

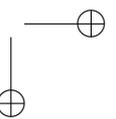
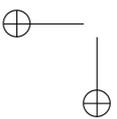
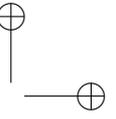
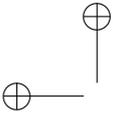
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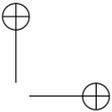
The Dialogue Imperative

**Trends and challenges in strategic
and organisational communication**



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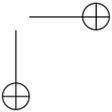
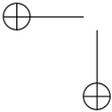


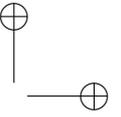


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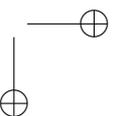
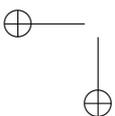


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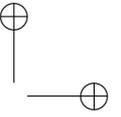
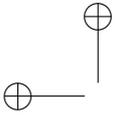
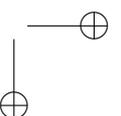
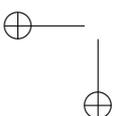
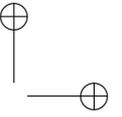
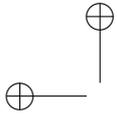


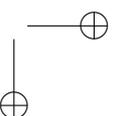
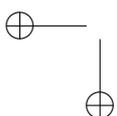
Table of contents

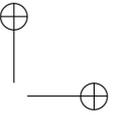
Foreword	1
I THEORETICAL APPROACHES ON DIALOGUE	5
The engineering commitment: the role of public relations in managing internal communication <i>by Jordi Xifra</i>	7
Public relations and dialogical ethics <i>by Rui Sampaio da Silva</i>	19
Who's afraid of social media? A normative approach to corpo- rate discourse on the Web <i>by Gisela Gonçalves</i>	33
Understanding stakeholder expectations <i>by Laura Olkkonen</i>	47



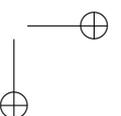
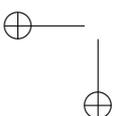


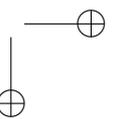
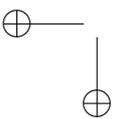
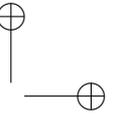
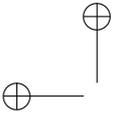
II DIALOGUE IN MEDIA RELATIONS AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION	61
Media relations and health news coverage: The dialogue on <i>Influenza A</i> in Portugal <i>by Teresa Ruão, Felisbela Lopes, Sandra Marinho, Rita Araújo</i>	63
The bidirectional communication and interaction between Journalist and Press Officer - A Case Study: Logica <i>by Naíde Müller Caldeira, Nuno Goulart Brandão</i>	81
Contribution of the New Information Technologies to the Efficacy of Communication in Crisis Situations - Their Incidence in Small and Medium-sized Companies in the North of Portugal Euro-Region - Galicia <i>by Jorge Remondes</i>	101
NATO Strategic Communication - The reflection of Crisis in National Newspapers <i>by Patrícia Marcelino, Nuno Goulart Brandão</i>	113
III INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	129
Organisational Communication and Sustainability, studying European public campaigns <i>by Raquel Evangelista, Teresa Ruão</i>	131
An identity-based approach to communication <i>by Arminda Sá Sequeira, Teresa Ruão</i>	149
Discussion groups as strategy for organisational communication. The practical example of <i>Tertúlias FNACiência</i> <i>by Paula Nogueira, Teresa Ruão</i>	155

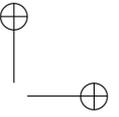
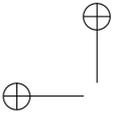




Strategic and organisational communication in Mexican SMEs. Types of companies according to their integrated communication practices <i>by Victoria Carillo Duran, Maria Garcia G., J. Luís Tato, G. Melendez Haba</i>	171
IV BRANDING AND INTERACTIVE CAMPAIGNS	181
Logomorphism and Liquid Logos: An Analysis of Google Doodles <i>by Louise A. Elali, Danielle I. Keiser, Ozen Odag</i>	183
Branding Events: The Continuous Experience <i>by Herlander Elias</i>	207
The bad, the bold and the beautiful: conflicting attitudes towards advertising <i>by Ana Duarte Melo, Helena Sousa</i>	223
Contributors	235



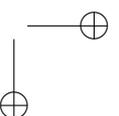
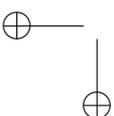




Foreword

In the contemporary marketplace, perceptions about corporations and their products are framed by multiple sources of information. Shifts in media access and consumption, the multiplication of marketing, and corporate messages, along with the demand for more corporate responsibility, have pushed strategic communication into a new paradigm. Today, different interest groups are continuously shaping brand perception and corporate reputations. The various publics are no longer passive receivers of corporate messages. They want to participate in their favourite brands and companies and expect more attention, feedback, and information. To be effective, communication strategies must be planned to develop dialogue within the organisation and with different groups of stakeholders and publics. Each stakeholder group requires focused and continuous attention; it is an organisational imperative to nurture this relationship.

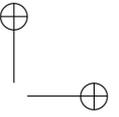
These observations sum up the general theme of the Organisational and Strategic Communication Section (OSCS) Workshop of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA): ‘The Dialogue Imperative: Trends and challenges in strategic and organisational communication’. The workshop was hosted by the Faculty of Arts and Letters and organised by the Laboratory of Online Communication (LabCom), at the University of Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal, on 5 and 6 May 2011. About 30 participants from Finland, Germany, Romania, Scotland, Spain, and Portugal took part in the event, promoting rich and inspiring debates. The workshop aimed to analyse how contemporary developments in strategic and organisational communication theory contribute to understanding the dialogic paradigm. Special attention was paid both to theoretical approaches to dialogue and to the new tendencies in strategic and organisational communication



by looking at campaigns, instruments, and messages that promote dialogue with different publics.

With the collected articles on this volume, we attempt to keep alive the debate initiated in those two-day get-togethers. The book is divided into four main parts. The first part, *Theoretical Approaches on Dialogue*, features articles written by Jordi Xifra, Rui Sampaio da Silva, Gisela Gonçalves, and Laura Olkonen. Jordi Xifra proposes that public relations is, ‘the engineering of commitment’ by analysing the existing relationship between the management of internal communication and identity and values. Jürgen Habermas is at the centre of both texts from Rui Sampaio da Silva and Gisela Gonçalves. In *Public relations and dialogical ethics*, Rui Sampaio da Silva suggests that Habermas’s dialogical ethics can be fruitfully integrated into the theory of public relations due to recent developments attributing an equal status to the interests of organisations and their publics. Grounded in the public relations studies encompassed by the paradigm of ‘Discourse Ethics and Theory of Communicative Action’, Gisela Gonçalves’s text *Who’s afraid of social media? A normative approach to corporate discourse on the web*, discusses a theoretical model that reveals discursive elements inherent in the creation of corporate legitimacy, particularly as evidenced by social media interactions. The article that closes the first part of the book is presented by Laura Olkonen, who highlights the importance of *Understanding stakeholder’s expectations* from the point of view of organisational communication in the era of social media.

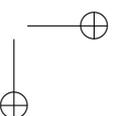
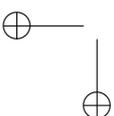
The second part of this book is dedicated to the study of *Dialogue in Media Relations and Crisis Communication*, one of the most important areas of organisational and strategic communication. The collective text of Teresa Ruão, Felisbela Lopes, Sandra Marinho and Rita Araújo, and the text of Naíde Caldeira and Nuno Brandão, are centred in media relations theories as applied to Portuguese case studies. The first analyses the role of media relations strategies and tactics in the construction of news about Influenza A. The latter applies Grunig’s bidirectional communication model to the interaction between journalist and press officer in the case of a multinational provider of business services and technology. The following texts enhance the role of dialogue on crisis communication. Jorge Remondes reflects upon the new information technologies’ contribution to the efficacy of communication in crisis situations, particularly in small and medium-sized companies in the north of

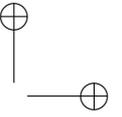


Portugal Euro-Region–Galicia. Patricia Marcelino and Nuno Brandão essay about the phenomenon of crisis management through the analysis of NATO’s negative reflection in national newspapers.

The third part of the book, *Integrated Communication Strategies*, assembles contributions from Portuguese and Spanish researchers. In *Organisational communication and sustainability*, Raquel Evangelista and Teresa Ruão study the sustainability campaigns of four European public organisations. Their analysis is grounded in the Politically Attentive Relational Construction model elaborated by Stanley Deetz. The organisational identity construct is behind the *Identity-based approach to organisational communication* text, where Arminda Sá Sequeira and Teresa Ruão propose a set of elements fundamental to the creation and maintenance of a solid reputation: vision, mission, objectives, cultural values, behaviour, optimal identity attributes, positioning, messages, means, and communication style. In another paper, Paula Nogueira and Teresa Ruão describe the communication strategy adopted by a higher education institution in order to promote science to the public and increase awareness about Portuguese researchers and scientists. Following that, Victoria Carrillo Duran, María García García, Juan Luis Tato, and Guadalupe Melendez present a study carried out on data stemming from a project financed by the Spanish Latin American Cooperation Agency (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation) to look at Mexican SMEs on the basis of the value they place on communications and to analyse how such strategies can stimulate their development.

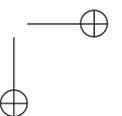
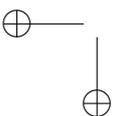
The fourth and last part of the book, *Branding and Interactive Campaigns*, is initiated by Louise Elali, Danielle Keiser, and Ozen Odag with *Logomorphism and liquid logos: An analysis of Google Doodles*. The researchers analyse Google Doodles (the decorative changes made to the Google logo), as a potential influence on the company’s corporate visual identity and as a means through which Google connects to and identifies with the public, building a deeper and more personal connection with its users. The following text, *Branding Events: The continuous experience*, written by Herlander Elias, focuses on brands being a ‘new star system’ and how advertising reflects a branded society. And finally, Ana Melo and Helena Sousa, in *The bad, the bold and the beautiful: The conflicting attitudes towards the role of advertising*, present a qualitative study about advertising professionals’ perception of their role and values in the contemporary marketplace.

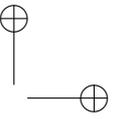
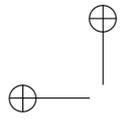




To conclude, some words of thanks to the LabCom Editorial Team, in the person of its Director, Prof. António Fidalgo, and to Prof. Adela Rogojinaru, Chair of the Organisational Strategic and Communication Section of ECREA who from the first moment supported the organisation of this event at UBI, Covilhã, Portugal.

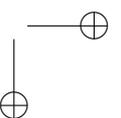
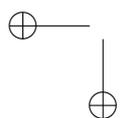
Gisela Gonçalves
Labcom, University of Beira Interior, Portugal

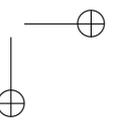
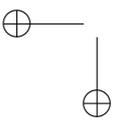
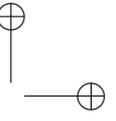
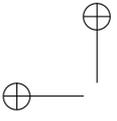


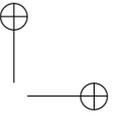


Part I

THEORETICAL APPROACHES ON DIALOGUE







The engineering commitment: the role of public relations in managing internal communication

Jordi Xifra

Department of Communication, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to analyse the relationship between internal communication management and identity and values, the two main elements of organisational behaviour. The importance of this relationship is demonstrated and paired with advice on how to gain credibility and increase employee company knowledge. At the same time, the approach to managing commitment invites the reader to go deeper inside the principles of internal communication through the analysis of corporate culture in an increasingly global market.

Keywords: Commitment, corporate culture, internal communication, public relations.

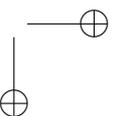
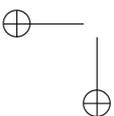
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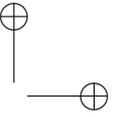
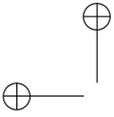
For some time now, we have been debating the concepts that determine public relations processes. The recurring objective of many studies is to provide a basic description of these processes and their effects, given that we often think that by explaining how an activity is structured, we are describing our discipline. We are forgetting, however, to study the organisation as a stage prior to the implementation of actions and campaigns. In both the professional and academic spheres, we tend to highlight the explanation of techniques and specialties, while neglecting the study of the organisation and its characteristics.

It is essential that the focus is returned to the identity and personality of organisations and their adaptation to the social characteristics of the environment. In public relations, although a command of support techniques is necessary for an organisation's message to be better understood, we must not allow ourselves to run the risk of transmitting an incoherent message with regard to the organisation's characteristics and operations.

Public relations contribute to improving corporate values and the credibility of institutions. Despite the important role played by value management and commitments, however, studies and methodology in this field are inadequate; here, we hope to make a minimal contribution to their enrichment.

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 7-17.





We would like to highlight a subject related to new ways of generating internal involvement in companies and other organisations, which are now facing a revolution in the way new organisational systems are applied. This affects human resource and marketing management and we believe it is at least partly a consequence of the democratisation of the information we are exposed to by new technologies. Within this framework, organisations, and, in particular, companies, have become increasingly concerned with defining and constructing the personality of the organisation and its areas of interest and social commitment.

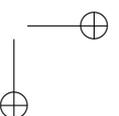
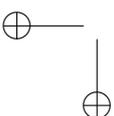
We believe that the first step in a lengthy public relations process resides principally in the formation of a group identity within the different environments in which the organisation operates. In this respect, management of the organisational culture becomes essential for development of the elements which will construct the message addressed to the *publics*. Identification with the organisation's values and message increases the level of participation within entities and constructs an area of understanding, which constitutes the backbone of public relations activity.

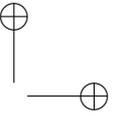
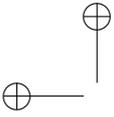
This area of understanding does not exist between people if there is no commitment from both sides, however; commitments are expressed through values and generate expectations that have to be satisfied to win credibility, thus forming a complementary circle.

We are therefore left with two subsidiary questions to address. The first is to establish the fundamental principles governing the processes of internal participation in organisations and to determine the basic functions and professional roles deriving from them. The second is to open a debate on internal relationships in a new globalised market and to establish the role that public relations must play in this area.

In summary, this discussion demands that we ask ourselves what role the profession must adopt in order to keep corporative/organisational culture cohesive with regard to new challenges and emerging tendencies in extremely demanding dynamic social environments and in markets with new sensibilities.

We must not forget that, among other factors, both internationalisation and new technologies have provoked a succession of social changes which have affected the management of organisations and which have, at the same time, generated new approaches in the field of communications and public





relations. We have taken into consideration three fundamental aspects when initiating the debate: the construction of identity and values as a backbone for organisational culture, the internal effects of social responsibility when constructing reference values with and between employees, and the processes and methods that constitute internal relationships as a form of expressing commitment and achieving consensus within and between the different sectors of the audience comprising the entity.

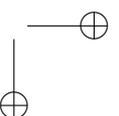
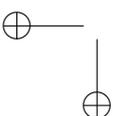
Changes in the social environment and in organisational management

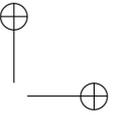
We begin from the consideration that changes in organisational systems favour the cohesion of organisational culture, and that the effective cohesion of such culture is dependent on a good internal communication process. This is provided, to a great extent, by the environment, history, sector, leaders, and people who comprise the organisation's teams.

In an international context, we see that in recent years the biggest European companies have replaced their general communications and public relations departments with specific departments which highlight the diversity of tasks and functions within the field of communications and public relations, among which appear specific areas exclusively dedicated to the analysis and management of organisational culture. The need to create a solid corporate culture capable of adapting to a changing and globalised market has led to, among other things, the development of activities aimed at the social construction of the brand, the definition of values and the improvement of internal participation and communication.

Finally, it is not possible to understand current organisational management if we do not take into account the evolution of new techniques which favour interaction. These new tools help to align individual objectives with the organisation's group objectives. Comprehension, dialogue, and participation are concepts which are already integrated into current human resource policy management. Information transparency can therefore be established as a necessary change for all organisations in an ever more interconnected and globalised world.

These social and economic changes have not favoured the development of public relations as a professional field, however. Communication has often been viewed as an additional task of little short-term benefit rather than a pri-





ority for adapting to the environment and a means of ensuring the future of the organisation. Furthermore, internal communications, and, as a consequence, internal relations, often assume tasks which are considered appropriate, but which correspond to activities in which all the other departments or functional areas must be involved. Finally, commitment management is closely linked to satisfying expectations and its establishment therefore generates reticence due to fear of failure.

The construction of organisational culture may be understood to be a basic element for an organisation to preserve its being positively accepted by society, with the effects on the market that this entails in the case of companies.

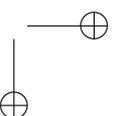
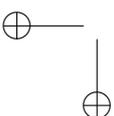
The construction of organisational culture: identity and values

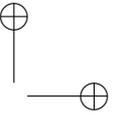
The link between identity and values and the personality of the organisation can be understood from a definition of the concept of culture. Culture can be described as the set of values shared by members of an organisation, manifested in their own cultural behaviour and expressions. These expressions, that is, symbols, ceremonies, rituals, language, style of communication, etc. guide the attitude of its members and determining the organisation's relationships both internally and externally.

Edgar Schein (1992) understands organisational culture to be a set of assumptions shared by members of an organisation, manifested in the behaviour and cultural artefacts of the organisation itself (language, style, rituals...) and guiding all members of the organisation in their actions and in making coherent and stable judgements of their own and others' behaviour.

According to Kotter (1985), culture is a set of values, group behaviours, and ways of thinking and acting by most of the members of an organisation, and it is transferable to future members. That which is not written determines the elements that constitute the feeling of belonging to a group.

In summary, we can say that organisational culture is the sum of shared values, meanings, beliefs, conceptions, and expectations which organize and integrate a group of people who work together. We must take into consideration the fact that values, assumptions, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, and feelings are implicit elements of the organisation which are only observable through the symbols, rituals, myths, language, communicative style, and organisational dynamic.





If we understand corporate values to be the attitude preached by the company and upon which its principles of coexistence are based, companies which wish to generate a strong social activity and establish significant internal cohesion tend to have their social values and complicities very well defined. In fact, a company is no longer understood to be socially committed if it has not adequately developed its reference values.

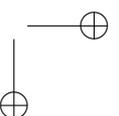
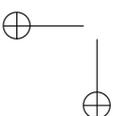
Therefore, as we have stated, a company generates an identity to differentiate itself from the competition when it demonstrates coherence with the expressed attitudes (Grunig, 1992). The company strengthens its attitude when it commits itself to aspects which interest or comprise the social activity of the city or country in which it operates. This identity and these values are often expressed through public activities, or through declarations of corporate principles, such as deontological codes (Botey & Ordeix, 2005), or plans and reports pertaining to sustainability and social responsibility.

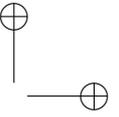
Commitment to the employees: Public responsibility or social responsibility?

A company's commitment is linked to its level of responsibility. The first level of commitment is linked to basic company management, while the second is linked to citizens.

Expressed from Grunig's (1992) point of view, public responsibility is understood to be the commitment deriving from basic management of the organization; social responsibility, on the other hand, comprises that which derives from the ability of the organization to develop roles and therefore influence the society around it. Despite the fact that, on a basic level, the organisation must follow established norms and comply with the labour and economic commitments deriving from its own management, on a second level, responsibility is developed by influencing a broader social environment and becoming involved in areas of general interest which transcend the organisation's reason for being.

We do not conceive of an organisation to have established social commitments without it beforehand having the attitude to fulfil internal commitments with its employees. It would be improbable to think a company expresses an attitude differently outside to inside. What is more, it would be counterproductive to think that an organisation uses a language or acts or reacts differ-





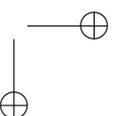
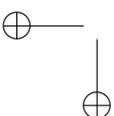
ently towards its main body of opinion (its employees), those who generate messages to the outside and who, at the same time, enjoy great credibility.

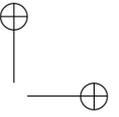
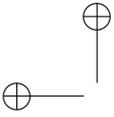
The role of internal relationships is therefore fundamental in bearing testimony to an organisation's public responsibility and as a step towards solid and coherent social responsibility. In this respect, if we do not align individual and group interests, those which affect the closer environment and the broader, it is difficult to group concerns and satisfy expectations as an organisation. It is clear that internal relationships present themselves as a weapon to combat discrepancies and promote consensus between groups within an organisation.

The professional management of internal relationships is a field of undoubted value for organisations wanting to bring cohesion to their organisational culture. The growing importance of this field is mainly due to its ability to adapt messages to cultural reality, its values, and people. It is for this reason that communication processes aimed at employees require significant amounts of knowledge of the principles, characteristics, composition, and processes for creating a solid organisational culture, often supported on the pillars of social responsibility.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) propound the correlation between communication and organisational culture: bi-directional communication is a typical element of participative culture, whereas unidirectional communication is for companies with an authoritarian culture. In this respect, these authors state that communication provides considerable benefits, as participative cultures enjoy a better return with regard to social image than authoritarian cultures; social responsibility is a form of expressing this.

The new models of participation permitted by new information technologies necessitate greater transparency and commitment, promote greater symbiosis between organisations and their environment, and establish a 'communicating vessels' effect to bring consensus. When this happens, the target audience is also the transmitter and improved two-way information is established. In fact, we know that successful internal relationship processes are those which allow communicative symmetry because they manage to achieve areas of common interest. Many definitions of public relations have now integrated these concepts.





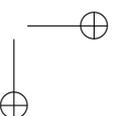
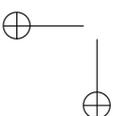
We can therefore now make a list of an organisation's new needs for internal communication and relationships in the new organisational context we have described:

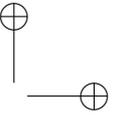
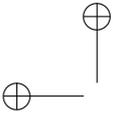
- To give coherence and confidence to actions and general processes for change while correcting arbitrariness. To therefore improve financial and time savings in the analysis and application of strategy.
- To create a solid corporate culture: to establish an individual style and align individual and group objectives.
- In particular, to make all employees aware of the importance and need for controlling communicative processes in order that they add value to the organisation and its brand, and demonstrate their effectiveness and valid contribution to the attainment of 'business' or service objectives.

This leads us to think of the strategic role internal communication plays in managing the commitments which explain the personality of the organisation. Involvement in subjects of general interest to the social environment often entails a type of communication which is inspired in personal relationship dynamics unrelated to the mass media. One danger for the organisation is to be left outside the debate if it does not establish participation dynamics and limits itself to being a mere spectator. Having once been the main transmitter, it is now relegated to the role of a channel; put another way, the previously passive receiver now becomes the active and dominant party in the communicative process.

An organisation's commitment to subjects of interest to internal *audiences* means that this command of the communicative process is not displaced to the old receiver, but remains within the organisation as a thematic and conceptual reference. Furthermore, despite the fact that a tendency towards Grunig and Hunt's fourth model (1984), that is, the *two-way symmetrical* model, is preferable, we find that many organisations will fight to remain within the *two-way asymmetrical* model, due to the fact that directors erroneously believe this will give them better command of the situation and the activity of communication.

The contribution of communication as a form of expressing areas of commitment is therefore of paramount importance. Expressed values must coincide with actual actions, as Schein (1992) stated, in order that there is a coherent perception of them. We know that major crises stem from incoherence





between that which is expressed and actual actions and the way this generates incoherence and unsatisfied expectations. Communication serves to generate the correct attitude to provide a value which will conceptualize and determine the identity of the organisation.

Cultural cohesion and consensus are achieved in the sense that internal communication and, by extension, internal relationships, contribute to the balance and symbiosis of interest among members of the organisation.

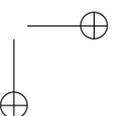
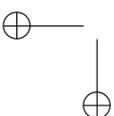
Conclusions

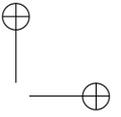
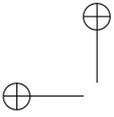
In their model of the public relations process, Long and Hazelton (1987) were already placing particular stress on the cognitive function of public relations for obtaining determined behaviours. This discursive function, which establishes attitudes within a group, is the one we now incorporate within the concept of constructing organisational culture.

We cannot conceive of a solid organisational culture without coherent spaces for commitment. Commitment often gives security to the people the organisation is in contact with, and the areas which best generate complicities and confidence are in fact mainly those which are conceived on the basis of psychology as areas of comfort. Areas of comfort generate security, whilst at the same time establishing commitment from the party until now perceived as the receiver. As we have mentioned before, this party is now something more than a receiver, given that the communicative process searches them out in order to produce the message and basic concepts which defend and justify the organisation before the competition.

We believe it worthy of mention that various business owner forums consider progress without commitment to be impossible (Cortina, 1996), and that the principal element of progress is in the company's capacity to develop a framework for social responsibility. We can therefore say that real progress is only established when the company is respectful of its basic social environment and balances its business activity with a certain amount of social commitment, beginning with its own employees.

If we consider that the informing and educating function of public relations is strongly linked to the capacity to generate complicities among the organisation's target publics through rational communication, this could lead us to believe that the emotional element plays only a minor part. This is contrary



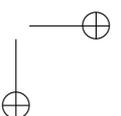
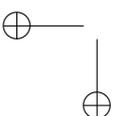


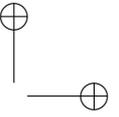
to what happens in other related disciplines in the field of communication such as marketing or advertising, where the affective element becomes significant and achieved complicity is weakened through argumentation. Internal public relations work along the lines of arguments to convince members of the organisation, either directly or through the opinion leaders in each functional area or department. Although emotion plays an important role in the field of human relationships, there are audiences, such as the internal one, with whom it is better to use a descriptive and argumentative style, and not one which appeals to sentiment.

In this respect, we could say that there are three trends in the area of internal relations in a new market and a changing society:

- Symmetrical bi-directional communication is imposing itself, despite the fact that relationships between persons on different levels (Heath, 2000) of power will never be able to establish themselves with the same conditions and abilities of those involved. As we have seen, the new supports provided by interactive environments are fundamental to this tendency.
- Knowledge management theories are becoming the methodological basis from which to select information best adapted to the receiver, regardless of their department or area of work, creating new online internal computer applications (Sha et al., 2005).
- There is no communication without commitment (Negus & Pickering, 2004). We are either addressing a subject of mutual interest to both parties or we are facing very technical and unstrategic communication, with a low effectiveness index. Social responsibility for businesses has the momentum it has in part because of this tendency to establish areas of commitment associated to general interest. This naturally has internal effects within organisations, with regard to both the fulfilment of expectations and joint responsibility in the management of the content which appears in the communication process.

Consequently, the new professional roles of the person in charge of internal relations in this new organisational framework are as follows: to mediate conflict; to act as a prescriber for everything relating to information about the



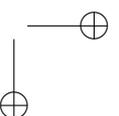
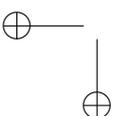


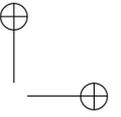
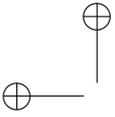
industry and the organisation; to investigate aspects which could potentially become either an opportunity or a conflict; to develop a critical spirit; to research tendencies that could influence the organisation's working dynamic; and, finally, to supervise and guide strategic communication policies in order to make them coherent with the social expectations of employees.

As a set of internal (and also external) relationships, public relations must take responsibility for the construction of a solid corporate culture, which requires constant monitoring and often the reconfiguration of communications management in accordance with the values of the organisation. Organisations' investment in internal relations is meaningful because it brings with it increased returns and prestige for the organisation, and represents medium- and long-term benefits according to the level of commitment and expectation generated.

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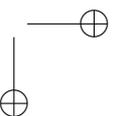
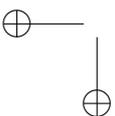


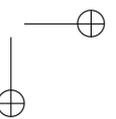
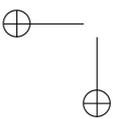
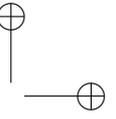
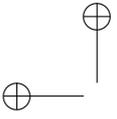


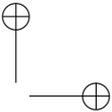
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Public relations and dialogical ethics

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Abstract: In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas criticized public relations for being a manipulative technique that was contributing to the decadence of the contemporary public sphere. I argue that his critique does not apply to recent developments in the history of public relations, which attribute an equal status to the interests of organisations and their publics and have a deep commitment with the ethical nature of the profession. Habermas's dialogical ethics, far from being alien to public relations, can be fruitfully integrated into public relations theory.

