deviants, and rejecters). Study 1b involves an online survey with 373 frontline employees from UK-based retail service organisations to develop and validate the measurement scales of the identified corporate brand identification modes. In Study 2, data were collected via an online survey from 357 frontline employees and supervisors from 408 UK-based retail service organisations.

**Findings**
The results from Study 2 indicate that HR practices, as part of internal branding, affect employees' cognitive and affective responses towards an espoused corporate brand promise. However, their effects vary across different modes of frontline employees' corporate brand identification.

**Theoretical and practical implications**
This paper advances SIT by revealing that the corporate brand identification notion (first proposed by Balmer and Liao, 2007) determines the quadripartite service employee typology. Consequently, the measurement scales of the four modes are proposed. In effect, whilst confirming previous studies of the central role of HR practices on employee corporate brand delivery (Boukis et al., 2014; Sartain, 2005), this paper extends the internal branding literature in showing how services employees respond differently to HR practices based on their corporate brand identification mode. This paper is of instrumental utility since the identification of quadripartite genres - and the outcomes of HR endeavours therein - helps account for variations in corporate service brand delivery (and non-delivery) by frontline employees. Therefore, senior managers, by recognising their employees' mode of corporate brand identification along with HR practices, are better placed to understand, intervene, and facilitate improvements in the delivery of their organisation's corporate brand promise.

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# The effect of waiters' occupational identity on work engagement and its impact on employee turnover

Abstract

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**Purpose**
The aim of this study is to investigate waiters' sense of self and their identity in the workplace. The principal objectives are to study the antecedents (employer branding, self-concept, interaction, interference, authenticity, inter-groups, and stereotype) (see Appendix 1) and how this relationship affects work engagement and employee turnover. Salience is used as a moderator of this relationship to describe the meaning of the stimuli (see Appendix 2).

**Design/methodology/approach**
The complexity of the 'occupational identity' relationship between the employee and characteristics of the restaurant's social mileau combines the situation specifically for applying mixed methodologies, where qualitative and quantitative methodologies are used together to collect waiters' experiences and to consider employees' perceptions, unencumbered by "what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature" (Creswell, 2013, p.48; Wild et al., 2017).

**Practical implications**
In connection with the potential managerial implications, one of the outcomes to employee turnover and work engagement is the stigma that society has of working in restaurants in the UK (Wildes, 2005). An expected result within the study can be established with the construction of an agentic role on the development of occupational identities; this will present the specific explanatory example while contributing to the main elements of an occupational identity intergroup (Cameron 2001; Palmer, 2010).

**Originality/value**
This work is important because the effect of concepts, such as identity and connection for evolving specific job roles, is still under-examined in particular conditions. Employers need to work with and understand the ability of the individual framework of waiters in job roles because these have repercussions on the principal interests, such as work engagement and turnover of waiting employees (Paules, 1991).

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**Appendix 1. Definition of constructs**

***Occupational Identity***
Occupational identity is a set of perceptual components such as, goals, abilities, occupational interests and meanings connecting the individual's identity to their career perspectives as generated by previous experience (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Bauman, 2004; Cameron and Spreitzer, 2011; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Delanty, 1995; Hirschi, 2012; Ibarra, 1999; Jekings, 1996; Pratt et al., 2006; Snow and Anderson, 1987).

***Employer branding***
The employer brand in which the employee's identity is created, constitutes the identity of the organisation as an employer. It is a long-term strategy that comprehends the firm's value, policies and behaviour system towards the objectives of interesting, encouraging, and retaining the organisation's current and potential staff and correlated stakeholders with regards to an organisation (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Ashcraft, 2007; Conference Board, 2001; Sullivan, 2004; Wallace et al., 2014).

***Self-concept***
Self-concept is what we perceive when we think of oneself. It is a person's feeling of self-worth, as well as a rich, multifaceted cognitive structure with aspects of the 'me' forming self-concept and identities being part of self-concepts (Abrams, 1994; Cantor and Kihlstrom, 1987; Daphna et al., 2012; Greenwald and Pratkanis, 1984; Hogg, 2003; Markus and Wurf, 1987; McLean, 2005; Neisser, 1993; Serpe, 1987; Stein, 1995; Stets and Burke, 2003; Stryker and Burke, 2000; Stryker, 1980; Taijfel, 1981;Tajfel and Turner, 2004).

***Interaction***
Interaction refers to the procedure of exposure to multiple staff by which an untrained employee is accepted into an occupation and adopts the norms and values of the occupation in his/her self-concept and behaviour. It is also described as an outcome of the formation of self-esteem as an employee with the necessary responsibilities and knowledge (Blais et al., 2006; Blais, 2006; Cohen, 1981; Creasja et al., 2007; Hardy, 1988; Haynes et al., 2004; Lai and Lim 2012; Leddy, 1998; Tappen et al., 1998).