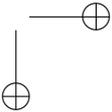
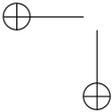
Keywords: Habermas, Grunig, Ethics, Dialogue, Public Relations.

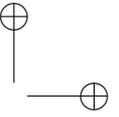
In his influential book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas criticized the contemporary public sphere, denouncing the existence of a continuous process of political and cultural decadence. From the standpoint of public relations, his critique is very significant because he claimed that public relations, understood as an 'engineering of consent' (a well-known phrase that Habermas borrows from Bernays), was contributing to the decadence of the public sphere. In what follows, I will first clarify the meaning of Habermas's critique of the public sphere (1) and then analyse his critique of public relations (2). In the third part, I will argue that his critique applies only to certain, traditional accounts of public relations, but not to more recent accounts; special attention will be given to Grunig's work (3). Finally, I will show that Habermas's dialogue ethics, far from being in contrast with contemporary public relations, can be incorporated in the practice and theory of public relations (4).

1.

In his critique of the contemporary public sphere, Habermas invoked the public sphere of the eighteenth century as a model of his analyses. According to the Enlightenment authors, the public sphere was a space where private persons could discuss critically issues of public interest, and it was often claimed,

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 19-32.





especially in the second half of the eighteenth century, that laws should be validated in the course of a public and critical discussion. The self-representation of the public sphere of the eighteenth century was somewhat idealized, as is manifest in the following key presuppositions:

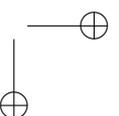
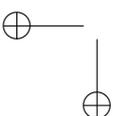
- 1) There was a presupposition of universal access, in the sense that nobody could be excluded from the public sphere on the basis of his/her social status, for instance;
- 2) Another key presupposition was the idea that the public debate consisted of a free and purely rational discussion of the issues;
- 3) Every issue was potentially object of a critical discussion.

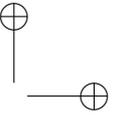
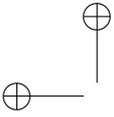
Guided by this normative model, Habermas claimed that the twentieth century public sphere was not respecting these key presuppositions. On the one hand, the protagonists of the public sphere were no longer private people, but institutional entities; far from being a space of universal access, the public sphere was controlled by private and public organisations.

The process of the politically relevant exercise and equilibration of power now takes place directly between the private bureaucracies, special-interest associations, parties, and public administration. The public as such is included only sporadically in this circuit of power, and even then it is brought in only to contribute its acclamation. (Habermas, 1989: 176).

On the other hand, the public debate was no longer conceived of as a free and rational discussion, ruled by the force of the best argument, not only because communicative processes are often distorted by power relations, but also because of the pervasive presence of strategic and manipulative uses of language.

In the course of its evolution, the political function of the public sphere was reversed: in the eighteenth century, its function was to control and legitimize the political power, whereas in the twentieth century, it becomes an instrument that controls, influences and persuades consumers and electors. In this context, Habermas denounces the existence of a 'refeudalisation' of the public sphere in the sense that it no longer refers to a gathering of private people who discuss public issues, because it is dominated by public and private institutional protagonists.





2.

When discussing the political decadence of the twentieth century public sphere, Habermas claims that public relations played a major role in this process. Understood as an ‘engineering of consent’, public relations are, according to Habermas, an extension of economic advertisement into the field of policy-making. Public relations are distinguished from advertising only in the sense that they are a form of ‘opinion management’:

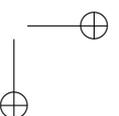
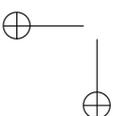
Private advertisements are always directed to other private people insofar as they are consumers; the addressee of public relations is ‘public opinion’, or the private citizens as the public and not directly as consumers. The sender of the message hides his business intentions in the role of someone interested in the public welfare. (Habermas, 1989: 193)

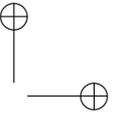
Organizations strive for political compromises with the state and with one another, as much as possible to the exclusion of the public; in this process, however, they have to procure plebiscitary agreement from a mediatized public by means of a display of staged or manipulated publicity. (Habermas, 1989: 232)

According to Habermas’s account, public relations rely on psychological techniques, on a ‘dramatic representation of facts and calculated stereotypes’ (1989: 194) in order to manage public opinion. Habermas also quotes, in a derogatory tone, a textbook that recommends, ‘twenty methods for this kind of “making or creating news”’ (ibid.). He obviously considers public relations a manipulative technique that blurs the distinction between information and publicity and can be used by private and public organisations alike to obtain the consent of the public to organisational interests. Conceived of in such terms, public relations is considered a negative force in the public sphere.

3.

However, after the publication of Habermas’s book *The Transformation of the Public Sphere*, major developments occurred in the field of public relations, and the result was a new approach to public relations that is immune, at least to a large extent, to Habermas’s critique. This fundamental change in the history of public relations consists in the emergence of a paradigm that establishes a parity between organisations and their publics, in opposition to an



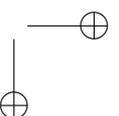
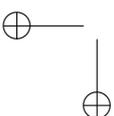


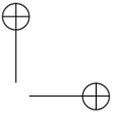
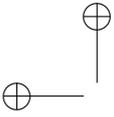
older paradigm according to which there is a primacy of organisations over their publics. Instead of being simply an organisation's advocate, the public relations practitioner can play a new role as a mediator between organisations and publics. For instance, Cutlip and Center, in their influential textbook *Effective Public Relations*, define public relations as 'the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends' (Cutlip & Center, 2006: 1). In a similar vein, Aronoff, Baskin, and Lattimore (1996) propose a tripartite interpretation of the history of public relations, according to which a first period dominated by an intention to *manipulate* the public is followed by a second one, where the emphasis is put on *informing* the public. Finally, the authors consider that the third and last stage of the development of the public relations is characterized by *mutual influence and understanding*:

Public relations was born as a manipulative art. (...) Public relations' purposes was to communicate in such ways as to assure the compliance of the relevant publics' behavior and attitudes with an individual or organization's plans. (...) As the 20th century progressed it became apparent that organizations achieved success not just by seeking compliance to their plans from outside entities, but by responding and adapting effectively to environmental demands, constraints and opportunities. Public relations practitioners found they could they could greatly facilitate this adaptative process if they could become trusted, two-way communicators seeking to establish rapport and mutual understanding between groups. (Aronoff, 1996: 46)

Grunig's famous distinction between four fundamental models of the practice and history of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) may be considered a milestone in the development of public relations to the extent that it entails a rejection of traditional and manipulative practices and endorses an ethical approach to public relations. According to the proposed classification, the history and practice of public relations could be analysed in the light of the following models:

- 1) The Press Agency/Publicity Model, involving propaganda, one-way communication and neglect of the complete truth;
- 2) The Public Information Model, based on the dissemination of information, one-way communication and the importance of truth;
- 3) The Two-Way Asymmetrical Model, whose purpose is scientific persuasion in conjunction with two-way communication, but in an impoverished



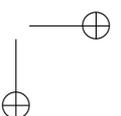
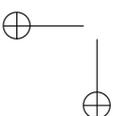


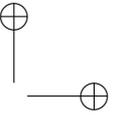
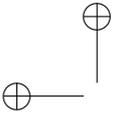
sense, because the attitudes, opinions, and reactions of the public matter essentially as a form of feedback;

4) The Two-Way Symmetrical Model, which endorses mutual understanding, two-way communication, and an equal status for organisations and publics; ‘with the two-way symmetrical model, practitioners use research and dialogue to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviours of both their organisations and publics’ (Grunig, 2001: 12).

Although the latter model can be considered more adequate to specific domains (like regulated business and agencies; cf. Grunig, 1984), it is clear that Grunig has a clear preference for this model, since it is the model that best expresses an ethical stance towards public relations; ‘it provides the normative ideal for public relations in most situations’ (2001: 13). However, Grunig’s elaboration of the two-way symmetrical model has not been linear. Initially (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), he considered that in some contexts other models could be more adequate, but later on, especially in the context of his ‘excellence project’ in public relations, he revised his position and considered the fourth model a normative model that should guide excellent public relations practices. The above-mentioned project was commissioned by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and the original central question was to characterize effectiveness in public relations. Grunig and the other members of the research team (the so-called ‘excellence team’) eventually realized that the effectiveness question was not enough and should be complemented by the excellence question, formulated in the following terms: ‘How must public relations be practiced and the communication function be organized for it to contribute the most to organizational effectiveness?’ (Grunig, 1992: 3). A distinctive trait of the excellence project was a deep commitment with the ethical dimension of public relations. Grunig argued that, ‘excellent public relations is based on the worldview that public relations is symmetrical, idealistic in its social role, and managerial’ (Grunig, 1992: 56). His condemnation of asymmetrical practices is quite clear: ‘the asymmetrical worldview steers public relations practitioners towards actions that are unethical, socially irresponsible, and ineffective’ (Grunig, 1992: 40).

Arguing for the ‘practicality of idealism’, Grunig claimed that the symmetrical model is a realistic model, to the extent that the norm of reciprocity on which it is based is compatible with ‘divided loyalties’ and ‘mixed motives’. (1992: 46). It is precisely in this period that Grunig’s view of pub-





lic relations was closest to Habermas's normative account of communication. Passages like the following one reflect an account of the public debate that evokes Habermas:

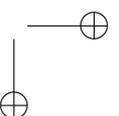
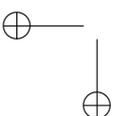
Public relations should be based on a worldview that that incorporate ethics into the process of public relations rather on a view that debates the ethics of its outcomes. Such an approach could, for example, set up a dialogue between tobacco companies, smokers, and antismoking groups or between various religious groups and abortion rights groups. The outcome then must be ethical if all parties participate in making decisions. (Grunig, 1992: 57)

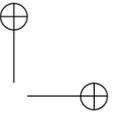
But Grunig's defence of the two-way symmetrical model as the guiding model of public relations has been heavily criticized, because of its supposed idealistic and naive character, with some critics claiming that, 'the symmetrical model misrepresents the reality of what they consider to be an evil practice' (Grunig, 2001: 13). In the words of L'Etang, for instance, public relations 'are necessarily partisan' because 'symmetry and advocacy are in opposition' (cf. Grunig, 2001: 16). This claim contrasts with an essential thesis of the 'excellence team', which argued that 'collaborative advocacy' could be integrated in the symmetrical model to the extent that it is guided by a norm of reciprocity.

Grunig was sensitive to this wave of criticism and tried to distance himself from the objection of idealism, without renouncing the basic values of the two-way symmetrical model. As a result, he expressed doubts regarding the appropriateness of the concept of symmetry:

Symmetry might not have been the best choice of name for the model of public relations I had in mind, but unfortunately, it probably is too late to change the name. Mixed motives, collaborative advocacy, and cooperative antagonism all have the same meaning as does symmetry. Symmetry means that communicators keep their eyes on a broader professional perspective of balancing private and public interests. (Grunig, 2001)

These new terminological characterisations of the symmetrical model reflect a theoretical shift in the evolution of Grunig's work. The new conception of public relations remains faithful to the two-way symmetrical model to the extent that it tries to reconcile the interests of organisations and their publics.

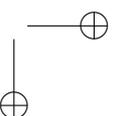
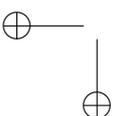


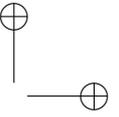
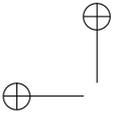


Even in his more idealistic moments, Grunig never endorsed a pure subordination of organisations to their publics. However, the new approach points to a more strategic and less idealistic account of communication processes, and, in this sense, it stands in an uneasy relation to some of his previous writings (and to Habermas's dialogical ethics, as we will see). The new elaboration of the symmetrical model presupposes a more realistic account of the practice of public relations, which is partly informed by concepts and principles from game theory. In *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, some influence from game theory was already visible in notions like 'mixed motives' (corresponding to the different interests of organisations and publics), but the central role of ethics was emphasised, as we have seen. Later on, the influence from game theory becomes stronger and the ethical basis of the symmetrical model becomes weaker. The following passage illustrates this shift:

Symmetrical public relations do not take in an ideal situation where competing interests come together with goodwill to resolve their differences, because they share a goal of social equilibrium and harmony. Rather, it takes place in situations where groups come together to protect and enhance their self-interests. Argumentation, debate, and persuasion take place. But dialogue, listening, understanding and relationship building also occur because they are more effective in resolving conflict than are one-way attempts at compliance gaining. (Grunig, 2001: 18)

In fact, far from relying on an ethical basis, game theory is based on the pursuit of the participants' interests. The cooperative strategies that are developed in game theory are a form of cooperation quite distinct from the communicative action as described by Habermas; these strategies amount to a negotiation of different interests, whereas communicative action (in Habermas's sense), which may also be considered as a form of cooperation, is oriented towards mutual understanding and to a rational consensus based on universal norms. According to Grunig's revision of the symmetrical model, both the subordination of organisations to their publics and organisational attempts to control the public are considered asymmetrical practices: 'Total accommodation of the public's interests would be as asymmetrical as unbridled advocacy of the organization's interests' (Grunig, 2001: 15). The idea of symmetry remains present, but in the form of another key notion from game theory:





the so-called win-win situation. In the case of public relations, win-win situations are states of equilibrium between the interests of organisations and publics. The idea of two-way communication is, accordingly, at the service of this equilibrium. As a result, 'the difference between the mixed-motive and two-way symmetrical models disappears' (Grunig, 2001: 25).

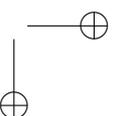
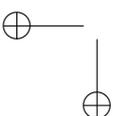
According to this mixed-motive model, asymmetrical tactics are legitimate to the extent that they promote a win-win situation. Grunig's account of the role of persuasion in public relations is very significant in this context. Persuasion is an important element of the practice of public relations, but one can wonder whether persuasion is not intrinsically manipulative and asymmetrical. Grunig, even in his more idealistic moments, has always accepted persuasion as a legitimate element of his two-way symmetrical model. But how to distinguish an acceptable form of persuasion from the scientific persuasion of the third (two-way asymmetrical) model? According to Grunig, 'the difference is that the public relations professional sometimes must persuade management and at other times must persuade a public' (Grunig, 2001: 13). Regarding this point, Grunig's position has been stable, as the following passage from 1984 shows: 'If persuasion occurs, the public should be just as likely to persuade the organisation's management to change attitudes or behavior as the organization is likely to change the public's attitudes or behavior' (Grunig, 1984: 23). In fact, public debate in democratic societies consists typically of an attempt to persuade other people, and there is nothing inherently wrong in these efforts, provided that the persuader accepts to be persuaded by the other voices in the public debate and provided that one complies with the relevant ethical norms.

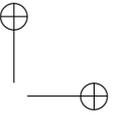
In this context, it is useful to bear in mind Johannesen's attempt to formulate an ethics of persuasion, based on a list of several principles, from which we can point out the following ones:

Do not use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted or irrelevant evidence to support arguments or claims.

Do not ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it actually is not related.

Do not deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, your self-interest, the group you represent, or your position as an advocate of a viewpoint.





Do not oversimplify complex, gradation-laden situations into simplistic two-valued (...) choices.

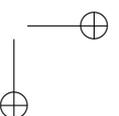
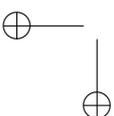
Do not advocate something in which you do not believe yourself. (Johannesen, 2001: 31-32)

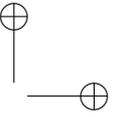
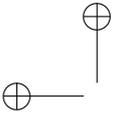
In sum, we could say that in the last decades, there was a paradigm shift in public relations characterized by a series of contrasts: a defence of adjustments of interests in opposition to organisational attempts to control the public; a recognition of the equality between organisations and publics, as opposed to the primacy of organisations over their publics; an appeal to mutual understanding in opposition to unilateral persuasion; a defence of dialogue and symmetrical communication instead of monologue and asymmetrical communication; an ethical turn, expressed both by many academic texts and by the elaboration of several deontological codes. One can complete this brief characterisation by adding that the new paradigm also includes a communitarian turn, promoted, for instance, by Starck and Kruckeberg, who claim that, 'public relations is best defined and practiced as the active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community that had been lost because of the development of modern means of communication/transportation' (Starck & Kruckeberg, 2001: 51).

To conclude this section, one should remark that the conception of public relations that is present in the main deontological codes of public relations (the PRSA, Athens and Lisbon codes) also stress the need for dialogue and reject any form of manipulation.

4.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, it can be argued not only that Habermas's critique of the public relations does not apply to the new paradigm, but also that Habermas's project of a dialogical ethics can be incorporated in the practice of public relations. The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) code of ethics states (Item 7) that their members 'shall undertake to establish the moral, psychological, and intellectual conditions for dialogue in its true sense and to recognise the rights of these parties involved to state their case and express their view'. Habermas's approach to public debate and moral philosophy is based precisely on a reconstruction of these conditions for a free and genuine dialogue.





In opposition to more traditional, monological approaches to ethics, Habermas claims that the validity of moral norms depends on dialogical or communicative processes.

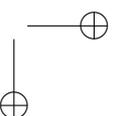
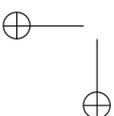
Only those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourse. (Habermas, 1996: 107)
A norm is valid if and only if the foreseeable consequences and side effects of its general observance for the interests and value-orientation of each individual could be freely and jointly accepted by all affected. (Habermas, 1998: 42)

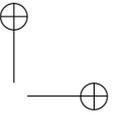
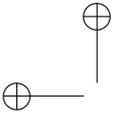
However, communicative processes are often distorted by several factors: the use of force, domination relations, manipulative or strategic uses of language. In order to dismiss these dangers, Habermas elaborated in the 70s the programme of a universal pragmatics (a precursor of his theory of communicative action), which can be considered as a theory of communicative competence, as its aim is precisely to reconstruct our competence as agents of communicative processes by identifying the conditions of communication and intersubjective understanding. Such a theory is not a purely descriptive theory; on the contrary, it has a critical character, because communication has, according to Habermas, a utopian character, to the extent that it demands a free and undistorted communication, and this requires, in turn, a fully democratic society.

Particularly important, in this context, is Habermas's analysis of the presuppositions, requirements, or 'idealizations' of communication:

- 1) No relevant argument can be excluded; nothing is immune to criticism;
- 2) Debates are ruled only by the force of the best argument; public discussion cannot be distorted by power relations;
- 3) Everybody must have access to the public debate;
- 4) Everybody can express her needs and desires.

Habermas defends a particular form of dialogical ethics that he calls discourse ethics. Discourse is, in this context, a term of art that refers to a reflective form of communication that respects the above-mentioned idealizations or presuppositions. Discourse ethics is a procedural and not a substantive form of practical rationality, because one does not answer directly the question 'what should I do?'; one tries, instead, to describe the conditions under which one can correctly answer this question.

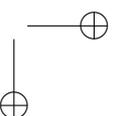
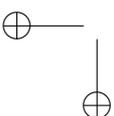


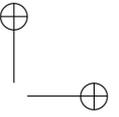


Habermas also claims that every speech act entails some validity claims like truth, normative correctness, and veracity. In light of these idealisations and validity claims, Habermas draws a strong conclusion, namely, that strategic or manipulative uses of language are parasitic on communicative uses. Because he conceived of public relations as a strategic form of communication, it is understandable that Habermas was suspicious of public relations, and he has never, to my knowledge, revised his critical remarks on public relations.

However, the recent emphasis on symmetric communication and the development of an ethical and deontological reflection on public relations allow us to conclude that Habermas's treatment of public relations in *The Transformation of the Public Sphere* is outdated and unilateral; his target is basically the public relations conceived of as an engineering of consent, as a manipulative and merely strategic form of communication. Curtin/Boynton (2001) argue that Habermas's discourse ethics is compatible with what they call the accommodation/discursive approach to public relations ethics, a school of ethical thought that they associate with Sullivan and Grunig. Sullivan distinguished three types of values in public relations: technical, partisan, (values like loyalty and trust in organisations) and mutual ('comprising institutional obligations to the public based on principles of mutuality and rationality'; cf. Curtin and Boynton, 2001: 418). Sullivan recognized the existence of a tension between partisan and mutual values and urged public relations practitioners to mediate between organisational and social interests. To the extent that Grunig conceives of public relations as a negotiation between 'equal and rational communicators', his approach would be compatible with the discourse ethics of Habermas, according to which all parts affected by an issue should participate in its discussion and have the right to express their needs. Debates would be settled by the force of the best argument.

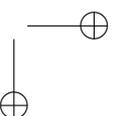
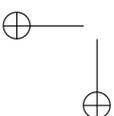
I do not agree totally with this interpretation, because Habermas has a truly idealistic view of communication, whereas Grunig came to reject, as we have seen, the label of idealism. Habermas is clearly opposed to strategic uses of language and to the very idea of negotiation in the public sphere. According to his ideal, the notion of negotiation should be replaced by the notion of rational consensus, a consensus that is produced by the force of the best argument on the basis of the idealisations or presuppositions of communication. Grunig's acceptance of the role of persuasion in public relations is also dubious from a Habermasian standpoint. However, there are relevant affinities

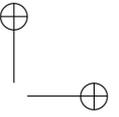




between Habermas and Grunig. They stress the importance of a fair dialogue and share a common concern for the ethical nature of communication and for the symmetry of the participants in communicative processes. The main difference consists perhaps in the fact that Grunig has a more acute awareness of the conflictual, antagonistic character of human relations. Grunig accepts, as we have seen, the legitimacy of ‘asymmetrical tactics’, provided that they are aimed at win-win situations which are advantageous both for organisations and their publics. Habermas also recognizes the fragmented and pluralistic character of modern, democratic societies, but offers another, although unsatisfactory, solution. More precisely, Habermas relies on a distinction between morals and ethics, according to which morals deal with universally valid norms, and ethics with context-dependent values; moral norms should be universal, because they regulate intersubjective relations, whereas values express particular (individual or communitarian) conceptions of the good. Habermas distinguishes the moral and the ethical perspectives in order to reconcile the claim to universal validity that characterizes the moral discourse with the plurality of interests and worldviews that characterize our democratic, heterogeneous societies. The weakness of this proposal lies in the fact that it is often not easy to draw the line that demarcates universal norms from context-dependent values.

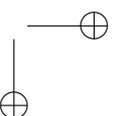
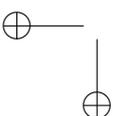
We may conclude that public relations, duly understood, far from being a negative force in the public sphere, can play an important role by promoting symmetrical communication, by building bridges between different groups, and even by reinforcing the sense of community. From this standpoint, Habermas’s theory of communicative action and dialogical ethics are a fundamental reference for an ethical practice of public relations, with the reservations that I have expressed. Comparing Grunig and Habermas, one may accept that Grunig has a more realistic view of human communication, but one cannot stay indifferent to the deeply ethical approach to communication that is present in Habermas’s work.

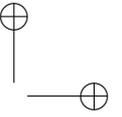
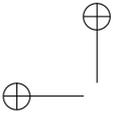




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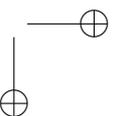
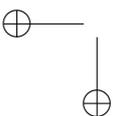


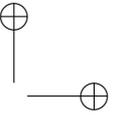
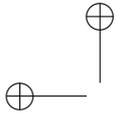


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Who's afraid of social media? A normative approach to corporate discourse on the Web

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Abstract: The main objective of this article is to analyse the communication of companies through a theoretical model that reveals discursive elements inherent to the creation of corporate legitimacy. A Habermasian approach to corporate communication and public relations on social networks is at the centre of this reflection. The article starts by presenting a brief review of public relations and communication management studies encompassed by the paradigm of Habermas's *Discourse Ethics and Theory of Communicative Action*. Following that, a recent Portuguese case study, the Ensitel Case, is presented as an example of the loss of corporate legitimacy on the Web. The importance of a dialogic approach to corporate communication and public relations in order to maintain corporate legitimacy is underlined.

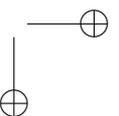
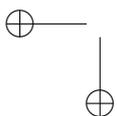
Keywords: Habermas, Legitimacy, Ethics, Dialogue, Ensitel.

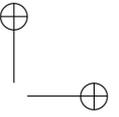
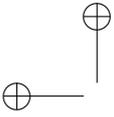
In recent decades, the corporate world has become public enemy number one due to financial scandals, environmental disasters, human rights violations, etc. Inevitably, the public's trust with regard to decisions made by companies is reduced and corporate activities are increasingly scrutinised by activist groups and NGOs and magnified by news coverage, in real time, by new online means (Waddock, 2000; Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003).

Today, corporations are facing a legitimacy problem. Organisational legitimacy can be understood as the congruence between public expectations and organisational actions and values (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Suchman, 1995). Legitimation is therefore an essential process for all organisations, even to such a degree that it forms the core of all strategic communication practice (Metzler, 2001). The role communication and public relations play in the management of organisational legitimacy is not consensual, especially within conflict or crisis contexts. Public relations is viewed with suspicion, that is, as a *strategic approach* to instrumentally manipulate and deploy evocative symbols in order to garner social support (Suchmann, 1995: 572).

The main objective of this article is to analyse the communication of companies through a theoretical model that allows observing discursive elements

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 33-45.





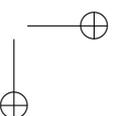
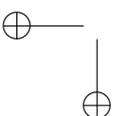
inherent to the creation of corporate legitimacy. A Habermasian approach to corporate legitimacy as it pertains to the intercomprehension between organisations and their public in social media is at the centre of this reflection. Furthermore, this proposal is based on the participatory character of the Internet as a new arena for public opinion (Debatim, 2008; Smith et al., 2009) and on the idea that the Internet presupposes the conditions for the existence of a media-focused public sphere characterized by disregard of status, a domain of common concern, and inclusivity (Crossley & Roberts, 2004).

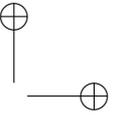
The analysis is structured in two main parts. The article starts by presenting a brief theoretical review of public relations and communication management studies encompassed by the Habermasian paradigm of *Discourse Ethics and Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas, 1962, 1981). Following that, a recent Portuguese case, the Ensitel Case, is featured as an example of the loss of corporate legitimacy in social networks. In the end, we intend to offer a path for further investigation in the organisational legitimacy and public relations field through a discursive and normative analysis of companies' communication.

Public Relations and Habermas's Theory

In spite of some criticism of the application of Habermas to public relations theory (Holmström, 1997; Benson, 2008), the fact is that Habermas's *Discourse Ethics* has come to occupy a central position in public relations and organisational communication studies (Pearson, 1989, 1989a; Leeper, 1996; Burkart, 2004, 2009; Meisenbach, 2006; Meisenbach & Feldner, 2009). In this article, we have chosen to focus on Ron Pearson and Roland Burkart's theoretical approach, not only because of their pioneerism and consistency with regard to public relations as founded on the *Discourse Ethics and Theory of Communicative Action*, but also for their suitability to the study of discursive interaction in situations of conflict and the consequent problem of loss of organisational legitimacy.

The Canadian Ron Pearson (1989, 1989a, 1989b) was the first author to present a public relations theory inspired by Habermas's *Discourse Ethics*. It can be said that the ethical investigation for Habermas is associated with a communicative reason, concretised in a discussion open to the plurality of the members of an ideal argumentation community. The discussion is ethical if



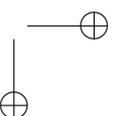
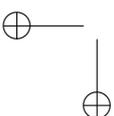


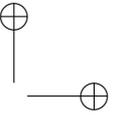
its object is problems based on standards and practical principles, and if it is purely rational. That is, if it occurs without domination, it will lead to a *consensual* solution of the problems. According to Habermas, the conditions under which consensus justification may occur are marked by the symmetrical opportunity of participants assuming dialogue positions in various types of *speech acts*. Those conditions constitute the 'ideal speech situation': 1) No relevant argument can be suppressed or excluded; 2) No force except that of the better argument is exerted; 3) Everybody must have access to the public debate; 4) Everybody can express her needs and desires.

Pearson suggests that an 'ideal public relations (PR) situation' would be one in which organisations and the public interact, that is, a space (the public sphere) where the speaker (or the organisation) and the listener (or the public) communicate. This situation would be a precondition for the practice of public relations ethics that allow intercomprehension between the organisation and its public and minimise the unbalance between them (Pearson, 1989: 241). Also, the ideal speech situation would invoke a presupposition of all *speech acts*, facilitating the dialogue between the organisation and its public. This parallelism would have consequences on the four kinds of *speech acts*, as theorized in Habermas's *Universal Pragmatic*:¹

- *Communicatives* are speech acts that open lines of communication. As such, they should be *intelligible* to the person to whom they are directed. The communicator should clarify, offer synonyms, make whatever repetitions are necessary so that a hearer understands, and select channels of communication that increase the likelihood of understanding (Pearson, 1989 *apud* Grunig & White, 1992: 58).
- *Constatives* are speech acts that assert, report, explain, predict, deny, object, or estimate. They make an implicit claim to truth, and the communicator should support that claim to truth by providing grounds or reasons (*ibid.*: 59).

¹In the *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987) Habermas is based on the theories of Austin and Searle, which have the central idea of the dual structure of the discourse: the contents of a speech act (locutionary) and how it is presented (illocutionary). Who speaks not only says something, but also does something. This allows that the language be strategically used to obtain an effect in the listener.



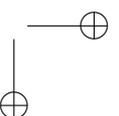
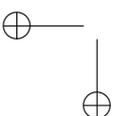


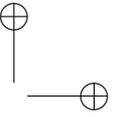
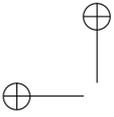
- *Representatives* are expressive speech acts that reveal how a speaker feels. In making such statements, a communicator should *be sincere and show trustworthiness* by behaviour, that matches his or her expressed intention (ibid.).
- *Regulatives* include orders, commands, requests, admonitions, promises, agreements, and refusals. In making them, the communicator claims that they are *based on valid norms* or on his or her authority and responsibility. The communicator, therefore, must justify these claims by explaining the norms that give the speaker the conviction that he or she is right. If the hearer disagrees, the claim should be debated (ibid.).

Roland Burkart (2009: 144) extended Pearson's approach to public relations ethics to suggest a *Consensus-oriented public relations model* to legitimate corporate actions in situations in which the public questions the organisation's messages and does not believe in the underlying validity claims (for example, in situations related to environmental disasters). This is a model that allows the organisation and its publics to achieve understanding and, as a result, consensus, which is especially useful in conflict or crisis situations.

Following Habermas, Burkart (2007, 2009) asserts three types of validity claims that are judged by participants in the communicative process: truth, rightness, and sincerity. These validity claims must exist in order for the ideal speech situation to be realized. In order to develop a communicational act in view of consensus, organisations must notice which validity claims are in dispute and need to be validated through discursive debate:

- In case of doubts regarding the *truth* of the company's statements the discourse should be based on scientific or technical evidence (for example, reports, audits);
- In case the doubts are regarding the *rightness* of the project, the object of the discourse will be the justification of interests, objectives and decisions;
- *Sincerity* is the only validity claim that cannot be the object of discourse as the speaker will only be able to prove their sincerity through subsequent actions and not through arguments.



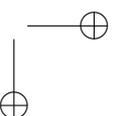
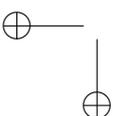


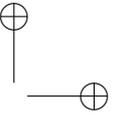
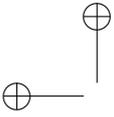
In short, in this model, intercomprehension plays an important role in the management of public relations' process because organisations are forced to present good arguments when communicating their interests; in Burkart's words, they must make the public *understand* their actions (2007: 250).

A Habermasian framework can also be seen in the well-known model of public relations, the *two-way symmetrical model*, which emphasizes mutual understanding as the purpose of public relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 22).² Contrary to the public relations models which intend to persuade or manipulate their publics, the two-way symmetrical model consists more of a dialogue than a monologue (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 23), as the organisation is as likely to be influenced by the receiver's communication as vice-versa. Hence, the practice of symmetrical public relations involves the use of bargaining, negotiating, and strategies of conflict resolution to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviours of both the organisation and its publics (Grunig, 1989: 29). Furthermore, Grunig and Grunig (1992) have argued that this model is the most ethical approach to public relations and that ethical public relations is the model most effective in meeting organisational goals:

The two-way symmetrical model avoids the problem of ethical relativism because it defines ethics as a process of public relations rather than an outcome. Symmetrical public relations provides a forum for dialogue, discussion, and discourse on issues for which people with different values generally come to different conclusions. As long as the dialogue is structured

²The *two-way symmetrical model* is one of the four-model framework introduced by James Grunig and Todd Hunt in 1984: *press agentry*, *public information*, *two-way asymmetrical*, and *two-way symmetrical*. Public relations based on the *press agentry* model serves a propaganda function as it is concerned with the one-way communication of often incomplete, distorted, or false information to persuade or manipulate the organisation's publics. The *public information* model also focuses on one-way communication or dissemination of information, but manipulation or persuasion is not intended (even though it often ends up achieving those effects). In both models, the receiver does not have the opportunity to provide feedback to, or influence the source. Thus, communication in both models is viewed as telling, not listening (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 23). In the *two-way asymmetrical model*, communication flows two ways: from source to receiver and from receiver to source. Nonetheless, organizations and individuals who practice two-way asymmetrical public relations also have the intention of manipulating their publics. Thus, contrary to the symmetrical public relations model, the effects of asymmetrical public relations are unilateral, that is, the source aims to change the receiver's attitudes and behavior while maintaining his own status quo.





according to ethical rules, the outcome should be ethical (Grunig & Grunig, 1992: 308).

Despite the fact that Grunig just considers Habermas's theories by quoting Pearson's texts, it can be argued that Habermas's ideal speech situation and validity claims are reflected in the symmetrical model. More specifically, this model, like Burkart's *Consensus-oriented public relations* model, is intended to be a tool in PR's service to increase the likelihood of solving conflicts through dialogue and generating acceptance of organisations within society. However, there are no magic recipes; such acceptance may only arise amongst people involved if the intercomprehension process has worked successfully.

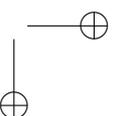
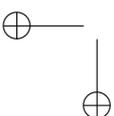
The prerequisite for this success is that the public's need for dialogue is taken seriously by the organisations themselves, especially when they feel threatened by company actions. This is the main problem identified in the Ensitel Case shown below - this company did not take into consideration the public's need for dialogue within the social networks world, with visible consequences to its reputation.

A Discursive Analysis of the Ensitel Case

Ensitel is a French company specializing in telecommunications equipment that operates in Portugal in over 60 stores. The following is an outline of the case that became known as 'The Ensitel Case'.

At the end of 2010, a wave of negativity against Ensitel was triggered on social networks. In less than 24 hours, more than 200 bloggers gave their opinions on the brand's attitude and the customer's position, thousands of negative comments were posted on the brand's Facebook page, and hundreds of thousands of tweets, where Ensitel was the most used hashtag in Portugal for 24 hours non-stop, could be read. Some Internet users swore to boycott the company, which they accused of trying to prevent their freedom of speech; some even wanted to protest in front of the shops. Meanwhile, Ensitel systematically deleted many of these negative comments.

By this time, the negative wave was unstoppable: the creation of a hate page on Facebook that in a few hours attracted thousands of fans, a page on Wikipedia, films on YouTube, and even bad tips on Foursquare. Simultaneously, a solidarity movement was created to help the customer pay the



<i>February 2009</i>
A customer purchases a mobile device at an Ensitel shop; she complains that the device does not work and tries to change it, as it is still within the guarantee period. The entire process is told in detail on her personal blog: details of the fault, steps taken to complain and contradictory responses by company employees.
<i>March 2009</i>
Customer's personal blog appears on the first page of the search engines with the search for the word Ensitel, emphasising a very negative image of the company.
<i>April 2009</i>
Presentation of the complainant's case at the Lisbon Consumer Conflict Arbitration Centre.
<i>May 2009</i>
Sentence is in favour of Ensitel, recommending the client send the mobile device for repair. The client follows the recommendation, despite disagreeing.
<i>27 December 2010</i>
The case is reopened 7 months later when the client posts on her personal blog that she has received a summons demanding that she delete the posts about the company.

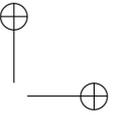
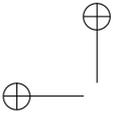
incurred legal costs. Finally, the Ensitel Case went mainstream - it reached the traditional news media (RTP1, RTP2, SIC, TVI, JN, Journal I)

Facing this wave of negative comments, Ensitel decided to post the following declaration in their Facebook page, on 28 December (post 1):

Ensitel, Lojas de Comunicações, S.A. is being confronted with a series of statements published through social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, and has therefore decided to present the following brief clarification: Ensitel does not refute any type or form of freedom of speech; however, it does repudiate, reject, and does not accept being the target of a completely defamatory campaign, based on absolutely false facts whose sole purpose is to defame the image and good reputation that Ensitel has built over 21 years, only because the customer did not agree with a judicial decision which was unfavourable to them.
The Management

Nonetheless, this post was counterproductive, provoking more negative comments about Ensitel's position. Facing the public's negative reaction, Ensitel adopted another posture, as posted on 31 December (post 2).

From this description, we can now briefly exemplify how a Habermasian perspective offers a strong and unique conceptual framework to understanding communication distortions and for improving practice. Particular attention will be paid to the official communication of Ensitel on the Facebook mural



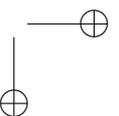
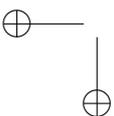
In the last few days we have listened to your opinions.
It was never our intention to oppose freedom of speech, only to defend our brand. We now perceive that our attitude was not the most appropriate and **thus, we will immediately withdraw the court case.**
We also intend, in the future, to pay more attention to our customers' online comments, in a way that we can ensure that your dealings with Ensitel shall be as positive as possible. With this in mind, we are installing new means of communication for you to contact us whenever you have a problem in one of our shops or with our products.
Pedro Machado
Head of Sales and Customer Service

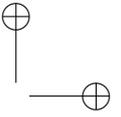
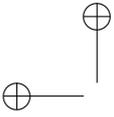
since it is an example of corporate communication using social media in a crisis situation.

The first post published by Ensitel on Facebook generated three different types of validity claims:

1. That it was **true** that Ensitel was suffering defamation and that it respected the right of freedom of speech. The fact that the comments on Facebook against Ensitel had been deleted led readers to doubt the **truth** of the statement, as it was clearly an act of censure as various people commented online. With this post, Ensitel showed a lack of interest in dialogue engagement.
2. That it was **right** to file a legal suit against the customer, forcing her to delete the posts on her Blog. They assume the fact that they won the legal case would also invalidate user's comments. Most of the users of social networks consider that they have the right to write whatever they think without any sort of constraint. They would not consider any type of censure of freedom of speech. Thus, the lack of acknowledgement of the interests of the public shows the inappropriateness of Ensitel's communication.
3. That Ensitel was being **sincere** regarding the statement contained in the document. Therefore, the choice to not debate with their public on social networks and their authoritarian communication showed lack of sincerity in the statement.

According to Habermas, rational action is the result of communicative action, that is, when actors do not violate any of the validity claims in their



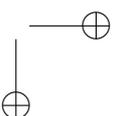
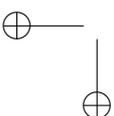


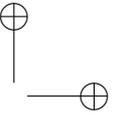
speech acts. The validity claims must exist in order for the ideal speech situation (or ideal PR situation) to be realized. In the case analysed here, by violating the validity claims, Ensitel caused misrepresentation, dissent, and illegitimacy. That is why a wave of negative comments assaulted the company Facebook page.

We can argue that in handling the social media situation, Ensitel failed to meet the ethical requirement that inheres in discourse ethics. Only when Ensitel adopted a dialogue posture with the second post and made a call for communicative action that it finally managed to produce some kind of comprehension, trust, and consent. In fact, after publication of the second post on Facebook and sending an apology request by email to the customer, the comments on the case dissipated. In this sense, we can claim that the end of the crisis situation was determined by a symmetrical approach to communication in the social media sphere. Therefore, the symmetrical public relations model that privileges dialogue can be considered an efficient and ethical way for organisations to communicate with their publics in the social network and maintain corporate legitimacy. That is to say, like Pearson, that the transference of the ideal type conditions of the dialogue to the public relations process is an ethical imperative for PR (1989b: 127).

We may conclude that Habermas's theory provides a dialogic and content-based means by which legitimacy claims are assessed and explains why some claims are more successful than others. Some critics may argue that the reliance on validity claims does not allow for a consideration of power relations embedded within practice. However, Habermas aimed for a discursive space in which power relations were equal, though he did recognize that that equality did not typically exist in society. The ideal speech situation is, therefore, an ideal toward which individuals and organisations may strive. This idea is very similar to Grunig's ideal of two-way symmetrical public relations practice and Pearson's ideal public relations situation.

According to Habermas, all speech acts have an inherent *telos* - the goal of mutual understanding, with human beings possessing the communication competence to bring about such understanding. Despite charges of idealism, the provision of validity claims addressing truth, right, and sincerity provides a useful and dialogic avenue for considering how and why publics respond as they do to legitimacy claims. Suchman (1995) recommends that companies can build a legitimacy reservoir through frequent and intense communication

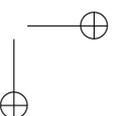
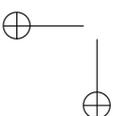


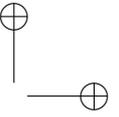


with the organisation's social surroundings. We may argue that a more normative approach to those efforts may help communication actors to see conflict situations in a different light and reconsider possible and more adequate discursive options.

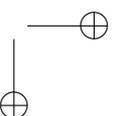
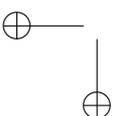
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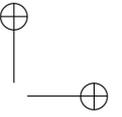
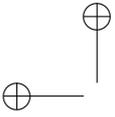




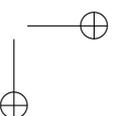
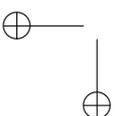
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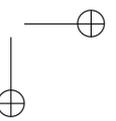
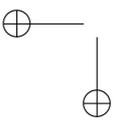
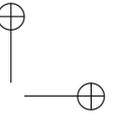
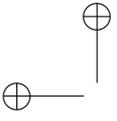


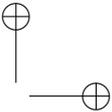
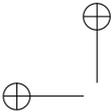
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Understanding stakeholder expectations

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Abstract: This paper draws from theories of stakeholder expectations and social media to highlight some of the most important changes on the current agenda of organisational communication. While social media is a definite hot topic in organisational communication, the dynamics of stakeholder expectations remains understudied. However, expectations affect organisational relationships as they can be decisive in whether a relationship continues or ends. Thus, the paper argues that organizations should try to understand stakeholder expectations better also from the point of view of organisational communication, especially in the era of social media. The paper's baseline is analytical with propositions for future practice and research alike.

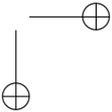
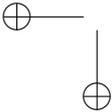
Keywords: Stakeholder thinking, expectations, social media.

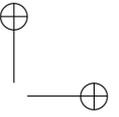
Introduction

With the introduction of social media the working environment of organizations today includes a new media environment where participatory media has come to coexist with the traditional media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Miel & Faris, 2008). This new dynamics of the media environment can change the way organizations are perceived, how they are expected to behave and how publics can expect to participate and voice opinions (Miel & Faris, 2008; Wright & Hinson, 2008). In an organisational environment where demands have already been raised for shared problem-solving and dialogue (Kaptein & van Tulder, 2003), joint responsibility (Waddock, Bodwell & Graves, 2002), as well as ever more transparency and credibility (Dando & Swift, 2003), the social media has brought about new tools for joining forces and making voices heard.

The changing landscape of organizations includes shifts also in one of the most important organisational theories, stakeholder thinking, that has moved away from organization-centricity (Steurer, 2006). Instead, it has become to stress mutual interaction, relationships and organization-stakeholder engage-

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges. . . , pp. 47-60.



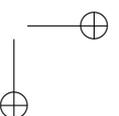
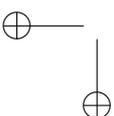


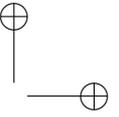
ment (Andriof & Waddock, 2002; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010; Steurer, 2006). In these changing settings organizations continue to seek legitimacy through a good reputation that is believed to provide resilience in turbulent times (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). However, reputations are formed through assessments (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990) and assessments can change whenever attitudes, values and expectations change. This paper suggests that better understanding of these delicate factors, especially those of stakeholder expectations, can help organizations to understand the dynamics of their current working environment.

The paper ties together two areas; stakeholder expectations and social media. While social media is an undisputed hot zone of organisational communication research and practice of today, stakeholder expectations remains an understudied area – so far the topic has received interest mainly in customer management and marketing research (see for example Creyer & Ross, 1997; Walker & Baker, 2000). The paper argues that stakeholder expectations are an important area organizations should try to understand better also from the point of view of organisational communication, especially in the era of social media. The paper's baseline is analytical, but towards the ending section the paper crafts propositions for future practice and research alike. To begin with, the paper sets theoretical anchors to stakeholder thinking, stakeholder expectations and social media.

Stakeholder thinking: towards reciprocity

Stakeholder theory was crafted as a tool for managerial purposes in order to understand organizations with their relations to their surrounding environment and actors in it (Freeman, 1984). At the core of stakeholder thinking is the idea that organizations are connected to their surrounding economic and social systems, inside which they affect and are affected by other actors, such as customers, partners, NGO's, the government, and the media (Carroll, 1993; Freeman, 1984). In other words, these actors, called stakeholders, are actors that have some sort of stake in the organization and its operations. While different scholars have distinguished different kinds of classifications of stakeholders, depending for example on importance or status (see for example Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997), the basic idea is that stakeholders have some kinds of legitimate interest, claims or expectations towards an organiza-



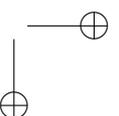
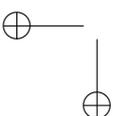


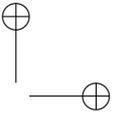
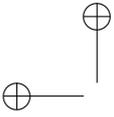
tion and its operations that organizations need to take into account (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Friedman & Miles, 2006).

Since its breakthrough, stakeholder thinking has been moving from an organization-centric view towards a network-based perception, where mutual interaction, relationships and organization-stakeholder engagement have become the center of focus (Andriof & Waddock, 2002; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010; Steurer, 2006). In this setting stakeholders are seen as equal players on the organisational agenda where multiple interests need to be balanced (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010; Steurer, 2006). This can imply that the organization is not always at the centre of the stakeholder map, and that stakeholders can form relations also to other stakeholders and combine powers (Rowley, 1997). Reciprocity implies that the network of stakeholders constitutes a delicate ecosystem where organizations need to find their fit and gain support for their operations. The challenge of this environment is that it can change whenever stakeholders' attitudes, values and expectations change.

As part of their relationship with the organization, stakeholders assess organizations on their past actions and current reputations, and these assessments guide how organizations are perceived and how they are expected to behave in the future (Luoma-aho, 2005; Sztompka, 1999). For future assessments it is the current expectations and their correctness that counts; theory has suggested that meeting stakeholder expectations leads to stakeholder satisfaction that in turn rewards organizations with good reputations (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Wan & Schell, 2007). As such, stakeholder expectations form dynamic 'mental standards' (Olkkonen & Luoma-aho, 2011) through which the operations of an organization are examined and they have an effect in the future willingness to stay in a relationship (Thomlison, 2000).

For relationship management, few things are more important than the willingness to continue or end a relationship. Yet expectations remain to be an understudied arena within communication research that sees communication's role central for maintaining and building relationships. However, if a relationship is a set of expectations (Thomlison, 2000), and relationships shaped by communication are what communication scholars want to understand, then also expectations should be seen a priority.





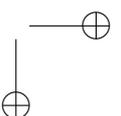
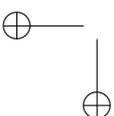
Expectations as mental standards

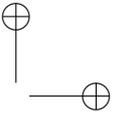
According to Fombrun (1996) organizations face different expectations from different stakeholders; according to him employees generally expect trustworthiness, customers expect reliability, and communities expect responsibility (Fombrun, 1996, p. 62-70). As different stakeholder groups can stress different things with their expectations, these seemingly unanimous groups can also vary in their expectations depending on various subgroups and individuals (Klewes, 2009). In fact, expectations are highly subjective in nature, and can display both trust and distrust (Lewicki, McAllister & Bies, 1998). What makes expectations important for organisational success and survival is that they serve as reference points against which performance is assessed (Creyer & Ross, 1997).

Stakeholders' assessments based on expectations do not always happen consciously, as expectations are not always precise, but imprecise, fuzzy, implicit – or unrealistic (Ojasalo, 2001). Though they are complex and not easy to make sense of, the importance of expectations lies in the way they affect relationships. According to Podnar and Golob (2007) organizations have an 'expectational relationship' to their stakeholders, where organizations need to meet or exceed stakeholder expectations in order to keep the relationship running. Thus expectations affect stakeholders' behavior directly (Creyer & Ross, 1997) and they can be the key why for example customers shift from one company to another (Ojasalo, 2001).

Though stakeholder expectations are quite often mentioned in the communication literature as one of the things organizations need to be aware of (Massey, 2001; Ledingham, 2003), they are rarely explicated thoroughly. For deeper analyses an excursion into customer satisfaction studies can help, as they have divided expectations to, for example, predictive and normative expectations. The difference between the two is that predictive expectations describe what is considered likely (a prediction of what will happen) whereas normative expectations represent what should or ought to occur (a hope of what one should be able to expect). (Summers & Granbois, 1977; Walker & Baker, 2000).

Another interesting division that relates also to organisational communication, drawn again from customer satisfaction studies, is that of adequate and desired levels of expectations. Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman (1993)



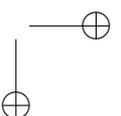
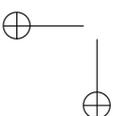


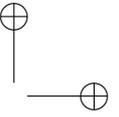
describe the adequate level of expectations as the lowest level where customer satisfaction is maintained. The level of desired expectations, in turn, indicates the ideal level of customer's hopes and wishes. Between the adequate and desired level there is a zone of tolerance where performance can land in order to be able to meet expectations (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993). When looked from the perspective of communication research, stakeholders can have expectations on different levels concerning organisational communication and their relationships towards an organization. Communication can also create expectations (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Ojasalo, 2001), and hence have an influence on the zone of tolerance. Gaps can exist between expectations and perceived performance, and there can also be variance in the size of the zone of tolerance depending on the issue.

Because expectations can derive from normative grounds, meeting expectations becomes a factor also for social acceptance, i.e. organisational legitimacy (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). If stakeholders are the ones granting companies with legitimacy, they are the ones who can also take it away by withdrawing their support. This can happen, if expectations are not met (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Sethi, 1979). This dilemma can be defined as a legitimacy gap (Sethi, 1979) that can potentially threaten the acceptance necessary for an organization to operate.

While legitimacy can be understood as social acceptance and adherence to social norms and expectations, reputation can be understood as a comparison among organizations (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). As legitimacy and reputation are closely related, expectations relates to both, since legitimacy is connected especially to social dimensions of reputation (sometimes referred to as social reputation) that displays organisational commitment to the norms of the society (De Castro, Navas Lopez & López Sáez, 2006). In other words, without the expectation of following the norms of the society being fulfilled, organizations are not able to gain legitimacy on which to build a sound reputation.

What is more, reputations guide what can be expected of an organization; in Burt's (2005, p. 100) words, 'reputation is behavior expected of you'. Thus expectations guide how the operations and behavior of a company are examined. As such reputations are what differentiates otherwise similar companies (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004) and theory has suggested that meeting expectations leads to stakeholder satisfaction that in turn rewards organizations with





good reputations (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Wan & Schell, 2007). Thus unmet expectations can cause gaps not only in terms of overall legitimacy, but also between perceived reputation and performance.

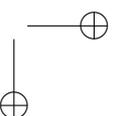
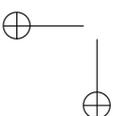
To avoid reputational and legitimacy gaps, and to fulfill the requirements the society has for granting organizations their support, staying aware of value changes that affect expectations can become more important now in an era where reputations, networks, attention and social media are strikingly present. Communication's role in acknowledging, understanding and meeting expectations is likely to be central, as sound relationships to stakeholders with well-functioning communication channels can help to avoid mismatched expectations (Ojasalo, 2001).

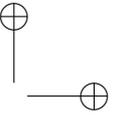
The social media factor

Social media can be understood as technologies that enable the forming of groups and communities without the help and structures of traditional organizations (Shirky, 2008). The magnitude of social media is easy to understand by looking at the masses that use social media for connecting, sharing, and discussing the topics they find interesting. The most popular social media sites, such as Facebook, have hundreds of millions of users – masses that outweigh the size of many big nations (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some of the topics that are discussed and shared in social media are those that relate also to the organisational agenda – some topics in fact might be about organizations themselves.

In essence, social media has become important for organizations as it has formed an arena where their products and operations are discussed and where their reputations are (at least) partly formed (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). In fact, most organizations are present in social media, whether they themselves are aware of it or not (Qualman, 2011). The question is rather whether organizations are going to take part in the discussion that involve them or issues related to their operations.

Though it is acknowledged that social media has become an arena most organizations need to at least keep an eye on along with the traditional media (Wright & Hinson, 2008), it is yet not clear what social media does to the organisational agenda on the whole. While others are certain that social media has brought about a change so profound that the whole practices of the

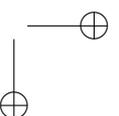
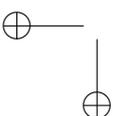


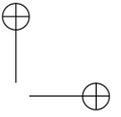
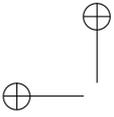


society are changing (Shirky, 2008), others are not convinced from the current evidence that such a profound change is actually penetrating organisational practices (Taylor & Kent, 2010). Whether the overall impact of social media will turn out to be major or minor is still left to be seen.

Though the importance of social media is debatable, it has already proved that it can be, when given the chance, a powerful tool in directing attention (Shirky, 2008; Weber, 2007). In fact, with its citizen journalism effect news can be published and picked up to mainstream media from personal blogs, Twitter feeds or Facebook pages (Gillmor, 2006; Shirky, 2008). While most content online will never make the limelight, simply because of the enormous mass of it, the potential is always there when content is published in the internet for anyone to see (Coombs, 2002). However, social media is not only a tool to look for weak signals for crisis management, but also for less dramatic changes, such as changes in expectations that can have equally significant implications in the long run. What is more, social media can also offer a passage for the organizations to communicate proactively about issues they find important. In fact, the most important implication of social media is said to be a change toward an ongoing dialogue: companies should be talking with customers - not talking at them (Weber, 2007).

The challenge of social media is that at the same time when organizations are expected to engage with their stakeholders more than ever, the arenas for this engagement are changing profoundly by the presence of the internet and especially social media inside it (Coombs, 2002; Wright & Hinson, 2008). This change is turning static stakes into dynamic issues (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010) where groups are formed and dismantled flexibly and rapidly when a need emerges (Shirky, 2008). Organizations themselves rarely have control over these arenas and in fact various stakeholders can engage in them with each other regardless of an organization's presence. The rules of these 'issue arenas' are defined by the users, not by the organization, and hence an organization wishing to participate needs to first get acquainted with the rules and practices of a specific forum. (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010.) This changes the dynamics for both communication and stakeholder expectations, as there is not only a need to acknowledge different stakeholders but also the arenas they choose to operate in. Thus, also the formation of stakeholder expectations needs to be understood in very complex settings.