***Interference***
Interference is the result of having multiple identities, which happens when the pressure of one identity hinders the performance of another identity and may create a number of physical and negative psychological outcomes (Cooke and Rousseau 1984; Coverman, 1989; Fried et al., 1998; Gerson, 1985; Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; O'Driscoll, et al., 1992; Settles, 2004; Thoits, 1991; Van Sell et al., 1981).

***Authenticity***
Individuals, in particular, look for an authentic identity - 'being yourself' or 'becoming yourself' - by the link between one's personal experiences and outer manifestations, and operating and communicating upon this personal experience in the workplace. On some occasions authenticity can position itself as a rebellion against social order (Aupers and Houtman, 2010; Brunet, 2011; Deci and Ryan, 2000; Lietdka, 2008; Ménard and Roberts, 2007).

***Inter-groups***
Inter-groups occur when people from one group interrelate, individually or collectively, with another group or its components in relation to their group identification. As an example of inter-group conduct, group identification will bring about bonding, create well-being, companionship and personal security. Individuals often achieve a higher level of self-esteem by comparing their own group positively to others (Haslam, 2009; Hogg and Abrams, 2001; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Lyubomirova, 2013; Sherif, 1966; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

***Stereotype***
Stereotype provides the simplified essence of a group's overall perception of a person or group by downplaying individual differences and exaggerating commonalities as communicated between individuals and groups. Individuals tend to keep their stereotype of specific groups even after there is a significant indication that disconfirms the actual stereotype that they are using (Amilton and Sherman, 1994; Fiske, 1998; Hilton and von Hippel, 1996; Nadler and Clark, 2011; Stedman, 2006; Von Hippel et al., 1995).

***Salience***
Salience theory is still an imprecise term. However, it has been defined as a property of a stimulus that permits it to be noticed and to stand out compared to others in their same context; therefore, and according to the dichotic theory of salience, this stimulus will be in-salient when it is incongruent with a specific environment and

re-salient when it is congruent in a specific environment (Alba et al., 1991; Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Guido 1995a; 1996; Hastie et al., 1984; Heckler and Childers, 1992; Mowen, 1993).

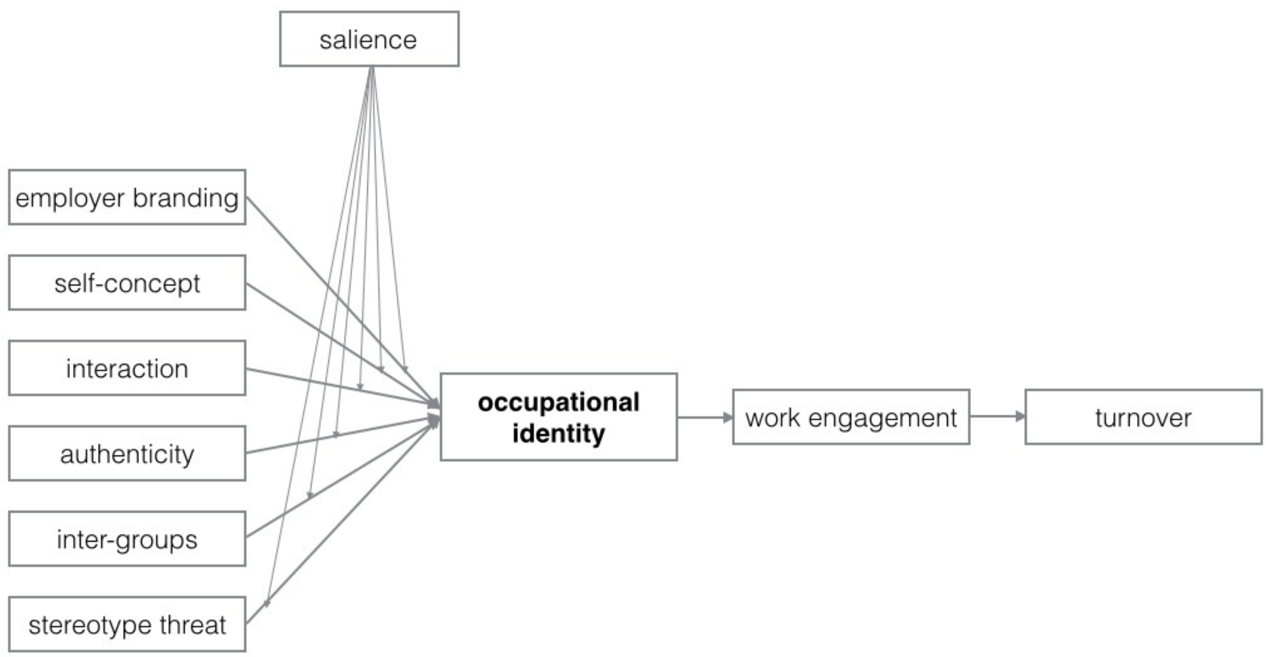
***Work engagement***

Work engagement is an optimistic occupational emotional and incentivational state of mind that involves an honest disposition to make an effort in one's work and towards managerial achievement. It is typified by vigour, dedication, absorption and passion for work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Billett and Somerville, 2004; Britt, 2003; Brown and Leigh, 1996; Brown, 1996; Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Zigarmi et al., 2009).