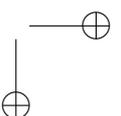
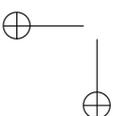
Expectations in the new media environment

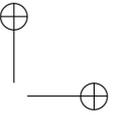
The working environment of today for most organizations includes the social media, in one way or another, in a lesser or greater extent. As social media has become an arena where the stakeholders for many organizations spend time, share and look for content and discuss, stakeholder thinking has to yield into these new arenas as well. Hence also stakeholder expectations towards organizations need to be studied by taking social media into account. The discussions that are happening in social media with or without organisational presence could be one of the rare arenas where expectations could be monitored. Thus social media could potentially shed more light on stakeholder expectations than ever before as expectations often result in silent manifests of satisfaction or dissatisfaction – previously very hard to get evidence from.

Despite the potential, also challenges exist. In social media topics can change rapidly and fame can happen unpredictably (Shirky, 2008), which makes social media challenging for organisational monitoring functions to tap into. Thus it has to be remembered that social media does not offer instant fix to deciphering expectations as expectations are formed as combinations of multiple components such as own experience, other's experience, past behavior and currently available information (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993). However, studying expectations with a social media scope is worth the try, as the cycle of expectations formation and communications role in it could be made more visible and easier to understand by taking social media into account.

Implications for organisational communication

The need to acknowledge different stakeholders and also the arenas they choose to operate in changes the dynamics for both communication and stakeholder expectations. As the arenas for communication and hence for the maintenance of relationships are more diverse than before, relationship management is put to new tests. What is worth noting is that changes in expectations can influence how organizations' relationships with their stakeholders evolve in the future. While the media environment is changing with implications to organisational working environments, especially social media and its potential for offering a window to stakeholder expectations should be considered.





Rooted in the previously presented theory, five propositions for future research and practice alike are drawn below.

Firstly, theory suggests that understanding weak signals is important for organizations especially in current complex environment (Coombs, 2002; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010).

- *Proposition 1:* Weak signals such as stakeholder expectations need to be acknowledged and understood better, especially inside the social media.

Secondly, social media has become an arena where opinions are formed and the public agenda is partly set (Gillmor, 2006; Shirky, 2008; Wright & Hinson, 2009).

- *Proposition 2:* Monitoring stakeholder expectations inside the social media can help organizations to tap into the discussion at an early stage.

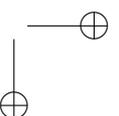
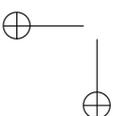
Thirdly, theory suggest that social media as an issue arena is a dialogue imperative, as it about sharing, commenting and participating (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010, see also Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Wright & Hinson, 2009).

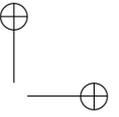
- *Proposition 3:* To be able to take part in the discussion, organizations need to understand social media and its possibilities to make expectations visible.

Fourthly, theory suggests that organization's ability to respond to stakeholder expectations might make or break business (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Wan & Schell, 2007; Sethi, 1979).

- *Proposition 4:* Understanding stakeholder expectations in the new media environment can become of crucial importance for long-term organisational survival.

Fifthly, and finally, the literature on social media suggest that social media assumes a whole different way of interacting (user-driven, instant, potentially global, many-to-many) (Shirky, 2008; Gillmor, 2006).





- *Proposition 5:* organisational adaptation of social media can call for new kind of professionals that understand how social media works as an online issue arena.

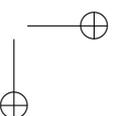
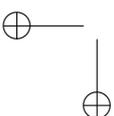
The five propositions combined, the most important implication for organisational communication is the need to learn to understand stakeholder expectations more profoundly, especially in the new social media environment, as well as to understand communication's role in expectations formation more profoundly.

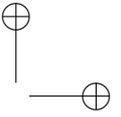
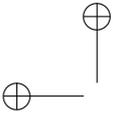
Conclusion

This paper combined theories of stakeholder expectations and social media to illustrate some of the important issues that the changing landscape of organizations brings to the organisational agenda. The changing stakeholder thinking that moves from organization-centricity to organization-stakeholder reciprocity is changing also the way organizations are perceived and how they are expected to engage with their stakeholders, especially in the era of social media. This can put increasing emphasis on stakeholder expectations that guide how organizations are assessed. However, stakeholder expectations has so far been an understudied topic in organisational communication research, and hence not always acknowledged properly. The paper suggests that deeper understanding of stakeholder expectations can help organizations engage with their stakeholders especially inside social media, where rules are created by the users and issues are discussed without institutional control. Understanding of stakeholder expectations can prove to be valuable especially for monitoring and maintaining organisational legitimacy.

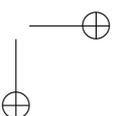
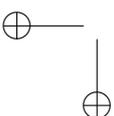
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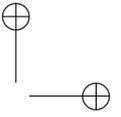


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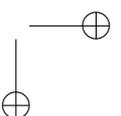
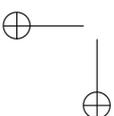


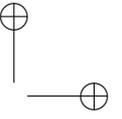
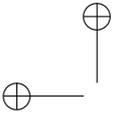
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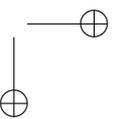
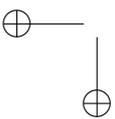
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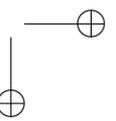
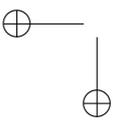
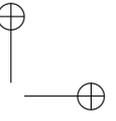
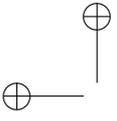


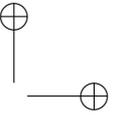


Part II

DIALOGUE IN MEDIA RELATIONS AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION







Media relations and health news coverage: The dialogue on *Influenza A* in Portugal

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Abstract: In Portugal, the use of strategic communication within the health sector has been growing in the past decade. However, the ambience of health information production in the country is controversial and there is a widespread sense of dissatisfaction among agents involved. In order to enlighten this debate, we have been conducting a systematic study on health news coverage in the country. In 2009, the most significant subject in Portuguese health news coverage was *Influenza A*. We have used the *Influenza A* case to analyse the role of media relations strategies and tactics in the construction of news in the health sector.

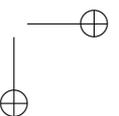
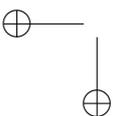
Keywords: health communication, health media relations, health journalism, risk communication.

1. Introduction

Health media relations can be described as those organisational or personal public relations (PR) activities that aim to develop media access on health issues. Its instruments are public statements, interviews, press releases, press conferences, briefings, and pseudo-events, among others. This technical process is recognized by PR professionals as having the potential to increase the quantity and quality of health information that is disseminated through mass media in order to create a stronger sense of public security and enhance the motivation of those involved in the health sector. The media relations programme can be part of a wider strategic communication plan or it can be developed as a reaction to media requests.

In Portugal, the use of strategic communication within the health sector has been growing in the past decade. Driven by the enlargement of the health market (with the growth of private health care institutions), the increase in public demand for accountability, and the rise of market-oriented approaches

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 63-80.



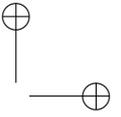
in public institutions, communication has become a recognized asset for public health organisations. The increase of health media relations is part of this process.

However, the ambience of health information production in Portugal is controversial (as reported in other countries; Springston and Larisey, 2005) and there is a widespread sense of dissatisfaction among agents involved. The health information field is seen as unstructured and fragile. Health agents blame the press, arguing that journalists are careless in their reporting, as a result of competitive pressures and ignoring the scientific process. Conversely, journalists accuse the health community of limiting access to information and erecting barriers to public dissemination of medical research. Sensationalism, biases, conflicts of interest, and lack of follow-up are other problems reported in our exploratory research.

Thus, paradoxically, while media attention and public relations practices have increased in the Portuguese health sector, its actors feel that the public is poorly served by health coverage in the general press. In order to enlighten this debate, we have been conducting a systematic study on health news coverage in the country since 2008. Our research design combines the results of our examination of news contents, news production practices, and news sources. Each year we select the two most salient diseases covered by the press and conduct a thorough study to understand health information construction. This paper presents the results of our 2009 research on the perspective of information sources having the PR framework as its basis.

In 2009, the most significant disease by far in Portuguese news coverage was *Influenza A*. Our research group developed a study on the information sources used by journalists after its appearance in March 2009 and, above all, after the pandemic alert sent by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in April. The study looked at the following questions: first, *what were the main sources of Influenza A news coverage in Portugal?* and second, *how were these sources visible through news contents?* To respond to these concerns, we analysed three national newspapers, chosen by their different periodicity and editorial criteria.

In this article, we use the *Influenza A* case in Portugal to analyse the role of media relations strategies and tactics in the construction of news in the health sector. To begin this debate, we review the literature on Health Communication and Public Relations, as well as on Public Health PR Crises, to



contextualize our research problem and the case study. The references used are international ones, as there is no scientific investigation on Health PR in Portugal. After presenting the theoretical background, we continue with the presentation of our case, the *Influenza A* news coverage in Portugal.

2. Literature Review

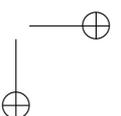
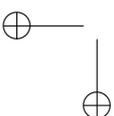
2.1 Public relations in the Health Sector

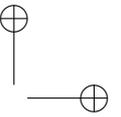
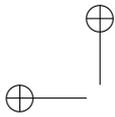
Since the 1990s, there has been a growing increase in health news dissemination; this international trend has continued to grow in the new century. In 2008, for example, a study ranked health news sixth in popularity among news topics in the United States.¹ The progressive understanding of the consequences of this growth to society soon caught the attention of the academy. However, research within the Health Communication field has given more attention to the study of mass media and journalists' activities in terms of selecting and framing health messages, with less attention given to the role of the people and organisations that provide information to the media. We refer to public relations professionals.

It is an acknowledged practice that journalists often use public relations sources to prepare news contents. In addition, research has presented evidence that there is a relationship between PR activities and the news media agenda (Hodgetts et al., 2008; Len-Ríos et al., 2009). However, as Grunig (2007) points out, journalists tend to balance PR story frames with those of other sources and, overall, they are able to maintain a neutral story frame. News editors seem to agree that PR professionals provide useful information, yet they do not trust them completely.

The health news organisations' attraction to the public space has been growing for the past 20 years; this is noticeable in the growing 'medicalization' of media speech (McAllister, 1992). Many authors refer to the 'medicalization' of societies as a recent and relevant social phenomenon relating to the growing influence of the medicine establishment in the way individuals see and interpret reality focusing on individual and collective health prob-

¹Survey Report, August 2008: 'Key news audiences now blend online and traditional sources – audience segments in a changing news environment', *The Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press*, <http://people-press.org>



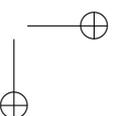
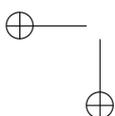


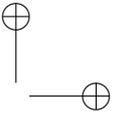
lems. This is a characteristic of the medical theory born in the nineteenth century that comprehends the intent of prescribing people new ways of living, behaving, and acting. The media have contributed strongly to that ‘medicalized’ reality, accepting and reproducing the ‘medicalized’ speech of the health sources.

This active role of health news sources has been strengthened by the use of strategic communication or marketing techniques that help them gain access to the public sphere. Studies highlight the growing activities carried out by official or specialized sources in the health field seeking to influence debates, agendas, and audiences. Several studies show the increase of public relations campaigns by health organisations, including governments, research foundations, hospitals, and other health care institutions. They seek to produce accessible, reliable, and specialized information as part of a conscious strategy to control news production and the social interpretation of health reality (McAllister, 1992; Zook, 1994; Miller & Williams, 1998; Briggs & Hallin, 2010).

The need for and use of strategic communication by public health organisations can be detected in different phenomena. Health institutions are experiencing a consumer-driven demand and, as a consequence, are beginning to deal with patients as ‘clients’. Health issues have become of high media interest. Public relations costs in health organisations have increased and many communication agencies have created specialized teams in health information (Longest & Rohrer, 2005; Springston & Larisey, 2005; Moreira, 2007; Wise, 2008). All those factors have generated impressive news coverage.

In addition, the power of health public relations was reinforced by some peculiarities of health journalism. According to a vast literature (Tanner, 2004a; Tanner, 2004b; Cho, 2006), the health information context is different from general news reporting because media are strongly dependent on the expertise of health organisations, scientists, and the medical community in order to cover the stories. This particular requirement of health journalism (shared with science news reporting) is confirmed in several investigations. Tanner (2004) conducted a nationwide survey in the US and the results showed that public relations spokespersons and health sources have a very significant impact on the health information broadcast to the public. In fact, 60% of TV health reporters said that they frequently found a health expert to explain technical information and 60% confirm that health sources often in-



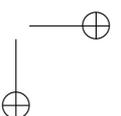
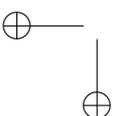


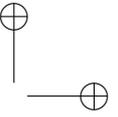
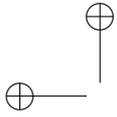
fluence news content. Other studies (quoted by Cho, 2006; Len-Ríos et al., 2009), showed that health journalists received most of their stories from personal contact with PR spokespersons, official proceedings, press releases, and press conferences and that there is a positive correlation between PR messages and media health coverage. PR professionals were seen as mediators between journalists and the health community; because of the technical nature of the information, they exerted a strong influence over the news agenda.

Len-Ríos et al. (2009) also looked for the PR perspective on this matter. They carried out a national survey among America's health PR practitioners and found that these professionals believe they have 'expert power' in media relations. This power was perceived to be higher in the health field, because PR experts working in health organisations have a strong credibility as communication facilitators between experts and the media. And those PR experts believed that the 'power' could be increased by using traditional PR techniques, such as frequent contact and establishment of personal relations with the journalists. Those strategies are referred to in other studies as ways to reinforce respect, trust, confidence, and legitimacy in media relations.

In fact, health reporting requires a certain degree of expertise that many journalists do not have. Tanner (2004b) stated that in the US, more than two-thirds of TV health reporters had no specialized training in the field, and more than one-third concentrated solely on health reporting. In Portugal, the landscape seems to be very similar. In spite of the lack of formal studies in this area, our initial exploratory study pointed out that there are few journalists covering health (13 reporters in national media), and the lack of training is evident. This lack of preparation, coupled with the complex nature of the field and a heavy workload, seems to drive health reporters to rely strongly upon the health community and its communication experts. As a consequence, these journalists quite often use information that comes in the forms of 'information subsidies', that is, information packaged free for the media by those seeking publicity (Len-Ríos et al., 2009). These subsidies seem to be frequent in health information production because they help journalists to cope with lack of expertise and deadline pressures.

In health crisis scenarios, the balance between PR objectives and journalists' information principles becomes even more difficult, because the uncertainty of the environment increases public demand for urgent information. Within such circumstances, the role of media relations seems to be strength-





ened as health organisations try to pacify the population and the media look for fulfilling public expectations.

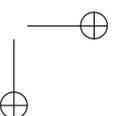
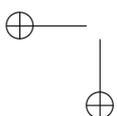
2.2 Public Health PR and Risk Communication

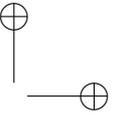
Within the health sector, public organisations have the assignment of protecting and enhancing public health. This mission has become quite difficult with the growing interdependence of economies and societies, as this phenomenon increases public health risks around the world. Cooperation and coordination have become very important to deal with such risks, as diseases, epidemics, pandemics, bio-terrorism, and other health threats.

International public health policies have been giving much attention in recent years to the possibility of a pandemic threat potentially resulting in massive numbers of deaths, many hospitalizations, and high costs. Many researchers have also been discussing the urgency of developing a systematic approach for risk communication in order to improve health information about public vulnerabilities (Moreira, 2007). It has been argued that risk communication frames public perceptions and that those perceptions have a direct impact on the way people deal with a threat.

Risk communication is, therefore, widely perceived as an important instrument to carry out public health policy. The 'risk communication' concept emerged in the 1970s to name all the activities of production and exchange of messages between interested parties about the nature, meaning, and control of a risk situation (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). It is different from the 'crisis communication' notion that includes the communication process that occurs during an emergency, because it encompasses those messages delivered before the emergency and with the purpose of avoiding that occurrence.

In the public health field, risk communication involves the delivery of public messages to alert the population to health threats and it follows well-known communication models applied in emergency situations, such as media relations programmes and public health campaigns. In general terms, these programmes and campaigns aim to promote changes in public behaviour in order to reduce health threats. These activities follow strategic communication planning rules by including the identification of the target-population, the preparation of persuasive messages, the definition of the media programme, and the evaluation process.





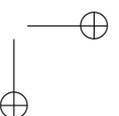
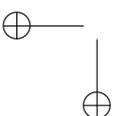
In a pandemic risk scenario, events seem to be largely dependent on the efficiency of a risk communication plan. Communication errors may lead to an inadequate protection of the population. According to some studies, communication efforts must educate, inform, motivate for protection, build trust in authorities, and avoid rumours. During a pandemic situation, communication activities can enlarge the audience's ability to act as an effective partner, promote contention, decrease opposition, and encourage recovery (Vaughan & Tinker, 2009).

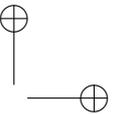
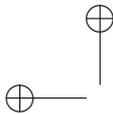
Therefore, when public health is in danger, authorities are advised to develop emergency plans that include risk communication programmes in order to decrease the threat's impact. The confidence in official authorities has been pointed out as essential to public perceptions assigned to risk messages and it is referred to by the specialized literature as a critical element to the success of a public health risk plan.

The urgency of risk management commonly leads authorities to mass media channels. Through the media, they can send urgent messages to the population and benefit from their high level of repetition and redundancy. As argued by several authors, an effective interaction with the media can be of critical importance in conveying consistent information and practical instructions to the community, as well as in developing confidence and trust in leaderships. Moreover, public health crises and risks are media events, with a strong influence in their agenda and responding to the mass media sense of accountability (Pratt & Bloom, 1997; Moreira, 2007; Vaughan & Tinker, 2009; Ferrante, 2010). For all those reasons, the pandemic communication literature emphasizes media relations role in a preventive plan (Chong, 2006).

Some studies also refer to the dangers involved in media health communication, because their messages are not free from errors and contradictions, due to the complexity of health themes, the crossing of news sources, and the confronting of opposing statements. In addition, in media space, news sources' credibility is a basic element for the success of risk communication. We refer to credibility toward both journalists and audiences. In pandemic cases, research reinforces the need of training regarding public health authorities due to the uncertainty of the communication context with the media (Fischhoff, 1995; Vaughan & Tinker, 2009).

As we can conclude, how public relations practitioners frame their health messages to the media may have a direct impact on the public health percep-





tions and decisions. This is why we consider this issue of such importance. Through an analysis of the Portuguese context in a crisis scenario, our research looked to assess the internationally reaffirmed hypothesis that the influence and power of public relations in the health field may be greater than in other areas.

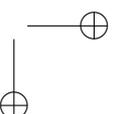
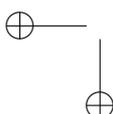
3. The *Influenza A* case in Portugal

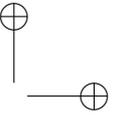
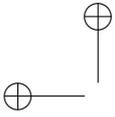
3.1 Research Questions, Hypothesis and Methodology

As we have already stated, this research, which is part of a wider project that focuses on the health news coverage in Portugal (Lopes et al., 2009a), aimed the study of *Influenza A* media coverage in the Portuguese press in 2009. The study looked particularly for answering the following questions: first, *what were the main sources of Influenza A news coverage in Portugal?* And second, *how were these sources visible through news contents?* Through the material gathered in the initial study, we looked for another dimension, a PR perspective that could answer a third question: *what was the role of media relations programmes on Influenza A news coverage?*

With these equations in mind, we looked for testing the hypothesis found in the literature review stating the strong influence and power of public relations in health news production. In order to access this assumption, we conceived that a ‘strong influence and power’ exists when public relations activities are the main information sources quoted by the news texts. More to the point, the study of news sources on health issues is a way of understanding health information and it has been a neglected area in Health Communication.

With the purpose of responding to these concerns, we analysed three national newspapers, chosen by their diverse periodicity and editorial criteria: *Expresso*, *Público*, and *Jornal de Notícias* (a weekly newspaper and two daily newspapers). The study involved the identification and characterization of news sources found in news texts. The analysis had two stages, the first consisted of data collection according to seven variables: *existence/absence of sources; number of quoted sources; geographic location; gender; identification; status; and medical expertise*. This task followed a quantitative methodology. The second stage included a qualitative analysis on three variables – *sources type; spokesperson/s; PR instruments* – and interviews.





The year 2009 was selected for the analysis because of the emergency criterion. In that year, *Público* published 260 news on *Influenza A*, *Jornal de Notícias* published 244, and *Expresso* published 51. The sum is a 655 news story corpus.

3.2 What were the sources on *Influenza A* and how did they work?

After this extensive analysis, we can state that almost every newspaper article dealing with *Influenza A* presented its information sources; in our study, more than three quarters of the sources were identified (Table 1). There is special care in pointing out names and people's professional status, documents' origins, mass media news, websites, or blogs. There are not many unidentified news sources and journalists almost never used so-called 'anonymous sources'. However, there is a small percentage of unidentified sources who represent an institution or body (the Ministry of Health, a hospital, or other).

In *Expresso* and *Público* nearly half of the articles use at least four sources. In *Jornal de Notícias*, journalists quote a smaller number of sources: more than half the texts (58.6%) have one or two news subsidiaries. Mostly of medium size, the news stories do not make room for a remarkable plurality of voices.

Actually, there are not many actors who comment on the information presented; a tendency to hear the same people should be noticed in this 'news sources economics'. Of the newspaper articles that, throughout 2009, addressed *Influenza A*, it can be said that the number of cited sources is substantial. However, this quantitative analysis must be balanced with a qualitative examination, since the articles repeat a significant part of its source base. With official news sources, for example, there is a trend to look for the Minister of Health, the Health Secretary of State, and the head or vice-head of the Portuguese National Board of Health. With specialized news sources, there is a narrow group of people from different professional groups who give opinions and information on the topic. There is a kind of a 'news source brotherhood', with a dominant speech on what should be said or thought about *Influenza A*.

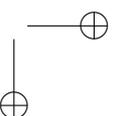
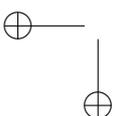


Table 1. Sources identification on *Influenza A* news

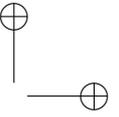
	<i>Expresso</i>	<i>Público</i>	<i>Jornal de Notícias</i>
Identified sources	77.2%	80.2%	77.1%
Unidentified sources	18.6%	19.4%	22.8%
Anonymous sources	4.2%	0.4%	0.1%

In the three analysed newspapers, journalists mainly look for partners within the health field to talk about *Influenza A*. These news sources have a diverse status (as official, specialized institutional, specialized non-institutional, common citizens as patient or family, etc.) and a diverse nature (human or document-based).

Table 2. News sources status on *Influenza A* texts

	News sources	<i>Expresso</i>	<i>Público</i>	<i>Jornal de Notícias</i>
Health field	Official sources	30.7%	35%	45.5%
	Specialized and institutional sources	22.3%	13.5%	11%
	Specialized and non-institutional sources	12%	7.1%	7.6%
	Documents	6%	10.1%	8.5%
Out of health field	Other sources	29%	33.3%	27.9%

Within the health field, official sources are the most valued, including Portuguese official entities (Table 2). At this level, the most common sources are politicians who work in the Ministry of Health and those in charge of



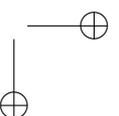
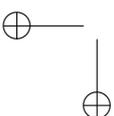
the Portuguese National Board of Health. These actors are almost always present in the journalistic work, whether in the form of direct quotations or indirectly as information remainders. Hospital administrators or health unit directors are not very active voices on *Influenza A* news. Press officers are not much mentioned either, although their action can be perceived in repeated press conferences or press releases aimed at journalists. Also pertinent is that the Ministry of Health felt the need to assign health specialists to speak to journalists about *Influenza A*. As such, these sources are qualified as officials. More than specialists, these sources speak on behalf of the government. Very often, this option was interpreted by Portuguese newspapers as an attempt to control public information.

The control of the situation went so far that all information was centralized in the daily evaluation briefing made by the Ministry of Health, which gave journalists the contacts of four experts able to respond to their doubts (Vera Lúcia Arreigoso in *Expresso*, 1 May 2009).

Regarding specialized sources, they are more valued when part of recognized organisations, such as associations, unions, research centres, public institutions, etc. In this context, journalists are inclined to emphasize leading position voices. Doctors, researchers, and pharmaceutical companies were the most wanted specialized sources on the three newspapers we have analysed.

Still within the specialized sources (institutional and non-institutional), the medical community retains the highest number of citations: 16.8% in *Expresso*, 10.3% in *Público*, 8.8% in *Jornal de Notícias*. However, those sources are not always presented as experts in specific medical fields, although the percentage of identification is substantial and close to the total sum of sources' quotes (15.6% in *Expresso*, 8.2% in *Público*, 6.6% in *Jornal de Notícias*). The most requested medical fields were similar in all three newspapers, in spite of some curious options: pulmonologists, gynecologist/obstetricians, paediatricians, and public health doctors.

Documents did not emerge as very significant sources in our study. Within this context, however, it should be noticed that in *Influenza A* news coverage the number of press conferences, press releases, briefings, or interviews quoted in the texts was higher than usual in health news (Lopes et al., 2009b). *Influenza A* risk raised strong media relations efforts by official sources in order to control the information. The main sources - the Ministry of Health, the



Portuguese National Board of Health, the Portuguese Medical Association, and their press officers - developed intense public relations programmes in order to influence news or react to media questions.

During the *Influenza A* crisis, my work was to respond to media phone calls from 9 am to 12 pm... Our chairman was always questioned about the subject and gave several interviews... the Ministry of Health and the Portuguese National Board of Health had several press officers and communication agencies working in media relations and other communication initiatives... (Portuguese Medical Association - Press Officer, interviewed December 2010)

It can also be stressed that both *Expresso* and *Jornal de Notícias* preferred official documents to specialized ones; this trend is once again divergent from previous studies on media coverage of other diseases (Lopes et al., 2009b). In *Público*, the percentage of official and specialized documents is closer. As a general evaluation, however, we can state that document-based sources are mainly official. More than explaining what a pandemic is, these sources looked to impose political actions on the disease.

Outside the health field, journalists did not use many other sources, although there are two groups that stand out: one connected to the business arena and another linked to the political arena. Both groups had a remarkable presence within the voices speaking on *Influenza A*. It should also be highlighted the value journalists gave to other media as news sources (newspapers, news agencies, TV channels, among others), which emphasizes the circular process of information referred by Pierre Bourdieu (1997).

If there are some groups with easy access to media channels, others seem to be part of a huge *spiral of silence*. Within the official sources, hospital administrators and health unit directors were, in 2009, not valued by newspapers. As for specialized sources, there is a noticeable devaluing of nurses in every newspaper we analysed. While general media were highly valuable news sources for journalists, specialized sites and blogs were not very helpful; they did not have enough strength to generate a quote. The same happened with press officers within the health field; they are not quoted very often, but their presence is perceived in the preparation of events promoting *Influenza A* prevention (we refer to press conferences, seminars, vaccination campaigns, etc.).

Nevertheless, among these silent voices there is one worth emphasizing: the patient or the common citizen who is or might be carrying the H1N1 virus. Daily newspapers did not pay them much attention. In *Público*, this group is represented in 4.4% of stories and in 5.3% of stories in *Jornal de Notícias*. In *Expresso*, that percentage grows to 12.7% because this newspaper has a higher number of news reports and opens up space for hearing other news sources, especially those more testimonial-oriented. However, it is expected that a newspaper look up to common citizens, who should be at the heart of its information goals.

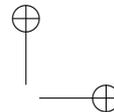
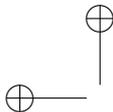
Regarding news source geography (table 3), all the analysed newspapers stand out in their preference for national actors, especially those who represent the country (as members of the government or public organisation administrators). This happens even when the news angle is located abroad. When the news sources are from a particular place in the country and speak with a strict connection to that place, the news priority seems to be given to the capital, Lisbon. This happens even when the main newsroom is located in the north of the country, as with *Jornal de Notícias*.