***Turnover***

Employee turnover is the movement, attrition, mobility, exits, migration or succession of employees between jobs, firms and occupations within the labour market, as well as the rotation between the states of unemployment and employment (Abassi et al., 2000; Hom and Griffeth, 1995; Ivancevich and Glueck, 1989; Morrell et. al., 2004; Woods, 1995).

**Appendix 2. The proposed research conceptual framework**



# Bridging the gap between Corporate and Organisational Identity: A self-categorization perspective

Abstract

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**Orientation**
After more than four decades of Corporate Identity scholarship, researchers continue to emphasize the need for further cross-disciplinary fertilization between Corporate and Organisational Identity. (Balmer and Wilson, 1998; Cornelissen et al, 2007; Perez and del Bosque, 2014) They point to the crucial role of employees in shaping and communicating Corporate Identity (CI), often in direct opposition to managerial dictates, and they argue that the literature on Organisational Identity (OI) can offer valuable insights into this relationship. (Brexendorf and Kernstock, 2007; Powell, 2011; Dean et al, 2016; Balmer, 2017) However, attempts to bridge the disciplinary divide have been repeatedly confounded by three fundamental points of difference (He and Balmer, 2007): conceptualization (substantive versus perceptual), unit of analysis (the organisation versus the individual), and focus of inquiry (dimensions of the construct versus organisational sense-making and behaviour).

**Purpose**
In this paper we argue that Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, 1987) can help to overcome these points of difference. SCT builds on the principles of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), which have received extensive empirical support in an organisational context (Korschun, 2015; Haslam et al, 2003), but is specifically concerned with the nature and formation of social groups. As such, it deals with elemental issues that are directly relevant to the CI-OI divide; SCT explains why the perceptions of employees (OI) must logically 'more or less directly reflect' objective reality (CI) and how, through the process of depersonalisation, employees can transcend the distinction between individuals (OI) and the organisation as a whole (CI). Moreover, this theory offers a direct link between CI and employee behaviour, suggesting that managers who understand their organisation's CI will be better equipped to manage both.

**Design/methodology/approach**
The objective of the study was to describe the dimensions of Corporate Identity as seen through the lens of SCT. To this end we conducted a comparative case study of seven organisations. Within each organisation we used an open-ended questionnaire to elicit individual employees' perceptions of their own organisation's identity. Responses were then coded according to the procedure prescribed by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

**Findings**
The resulting framework is comprised of five dimensions, which can be divided into twelve sub-dimensions, each of which was observed in all seven cases. However, the most surprising findings relate to the absence of culture, which is the component most closely associated with employee behaviour in the CI literature, and to the way in which respondents viewed their organisation's strategic outlook; rather than focusing on managerial vision, respondents consistently emphasized the link between strategy and organisational capabilities. Moreover, they demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of various other dimensions typically considered the domain of managers - including reputation, stakeholder relations, leadership – as well as the complex web of connections among them.

**Theoretical and practical implications**
Our findings challenge the mind-soul dichotomy (Balmer and Soenen, 1998) that shapes the way in which managers and academics view CI. They suggest that identity related behaviours on the part of employees can

be fully explained without reference to the culture or 'soul' of the organisation, and that managers do not have sole claim to being the 'mind' of the organisation. As such they underscore the need for managers to understand the role that employees play in co-creating CI (Glanfield et al, 2017); managers who actively engage with employees should encounter less resistance and benefit from the fresh perspective that employees bring to strategic issues. Moreover, the emergent framework can facilitate this engagement by helping managers to focus their attention on the dimensions of CI that directly affect employee behaviour.

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# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# It's all about quality of life: The influence of internal CSR and affective organisational commitment on life satisfaction

Abstract

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**Purpose**
Management and CSR fields have so far paid less attention to relating the idea of a "happy employee" to the concept of overall life satisfaction. The aim of this study is therefore to explore the contribution of work domain to life satisfaction. Particularly, we focus on the role internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) dimension and affective organisational commitment play in achieving life satisfaction, a holistic concept of happiness.

**Design/methodology/approach**
The study is based on quantitative data gathered from a representative sample of Slovenian population (reduced to respondents who are employed; n = 482) in 2017. The variables studied are part of a larger set of questions aimed at researching work-life balance. The hypotheses drawn from the literature are tested with structural equation modelling.

**Findings**
The findings of this study indicate the key importance of perceived internal CSR for both, the internal (i.e. satisfaction related to work) and external satisfaction (i.e. satisfaction with life in general) of employees. Internal CSR explains around 30% of variance in satisfaction with work processes and relationships at work. The positive relationship between internal CSR and affective commitment is also confirmed. Moreover, both, internal CSR and affective commitment tend to have a moderate positive influence on life satisfaction.

**Practical implications**
This paper offers some interesting insights for practice where managers globally are striving towards more sustainable organisations. It emphasises the importance of internal, organisation-focused perspective of CSR often neglected in the CSR literature.

**Originality/value**
The paper has two important contributions to the literature. First, it addresses a gap in the (management) literature related to the scant attention paid to the concept of overall life satisfaction in the work domain. Second, it adds to the newly developing micro-perspective in the CSR literature by investigating the impacts of internal CSR on employees' attitudes.

# An empirical examination of the direct and indirect effects of CI dimensions on CSR performance

Abstract

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**Purpose**
Given the competitive tempo of today's business environments, superior performance is reliant on a firm's ability to manage critical intangible assets, i.e., corporate identity (CI) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Balmer, 2017). Yet, little empirical research has considered how to create and manage CSR brands and few studies have examined how to leverage CSR in brand-building activities (Lindgreen et al., 2016). Similarly, identity attributes required to develop credible CSR brands are unclear. Therefore, comprehensive models capable of addressing organizational attributes that underlie the development and implementation of CSR brands and are clearly needed.

**Design/methodology/approach**
Based on data collected from 126 senior executives working in UK food and beverage industry, this paper applies PLS-SEM to fulfil the above purpose. This paper also uses importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) which extends the standard PLS-SEM results by representing the predecessor (top management, founder, mission dissemination, communication, culture and employee identification) constructs' importance in implementing CSR, as well as their performance.

**Research limitations/implications**
Data were only collected from executives in the UK food and beverage companies. This research would benefit from replicative studies.

**Theoretical and practical implications**
The model answers a call for CI research to 'examine different types of corporate marketing interfaces' (He and Balmer, 2013:425), and enhance understanding of the relationship between corporate intangible assets. It also underpins CSR adoption and fills a gap in the CSR literature regarding lack of clarity on how best to implement CSR in organizational practice.

This study reveals the role of CI dimensions, and activities, in implementing CSR. The graphical presentation of IPMA analysis enables managers to identify critical areas of attention and action (dimensions with high importance but low performance).

**Originality/value**
This is the first empirical study to assess the interrelationship between CI dimensions and their individual and compound effects on CSR.

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# Exploring ethical corporate identity, CSR and the positioning of corporate brands in the luxury industry

Abstract

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**Purpose**
As noted by Hildebrand et al. (2011) and Powell (2011) 'Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an integral part of corporate marketing strategies due its ability to strengthen corporate identity' (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017, p. 420). Additionally organisational moral blindness, scepticism and cynicism and many more thought provoking issues are currently creating challenges to corporate brand management, corporate communications and above all corporate marketing itself. The purpose of this paper is to raise the question, are current social and ethical concepts already embedded within corporate marketing able to embrace some of these challenges.

**Design/methodology/approach**
This follows a multi-step approach. Step one is based on a review of nascent research on the concept of 'ethical corporate identity management' in relation to CSR strategies and the positioning of corporate brands, and also incorporates an analytical framework proposed by van Rekom et al. 2013. Step two and following calls by Balmer et al. (2017, p. 13) explores the applicability of the concept of ethical corporate identity management within the context of the CSR-luxury paradox (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). Step three develops a conceptual framework to help guide further empirical research in this area. The methodology is based on expert industry interviews and thematic analysis.

**Findings**
The results further conceptual development in the area of ethical corporate identity management, CSR and the positioning of luxury corporate brands.

**Practical implications/originality/value**
This paper provides a framework to help explore ethical corporate identity management activities within corporate marketing initiatives.

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# CORPORATE BRAND HERITAGE

# Operationalizing corporate brand heritage

Abstract

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**Purpose**
The purpose of this paper is to develop an initial framework for the operationalization of the corporate brand heritage concept. Intangible assets account for an increasing share of corporate value. Therefore, an understanding of, as well as a means to measure their value creation is essential.

**Design/methodology/approach**
The operationalization is based on an analysis of the existing literature on brand and corporate heritage as well as insights from corporate representatives. The conceptualization is comprised of four components: history, core values, symbols and vision. The empirical applicability of this framework is tested via the case of Finlayson, a Finnish textile manufacturer.

**Findings**
Most respondents agreed with our suggested past, present, future (PPF) framework. In particular, history was considered important. However, staying too stuck on heritage and not keeping pace with technological developments can become a future hindrance.

**Research limitations/implications**
More research and further evidence is needed to gain insights into this concept and its components, as well as to their empirical, quantitative measurement. The suggested measures could be developed by interviewing knowledgeable parties, focus group discussions and pilot tests, thereby contributing to the reliability and validity of future studies.

**Originality/value**
While a number of studies have been conducted related to the concept of brand heritage, no previous research has suggested a means of operationalizing corporate brand heritage. The framework presented here furthers the understanding of brand heritage, which has implications for both theory and practice.