Table 3. News sources geography in Influenza A texts

	<i>Expresso</i>	<i>Público</i>	<i>Jornal de Notícias</i>
National	80.7%	67.2%	73.2%
International	19.3%	32.8%	26.8%

In the international panorama, the trend is the same: to privilege statements with a global level, regardless of their geographic location at the moment (for instance, people in charge of international institutions, like the WHO). When the news sources reveal a strict bond to a certain geographic place, the European continent has the highest number of voices in the Portuguese newspapers that were analysed.

In sum, our findings suggest that: (a) the official sources were the dominant information suppliers on *Influenza A* news coverage in Portugal; (b) these official sources were mainly political representatives and official authorities on health issues; (c) the medical sources quoted in the news were largely consultants suggested by health authorities; (d) the sources were generally located in the capital, Lisbon; and (e) those national representatives looked for influ-



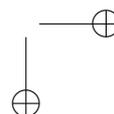
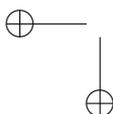
encing media agenda through the intense use of public relations techniques, such as press releases, press conferences, interviews or regular briefings.

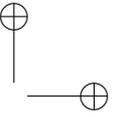
4. *Influenza A*: a pandemic drawn by the media and controlled by official sources

This analysis was an extensive media study, looking to produce a deeper reading on the broad *Influenza A* media coverage in Portugal. On average, throughout 2009, the national press published one story every day on the topic, creating an impressive ‘agenda-setting’ effect (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). This would guide the public opinion toward what was worth thinking and debating. Newspapers dictated what to think, how to think, and how much importance this disease should be given, all through the suggestion of themes, categories, and hierarchies.

With an oversized media coverage, the need to organise information dissemination became manifest. Since the beginning, the WHO at an international level and the different state governments at a national level showed a great concern in managing risk communication. They chose opposite strategies: the alarming scenario was favoured by the WHO (‘WHO alerts to the Influenza A virus’, *Jornal de Notícias*, 26 April 2009; ‘The world should be prepared to face the worst scenery, warns the WHO’, *Público*, 29 April 2009); and Portuguese authorities preferred to call on serenity (‘The first Portuguese case: Influenza A was confirmed with serenity’, *Jornal de Notícias*, 5 May 2009; ‘Portugal is ‘perfectly ready’ to face a new pandemic’, *Público*, 14 June 2009).

Both organisations soon understood that it was essential for each of them to manage the communication channels with journalists as a strategy to strengthen the official sources’ interpretation of reality and control the pandemic. The regular presence of these sources in Portuguese newspapers reinforced the dominant vision, pushing journalists back to mere messengers in the official sources communication plans. However, time has shown us that this excessive information control by official sources, combined with the passive attitude of the media, was not the best attitude for society. Neither did the WHO’s tragic predictions happen, nor did the Portuguese political and health authorities’ statements of apparent normality protect the population from a generalized fear:





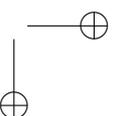
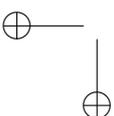
The number of calls to 'Saúde24' [the Influenza A official information call center] increases especially after the press conferences within which the Minister of Health makes a state of play on the disease's evolution in Portugal. These moments are almost always broadcasted live by TV channels (Alexandra Campos, *Público*, 10 July 2009).

Along with political and public health authorities, doctors have also gained the right to speak or give journalistic opinion, either because they were chosen by the Ministry of Health to explain to journalists what was supposedly happening (this was somehow criticized by the media), or because they had management positions in certain organisations or bodies and were included in the 'organised sources' group. These specialized sources were important to the journalistic texts that wanted to explain the pandemic. They were understood as reliable because of their specialized knowledge, even when they were professionals suggested by official sources. However, this study shows that journalists did not much value these sources to tell their stories on *Influenza A*.

In summary, our study reinforced the theory on the media and the official sources' role in health risk communication processes. Here are some of the main ideas presented by the scientific literature on Health Communication that have been strengthened by the *Influenza A* study: (1) media are key communication channels in public health risk situations; (2) health journalism, mainly the type produced in a risk environment, shows a great dependency on official and specialized sources for decoding requirements; (3) official sources in the health field show a high degree of professionalization in PR and risk communication; and (4) citizens are the weakest link in health risk situations because they are at the mercy of this power game between journalists and official sources.

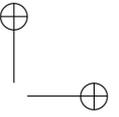
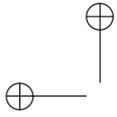
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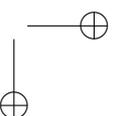
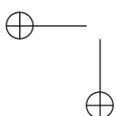
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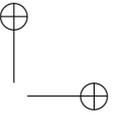
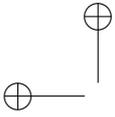
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The bidirectional communication and interaction between Journalist and Press Officer - A Case Study: Logica

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Abstract: The maintenance of efficient media relationships is a very important component of public relations activity, regarding the communication of organizations with specialized publics. The question of cooperation or conflict between press officers and journalists continues to raise controversial debates amongst professionals and academics in the area, requiring a strict delimitation of the possible areas of convergence or divergence of the two professions. Bidirectional communication, which involves the functioning of an organization as an open system making communication flow in both directions (inside and outside the organization) is the basis of this approach to study the relationship between the journalist and the press officer by analyzing the case of Logica – a multinational company provider of business services and technology.

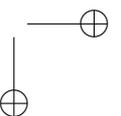
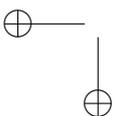
Keywords: Communication, bidirectional, public relations, press officer, journalist.

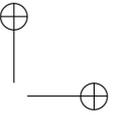
Introduction

The maintenance of efficient media relationships is assuming an increasingly prominent role in the current dynamics of communication, with public relations professionals, particularly press officers, committed to being seen as a helpful ‘assistant in obtaining information’ (Lampreia, 1999:67). The increasingly obvious presence of media in society arises, in a way, to justify the growing interest that communication has been acquiring, converting communication itself to an ‘ethical imperative’ (Perales, 1999:25-28). Understanding the possibility of forming a mixed identity between journalism and public relations in an environment of openness, cooperation, and respect for both professions is a key issue in the investigation of this subject. This requires an analysis of public relations activities that reflects on the state of the art of the discipline and the profession, and, in turn, places it within an organisational context that delimits its operating areas (Gonçalves, 2010).

According to Jesús Timóteo Alvarez (2006:22), communication is the ‘ba-

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges. . . , pp. 81-100.



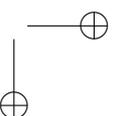
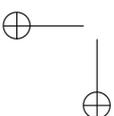


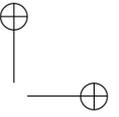
sic instrument for management of companies and organizations'. Considering the role that the media have in contemporary societies, it is essential to position the press offices in a communication area that deals with uncontrolled messages, in order to benefit from mass media credibility. From the bidirectional communication perspective, the press officer is aware of the benefits of interacting with a 'free and independent media', assimilating the concept of 'negotiated news', which understands journalists as neutral intermediaries between the organisation and the public. On the other side, the journalist could benefit from easier access to information, enhanced speed of interaction and access to credible sources, while enjoying 'free and non-copyright' contents (Bailey, 2009:300-302). If the responsibilities and characteristics of each profession are properly defined and respected, it will be easy to identify areas of cooperation between journalist and press officer. Of undoubted importance is the existence of good professionals on both sides who have a solid education and knowledge of their professions and an ethical attitude (Heath, 2001).

These considerations are particularly relevant due to the visible development of information and communication technologies. Journalists and public relations professionals, including press officers, have to adapt to these changes, and adjust to new contexts of online communication that also influence organisational communication, leading to a necessary openness and transparency in business.

Public Relations in an Organisational Context

It is quite common to find examples of activities practiced since antiquity in the public relations literature. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2001:200) argue that communication with the aim of influencing actions and viewpoints existed in the earliest civilisations. Bernays (1952:11-17), for example, devotes a chapter to contending that the three principles of the activity—to inform, persuade, and build relationships—are as old as society. James Grunig and Todd Hunt developed four models of public relations to characterise its history in the United States and establish a set of common forms of contemporary practice: the *propaganda/press agency* model, whose premise is the dissemination of information and the promotion of an organisation by publishing favourable stories in the press; the *public information model*, which aims to spread information, but not necessarily with persuasive intent, with the truth

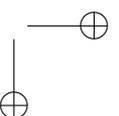
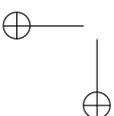


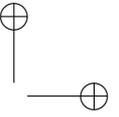


and objectivity of the key messages being fundamental; the *two-way asymmetrical model*, already concerned with the attitudes and behaviours of the public in order to persuade them; and the *two-way symmetrical model* practiced with the aim of bringing ‘symbiotic changes in ideas, attitudes and behaviors to the organization and its public’ (Grunig and Hunt, 2000:11-12).

The concept of public relations is the subject of many definitions from professionals and academics. Grunig and Hunt (2000:52) stated that it seems impossible to create a single definition of the activity due to the lack of clarity regarding the role played by this area in organisations. Furthermore, the proliferation of parallel terms and other distinct activities causes noise and confusion regarding the essence of the study area and the profession (Gonçalves, 2010:10). The publication of Grunig and Hunt’s 1984 text *Managing Public Relations*, broadened public relations’ scope to include a strategic role within organisations that managed its relationship with its stakeholders, based on a two-way communication process that aims to balance the interests of both parties. The definitions of public relations has given rise to debates in academia and it is possible to distinguish between two perspectives that enrich the theoretical discussion in this area. The American systemic perspective, a ‘positive and institutionalized vision’ of public relations, is viewed by some authors as ‘naive’. The European perspective, with a ‘more negative view of the profession’, emphasises its propaganda role, presenting a more ‘reflective and sociological’ vision (Gonçalves, 2010:14-15).

It is also important to note that the transformation of the global context of the media brings new considerations on ethics for journalists and public relations professionals (Washbourne, 2009:78). Assuming that every act of communication is persuasive (and given the frequent, often clichéd criticism of the manipulative nature of the profession), public relations acquires a higher responsibility in determining ethical standards. The profession is ruled by specific ethical codes that have attempted to substantiate the activity and define their core values. Modern organisations exist in a highly competitive environment that is constantly changing, requiring an increasingly balanced adaptation to their surroundings and a strong concern about the systematic management of relations with its stakeholders and internal and external publics. Following the systematisation proposed by Susana de Carvalho (2007:203), the strategic areas of public relations in an organisational context are ‘the image, reputation and organisational identity, the public and social re-



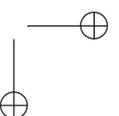
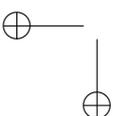


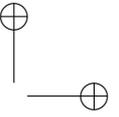
sponsibility'. From the standpoint of the author, public relations must define what an organisation is vis-à-vis all the elements of its identity, its relationship with others, and its values. Public relations can also present in a set of operational areas: media relations, community placement, corporate advertising, specialised public relations (financial, crisis, government, public affairs, lobbying and environmental), and internal communication. Media relations, as the basis of the practice of public relations activity, are frequently the central theme of study. The rise of a more mediated world lends a higher visibility to the relationship with the media, leading to many organisations reducing activity to this area.

Media Relations - Cooperation or Conflict

The influence of the media in spreading and reinforcing established and institutionalised values is accepted more or less consensually and should be highlighted. The relationship of events and news to the social reality lies, according to Miguel Rodrigo Alsina (1996:29), in the 'notion of constructing reality, as a production of meaning through productive practice and routines that organise journalistic activities'. Journalism thus emerges as a method of construction and interpretation of social reality because it has the power to select the more 'interesting' events, and because it translates and interprets the selected news by noting what aspects in the news itself are more and less relevant; finally, it has ways to *place* the information compiled so that this information can be understood in a certain context, explained and, in case of editorials and opinion articles, criticised (Gomis, 1991:36-38). In this manner, the journalist takes on 'a renewed and decisive role in transmitting knowledge to citizens and executes routines to produce everyday knowledge of the reality'. This professional is not only a 'source that communicates', but someone who 'produces and reproduces knowledge to citizens' (Brandão, 2008:29).

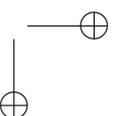
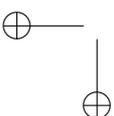
The *relationship between the journalist and the source may not always be harmonious but depends* on the degree of mutual involvement that can be complete independence, agreement, or subjugation, in which case the source has the power to make the news. The journalist in his role as *gatekeeper* is thus part of a broader system of 'social relations and regulatory controls'. It is expected that in this relationship, professional values prevail, not merely the maintenance of a good relationship with the source (Alsina, 1996:115-118).

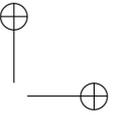




Also worth mentioning is that the social responsibility of media is related to the real awareness of its importance, not only in educating, but also in the ‘interpretation and production of responsible public opinion’, providing social significance and providing ways of contextualizing the ‘order and intelligibility of the world’, while simultaneously facilitating the formation of an appropriate ‘group of production relations in our society’ (Bailey, 2009:301-302). Communicating with the press is ‘a central area of corporate communication’. From the standpoint of the organisation, it acquires added relevance, since media coverage can generate awareness and simultaneously may influence other public determinants such as ‘investors, customers and employees’ (Cornelissen, 2008:177).

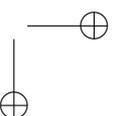
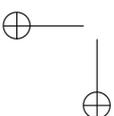
The media helps the public to form opinions and sometimes to make decisions. This contributes to an increased need for organisations to communicate with the media in an appropriate, credible, and effective way by requiring continuous effort and commitment from press officers (Tench and Yeomans, 2006:310-331). Most of the abuse that harms the relationship between press officers and journalists comes from the use of unidirectional models, which do not include the requirements and concerns of professional cooperation and information relevance. Two-way communication in interactions between journalists and press officers consists above all in ‘give and take’ (Grunig and Hunt, 2000:342-345). Professionals who understand the concept of news value and use the bidirectional communication model establish clear objectives about what they intend to convey to the media, suggesting the information in a way that is actually useful to them and thus acceptable to the journalist. Nevertheless, conflicts can still arise from the use of a two-way asymmetrical model since press officers often want to ‘control the media coverage of the organisation by limiting it to its objectives of public relations’. Journalists, in turn, seek open access to information of a given organisation. Professionals who use symmetric models should concern themselves less with the control of information and instead facilitate access to the organisation and assist journalists in their coverage, believing that a frank and open attitude will result in a more ‘accurate and less biased’ coverage. The communication professional in the role of press officer will act as an arbiter between the organisation’s management and the journalist, assuming the role of adviser to the organisation and reminding them of the obligation to respond appropriately and *truthfully* to the media.

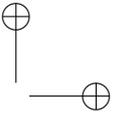




With a similar argument, Xifra (2005:337-347) defends the two-way symmetrical model, noting how it can ease the cooperation with the press in order to create professional synergies. The relationship between press officers and journalists has often been described as adversarial. Journalists often have a negative view of communication professionals, partly because they feel there is a clear division of their interests. According to journalists, communication professionals think more about the needs of the organisations and less about the information needs of media and in public affairs. On the other side, press officers usually have a more positive perspective on the relation with journalists, realizing they have their own agenda and that they could interpret the issues related to an organisation differently. However, both are aware that they work in 'interdependent' professional areas: 'journalists need and often use the information made available by press officers and, in turn, press officers and the organizations they represent need the media to generate coverage and reach important stakeholders' (Cornelissen, 2008:182).

Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2001:449-452) stress that the relationship between journalists and press officers, while being nominally a relationship with mutual benefit, is in essence 'a relationship of adversaries', as the professionals belong to different business areas and usually do not share the same communication goals. According to the authors, to be effective in their role as communication intermediaries, press officers must enjoy the confidence of both the organisation and the journalists. This is certainly not an easy job, since organisations tend to distrust the media, believing they only look for sensational or negative aspects to report and sometimes distort the information provided. Journalists, in turn, believe that organisations never tell the whole truth and that often they obscure relevant information. Thus, the 'negative feelings, sometimes hostile' among these professionals are often subject of public debate. However, press officers and journalists act on the basis of a 'relationship of dependency and mutual benefit, sometimes as adversaries and others as partners cooperating for the interest of both'. These are reflected in a 'relationship of dynamic tension' between these professionals that is inherent to the 'journalistic culture'; indeed, sometimes neither the organisations nor the journalists understand the role of the public relations professional in establishing and maintaining relationships with media. Nonetheless, it is possible, according to the authors, to establish an interdependent relationship and

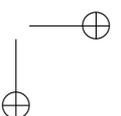
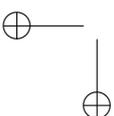


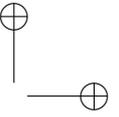
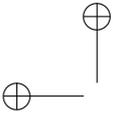


cooperation that contributes to the good functioning of information systems and serves the public interest.

However, watching the worst practices of this interaction between journalist and press officer, it seems at times ubiquitous that not all journalists believe in what is communicated to them about organisations. This goes beyond the ‘healthy skepticism’ that should be part of journalism, to fall into what Elliott and Koper (2002:22-29) characterise as ‘a regrettable loss of trust and integrity’ that compromises the efficient relationship between a press officer and a journalist. Moreover, one cannot understand and transform the field of media into a ‘battlefield of political survival and the desire to safeguard individual reputations’. Press officers are also involved in a complex network to sometimes ‘defend the indefensible and promote the despicable’, picked up by journalists who are hungry for more current or sensationalistic news than the competitor.

Public relations professionals today have ‘an opportunity that their predecessors did not. The current constant exchange of information puts them in direct contact with those with whom they need to build and maintain relationships’. Currently, we are witnessing a strengthening of social relationships on a global scale, giving rise to the oft-cited ‘globalization’ (Giddens, 2002:45). The information technology (IT) revolution has brought obvious social changes that lead, in turn, to new communicative contexts. New forms of relationship and interdependence between global economies, markets, states, and society emerge. According to Cutlip et al. (2001:402-406), the ‘digital world has changed the way we communicate within and between organisations and their diverse audiences’. That is, new technologies are changing the way we ‘produce, distribute, store and display the information’. It is no longer possible to ignore the emergence of digital technologies, driven by personal web pages that have brought a shift in the press and media in general. As Gustavo Cardoso (2006:188-189) defends, the network contemporary societies are based on is a ‘decentralized and flexible model’, leading to an active, innovative, and open process that tends to equilibrium. The new ‘communication paradigm’, arising from the network of communication, will in turn require profound changes in the media in general and in the way they relate to the audience. In summary, both journalists and public relations professionals will have to adapt to these changes, adjusting to new contexts of online communi-





cation that also influence organisational communication, leading necessarily to greater openness and corporate transparency.

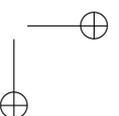
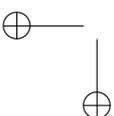
Case Study: Logica and its interaction with the media

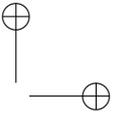
Company Description - Object of the Study

Logica is a company that showed willingness to cooperate in developing a case study based on its relationship with the Portuguese media during a certain period of time. For more than 40 years, Logica has been a leading provider of IT and management services, with about 40,000 employees worldwide. The company provides services in management consulting, systems integration, and outsourcing of processes and IT to customers worldwide. Logica is listed on stock exchanges in London and Amsterdam; in Portugal, it is a leading technology company, managing the Iberian business area and employing over 1,000 employees with offices in Lisbon (Iberian headquarters), Porto, Braga, and Madrid.

Methodological Strategy

This study aimed to determine the role of bidirectional communication, as presented by Grunig and Hunt (2000:11-12), suggesting that excellence in public relations activity occurs when the communication program of an organisation can *harmonise* the expectations of audiences with the goals of the organisation. The main objective of the study was to identify synergies between the communication objectives and initiatives of Logica and the results achieved in terms of news content. For this, we analysed the press releases sent by Logica's media consultancy and the news published between 1 January and 30 June of 2009. Since Logica has a very specific core business with complex messages (not normally generating much news), the choice of analysis was based on a limited time period and not on a selection of the news distributed via different types of media: online, TV, radio, and print media (newspapers, weeklies, and regional). The thematic analysis of content was used to break down the press releases sent and the news published by identifying units/variables of analysis for a classification of phenomena. Because doing a thematic analysis consists in discovering the 'meaning units' that make up the communication and whose 'presence or frequency of appearance can





mean something to the chosen analytical object' (Bardin, 1977:105), we first identified the key messages that Logica wished to convey by sending press releases. Second, a thematic analysis of the news was structured to identify certain core ideas grouped by categories and variables, allowing a comparison between communication objectives/key messages and the news content published in this period.

The hypothesis presented in this research is *the relationship and interaction between press officers of Logica and journalists manifests itself in the context of the assumptions of two-way communication*. The categorisation of data from the content analysis took the form of *quantitative* and *qualitative* assessment. Thus, we analysed a series of variables and indicators considered relevant for further observation of the global news spectrum, with the quantitative analysis based on a 'frequency of appearance of certain elements in the message' and the qualitative analysis based on 'non-frequency indicators that allow inferences' (Bardin, 1997:114).¹

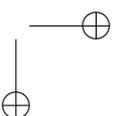
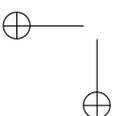
In this context, the variables of content analysis, that is, *quantitative*, used for this study are

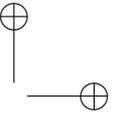
- Variable 1 – *News* – This variable examines the number of direct news stories that refer to the organisation published between 1 January and 30 June 2009.
- Variable 2 – *Scope* – This variable examines the number of news stories published in the context of the communication medium (online media, television, media newspapers, radio, regional, weeklies).

The variables and indicators of content analysis, that is, *qualitative*, used in this study were

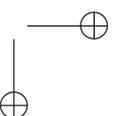
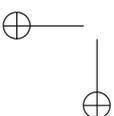
- Variable 1 – *Title* – This variable checks if the news published refers the organisation's name in the title. It does not, however, apply to the television and radio news.

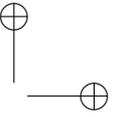
¹ Investigations done by Nuno Goulart Brandão of typical Portuguese television news broadcasts in 2003, competing at 8pm, were the methodological support of this work, adapted here to the press regarding the categorisation of data identified (Brandão, 2006:151; Brandão, 2010).



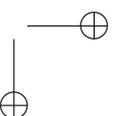
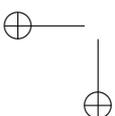


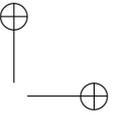
- Variable 2 – *Theme* – This variable examines what are the key messages conveyed in the news (for comparison with those defined as relevant to the organisation for each topic or subject). After analysing the various topics and business areas of the organisation, the following thematic categories were considered the most pertinent:
 - *Protocols*: news about the signing of protocols between Logica and other institutions;
 - *Programs for business innovation*: news related to the programs developed or supported by Logica and related with innovation in the market of IT;
 - *Human Resources*: news related to global initiatives that Logica created to encourage employee participation in recreational programs and initiatives, as well as new hires, promotions and recruitment of staff;
 - *Outsourcing*: news that refers to this area of business of the organisation as well as new contracts, partnerships and promotions within the senior management of this area;
 - *Transport*: news related to this area of business, new contracts and/or partnerships, projects for SAP customers and new pilot projects for mobility;
 - *New challenges in the energy sector*: news related to information disclosure referring to the energy sector, which is entering a period of profound changes, with major implications for how consumers and businesses meet their energy needs;
 - *Social Responsibility and Sponsorship*: news that refers to social responsibility initiatives of the organisation and sponsorship of events/entities;
 - *Results Presentation*: news from the presentation of results of the organisation;
 - *Telecommunications*: news related to topics such as new satellite navigation systems, application maintenance, new applications, new catalogues of products and services, global location of infrastructure, events, and partnerships in this business area;





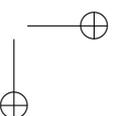
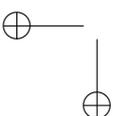
- *Financial services and public administration*: the news regarding the development of technologies and solutions for this sector or this area of business, partnerships and implementation of new contracts;
 - *Rebranding*: news related to changing the image of brand, slogan, and design characteristics;
 - *Other Issues*: news that does not fall into the previous categories.
- Variable 3 – *Key Messages* – This variable examines, firstly, the key messages that are conveyed in the news by theme category. Secondly, it analyses the number of times they are repeated in the theme category in question to allow us to understand which key messages were considered by the media as the most important, justifying their repetition in the news. Thirdly, it provides a comparison between the messages defined as relevant to the organisation for each topic or subject and the key messages detected on the news for each theme category.
 - Variable 4 – *Valencia* – This variable has only three possible *outcomes* and *determines* if the news contains a neutral, positive or negative sense, corresponding to *so-called* ‘neutral news’, ‘good news’, or ‘bad news’.
 - Variable 5 – *Origin of the news* – This determines if the news is the result of sending a press release or other direct contact with the journalist (promotion of interviews, reports suggestion about certain subject or event, as well as other initiatives).
 - Variable 6 – *Orientation of Contents* – This variable must consider whether the news content published is very similar or *the same as* the contents of the press release. There are only three possibilities – identical, similar, and different. The aim is to find out to what extent the journalist looks for more information and then *reformulates* the information received or if he/she just publishes the content as it was made available by the press officer.
 - Variable 7 – *Size* – This variable refers to the space the news occupies in the communication *medium*. In the case of the press, the chances of response will be one page, two pages or more, half a page, a quarter of a page, a third of a page and a brief (a very brief reference less than a

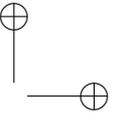




one-third of a page). In the case of online media, the computer screen that is used to access the site under review will be treated as a newspaper page with the other measures of size adapted to the medium in question, according to this criterion. In the case of television and radio news, they will be analysed in their temporal durations of the pieces.

- Variable 8 – *Positioning* – This variable refers to the location of the news in the communication medium and identifies the position of the news (odd or even page) in the case of the press, and the route (easy access) to reach the news, for online media, whether in the Home Page or on a secondary connection (in this case the amount of clicks needed to reach the news will be analysed) in a framework that will allow understanding the relevance attributed to the news by the communication medium in question. In the case of television and radio news, we examine whether the news is in the beginning, middle, or end of the newscast or program in question.
- Variable 9 – *Geographical Treatment* – This variable allows the identification of news predominant on a national level and international level. The creation of this variable in this study serves to determine if the media gives more attention to the news related exclusively to Portugal, or instead places it on equal footing with international news.
- Variable 10 – *Nature* – This variable will be analysed in two sub-variables: hard and soft. The sub-variable ‘hard’, or serious news, is news whose relevance absolutely justifies it being published that day if it is not published that day, it will become outdated with respect to current news’; this variable represents the daily news, current affairs. In the present study this means that there are reasons for the news to be published that day. The sub-variable ‘soft’, or light news, is timeless news, news whose relevance does not justify it to be published that day. Sometimes it is news that can be published at any time.
- Variable 11 – *Actors of News* – This variable aims to determine who the actors in the news are, that is the individuals whose testimonies are collected based on their duties. In the present study, this is registered based on their roles in the organisation, for example, heads of business



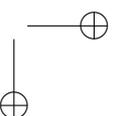
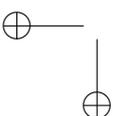


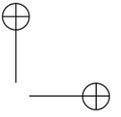
units, CEO (Chief Executive Officer) or other national or international roles in the organisation. Representatives of institutions or associations relevant to the sector will also be considered.

Results of the Case Study - Logica

The data obtained shows us that there is a correspondence between what Logica set as a priority to transmit to and through the media and what has been published. However, it is important to reflect on the data, based on the premise that Logica is embedded in a highly technical and specialised sector which is also related to the number of news items detected in the online communication media, 46%; in specialised media, 24%; and in daily newspapers, 16%. These results mirrored the contribution of the Web to the immediacy and speed with which information was circulated, but also the lack of spectacular issues inherent in this sector. The high percentage of news published in specialised media, with further expertise on the specificities of the sector, reinforces this point. The overall number of news items found in the Portuguese media (107 in the first half of 2009, effectively not a very large spectrum of global news), presented particular characteristics beneficial to the organisation, considering the communication objectives set and the variables analysed. In particular, the fact that 52% of the news items refer to Logica in the title reflects the importance that the media attributed to the organisation as the subject of the news. Of the 11 thematic categories defined in the methodology for analysis, news published in 8 were posted. This means that most of the issues relevant to the organisation during the study period generated news that corresponded almost entirely to the key messages that the press officers of Logica had set as priorities to transmit to the media. One of the central variables, to determine if what the organisation wished to convey was reflected in the news, was precisely the variable key messages.