# Making the British Museum: Corporate (heritage) marketing as a form of marketing, identity and temporal work by "hybrid" stakeholders

Abstract

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**Ivi Varda**
The British Museum

**Purpose**
The purpose of this research is to explore cultural heritage organisations as corporate (heritage) identities/brands based on the perspective of corporate (heritage) marketing as a form of "work". In particular, it draws on and integrates a tripartite notion of "work" (i.e. marketing work, identity work and temporal work) as a purposive activity carried out by various actors (i.e. stakeholders) having agency vis-à-vis the cultural heritage organisation, which shapes the material, semantic and symbolic configuration of such organisations as a corporate (heritage) identity/brand. Thus, the research broadly asks how and in what ways this multifarious form of "work" has constitutive and instrumental import for such entities. More specifically, the ongoing pilot study's focus is on the (re)presentational and interpretive activities and practices of the membership department and its members as "hybrid" stakeholders (internal/external) vis-à-vis the focal organisation and its constitution, qua cultural heritage organisation, as a corporate (heritage) identity/brand.

**Design/methodology/approach**
An exploratory interpretive-qualitative study of one cultural heritage organisation (i.e. The British Museum) based on a single case study design with multiple units of analysis. The organisation is purposively chosen as an exemplary and revelatory case in light of the general purpose that motivates our study (with the additional benefit of being an interesting and unique case per se). In light of the general conceptual perspective adopted for this study the empirical fieldwork focuses initially on the membership department of the BM. This is because this particular department operates at the nexus of internal and external with members being "hybrid" stakeholders, engages in various forms of marketing work and also requires prima facie identity and temporal work at different levels vis-à-vis the BM as a cultural heritage organisation. Empirical data are generated through (semi-structured/open) interviews, participant observations, and document research; triangulated and interpreted based on a prolonged and iterative engagement with the empirical data and emergent analytic categories.

**Findings**
This being an ongoing study, we will report on first tentative insights suggestive of the constitutive nature and instrumental impact of corporate heritage (marketing) work performed by the membership department and its members.

**Originality/value**
We believe our study to be highly relevant in theoretical and practical terms. In theoretical terms, the study aims to contribute to the nascent field of corporate marketing scholarship by introducing and empirically investigating the notion of "work" as a multifarious concept across different loci and levels. In practical terms, it is hoped that the notion of corporate (heritage) marketing work as a form of identity and temporal work vis-à-vis cultural heritage organisations helps to shed light on how to best establish and maintain them as corporate (heritage) identities/brands vis-à-vis hybrid stakeholders. This is hoped to have pragmatic import beyond the case organisation itself – in terms of the membership department of the BM understanding better the impact of and improving on their own work practices – also extending to those organisations that may also qualify as an actual or potential corporate heritage identity/brand in the cultural heritage sector.

# CORPORATE BRANDING IN B2B

# Corporate brand relationships influence on the initiation of customer relationships in B2B service

Abstract

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**Purpose**
This paper examines the time dimension in customers' corporate brand relationships and how the emergence of corporate brand relationships affect the initiation of a customer relationship in the context of a B2B service market. Rindell (2013) define consumers' corporate brand relationships as a mental relationship the consumer/customer has with a certain corporate brand over time. The term consumer brand relationship is thus basically equivalent to a consumer's perception of a company's corporate image over time. The service providers in this paper are two companies within construction business: a large international project and construction group, and a small workplace design consultancy company selling solutions implemented as projects. The first mentioned company has quite stable customer relationships whereas the second company has two types of customers: short-time customers that have little experience of such service solutions, and expert customers with a lot of experience of this specific service solution but is not necessary a long-time customer. In conclusion, we have three types of customers: one-time customers, expert customers, and long-time customers. The research question is 'how do customers' corporate brand relationships influence the initiation of customer relationships in B2B service'. From a theoretical point of view, two streams of research, corporate brand relationship research and customer relationship management/relationship marketing research is combined to further the understanding of sales success due to customers' corporate brand relationships.

Corporate brand relationships -In the branding literature a growing stream of research has focused on consumer brand relationships (Fetscherin & Heinrich 2014, Fetscherin & Heinrich 2015). Fetscherin and Heinrich claim that "While academia and practitioners have paid huge attention to customer relationship management (CRM) in the past, consumer brand relationships management (CBRM) is still in its infancy"(Fetscherin and Heinrich 2015, p. 388). Brand relationships have since the 1990's been studied through the lens of multiple constructs, like brand personality, brand trust, brand love, brand commitment, and has emerged to a multidisciplinary, multidimensional and multi-conceptual field of research (Fetscherin and Heinrich 2014). However, the time dimension of brand relationships has not gained much attention, especially not in B2B service settings.

Customer relationship management - From the service provider's point of view relationship marketing represent the company's perspective on managing customers. Relationship marketing can be defined as the deliberate management of customers and other stakeholders so that relationships with them are initiated, cultivated and dissolved in such a way that the company achieves and maintains its competitiveness. (Strandvik 1998) Initiation entails the whole process of discovering potential customers, selecting suitable prospects, approaching them, negotiating with them and closing a deal with them. In the relationship marketing literature concerning B2B settings, brands have not played any significant role, although there are indications that brand issues, and especially corporate brand images may influence the initiation (and continuation) of customer relationships (Edvardsson, Holmlund & Strandvik 2010). Hence, here exists an interesting area for further research.

Integrating brand relationships and customer relationships as perspectives - Although the two research perspectives both use the relationship metaphor, there is considerable differences in what a relationship entails respectively. Customer relationships are considered as expressions of business activities, starting when the business relationship is initiated and ending when the business activities end. Brand relationships may however exist irrespective of customer relationships, which represent the most interesting research issue from a relationship marketing perspective. A company's brand relationships may stimulate or hinder the initiating of

customer relationships, may influence the continuation of customer relationships as well as have an effect on endings of customer relationships. Consumers, users, potential customers and customers have a brand relationship with a certain company whether the company knows about it or not.

**Design/methodology/approach**
The empirical context consist of two companies and three types of customers: one-time customers, expert customers, and long-term customers. Qualitative data collected among short-time customers, expert customers, and long-term customers is used to analyse how the corporate brand relationship influences on the initiation of the customer relationship. In this study brand relationships are restricted to those of the service provider's potential customers that actually have become active customers.

**Findings**
Findings show the importance of understanding customers' corporate brand relationships and how they have evolved over time as premises for customer relationships. Differences in one-time customers', expert customers', and long-term customers' brand relationships in regard to information search, preferences, view on competence and communication as initiation of business relationships were found.

**Practical implications**
For managers the study shows the importance of corporate branding as a premise for business relationship initiation and continuation in a B2B context. Customers corporate brand relationships evolve over time based on multiple touch-points. They may precede considerably customer relationships but also influence remarkably on the continuation of the business relationship, and lives on also after business relationships.

**Originality/value**
The paper connects brand relationships with customer relationships in a B2B context. Additionally, the paper presents a definition of customer brand relationships based on how corporate brand relationships evolve over time. This approach is novel, since it focuses on the time dimension in customers (not consumers) corporate (not product) level brand relationships.

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# Premium pricing and customer retention: An investigation of B2B logistics corporate brand image in China

Abstract

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**Purpose**
Currently corporate brand image of logistics companies from emerging markets are under researched. The purpose of this study is to investigate the corporate brand image construct and a specific genus of corporate brand image, namely B2B corporate brand image in the most significant emerging economy is that of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This research is distinctive since it focusses on local but also foreign B2B logistics corporate brands operating in China and examines the significance of premium pricing and customer retention apropos industrial corporate brand image.

**Design/methodology/approach**
This research has adopted a web-based survey to gather data from respondents whose names were extracted from a database provided by a logistics service agency based in the Port of Dalian, the second largest container transhipment hub in China. Our survey was distributed to the business customers from this database of the four global and one local global logistics service providers operating in China: FedEx (USA), UPS (USA), DHL (Germany), TNT (The Netherlands) and EMS (China).

**Findings**
Our study found corporate brand images of foreign and local logistics providers had a material impact regarding (a) price premium, and (b) retention in China. Moreover, this study has an explicit B2B corporate brand image focus, as per our reference to the "industrial corporate brand image" concept. This study advances, broadens, and corroborates the findings of Blombäck and Axelsson (2007), vis-à-vis important role of corporate brand image in supplier assessment in industrial marketing management contexts. More generally, and materially, the research insights revealed a similitude in the importance managers accord to industrial corporate brand image in advanced economies in Europe and North America and, as highlighted here, in a major transitional economy: China.

**Originality/value**
The principal contribution of this article is found in our theoretical framework of industrial corporate brand image vis-à-vis B2B customer retention and price premium: this may be seen to represent a middle-range theoretical advance (Bryman 2012). In terms of research outcome, per the tripartite characterization of Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (2008), this study represents a research reflection which marshals existing insights apropos corporate brand image to the logistics sector and from the most well-known emerging market – China.

# Three dimensions of retail architecture: A categorisation from the practitioners' perspectives

Abstract

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**Purpose**
This study examines the concept of architecture from multidisciplinary approach. It facilitates better understanding of the concept of retail architecture, and its dimensions; focus on image, reputation, and identification as consequence from the customers and visitors perspective.

**Design/methodology/approach**
This study adopts a hybrid methodology with dominant qualitative and quantitative components and consisted of two phases. The first phase (exploratory phase) involving 22 in-depth interviews with architects, design consultants, marketing managers and 6 focus groups conducted with customers, visitors, and architects. In the second phase the framework was tested by means of a survey of 450 British customers and visitors to examine their perceptions of the influences of architecture, stakeholders' experiences, image, reputation, and identification. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied to gain insight into the various influences and relationships.