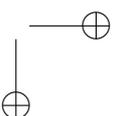
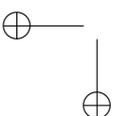
If the two-way communication process aimed at balancing the interests of both parties, and if, on the one hand, Logica was able to communicate its central messages and, on the other, the reporters found these messages interesting enough to be transformed into news, we can highlight that there was a concern about the balance of interests inherent in bidirectional communication. The key messages analysed in the news not only corresponded in most of the category themes to the ones the organisation wanted to communicate, but were

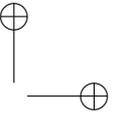
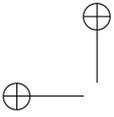




also repeated in several news releases, allowing an understanding that certain issues concerning the organisation effectively had more interest to the media than others. In this particular case, issues related to Portugal that focused on the organisation's involvement with local partners were given preference, along with the themes like 'new challenges in the energy sector' and 'human resources', with the highest number of equivalent key messages. Also worth mentioning is the interference of the political agenda with the media agenda to strengthen, in this case, the organisation's messages, as was observable in the analysis of the thematic category 'new challenges in the energy sector'. This equivalence showed that the press officer detected the 'news value' in the various categories, that is, defining the central ideas to transmit, helping the journalist to fulfil their role in determining what is or is not, news. That is, if the 'news values' are forms with which to quickly, but in an organised and coherent way, handle the selection and repetition of some events that will be transformed into news, as Mauro Wolf defends (2001:196), and if this study confirms a correspondence between what was defined by press officers as relevant to generate news and what was actually published by the journalist, then it is evident that concern was shown with regard to the requirements of the relevant information and cooperation between the two fields of activity under study.

For this observation, the *valence* variable also contributed, since 79% of the news examined referred to the organisation and its communication initiatives in a positive way; no news with negative content was detected. It is also interesting to note the high number of news items that occupied a page in the respective communication medium where they were published, visible in the analysis of the variable *size*, thereby reinforcing the importance that journalists attributed to the subjects. For example, odd pages lead positioning in printed news. The fact that most of the news analysed is the result of press releases sent and the realisation of an event, visible in the analysis of the variable *news origin*, shows us, on the one hand, that the press office of the organisation bets predominantly in the sending of press releases and the organisation of events with potential to attract the media. On the other hand, it shows us that the organisation does not give the same attention to other types of communication initiatives, a factor that, according to Grunig and Hunt (2000:345), does not facilitate the application of a bidirectional symmetrical model. However, as Nuno Brandão (2006:100) highlighted, the 'race to information' in a





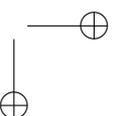
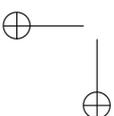
‘mercantile perspective of the news’ less often makes investigative journalism a reality. In this study we see precisely that not only that most of the news was the result of sending out press releases, but also that the news content itself resembled them, as seen in the analysis of the variable *orientation content*.

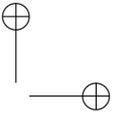
Also confirming the frequent use by the media of the information contained in press releases sent by the press officers is the fact that much of the news did not reflect declarations of the CEO or communicate statements in the first person of other individualities of the company. This was noted in the analysis of the variable *actors of news*, which also refers to the importance attributed by the media to statements of the Portuguese Prime Minister at an event sponsored by the organisation (Inauguration of a Competence Center in Portugal) supporting the organisation’s messages in a crossover of interests between private and political agendas.

Final Reflections

The knowledge of the true role of public relations in organisations rejects the frequent reduction of this activity to the practice of persuasion or manipulation of public opinion (Gonçalves, 2005:407). This reductive view is particularly impregnated in contradictions that lead to the frequent question of cooperation or conflict between journalists and press officers. If the press officer intends to promote the reputation of an organisation, its services or products, similarly, the journalist also has to serve editorial and informative interests that also seek profit and competitive advantages. Thus, there are a number of interests, objectives, and expectations to manage and balance in this relationship; on the side of the organisation, the real role of press officer is to assist journalists in developing their work. This function is consistent with the activity of public relations ‘activity that uses dialog par excellence in the management of conflicts that may arise with the various groups with whom the organisation interacts as open system’ (Soares, 2005:515).

The four models that, according to Grunig and Hunt, allow the study of the historical development of public relations, were the basis of this approach to the management of the relationship between press officers and journalists, with special focus on the models involving bidirectional communication. As for one-way communication models, which involve the practice of public relations according to a closed system, they serve to maintain the status quo

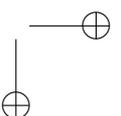
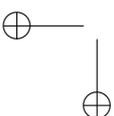


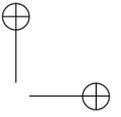
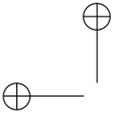


of an organisation, looking for changes in the environment that will uniquely favour it. The ideal model of public relations that we tried to apply to the area of media relations assumes that the organisation functions as an open system, allowing communication to flow both ways, that is, inside and outside the organisation.

As was observed, bidirectional communication is present in the interaction between the journalist and the press officer regarding the organisation studied. There was thus an obvious concern with the establishment of clear objectives about the information that was intended to be transmitted to the media, with an understanding of the concept of ‘news value’ and the suggestion of useful information apt for publication, principles that professionals who use the two-way communication model outlined by Grunig and Hunt (2000:342-345) must follow in dealing with the press. The requirements and concerns of professional cooperation and informative relevance considered fundamental by these authors were confirmed.

Regarding the establishment of the essence of bidirectionality found in this study, we must look to the distinction between the ‘two-way asymmetrical model’ and the ‘two-way symmetrical model’ systematised by Grunig and Hunt. The authors state that press officers who use the symmetric models should worry less about the control of information, facilitating access to the organisation and assisting journalists in their coverage. In this case, knowledge and research of the public—media—serves to determine their real needs instead of just communicating the messages of the organisation through the publication of news, an intention inherent to asymmetrical models. This guideline allows delineating the reality found in this investigation, to the extent that a combination of the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models was observed. Although communication flows as an open system in a bidirectional dimension with planning and evaluation of the interaction with journalists, it is still not practiced on the basis of symmetry that presupposes a communication relationship involving a balanced sharing of interests bringing transmitter and receiver into accord. That is, the analysis Logica’s communication initiatives showed an evident concern in defining key messages in abundance and sending them in the form of press releases, without a more meticulous job to verify the real needs of the journalists. For their part, journalists simply stuck to publishing news with content quite similar to the press



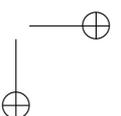
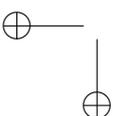


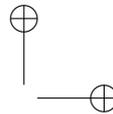
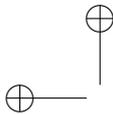
releases sent, avoiding the creation of a more balanced dynamic interaction and, above all, more productive for both parties.

It must however be stated that, in terms of media relations, the company under study, not yet being exemplary in many aspects, still showed obvious care to maintain an honest and open attitude in order to reach a mutual understanding. According to the results of this study, the conflict often associated with the interaction between the press officer and the journalist is not an inescapable reality and there is a tendency for less rigid boundaries on the interaction of the professions. This does not mean, however, that there is no need to delineate the fields of action of these two areas of communication. When we speak here of the possibility of forming a professional mixed identity, we talk about the openness, cooperation and respect for both professions required for a two-way communication with gains for both parties, not forgetting the accuracy indispensable in delimiting the two areas. This accuracy is essential, considering the role that the media play in modern societies, as an area of union of the various social fields, with increasing responsibilities in the formation or deformation of the thinking and attitudes of citizens.

The press officer, in turn, must be aware of this role, seeking to contribute to the movement of credible information, providing more than a mere description of a reality favourable to the emitters they represent. The press officer has the additional function to make these organisations aware of the benefits of interacting with a free and independent press. More important than transmitting messages at any cost and transforming events into news that expires in a relatively short time is for organisations to adopt attitudes and behaviours that will enable establishing a serious relationship and partnership with the media in the medium to longterm. In reality, both parties know their own interests and objectives, which in most cases, as noted here, are not opposites, and may often even coincide.

This study also allowed the understanding that the press officer contributes more effectively to the organisation's relationship with the media, assisting journalists in their integral coverage and not just 'bombarding' them with information in the hope that news can be generated. Note also that, as Cutlip et al. argued (2001:402-406), the Intranet and Internet enable bidirectional communication in a way never seen before. Following this line of thought, Gustavo Cardoso (2006:188-189) states that the new 'paradigm of communication', resulting from the communication network, generates

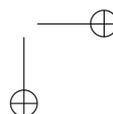
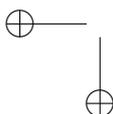


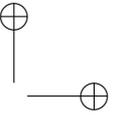
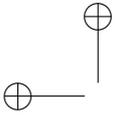


an active, innovative, and open social process of communication that tends to equilibrium. These assumptions corroborate the purpose of this study; more precisely, they prove that the bidirectional communication applied to the relationship and interaction with the media is possible and increasingly necessary, given that the new paradigms of communication point to greater audience interactivity, greater immediacy, and convergence among media, expanding the public space and stimulating discussions.

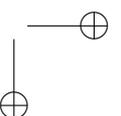
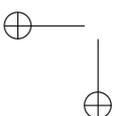
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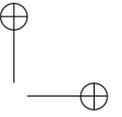
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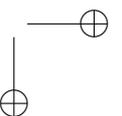
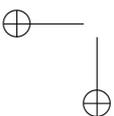


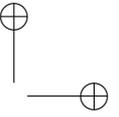
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Contribution of the New Information Technologies to the Efficacy of Communication in Crisis Situations - Their Incidence in Small and Medium-sized Companies in the North of Portugal Euro-Region - Galicia

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Abstract: Communication based on new technologies is a very current topic. This article reviews some projects and is centred on the contribution of new information technologies to communication in crisis situations in small and medium-sized companies in the North of Portugal, Galicia Euro-Region, after doctoral research by the author. The results based on a sample of 173 companies that responded to an online questionnaire showed that the contribution is statistically significant.

Keywords: Technologies, Communication, Crisis, Internet, Companies.

Introduction

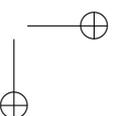
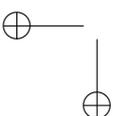
Analysing the contribution of the new information technologies to crisis situation communications seemed to me to be a very current topic. The researcher's interest in investigating this subject was not only for academic reasons related to the writing of a doctoral thesis but was also of a business nature.

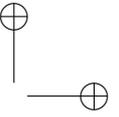
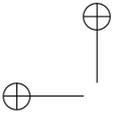
The structure of the research was based on two parts. The first was a review of the literature, and the second was empirical research, resulting in conclusions from a discussion of data gathered from 173 small and medium-sized companies in the North of Portugal, Galicia Euro-Region.

Research objectives and Hypotheses

Though the initial question was to find out if the use of the technologies could have positive impacts on internal communication, the research obtained on the subject enabled the following working hypotheses to be defined:

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 101-111.





H1: The new information technologies contribute to the efficacy of communication in crisis situations;

H2: The contribution of the new information technologies improves the efficacy of implementation of collaborative communications.

Literature Review - Communication in crisis situations

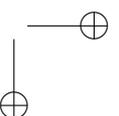
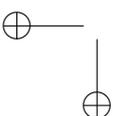
Caetano (2006: 41) says being very concerned with the audiences in the management of crises is the same thing as dealing with the crisis as an event with media potential. For Ramos (2002: 77), from a business or institutional point of view, 'a crisis is an unexpected situation to which an urgent response must be made, as it is a threat to the image of the company (...) it is an event which always has consequences. Thus the crisis must be controlled from the first moment.'

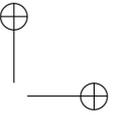
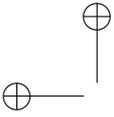
In the context of technological crises, Ramos (2002: 79) says that, in general, a crisis may be due to various causes or happenings, among which those of technological origin stand out. The author talks about the division of a crisis' causes on the basis of other criteria: those of physical origin which may, for example, be technological; crises arising from human relationships; management failures; and a simple minor incident may become a crisis, for example, due to: lack of preparation; absence of response; saying too much; lying; disinformation; waiting too long; g) absence of empathy; h) lack of discernment; or lack of responsibility.

In case of disaster, 'the analysis of the impact of the damages should be the first task to carry out (...) the effects may result in the loss of equipment, software, documentation (direct effects) and the damage may be commercial, civil liability or social (indirect effects)' (Pinheiro, 2008: 134).

This author (2008: 135) rightly reminds of the need to draw up a disaster recovery plan, which should include:

- Contact telephone numbers;
- Diskettes/CDs/DVDs with vital information;
- Identification by each department of which computer files are vital and must be backed up on a daily basis, to be stored outside the company;



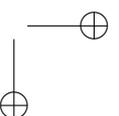
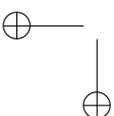


- Quarterly updating of the plan and a practice simulation carried out once a year;
- Testing the hardware of the alternative centre to allow use of its computers when the plan is implemented;
- Setting up various teams for joint action (one team for hardware, another team for applications, another team for the telecommunications, another team for customer relations, another team for relations with suppliers);
- Telephone numbers and people to contact equipment suppliers;
- Clear instructions for each member of staff;
- Contact to be established with other companies, in order of priority.

Pinheiro (2008: 136) stresses that the disaster recovery plan should be structured in two stages:

1. Recovery of activity that is vital (*Initial Plan – 1-10 days*);
2. Full return to activity (*Full Plan – 6-12 months*).

Orosa (2007: 209-220), an author who wrote on the use of the Internet for communication in crisis situations, laid out the advantages of online communications (see Table 1).



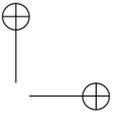


Table 1 – Benefits of the Internet for Communication in Crises

Online	Advantages
- Forums	- Possibility of reaching more people
- Chat	- Reduced costs
- Email	- Speed of response
- File on the Internet	- More material and greater accessibility
- Multimedia material	- Possibility of interactivity
	- Responding to questions
	- Single voice
- Video conferencing	- Transparency
- Private email	- Immediateness
- Private chat	- Accessibility
- Images and video	
- Audio speech	

Adapted from: Orosa (2007: 219)

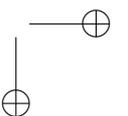
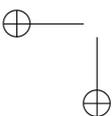
Collaborative communications

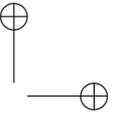
As Tapscott and Williams (2007: 266) stress, email makes internal information sharing more efficient, and tools such as blogs, chats, and wikis reinforce the power of staff who can participate more productively. New IT technologies contributes to the efficiency of collaborative communications, as highlighted by Turquin (2005: 23), in his claim that technologies alter the way people work due to the sharing of information and multivalency. We also believe that the groupware systems referred to by Almeida (2005: 276) are designed for working in groups. For this author, this is a, 'social tool for the way people work on the same document', an aspect which can contribute more to collaborative work.

Methodology

The structuring of the methodology was based on four points:

- elaboration of a questionnaire
- the sample design





- data gathering and analysis
- discussion of results

For the statistical analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Science software package was used. An analysis of frequencies and correlations was made and the *Kruskal-Wallis* and *Mann-Whitney Tests* were applied.

Discussion of Results

In this investigation, whose results were presented in February 2010 during the presentation and public defence of the author's doctoral thesis, was chosen by simple random sampling method. According to Silvestre (2007: 7), this is one of the most useful methods since each element in the universe has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample. It also takes into account Barañano's claim (2004: 86) that for a heterogeneous universe, the sample will be higher. Statistical calculations were made based on the Raosoft calculator to estimate a sample size more suited to the needs of research. Following the methodology of defining the sample, 121 questionnaires were recommended.

However, 183 questionnaires were received; 10 were not complete and were eliminated, leaving a sample of 173 companies. The questionnaire tolerated an uncertainty level of 99%. Moreover, the margin of error stood at 5%.

The questionnaire investigating internal communication in a crisis was divided into two sections. The first section aimed at assessing the level of satisfaction with internal communication, whether during a crisis or in terms of collaborative communication; the second aimed at measuring the contribution of technologies to effective internal communication in a crisis situation and also to effective collaborative communication.

The results concerning the first section show that firms are satisfied with the communication. The largest number of responses fell on the sort option 'satisfaction' (see Table 2).

Regarding the contribution of technologies for communication effectiveness, the results show that the level of satisfaction is higher in the field of collaborative communication and also show positive outcomes related to communication in a crisis situation. In the first case, the largest number of responses fell on 'good', and, in the second case, on 'reasonable' (see Table 3).

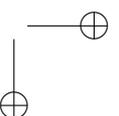
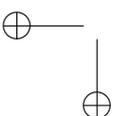


Table 2 – Level of satisfaction with the Internal Communication

				Neither				
Internal		Much		Satisfied		Much		
Communi- cation	A	Dissa- tisfac- tion	Dissa- tisfac- tion	Nor	Satis- faction	Satis- faction	Unres- ponsive	Total
				Dissa- tisfied				
Collabo- rative	Freq.	4	4	57	82	22	4	173
Communi- cations	%	2.3	2.3	32.9	47.4	12.7	2.3	100
Communi- cation	Freq.	4	7	65	67	23	6	173
in crisis situations	%	2.3	4	37.6	38.7	13.3	3.5	100

Table 3 – Contribution of information technologies to the efficacy of internal communication

Internal Communica- tion	B	Very bad	Bad	Reasonable	Good	Very Good	Unresponsive	Total
Collaborative	Freq.	3	10	57	65	29	9	173
communi- cations	%	1.7	5.8	32.9	37.6	16.8	5.2	100
Communica- tion	Freq.	7	11	67	53	24	11	173
in crisis situa- tions	%	4	6.4	38.7	30.6	13.9	6.4	100

The correlation is true. Thus, the Pearson correlation of 0.832 is high for this study (see Table 4).

Table 4 - The Pearson correlations

		Scale A Internal Communication	Scale B Internal Communication
Pearson	A Correlation	1.000	.832
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	170	166
Pearson	B Correlation	.832	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	166	166

To test **H1**, it was found that there are no statistically significant differences when companies from the North of Portugal are compared with companies from Galicia, $Z = -0.109$, $p = 0.913$ (see Table 5).

Table 5 – Mann-Whitney Test for comparison between North of Portugal and Galicia

	Comunicação em situação de crise
Mann-Whitney U	2,151.000
Wilcoxon W	2,746.000
Z	-.109
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.913

No differences were found when we compare the companies by sector of activity, Chi-squared (2) = 0.201, $p = 0.905$, with similarities (average ordering = 78.31 versus 82.92 and 79.68) (see Table 6).

There was also no difference due to the size of the company, Chi-squared (2) = 5.255, $p = 0.072$, there were similarities (average ordering = 79.88 versus 75.28 and 96.40). The test results are applied in the following table (see Table 7).

Table 6 – Kruskal-Wallis Test for comparison between sectors
(Activity Sectors: Industry, Commerce and Services.)

	Comunicação em situação de crise
Chi-Square	.201
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.905

Table 7 – Kruskal-Wallis Test for comparison of the size of companies
(Companies with 10 employees at most, between 11 and 50, 51 and 250.)

	Comunicação em situação de crise
Chi-Square	5.255
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.072

In relation to **H2**, when companies from the north of Portugal are compared with companies from Galicia, $Z = -0.189$, $p = 0.850$, it was found that there are no statistically significant differences (see Table 8).

Table 8 – Mann-Whitney Test for comparison between north of Portugal and Galicia

	Comunicações colaborativas
Mann-Whitney U	2150.500
Wilcoxon W	10535.500
Z	-.189
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.850

There was also no difference due to the sector of activity company, Chi-squared (2) = 2.571, $p = 0.276$, there were similarities (average ordering = 76.11 versus 72.19 and 84.97). The test results are applied in the following table (see Table 9).

As to the size of the company there was also no difference; Chi-squared (2) = 4.094, $p = 0.129$, there were similarities (average ordering = 84.35 versus 74.45 and 92.31) as may be verified by test results of Table 10.

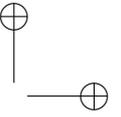
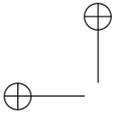


Table 9 – Kruskal-Wallis Test for comparison between sectors

	Comunicações colaborativas
Chi-Square	2.571
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.276

Table 10 – Kruskal-Wallis Test for comparison of the size of companies

	Comunicações colaborativas
Chi-Square	4.094
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.129

Conclusion

The results validate **H1**, which postulates that the new information technologies contribute to the efficacy of communication in crisis situations, and **H2**, which postulates that the contribution of the new information technologies improves the efficacy of implementation of collaborative communications.

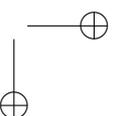
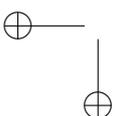
Therefore, it is now clear that the new information technologies have an impact on communication within enterprises, particularly with regard to communicating in a crisis and communicating more collaboratively.

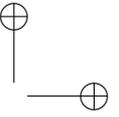
Implications

This research is relevant because institutional and corporate communication, as a field of knowledge, is a new area in Portugal. It is for this reason that there is still a significant amount of scientific production translated into scientific papers or theses. Accordingly, this writing is a contribution to the field of communication research, first for its objectivity, which makes the article noticeable, and second because it is about a specific domain.

Further Research

After examining the results and the conclusion of this investigation further work on this research with more specific business areas may be suggested

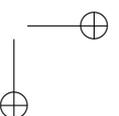
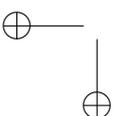


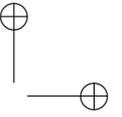


in order to draw conclusions about the reality of certain activities in trade, services and/or industry. By comparison, there were no significant differences between those sectors, but it seems appropriate to conduct further research within particular segments of the business. The study of technology and its relation to human resources and corporate communications requires a continuous and detailed study because this process is perhaps the most dynamic in the business world today.

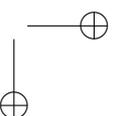
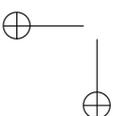
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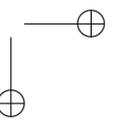
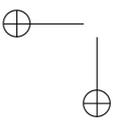
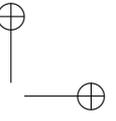
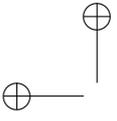
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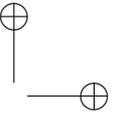
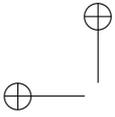




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NATO Strategic Communication - The reflection of Crisis in National Newspapers

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Abstract: Though the concept of crisis has several interpretations, it is generally characterized as a moment of disturbance that disrupts normal organisational functioning. Strategic communication acts as a support to board decisions, allowing decision makers a forward thinking attitude toward crisis management. Therefore, integrated strategies provide a background of inner planning that, when studied and trained, work as a ‘mattress’ to the inevitable shock of crisis. While NATO has well-prepared communication professionals and a strong strategic communication policy, the reflection of NATO’s crisis situations in national newspapers is, in general, negative.

Keywords: Strategic communication, crisis communication, public affairs, NATO.

Strategic Communication and Crisis Communication

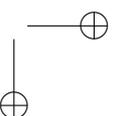
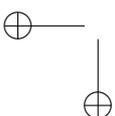
Our research focused on the importance of communication for the operation, image, and reputation of an organisation, with a particular emphasis on crisis communication. We began our research by conceptualising theories that were considered fundamental to the perception of crisis communication.

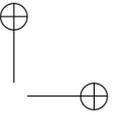
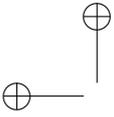
As Gregory (1997: 14) states, organisational communication is contained within the function of public relations. However, she adds that we have to distinguish between the organisational image and the organisational reputation, claiming that image comes from the ‘perception’ that the public has of the organisation, that is, the ‘reflection’ in the minds of its stakeholders that can vary from person to person, while reputation comes from the apparent ‘set of images’ that have been accumulating about the organisation.

Given this premise, we found that definitions of crisis are diverse, yet the common factor is the damage they can cause to an organisation, making crisis management a subject of serious analysis (Fearn-Banks, 2007).

When Pereira and Mendes (2006: 26-27) follow the historical evolution

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 113-127.





of the crisis concept, they refer to Charles Hermann (1963) as one of the first authors to analyse, 'the disruptive phenomena he called crises', noting that this author has defined crisis as, 'something that threatens the fundamental values of the organisation, that allows only a limited period of time for decision-making'. They also add that crisis threatens fundamental organisational values, is unexpected, and originates from an environment relevant to the organisation. For Pereira and Mendes crisis, in general, can be understood as, 'a serious phase, complicated, difficult, a time of tension or impasse in the life of a person, social group, or the evolution certain situations'. They conclude that, although this definition adopts a comprehensive approach, it is not worthy if organisations do not look at the objects and subjects that are part of it.

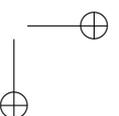
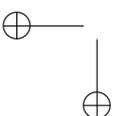
Another referenced author in the field of crisis management, Fink (1986), finds that, 'crisis are situations that represent a risk of rupture and of climbing in intensity, falling in media or government scrutiny', which ultimately, 'interferes with the normal operations of an organisation, jeopardizing its image and harming its chances of survival'.

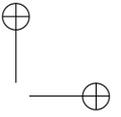
Communication in the course of a crisis does not produce new conflicts, but promotes a clear and quick restoration of normalcy in the organisation. Thus, the medium used to transmit a message can influence the intended meaning.

The Institute for Crisis Management (2010) states that in crisis situations, the aim is to effectively coordinate management, operations, and communication. Consequently, management and communication should never be separated.

Fearn-Banks (2007: 7-8) defends two-way communication by defining crisis communication as, 'a dialogue between the organisation and its publics before, during and after the negative occurrence' and states that dialogue details strategies and tactics that are designed to minimize damage to the organisation's image. Hence, for Fearn-Banks, companies using two-way communication often avoid crises. This author claims that organisations with crisis management and/or crisis communication plans get out of a crisis with a more positive image than those that do not have such preparation.

In a more holistic approach, strategic communication is mentioned by Villafañe (1998: 266), when he refers to the organisation's president, he reinforces that he 'should not forget that he is the last guardian of the values of





corporate culture'. His behaviours, attitudes, and image will, in the end, 'be decoded as one of the most important corporate symbols'. Today, organisations need to say, 'what is their role in society and should adopt a clear position in relation to major currents of opinion.'

Regardless of previous risk assessments, any situation that may be classified as a crisis will have the underlying element of surprise. Hence the warning signs should be a key factor towards the evidence of an impending crisis. Therefore, the preparation for the unexpected urges. Starting with the path that goes from prevention to the necessity of the existence of a crisis communication plan, a strategy to management is required.

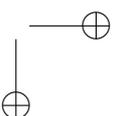
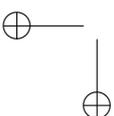
The lack of information usually leads to increased curiosity and the search for new data; this applies particularly to the media, which may augment the severity of the crisis. Langford (2006: 403-4) reports that, at first, the media will want to know the facts. Their reaction to information conveyed by the organisation can never be assumed, for it depends on the specificity of journalists (more or less informed), and the media they represent (more or less aggressive). In this sense, the way organisations speak to the media is critical.

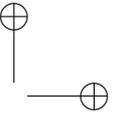
Some procedures that could prevent the appearance of a crisis, therefore, are as follows: analyse risks and crises, understand the public's perception, develop a communication strategy as an operational plan, identify stakeholders, and understand the media's needs for correct and timely information.

In this era of globalized media, information travels at a stunning speed and reaches the whole world in seconds. Therefore, the vulnerability of image and reputation of an organisation makes it very fragile and sensitive to a crisis. With the Internet, whether in the mainstream media, or social media, information flows quickly - opinions are formed and public opinion can be 'shaken'. The situation may become overwhelming in minutes because the public is increasingly informed, involved, and claims information.