**Findings**
The study identifies and confirms key constructs in retail architecture and its dimensions and focus on image, reputation, and identification as consequence from the customers and visitors perspective. Architecture and its elements were found to positively influence on image, reputation, and identification.

**Research limitations/implications**
The focus on British retailing limits the generalisability of the findings. Future research should be conducted in other country settings in order to test the relationships identified in the present study. Also, future research may build on the study's findings by investigating the attitudinal and behavioural consequences of brand identification in the retail context.

**Originality/value**
The findings of this research are generates a number of implications and have a value for managers suggesting that companies build a favourable architecture, stakeholders' experiences, image, reputation, and identification. Also, the findings identified four main factors which influence on architecture; i.e. spatial layout and functionality, physical stimuli, and symbolic artifacts. A key contribution of this study is presenting a robust model that describes the hopeful phenomenon of architecture and representing that perceptions has a definite positive impact on stakeholders' experience, image, reputation, and identification. Furthermore, this research adds novel perspective to the growing body of design and identity literature (chiefly corporate visual identity) and suggests directions for future study.

# CORPORATE BRANDS IN DIGITAL ERA

# Managing identity in the information age: New demands create new challenges

Abstract

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**Orintation**

Maintaining alignment between an organization's self-concept - its inner identity - and how it is perceived by external audiences is at the core of identity management.

In a world in which organizations grow incrementally and enjoy relatively long periods of strategic and organizational continuity, the roots of identity are relatively stable, and maintaining alignment across stakeholders requires routine monitoring and occasional minor adjustment. In such a world, corporate branding and rebranding efforts are infrequent, and are almost always undertaken in conjunction with some major strategic shift such as a merger or an acquisition, or in response to some extraordinary circumstance such as a corruption scandal, a punishing court ruling, or an industrial accident.

In a world of relative stability, managers have more control over how their organization is perceived by its relevant audiences and what these audiences know about it.

Fast forward to the information age where successful upstarts grow exponentially, scale globally at a very fast pace, and diversify their products and services very early. Google, Uber, Amazon, and Airbnb are obvious illustrations of the organizational species born in this age.

Exponential growth, rapid diversification, and swift internationalization compound the challenge of identity management. Internally, the recruitment of hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of employees every year in different parts of the world, can result in high levels of ambiguity among them about 'what kind of company this is'. And because these young organizations are scaling rapidly, and because their business models morph in response to feedback from the markets they are attempting to serve, they are challenged to project an image of themselves – that is, of who they are - before they (or even their leaders) can answer the question.

Significantly, conflicting answers to the question can have huge implications for a company's business model. Uber is a case in point. Senior management argues that it is a technology company, while its drivers see it as an employer. Competitors, on the other hand, view it as a transportation company, and the regulatory regime(s) to which it is subject depends on the definition of what kind of company it is. To make the challenge more complex, this definition may vary from one country to the next. The result is that Uber's identity is continuously at the forefront and subject to conflicting interpretations in the public space. Its managers must invest huge amounts of time and money to support its claim as a technology company and protect its business model.

Alignment across stakeholders in the information age is further complicated by the fact that managers have less control of what external audiences know about the organization and how they perceive it. Information and narratives about an organization (think again of Uber) are produced by multiple formal (media) and informal (social media) actors scattered around the globe and using different languages.

**Implications**

In this new landscape, identity management is evolving from relatively infrequent episodic corporate (re)branding activities to an ongoing and explicit process. This shift has profound implications for the organization of identity management: real time monitoring of multiple channels, agile response capabilities to adverse narratives, higher skills in storytelling and empathizing with the organization's multiple audiences, mastery of communication through mass media, etc. This shift is creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs who are developing digital solutions to support the ongoing monitoring and management of identity. Going forward, in order to cope with these new identity challenges, it is likely that firms will have to bring identity more squarely into strategic discussions. One early indicator of how this might be done is through creation of a new C-Suite position with the title of Chief Corporate Identity Officers (CCIO) or something similar. Understanding how this role becomes defined, how it is enacted, and what impact it has is an important agenda for research on identity management in the information age.

# Corporate brands and digital ecosystems – challenges and strategic options

Abstract

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**Purpose**
In recent years, concentration, efficiencies through digital processes and network effects have grown significantly to such an extent that some brands become powerful digital ecosystems and platforms that create value for consumers and act as gatekeepers for many other brands. These platforms provide digitally accessed, multi-industry solutions and reshape traditional industry boundaries and competition. As they grow, digital ecosystems retain more and more of the consumer's mind and share. Even strong brands cannot afford to ignore this development. Our paper aims to outline the challenges that corporate brands are confronted with through digital ecosystems and to broaden the understanding of strategic options, which can be used to address and counteract these challenges.

**Design/methodology/approach**
This conceptual paper explains the nature and challenges of digital ecosystems for corporate brands within the context of corporate marketing. Based on a literature review, the authors provide an overview of the domain, derive strategic options for corporate brands and develop avenues for future research in this domain.

**Findings**
Research and management practice have not fully realised the importance of digital ecosystem for managing corporate brands.

**Research limitations/implications**
More empirical research is needed to understand impact of digital ecosystems for corporate brand management.

**Practical implications**
Digital ecosystems are a threat and opportunity for many brands. We evaluate the threats and opportunities and discuss possible strategic options.

**Originality/value**
We discuss the rise of digital ecosystem and their relevance for corporate brand management. We draw on several research streams in the strategy, entrepreneurship, and brand management literature.
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# Corporate rebranding failure in the digital era: The impact of antagonistic and supportive brand meanings

Abstract

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**Purpose**
The main purpose of this study is to investigate the dynamic process of brand meaning creation by multiple stakeholders during corporate rebranding in the digital environment.

**Design/methodology/approach**
By applying a symbolic interactionist perspective, the case study analyses a failed corporate rebranding of Gap. A variety of narratives by managers, consumers, designers, and marketing professionals were captured by collecting qualitative data on Facebook, Twitter, and professional forums on the Internet.

**Findings**
The study demonstrates that the process of brand meaning creation is affected by the complexity of brand meaning negotiation within and between different stakeholder groups. The findings illustrate that the polarisation of brand meanings, in which both antagonistic and supportive forms co-exist, has a determinable impact on the outcome of corporate rebranding.

**Research limitations/implications**
The study analyses one case of corporate rebranding failure with the focus being on the four key stakeholder groups. Future studies are recommended to examine multiple cases of successful and failed corporate rebranding, including a broader variety of internal and external stakeholders.

**Practical implications**
Marketing managers are recommended to engage multiple stakeholders proactively during the process of brand meaning creation. They are encouraged to learn from antagonistic incidents of brand meaning negotiation as well as to utilise opportunities arising during constructive episodes of brand meaning co-creation.

**Originality/value**
The study contributes to previous research by exploring how the process of brand meaning creation can trigger the collision of brand meanings, which lead to the failure of corporate rebranding.

The symposia of the ICIG (The International Corporate Identity Group) have an enviable and quite distinctive provenance: the first ICIG symposium took place at Strathclyde University Business School in 1994. The ICIG was formally launched at The House of Lords, Palace of Westminster London in January 1996 following the “Strathclyde Statement” on Corporate Identity crafted in 1995. Since then, the ICIG has developed into an informal community of corporate branding, identity, reputation, image, culture, communication and marketing researchers and practitioners.

Its purpose is to provide a forum for academic and practitioner insight on the domain where research, scholarship and, best-practice vis-a-vis related corporate-level concepts such as corporate and organisational identity, corporate branding, corporate communication, corporate image, corporate reputation and corporate social responsibility can be discussed.

The ICIG, although proud of its British roots, is interdisciplinary and international in scope, membership and ethos. Professor John M.T. Balmer is the ICIG Chairman and its founder and has individually and collaboratively organised annual symposia with ICIG colleagues since its launch.

To date, symposia have been held at leading business schools and universities in the UK, Europe and beyond such as Strathclyde Business School (Scotland); Oxford University (England), Bradford School of Management (England), Brunel University (England), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), University of St Gallen (Switzerland), IE Business School (Spain), Aarhus University (Denmark), Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia) , University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (South Africa), University of Essex (England).

The ICIG works hard to maintain the small size (around 20-25 delegates) and exclusive character of the symposia so that a country house type atmosphere and a scholarly and supportive modus operandi are maintained. Attendance at the event is by invitation only and only scholars who take a collegial approach are invited or are re-invited.

Many leading academics have presented papers at the above events and key note speakers have included a former EU Commissioner, Lord King, Lord Marshall (both of British Airways), the Chairman of Barclays Bank and the Assistant Chairman of the Abbey Building Society. Senior managers and directors from well-known companies and other organisations have taken part in our events (for example, Arla Foods, Babcock, Barclays Bank, British Airways, British Museum, BP, BSI Bank, City of Cape Town, Enel, German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Grundfos, Holcim, Nokia, RBS, Royal Mail) along with leading marketing, identity and brand consultants such as Sir Robert Worcester, Wally Olins, David Bernstein, Adrian Day, Nicholas Ind, Clive Chajet, Jacob Benbunan and other representatives from consultancies (for example, Landor Associates, Wolff Olins, Saffron, Interbrand, Metadesign, CloserLondon).

The symposia organised by the ICIG have, since the mid-1990s, led to special editions of leading journals on the area such as the European Journal of Marketing, California Management Review, Journal of Business Ethics, International Studies of Management and Organizations, Management Decision, Journal of Brand Management, Corporate Communications: An International Journal, Corporate Reputation Review and the International Journal of Bank Marketing.

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