Method - The Empirical Nature of Scientific Work

Our work aimed to understand crisis management in NATO's communications. Therefore, we decided to use a method subject to empirical verification to interpret the collected data. Analysing the information in a qualitative way contextualized the research. By using data analysis, we obtained a holistic





view of NATO's communications, providing greater validity because the results translated NATO's unique features.

Because the analysis aimed to discover how this organisation works with strategic communication, we decided to use various data collection techniques. Our work had the scientific basis required of a case study through clear, objective, and above all, useful research. Hence, we started this study with a literature review of the 'State of the Art' in crisis management, focusing on the aspect of communication.

According to Yin (2009: 3-8), all research methods can be used for exploratory purposes if the starting question is why something happened. Therefore, the collection of a larger set of documentary information resulted, in the case in question, in better and more grounded research.

Lessard-Hébert et al. (2008: 170) state that the case study is also characterized by collecting information 'so numerous and as detailed as possible in order to cover the whole situation'. They argue that this is why case studies refer to various techniques of data collection (observation, interviews, and documents).

Referring to the role of theory in the architecture of research, Yin (2009: 35-36) claims that the search for theoretical material, prior to the collection of empirical material, is a characteristic that makes the case study different from other research methods. The author then reinforces the idea, saying that the development of theory in case studies is essential at an early stage, whether the objective is to develop or test that theory. In the present case, theoretical study supported the researcher by offering guidance on the collection and analysis of empirical data.

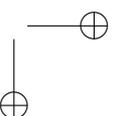
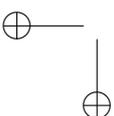
This research elaborated on NATO's Crisis Management and work in the field of communication, that is, how does the role of strategic communication fit in these situations?

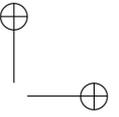
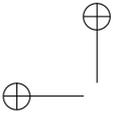
In summary, we considered the following hypotheses:

a) NATO is aware that crisis management is a current and imperious issue where strategic communication plays a special role.

b) The national daily newspapers report the Alliance's crisis and make it, in general, in a neutral way.

As there are no studies which could be comparable in terms of an analysis of thematic categories, we analysed the Portuguese case. We built our model





based on analysis and observation in order to verify data that could allow us to conclusively address the hypotheses' assumptions.

To answer our propositions, we had the existence of crisis management and strategic communication systems as indicators. Also, language indicators enabled us to classify the news about NATO as positive, neutral, or negative. Analyses focused on daily national newspapers, with distribution throughout the national territory, namely: *Diário de Notícias*, *Público*, *Correio da Manhã*, *Jornal de Notícias*, *i* and *1º de Janeiro*, as well as two daily newspapers specializing in economic issues, *Jornal de Negócios* and *Diário Económico*.

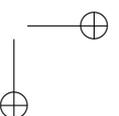
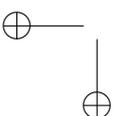
As for the news-gathering time horizon in the national daily newspapers, an early stage, was from 1 May to 31 July 2010 (with a total of 178 analysed news reports), due to the fact that in this time period there were crises situations with NATO military, including deaths in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, and the release of classified documents, among other crises.

In a second analysis, we collected news from 23 November and 23 December 2007 (with a total of 53 news reports) in order to provide a broader view, as this period included the date when the last death of a Portuguese military in a NATO mission occurred. This less recent timeframe allowed us to gauge how a crisis involving our country is analysed and monitored locally by the media.

Explanation and Analysis of the Empirical Key Data

Crisis Management is part of the Alliance's core business. NATO's Handbook (NATO, 2006), states that crises can be political, military, or humanitarian and can be caused by political or armed conflicts, technological incidents, or natural disasters. As a result, strategic communication is an integral part of the Alliance's efforts to achieve its political and military goals. Focusing on the example of strategic communication, we verified the approach to crisis communication in an organisation this large, observing the *modus operandi* of the Alliance in order to emphasize the relevance of integrated strategies for crisis management, and, on the other hand, to verify how NATO's Crisis are reflected in national newspapers.

We found NATO's communication activities divided into two areas: political, through Public Diplomacy, and military, through Public Affairs. Those



communication procedures demonstrate a conscientious awareness of Strategic Communication's importance to an organisation's success. This broad communication area covers all NATO's communication activities, including Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations, and Psychological Operations.

Besides the written doctrines related to Strategic Communication, Public Affairs Policy and Public Affairs in Operations, we also found, in Directive 95-3, a special interest in social media. Although social media is called 'citizen journalism', those citizens cannot be ignored by the Alliance. Therefore, NATO's presence can be found in different means in the Internet: Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube and NATO TV Channel.¹

We collected additional data in order to test the second hypothesis in concert with other techniques. To validate the indicators of our hypotheses, we empirically verified whether the reflection of NATO's strategic communication activities during crisis situations was mirrored in a neutral way by the media. Conversely, in order to ascertain the neutrality (or not) of the news, we sought what were the dominant themes in the national daily newspapers, as compared to situations that could be a reflection of a crisis in activities related to the Alliance.

As for the collection of information from newspapers, we highlighted first the number of mentions of NATO with a total of 231 news reports. Then, in the first period, we differentiated between national (40 news reports) and international affairs (138 news reports), after which we divided by subject category: deaths; attacks; Afghanistan; Kosovo; and NATO. These categories were based on a study conducted by Nuno Brandão (2002) – although he referred to television news, we decided that, with appropriate adaptations, they could also be framed in the press news. We then stipulated themes relevant to

¹Examples of NATO's presence in the Internet:

<http://twitter.com/AndersFoghR>

<http://www.facebook.com/?ref=logo#!/andersfoghrasmussen?ref=nf>

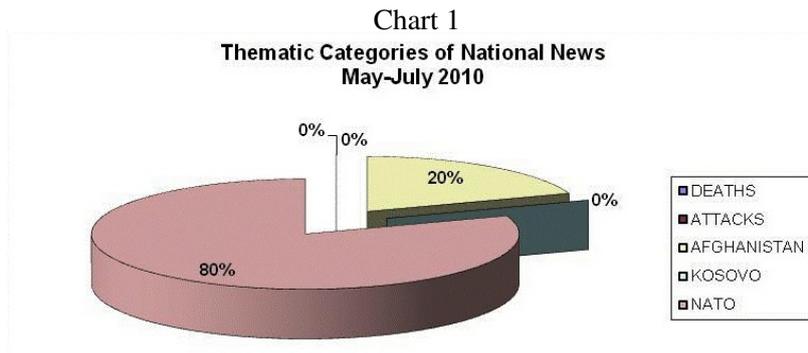
<http://www.facebook.com/ISAF>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/isafmedia/>

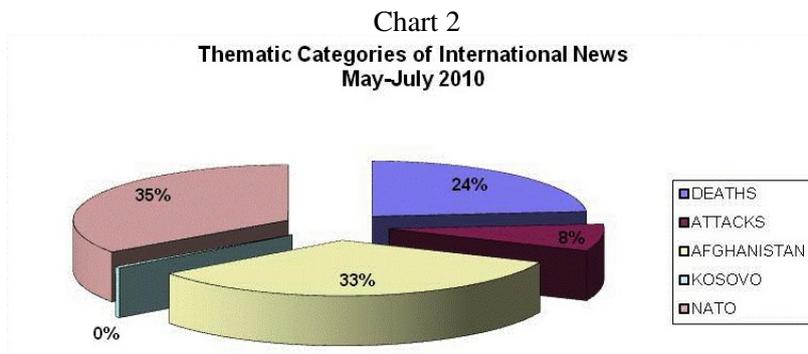
<http://www.youtube.com/user/SHAPEACO>

<http://www.natochannel.tv/default.aspx?aid=4310>

our study, featuring the most important institutional issues and also those that revealed greater media coverage (see Chart 1 and 2).



Source: Marcelino (2010)



Source: Marcelino (2010)

At the end of each month, we catalogued the news under the rubrics ‘positive’, ‘neutral’, and ‘negative’ in order to observe more generally the distribution of these three parameters.

In the second stage of data collection, the process was not as complex and referred only to national news with a specific category (Death of a Portuguese Soldier) with 53 news reports about this topic.

Regarding the first period, and during the month of May, we found a total of seven national and 36 international news reports, for a total of 43 monthly reports with reference to the Alliance. Nationally, the number of positive news reports matched the negatives, both with three references each; the neutral was limited to one report. However, internationally, this month reported more neutral news (18) than negative (14), while only four were positive.

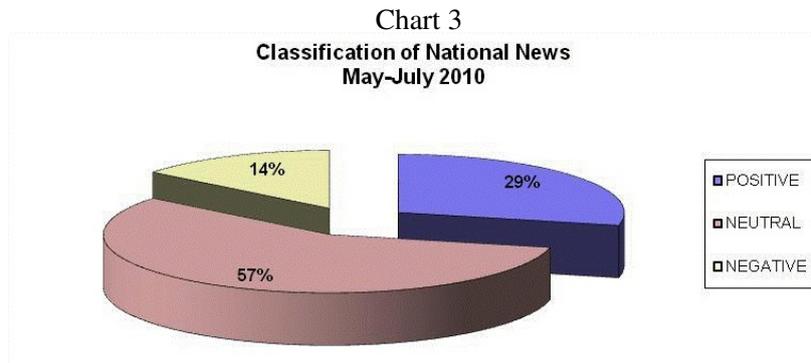
During the month of June, we found a total of 23 national and 58 international news reports, with a total of 81 monthly reports with references to the Alliance. The national news collected represented 13 as neutral, six positive and four negative. Regarding the international reports, on 23 June, they referred to the ouster of General McChrystal and to the new commander that would take over the forces of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. So, during three consecutive days, the news on this subject was in every newspaper. We highlight the output of 33 stories with more negative connotations for the Alliance, also because June was the bloodiest month with 94% more accidents than the previous year.

During the month of July, we gathered 10 national and 44 international news reports, with a total of 54 monthly reports with references to the Alliance. In fact, on 27 July, regarding international issues, the press highlighted the leak of over 92,000 classified documents on the War in Afghanistan that appeared on the Wikileaks website. About this subject, there were 14 out of 34 negative international news reports for the Alliance. The other negative news reports appeared divided amongst the following topics: an attack on one of the most important NATO bases in Afghanistan; NATO missed the target and bombed the Afghan army, causing six deaths; the first Donors’ Summit, held in Kabul; the kidnapping of two ISAF soldiers; and an indictment of the Alliance regarding the killing of 52 civilians. Needless to say, in July there were only eight neutral reports and two positive.

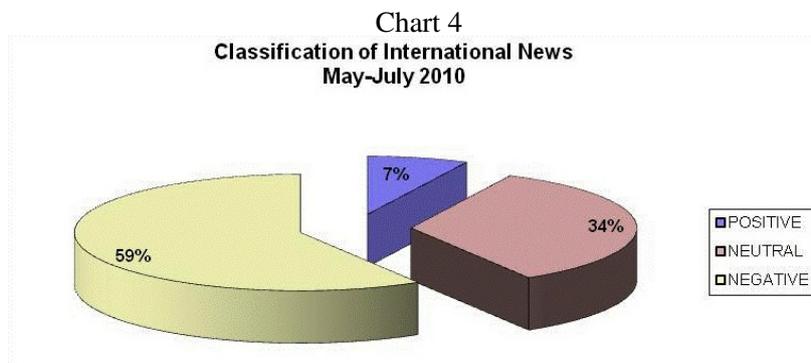
For a close-up view of the data we have been presenting, one can observe the percentage of positive, neutral, and negative representations by national

(Chart 3) and international news (Chart 4) analysed during the whole period of three months.

To complete the first phase of research, we noted that 178 reports were analysed for the period of 1 May to 31 July 2010 (see Chart 5 for a representation distributed by newspaper.)

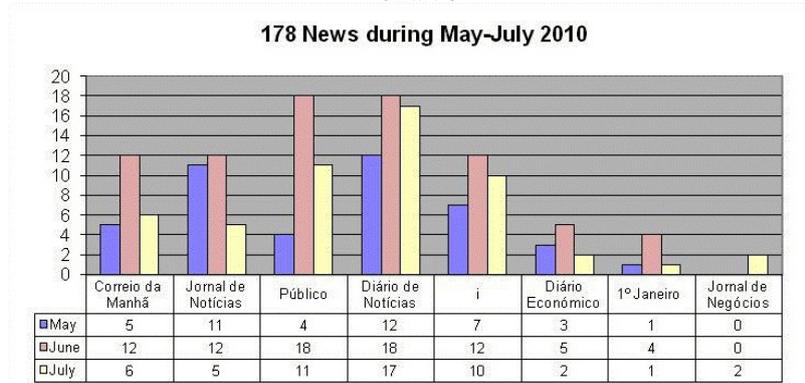


Source: Marcelino (2010)



Source: Marcelino (2010)

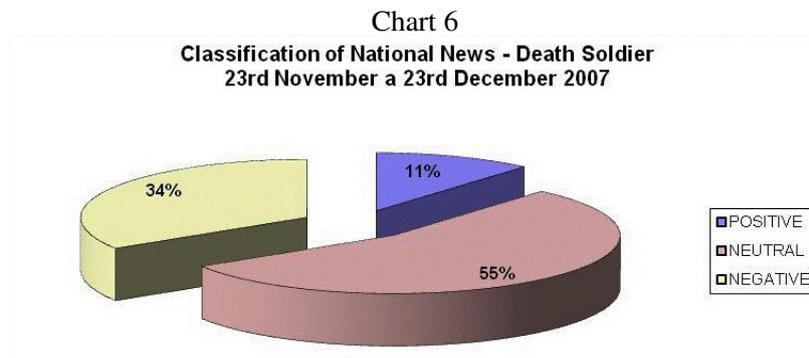
Chart 5



Source: Marcelino (2010)

We now turn to the data collected during the second period: from 23 November to 23 December 2007. This period represents 31 days counted from the day that the last death of a Portuguese soldier occurred in a NATO mission. A total of 53 reports were gathered in national newspapers.

The largest number of references is noted on 25 November when, for the first time, newspapers reported the death of the Portuguese military. That day had 16 references. These large numbers only reappeared on 27 November, the day of the young soldier's funeral, and where we found 14 reports, showing that the national press emphasised this event. Thus, we recorded six positive news reports (because what happened was a car accident and because the soldier loved being in the ISAF mission), 29 neutral (where the reference to the Alliance was simply to connect the event to meet the military's situation), and 18 negative (because that event was the connection to the other Portuguese soldiers' deaths that occurred earlier, or even to all the deaths during the mission in general) – see Chart 6.



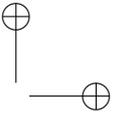
Source: Marcelino (2010)

Conclusions

Initially, our work focused on a detailed observation of the Alliance's structure. Since the 1990s, new challenges to Europe's security led to a change in the structure of NATO. A major transformation has been carried out within the Alliance that also embraces strategic communication. After the Cold War, public opinion began to trigger questions about the essence and need for the Alliance.

To research this topic, we felt the need to observe the 'state of the art' of public opinion towards this problem, which led us to conclude that, although there is still major public support towards the maintenance of NATO as a guarantor of security of the North Atlantic, many questions persist concerning the continuity of international missions such as ISAF. In fact, this is the major factor which promotes a decrease in the desired level of public support. Based on the data, we can see a diminished rate of effectiveness of NATO's communication in relation to its stakeholders. Moreover, as mentioned, one of the key factors that discredit the essence of NATO is the participation of international forces in the Afghanistan theatre of operations. In fact, the ISAF mission has proved highly expensive to the members of the Alliance, both in financial terms and in the loss of lives.

The increasing public support urges, and NATO promotes, on several fronts, strategies to increase public awareness towards its mission and ob-



jectives. The Public Affairs Policy encourages a proactive attitude and a good relationship with the public, the media, and civil authorities. Public Affairs practitioners advocate a position of closer relationship based on trust and credibility between the political-military structure, the media, and the Alliance's stakeholders. This relationship is crucial because in a crisis situation, NATO can count on their support. Thus, these links should be developed over time and not just when the crisis is already present. This link to the media has, in fact, great importance in relation to the activities of NATO's Public Affairs.

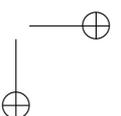
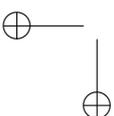
Based on 'triangulation' between the concepts investigated and the data provided, we can say that NATO is aware that crisis management is a current and serious issue; that is why it has already implemented the appropriate contingency plan, in which Crisis Communication has an important role, and Public Affairs is a grant foundation.

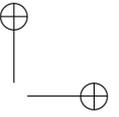
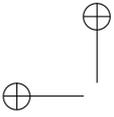
Our investigation took place in two different periods and situations, and according to the data obtained and the classification of news reports, we verified that the national daily newspapers reflect the crises of the Alliance, usually in a negative way, having seen a value of 59% of negative news reports on the Alliance during the three months analysed (see Chart 4). However, when the issue involved a crisis, such as the death of a soldier that is from the same country as the media that reported the news, the news turned out to be reported in neutral way towards NATO's institutional image (these numbers represented 57% of neutral news reports; see Chart 3).

As for national daily newspapers, they generally reported the crisis of the Alliance in a neutral way. This hypothesis was not totally observed. That is, the statement is considered true only for subjects that are somehow related to the country of origin of those who report the news.

As for our considerations, we summarize that communication has now become a priority, since the Alliance is undergoing an identity crisis and needs, at all costs, to gain public support to justify its continued existence. We must, however, recognize that in terms of its relationship with the media, the structure is exemplary, although the results are not as visible. We admit that the efforts in crisis situations are readily enabled by Public Affairs, demonstrating proper planning and training.

This work aimed to identify new paths of study that could contribute to more effective communication. The value of this research to NATO and to the scientific community is now prominent as it allows comparative studies to as-





sess the evolution of NATO's communication effectiveness through reflection of its crisis situations by the media.

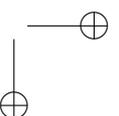
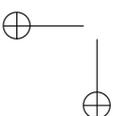
As we can verify by the Image Restoration Theory mentioned by Fearn-Banks (2007), organisations should determine what can threaten their reputation and to which publics their communication actions should be targeted. Organisations should direct their attention to warning signs, because the acknowledgment of the public, as well as reputation, requires continuous efforts in the management of corporate image. Therefore, a Manual of Corporate Management is recommended, with the Communication Strategy incorporated and a chapter committed to Crisis Communication.

In NATO, the new organisational structures with regard to communication show a perfect knowledge of social realities that influence the entire operation of the Alliance. However, its strategy of crisis communication is not effective, allowing the persistence of an identity crisis, which is reflected in how newspapers negatively mirror their crisis situations, with the exception of national issues that have been exposed to public opinion generally in a neutral way.

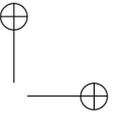
To conclude, we believe that prevention is the best cure for a crisis. Therefore, greater efforts must be made toward this new phase that the Alliance is promoting in order to integrate their communication strategies, as the success of an organisation is directly linked to the success of their communication.

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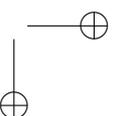
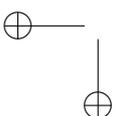
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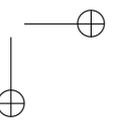
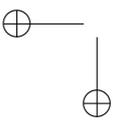
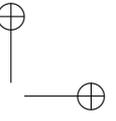
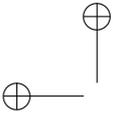


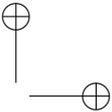
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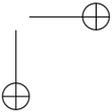
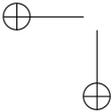


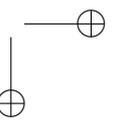
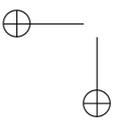
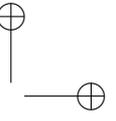
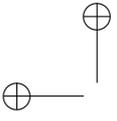


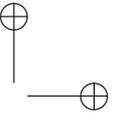
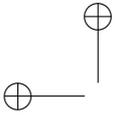


Part III

**INTEGRATED
COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES**







Organisational Communication and Sustainability, studying European public campaigns

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Teresa Ruão

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to reflect on the processes adopted for the communication of sustainability by European public organisations. The instrumental character that Organisational Communication usually presents is no longer sufficient to explain communication processes and their consequences in an organisational environment, especially when the subject is sustainability. There are a few models used for communication analysis, but here we highlight the Politically Attentive Relational Construction model elaborated by Deetz (2009). Through this, we analyse the sustainability campaigns of four European public organisations that constitute the case study of this article.

Keywords: organisational communication, sustainability, participatory democracy.

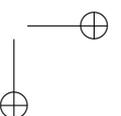
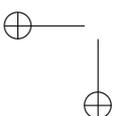
Introduction

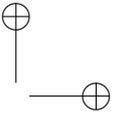
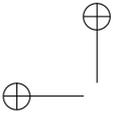
Until the 1980s, communication directed to society was basically sale-oriented and aimed at immediate quantitative results. However, in the last 20 years, due to changes in organisations and in media, a new way of processing information was created in which strategy is given more stress.

We believe that the valorization of a strategic character in Organisational Communication sometimes is unnecessary and restricts or inhibits the development of new perspectives that allow the analysis of production processes and attribution of meanings, as well as determining the actual level of stakeholders' participation in the communication process. To communicate in the chaotic scenario in which we live requires a more dynamic way of understanding communication phenomena. The traditional ways conducting Organisational Communication, that is, producing competitive results from the biggest possible uniformity in organisation actions, has had their own validity questioned.

In this article, we extend the vision of Organisational Communication be-

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 131-147.



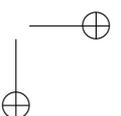
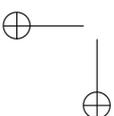


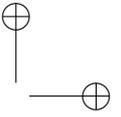
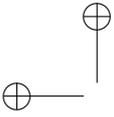
yond that strategy and build our research on the recent analytical perspective of communication proposed by Deetz (2009), the Politically Attentive Relational Constructivism. There are two reasons for this choice: the innovative use of similar characteristics to constructivism and the concern to promote politically responsible communication mainly based on participatory democracy. This last aspect is particularly important, since sustainability is the main subject of the messages analysed in the case study.

We should also clarify that the choice of sustainability reporting is not unfounded. Recently, this issue has assumed a central role in the discussion surrounding development and the alternatives configured to articulate the relationships between global and local. We highlight the major challenges of responses in the social sector that enable an articulation of different interests. The democratic organisation of local power is increasingly assuming a central place in an agenda that includes not only the necessary coordination between actors, but also between policies.

Rethinking about the place of sustainability in times of change and its relation to public administration is important to understand its role in relation to Organisational Communication. In the recognition and use of sustainability as a resource for the performance of organisations, Organisational Communication is a great ally, as it takes a transversal constitution never seen before and allows more visibility, enhancing and extending the commitments made by organisations for the solution of environmental, social, and economic problems.

The centrality that Organisational Communication assumes in the sustainability movement is not characterized by the intensive use of communication tools or the effort to build a positive corporate reputation. It is important to notice that Organisational Communication is an organising and constituent element that occurs through complex symbolic interactions. In this article, we question whether the processes adopted for the communication of sustainability by organisations are more participative. Before attempting to answer this question, we think it is necessary to present a brief summary about sustainability.





Sustainability - concept's observations

The discussion about sustainability arose in the 1980s and initially revolved around the planet's capacity to sustain development, taking into account, 'the maintenance of ecosystems, biodiversity and the needs of current and future generations' (Barbieri, 2002). Since there is no consensus on the definition of sustainability, the term has been opened to many different definitions, although some concepts are more acceptable than others, especially in the academic area.

Sustainability is a broad concept with many meanings and synonyms: corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, or corporate philanthropy, among others. Numerous terms refer to the set of social actions taken by companies that exceed the sphere of its immediate and direct economic activity.

The emergence and evolution of the concept are closely linked to numerous debates, conferences, and international research groups promoted by the United Nations, European Union, Watch Institute¹ and other corporate research institutes. These initiatives have always aimed to define sustainability.

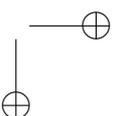
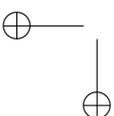
The United Nations and European Union are the major stimulators of the debate and are responsible for laws and recommendations about the topic. Although some of these references are not mandatory and their ratifications by governments are often lengthy processes, they provide indications of the way forward.

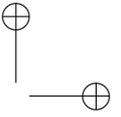
The evolutionary line of the concept of sustainability began in 1972, when it was first expressed as 'ecological development' by Ignacy Sachs, chief of staff of the Secretariat General of the United Nations at the time of the Stockholm Conference. According to Sachs, eco-development would be, 'the socially desirable development, economically viable and environmentally prudent' (Sachs, 1986).

In 1987, when the United Nations promoted the second framework meeting, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) produced the Brundtland Report, or, 'Our Common Future', in which the concept of sustainable development was presented and strongly linked to environmental concerns.

'Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

¹Independent research organisation, funded in 1974 and established in USA.





own needs.' It contains two key concepts. The first is 'necessity', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given. The second is 'the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs' (WCED, 1987).

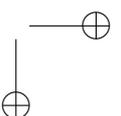
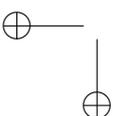
In 2001, the European Commission aimed to discuss the concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development at European and international levels. For that, a series of internal conferences was organised, which resulted in the publication of the 'Green Paper - Promoting a European framework for corporate social responsibility'. In this paper, the possibilities for maximum exploration are listed and the development of innovative practices is encouraged.

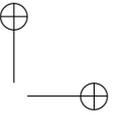
'The corporate social responsibility is a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a fairer society and a cleaner environment. At a time when the EU endeavours to identify its common values by adopting a Charter of Fundamental Rights, an increasing number of European companies recognise their social responsibility more and more clearly and consider it as part of their identity' (European Commission, 2001).

Therefore, we must clarify that Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development are distinct concepts, although complementary in some very specific contexts. The most appropriate distinction is to say that the concept of sustainability is the result of an evolutionary process that began with the term Corporate Social Responsibility.

Sustainability has a broader meaning, involving economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects. It comprises a set of elements focused on the well-being of societies, organisations, and informal groups seeking to preserve the common good. For an organisation to be sustainable, it must be environmentally correct, economically viable, socially just, and culturally accepted by its stakeholders.

Another distinguishing feature of sustainability is long-term vision. The actions that characterize this type of management require time before results can be identified. As opposed to philanthropy, for example, sustainable development programs include a joint action between the state and private enterprise.





Communicating Sustainability

In the current era of globalized information, communicating sustainability cannot represent a mere palliative for campaigns that aim to strengthen organisational reputations. Instead, sustainability should be a way to ethical, consistent, efficient and fair acting for any organisation. By doing that, organisations can have their relationships potentialized. Sustainability should be explicit in the communications policy of organisations and be reflected in their actions with all stakeholders.

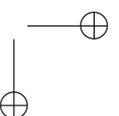
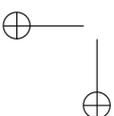
Sustainability reporting should be a voluntary activity, although currently there is greater pressure from NGOs and society in general to communicate credible and relevant information. Besides that, there is the fact that financial markets require information from organisations about adopted public policies, environmental and social performance, and the indices of social development.

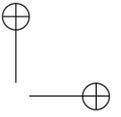
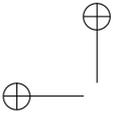
This topic is still evolving and there is no globally accepted and standardized approach. As opposed to financial reporting and its annual accounts, for example, there is no standard way to communicate sustainability. Stakeholder diversity is itself an obstacle, since they all have specific information needs. It is an organisation's responsibility to find the balance between what stakeholders want to know and what information can be reported.

A major challenge centres on the possibility to review the more traditional theories, which usually privilege corporate governance, market choices, and business decisions. Globalization and its consequences also require changes in how organisations communicate.

'Our new situation of pluralism and interdependence require a different response. Basically, our greatest hope lies in introducing broader social values in decision-making processes and routine business, rather than trying to direct them externally. This leads us to reflect on new forms of governance and communication' (Deetz, 2009).

Deetz's view is shared by other researchers in the field (Varey, 2002; Forester, 1999; Lewis, 2007; Lange, 2003; Kunsch, 2006; Marchiori, 2010). In general, they observe that Organisational Communication must demonstrate its ability to promote social cohesion around certain worldviews beyond merely meeting the demands for mediation between individuals and organisations.





The challenge today is to reinvent traditional Organisational Communication, which has developed a strategic vision for decades into a new direction, ‘in which what is valued is the experience of diversity, differences and the ability to decide, inspired by the new principles of collaborative communication’, as observed by Cardoso (2007).

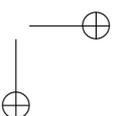
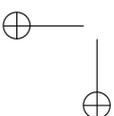
Organisational Communication can be used as a facilitator process that focuses on active citizenship and the change in individual and collective values to strengthen the reasons why we should build a sustainable society. We believe that this new paradigm is realized effectively through the enlargement and democratization of power relations, participatory practices in policy discussions, sharing information, and stimulating debates about the meaning of actions developed within the sustainability discourse.

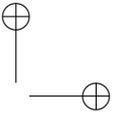
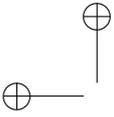
PARC - Politically Attentive Relational Construction

The Politically Attentive Relational Construction (PARC) perspective proposed by Deetz (2009) provides a comprehensive picture of several crucial aspects for communication of sustainability. Most germane are those concepts about the production of meaning and the level of participatory freedom attributed to stakeholders during the communication process. The first concerns the focus given the conception of meaning. In order to organise the information, a classification was created by McClellan and Deetz (2009): strategic communication, liberal democracy, management culture, and participatory democracy.

As we have referenced before, the strategic approach to Organisational Communication is widely accepted and has almost become its standard mode. This view considers the meaning production to be centred on the individual; it must always have strategic control over social actions. It will serve the purposes of persuasion. ‘The managerial communication and public relations thought this vision extremely useful and spent most of the time making strategies for the communication process to achieve influence and affect meaning constructions’ (Varey, 2000).

We can say that liberal democracy is also based on a individual view, but has characteristics of reciprocity. This means there is a need to manage information and the involvement of stakeholders, even through the creation of specific programs for that. ‘The concepts of communication used by these





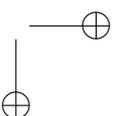
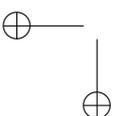
programs preserve most of the features of the theories of meaning production considered expressionists - centred on the person, but differ in terms of the use of strategic control by having an emphasis on public forums such as meetings with communities and two-handed interaction' (Deetz, 2009). Good examples of this approach would be town hall meetings and court proceedings, in which leaders promote the expression of individual meaning to create democratic practices.

The third classification, culture management, is based on a relational-constructivist meaning conception. The terminology seems confusing, but sums up the guiding principles of PARC, because communication is given as the main activity through which collective meanings are created and maintained. The analysis of metaphors, symbols, myths, narratives, and discourses is characteristic of communication in the production and reproduction of organisational cultures.

Participatory democracy is what Deetz (2009) considers, 'a response to increasing speed of change and the increasing presence of pluralism and interdependence theories of Organisational Communication, when the decision-making in contexts of diversity'. The idea is that interaction throws challenges to the existing positions, encouraging a review of what is considered an immutable truth within the organisation. It is, 'a more collaborative communication, based more on conflict than on models of communication centred on the person or consensus-oriented' (Deetz & Radford, 2007).

For Deetz, the main objectives of Organisational Communication based on this fourth 'classification' (which the author refers particularly as Politically Attentive Relational Construction) require a clear demonstration of processes and an intensification of decisions taken openly. 'It takes the concepts and practices of open conversation, deliberation, dialogue and collaboration. On both sides there is the requirement of communication concepts more sophisticated than the usual' (Deetz, 2009).

The author continues by noticing that the implementation of the PARC approach is undermined by hidden forms of strategic control, especially distorted communication and discursive closure. Briefly, we can affirm that the first is a form of strategic interaction, different from persuasion and manipulation, in which strategic intention is hidden. 'It becomes possible through the absence of analysis about systemic and structural limits of reciprocity of interaction by interlocutors' (Forester, 1989). The closure of discourse concerns

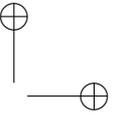


the techniques used in conversation, seeking only to eliminate possible conflicts of meaning and contradictions, which results in difficulties challenging existing meanings.

Table 1 - Classification of communication, regarding its meaning production

Meaning concept	Strategic control	Reciprocity
Centred in the individual	<i>Strategic Communication</i> Participants are adversaries. Interactions are polarized in different positions and reduce the options available. Defining the problem is an individual act, done before participant's meeting to discuss it. Final responsibility of decision is individual. Presence of distorted communication and discursive closures.	<i>Liberal Democracy</i> Participants are seen as stakeholders who need to be managed. Interaction based on arguments and confrontation of opinions known. Defining the problem is a collective act, but manageable. Final responsibility of decision belongs to the organisation, but is based in individual opinion.
Relational-Constructivism	<i>Culture management</i> Participants are manipulated. Social interactions can create collective meanings. Problem definition hides the control. Final responsibility of decision is individual, but aims to change the dominant meanings.	<i>Participatory Democracy</i> Participants solve problems together. Interactions seek to identify collective and complex interests. Defining the problem is a collective achievement. Final responsibility of decision is shared with all participants. Minimum level of distorted communication and discursive closures.

Source: Adapted from Deetz & Radford (2009)



Case Study

In order to achieve the objective proposed in this article, we chose to consider the PARC approach elaborated by Deetz (2009) and to develop a case study with a qualitative dimension. If we take into account the dialogic aspect of the construction and interpretation of reality, qualitative research is the appropriate methodology for collecting, processing, and analysing the data to which we had access.

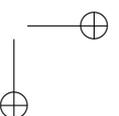
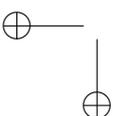
Our sample consisted of communication campaigns on sustainability prepared by European public organisations from the following countries: Austria, France, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. All data collected had their origin in the institutional websites of the organisations in charge of the campaigns and in the manual *Communicating Sustainability*, prepared by UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) in 2005. From the analysis of these campaigns, we verified the applicability of PARC as a model of analysis of Organisational Communication and reflected upon the several interactive processes involved in the communicative act of sustainability.

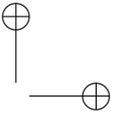
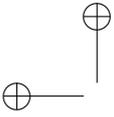
That's the way to do it: sustainably² is the name of the campaign, prepared by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment in partnership with large shopping outlets. It aimed to change consumer behaviour through advertising and product promotion. US\$240,000 was invested and four objectives were established: to encourage consumers to buy sustainable products; to raise awareness of sustainability and give practical examples of sustainable development; to highlight good examples of local sustainable development initiatives; and to give publicity to the partners in the media.

Sustainable products are slowly emerging from niche to mainstream markets in the grocery, pharmaceutical, and home improvement sectors in Austria. This campaign was developed to show how certain products in these ranges could fit a sustainable lifestyle. The campaign branding was carefully designed by an independent advertising agency. A clear brief was provided by the Ministry of the Environment, based on the campaign objectives and audience research.

The 'branded statement' needed to convey sustainability in a simple way, be short and concise, be adaptable for different advertising formats, be easy to

²More information at <http://www.nachhaltigewochen.at>



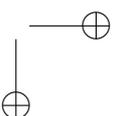
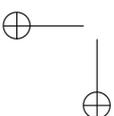


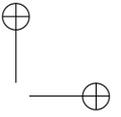
recognise, and aid the sale of products. To accomplish that, 650,000 copies of a brochure were produced and distributed. Also, 3,000 posters were placed at entrances in shopping centres and in public markets. Regarding digital means of communication, the Austrian Federal Ministry created a website with complete information on the subject and where the composition of all eco-friendly products was listed. Some outdoor activities, with the presence of the minister, took place with a strong commercial appeal. Throughout the campaign, there was a systematic evaluation about the levels of consumer awareness. These evaluations were based on the increase of sales, the coverage from Austrian media, the involvement of NGOs and local associations, and the increasing interest from other retailers to enrol in the campaign.

Overall, the campaign has achieved the expected results. Through the effective use of partnerships with commercial networks, disparate communications, and the creation of an eco-friendly brand, the ministry got good media coverage (191 stories published) and the formation of 21 local initiatives with the same goal. The use of commercial space allowed considerable reduction in advertising expenses and the presence of a representative government in public activities gave credibility.

This communication campaign has achieved some significant results, such as the 13% increase in the number of women who remember seeing sustainable products at least once in the supermarket shelves and the 14% decrease in the number of Austrians who are unaware of the concept of sustainability. The promotion of the campaign through partnerships with supermarkets aimed to reach public interest in the place where a buying decision is made. If we consider the approach proposed by Deetz (2009), we could classify this campaign as an example of culture management such as we are talking about:

- changing meanings ('which are attributes of this new product that make me, consumer, change my buying decision?');
- interactions that create collective meanings ('as I don't want feel excluded, I must buy this eco-friendly product. Nowadays, everyone is talking about sustainability and I should have an idea of what it is');
- unnoticeable control of participants, by directing the purchase decision of some products, for example.





Economies d'énergie³ was made by the Agency for Environment and Energy Management (ADEME) from France and combined a high-profile advertising campaign to raise awareness with activities implemented by partners at a national and local level to encourage behaviour change. Objectives were defined through research indicating that 73% of the population was aware that changing lifestyles is important for climate change, but less than 10% was aware of the environmental impacts of their everyday energy use. The campaign, therefore, aimed to change public behaviour to deliver energy savings and also to increase awareness among the public on the environmental cost of energy use and over-consumption.

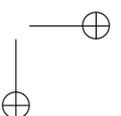
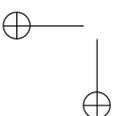
It relied on two complementary communications methods: a national advertising campaign and a partnership platform. The first was divided into three phases: (1) advertisements in regional newspapers with the question 'Is it for today or tomorrow?', with no explanation; (2) short TV commercials with a very popular French song in which some people are interviewed about individual actions that can help save energy; and (3) radio programs with simple and practical advice about small changes in lifestyle, which received more than 1,000 calls per day from listeners.

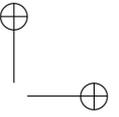
The partnership platform brought together 135 partners ranging from companies to local authorities and NGOs in sectors as diverse as transport and entertainment. Two good examples of initiatives from these partners are Extinction Planet, a campaign produced by WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and the distribution of 300,000 CLIMact⁴ in front of cinemas during the premiere of the film *The Day After Tomorrow*. Within a year, more than 2,000 activities were held, with 80% being carried out by the partners of the French agency.

The French agency combined two important factors for creating empathy in the public interest. The first was the use of testimonies from ordinary people, who spoke about changes already made in their lifestyles. In this case, the idea was to raise the question 'if they have changed and are happy, why do I not change too?' The second factor was celebrity power. The main character in its commercials was a popular singer, whose song became a jingle. This strategic choice stimulated the thought 'I like her and she is a success, so if I do what she says, I will have success too'. Thus specific audiences were reached:

³More information at <http://www.faisonsvite.fr>

⁴A simple card device used to show personal energy consumption and environmental impact with specific energy saving solutions.





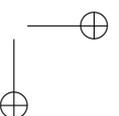
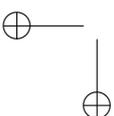
the average citizen and the one more connected to images of success. Moreover, the campaign has prioritized some of the more traditional media (TV and radio) to reach the audience with little access to digital media. Surveys conducted after the campaign showed that there was an increase in awareness and knowledge of sustainability, even though behaviour has changed only slightly. Here we may have an example of liberal democracy. Some of its characteristics are:

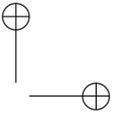
- speech distorted to serve interests (Does the singer really know what sustainability is? Does she have a good attitude regarding it? Were the testimonies gathered in the streets edited?)
- interactions based on a comparison of known opinions. This means that individuals have the freedom to give their opinion when interviewed on the street. However, it is confronted by the viewer that, in most cases, does not agree with the respondent;
- definition of the problem as manageable (the agency maintains in its speech the collective character of the problem - we'll have serious problems, unless we start saving energy - while not doing any research to determine whether society considers it the most important problem to be solved).

ThinkSustainable⁵ was developed by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in the UK and aimed to integrate the concept of sustainability in the daily work of 8,000 employees of the department. To achieve the goal, around US\$123,000 was spent to create an internal communication campaign that remains in effect. One of the particular objectives is to show to DEFRA's employees that sustainability and its implications are not a burden.

In 2005, the UK government launched a strategic plan, entitled *Securing the Future*, directed to all its citizens. Before starting an external communication campaign, DEFRA considered it appropriate to put it in practice among its employees. By doing so, the organisation would be capable of observing results and making any necessary changes. Research was conducted and

⁵More information at www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/think.



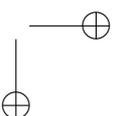
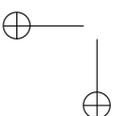


showed that 80% of its employees understand what sustainability is; however fewer than 50% were really committed to integrating the concept into their daily work. Another interesting result was the difficulty found in communicating the issue to people who are not related to DEFRA.

The team responsible for the campaign's design formed partnerships with private companies in order to produce fun and interactive tools which would translate the principles of sustainability. The result was the creation of three tools: (1) a film that shows successful practices in the UK, (2) an online game that uses the fishing industry as an example, and (3) The Stretching Web, an interactive tool.

We cannot deny that internal communication of organisations has as much importance as external communication, since employees, managers, shareholders, etc. can multiply values and organisational visions. Through interactive media, the campaign ought to bring the consequences of a policy on sustainable management into the staff's work. By observing the results obtained, DEFRA was able to change some aspects of the campaign before conducting it outside the organisation. We could consider this initiative as a case of strategic communication because:

- the problem to be faced was defined before any kind of research with the public;
- there was distorted communication and discursive closure, which was relevant since there are relations of power, pressures of schedule and specific technologies of mediation;
- the ultimate responsibility for decision is individual because only DEFRA has the duty of deciding the use of interactive media with the public;
- there is no interaction for the construction of a collective meaning. Instead, DEFRA standardized and distributed the meaning of sustainability to employees;
- the organisation acquired information from its staff and used it to make a significant improvement in the campaign's strategy although there is no guarantee that its adequacy in an internal level will be repeated in an external one.



Sustainable Development in Schools⁶ was the campaign developed by COMHAR-Sustainable Development Council of Ireland in partnership with ECO-UNESCO. The objectives meant to identify the level of sustainability awareness among students and teachers and also the tools already used in this context. Besides that, the project intended to develop new ways to integrate the concept in the context of Irish formal education and to implement and evaluate workshops in schools across the country.

Four primary schools and four secondary schools in Dublin were chosen as starting places for research in order to establish teacher's needs. Then it was discovered that materials to be produced for future use in classrooms should: (1) be easy to manipulate, (2) be identified and created from a real link between sustainability and its practice, (3) provide solutions to everyday problems like the reduction of water and energy consumption.

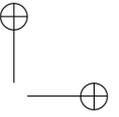
Two key features of the project were the priority of establishing current disciplinary boundaries and their possible links with sustainability and the fact that all the decisions made (the inclusion of the subject as a discipline in several educational levels, for example) were decentralized and based on the opinion of nearly 90% of teachers from all schools.

In primary education, the workshops had as their main themes health, social rehabilitation and personal rehabilitation. The activities were run by a facilitator who had no relation to public schools, and who used a large variety of methods of non-formal education. More than 70% of students were involved in it. In secondary schools, workshops were more related to science and geography. Techniques such as brainstorming and group discussion for the establishment of links between environmental, social and economic sustainability were adopted. All workshop results were systematically assessed through questionnaires and facetoface interviews.

Specifically in this campaign, students enjoyed being encouraged to think in a new perspective. Most of them liked to answer the questions proposed because they did not require only one perfect answer. Therefore we believe this can be a case of participatory democracy, since the nature of collaboration is evident, and we highlight that:

- the definition of the problem was collective and decision making was creative and reciprocal;

⁶More information at www.ecounesco.ie/partners.aspx.



- teachers, students, facilitators and government representatives tried to solve the problems of sustainability education together;
- the interactions between teachers and students were intended to identify mutual necessities and the best solutions to satisfy them;
- discursive closures were absent and all relevant opinions were considered;
- the ultimate responsibility for decision (such as the inclusion of a new discipline in the system or the development of new teaching materials) was shared.

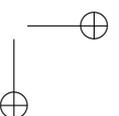
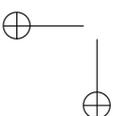
Conclusion

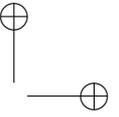
Currently, there is a growing consensus that we are facing an unprecedented scenario, distinguished by a high degree of mobility and diversity. This situation requires a new way of thinking about Organisational Communication and how useful it can be to the spread of the concept of sustainability.

One of the challenges is how to communicate sustainability through creative and innovative solutions, based on different stakeholders' opinions. The incorporation of values and practices to a new form of management with those characteristics is not simple, since not all audiences have the same level of education and culture. Every process of change involves resistance, transformation and learning.

We believe there is a process of evolution regarding the communication of sustainability by organisations. In this process, the strategic character of communication policies can be minimized and a more participatory approach can be developed. Deetz is one of the researchers who has already identified this change and has proposed a less distorted communication in which the ultimate responsibility of decisions is collective. His proposal suggests a positive development of communication campaigns regarding sustainability without compromising their effectiveness.

There is no doubt that organisations have been forced to rethink their communication. Understanding the characteristics of this new environment we live in is crucial. If the environment where people and organisations work today is fundamentally different, communicative responses to certain

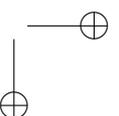
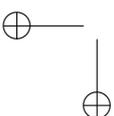


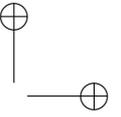
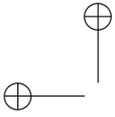


situations must also be updated. In the words of Deetz (2009), ‘routine theories based on common sense, developed in another era to meet different needs, are an obstacle to creative and sustainable decisions.’ We believe it is urgent to evolve into an Organisational Communication marked by participatory democracy and collective interactions that will allow the correct comprehension of sustainability and its practice.

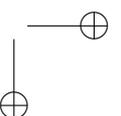
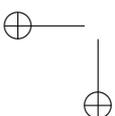
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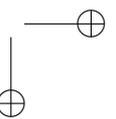
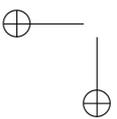
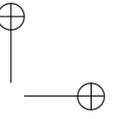
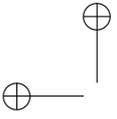
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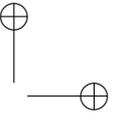




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An identity-based approach to communication

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Abstract: The main objective of this paper is to evaluate the key elements in the construction of consistent organisational messages over time. In order to accomplish that, we propose the alignment of several elements: vision, mission, objectives, cultural values, optimal identity attributes, positioning, type of messages, communication style and means, and image. The expected result of this heuristic approach is to obtain a favourable image in the relevant public's mind, which will eventually lead to an excellent reputation and, ultimately, prestige. Considering that an organisation can have a reputation for all the wrong reasons, we propose the concept of prestige as a means of focusing on the positive features of reputation.

Keywords: organizational and strategic communication, identity, image, reputation.

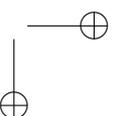
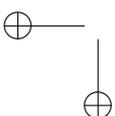
Introduction

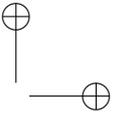
We argue that it is almost impossible to build a credible organisational image if leaders are not willing to establish clearly what the organisation is. This inner path is essential to conveying credible messages. In fact, identity should be the central concept behind any communication strategy, because the identity traits should 'contaminate' all other communicative relevant elements.

The concept of identity is complex and can have different meanings. In order to clarify our thoughts, we have adopted an inclusive formulation as stated by Ruão (2008: 93): 'a set of central, distinctive, enduring and stable attributes of a given organisation, that emerge from the historic legacy such as myths and traditions; from a shared culture its beliefs and values; from the features of personality visible in the business philosophy and vision; from a distinctive name, visual, symbols and other forms of communication; from the organisational behaviour patterns, as well as business actions and social responsibility.'

Having this definition in mind, we propose a set of elements which should be aligned to produce an identity-based approach to communication. These

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 149-154.





elements are vision, mission, objectives, cultural values, behaviour, optimal identity attributes, positioning, messages, means, and communication style.

The identity-based approach

We argue that it is almost impossible to build a credible organisational image, if the organisation leaders are not willing to establish clearly and verbalize who the organisation is. This inner path is essential to conveying credible messages. The next step is to convey internally and externally those features that identify the organisation in the audiences' minds. For the process to be completed, it is essential that the messages, coming from various sources and at different times, are congruent and enhance the same characteristics. Identity is the key element because it rests underneath and is essential to defining who the organisation is and how it wants to be perceived.

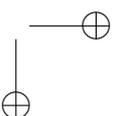
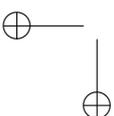
We propose a set of elements that we think will be foundational for a comprehensive identity-based approach to communication:

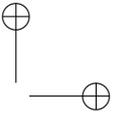
The vision – as a business in someone's dream – if it is clear for both the leadership and organisational members 'what do we want to reach', it will be easier to achieve it; this statement can be used as a motivational tool. The benefits will be felt internally – it sets a direction and frames different actions – and externally shows intentionality and demonstrates leadership.

The mission – to define, 'what we do, with whom, and to whom' is essential – sometimes the mission is very clear in the business owner's mind, but it is not clear for the rest of the 'crew'; differences in the internal perception of, 'who are we, what we do and for whom are we working' are very harmful because each organisation member may convey different messages to the outside, damaging the overall organisational image. A clear internal definition of the mission engages people, rises above any group interests, and clarifies organisational purposes. It also states clearly what the organisation's reason to exist is and rises above any particular stakeholder's interests;

The objectives – a clear definition of the in-between steps to achieve overall organisational goals is crucial as it allows members to have a clear notion of being on the right path. Internally, objectives materialize the mission, provide a focus for action, and allow synergies. Externally, objectives indicate direction and purpose, demonstrate intentionality, and clarify strategy;

Cultural values – the definition of cultural values guide and shape organ-





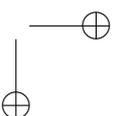
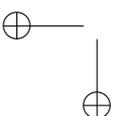
isational behaviour, which is a decisive step to providing the beliefs that make sense for the group, thus influencing the way the organisation is seen from the exterior. The clear definition of organisational values, helps internally to harmonize visions and behaviours and enhance the sense of belonging, cohesion, reciprocity and personal implication. Externally, it induces predictability into action that allows audiences' expectations to be fulfilled as previously;

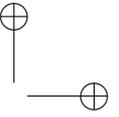
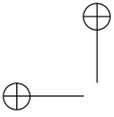
Optimal identity attributes – the exposure of the optimal identity attributes is the central crucial step to organisational differentiation. These attributes emerge from the confrontation between an organisation's defining traits and the ones of the main competitors, emphasizing to the relevant audiences why they should pick the organisation over all the competitors. This phase of the process implies the articulation of the visual identity and eventually a new or renewed corporate brand. The centrality of the concept becomes clear when identity becomes the raw material to shape symbols, behaviours, and communication. Internally, optimal identity attributes make differentiation points – real or induced – visible and raises recognition, support, and loyalty. Externally, for the internal elements enhance the same differentiation points, attract recognition, support and loyalty, help positioning, and increase visibility;

Positioning – the definition of a clear concept in the audiences' minds that allows the organisation to build strong links and cannot be owned by any other organisation. It embodies vision, mission statement, values, etc. in a unique concept consistently conveyed in order to achieve the desired place in the audiences' minds;

Messages, means and communication style – these elements must be carefully chosen. Every organisation is a *communicative body*, that is, everything that it does and shows communicates with its audiences. That can be done either through sophisticated means or through the interaction of organisational members with external audiences. The content of the messages should always meet the audiences' expectations. What is said about the organisation (values, attributes, and positioning concept must be taken into consideration at this point), which words, images, etc. are appropriate to meet that particular stakeholder expectation, is important;

Image – built from every fragment of information that the audiences process. If the messages are coordinated, consistently conveying the same strategic features over time, the expected result should be a harmonious set of in-





formation. From our point of view, it is impossible to build a credible, meaningful organisational image if the messages reaching the audience are contradictory.

This is a crucial step to building a credible organisational image over time, with effort, commitment, and authenticity to achieve a solid reputation, respect and prestige.

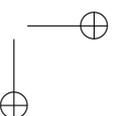
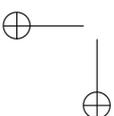
Discussion

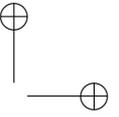
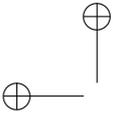
The opportunity to develop the model proposed would engage substantial time and resources, and a multidisciplinary group of professionals. The most important time-consuming part is employee training and the clarification of top management views about the business.

Recently, an important Portuguese holding corporation undertook a process of incorporating new attributes to their visual identity, with its entire internal structure suffering reorganisation. The process took 2 years and was widely reported through specialized media. For those who are unaware of the work that entails, it will appear as a 'simple' change of visual identity or an endorsement of all the business areas under the same brand.

Several authors have drawn attention to the fact that no communication policy is consistent if it is not firmly anchored in organisational identity and integrated, which requires the articulation of all communication means chosen by the organisation to present itself. Authors like Christensen and Cheney (1994) emphasize the need to define identity as an important part of the quest for visibility and credibility in a saturated and sometimes hostile environment. Knowing that the organisational image is located in the public's minds, we may intuit that everything a person receives – coming from several means at different moments, forming a mosaic of information – will be processed and form a meaningful piece of information. If several messages convey contradictory information, it is impossible for the public to build a consistent and credible organisational image.

According to Hatch and Schultz (1997, p. 357), identity has become a great concern in the minds of managers, since it can damage essential dimensions of organisational activity like reputation, recruitment, and performance. More importantly, it may develop an important role in the differentiation of the organisation in a cluttered market. As a result, identity attributes are the





basis for every communication plan, conveying and enhancing organisational uniqueness, bringing a number of potential benefits like adding value to increasingly similar products or services, attracting high quality personnel, improving employee identification and motivation, drawing investor attention, and generating consumer loyalty (Balmer, 1995; van Riel & Balmer, 1997; Fombrun, 1996).

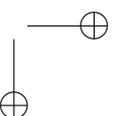
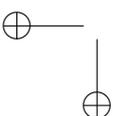
The model that we are proposing needs to be tested in real market conditions. Nevertheless, at this point of our investigation, it is our assumption that the alignment of these elements will bring consistency through the articulation of the proposed elements, and will enhance organisational image.

Conclusions

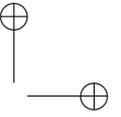
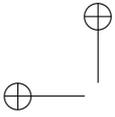
Cluttered markets demand new approaches in order to build strong reputations that will stand for a unique and credible image. Articulated communication is the key element to assemble and integrate several elements – vision, mission, values, cultural values shaping behaviour, optimal identity attributes, positioning, messages, means and communications styles – that will convey, with clarity, consistency, and stability, both inside and outside the organisation, the uniqueness of the organisation to the market. We think that organisations would be recognizable and visible to the market if they put an extra effort in articulating the messages to their key audiences. In our opinion, identity comprises the fundamentals of all the other elements that will be conveyed to audiences; if the messages are harmonic and articulated, in terms of visibility and notability, they will live longer in the audiences' minds.

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Discussion groups as strategy for organisational communication. The practical example of *Tertúlias FNACiência*

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Abstract: For a science-oriented organisation to communicate with different audiences, strategies are needed at the level of external communication along with a relational approach to society. At University of Minho, the School of Sciences (ECUM) conducted a project called ‘Tertúlias FNACiência’, with the support of FNAC stores. The context of informal sessions, the panel of guests, and the topics chosen have contributed to confirming the discussion groups as one of the most successful communication initiatives. This article describes the communication strategy adopted by the organisation in order to bring up science (especially science produced in the region of Minho), Portuguese researchers and scientists, the public, and increasing awareness of ECUM as a reference.

Keywords: organisational communication, communication of science, scientists, public, discussion groups.

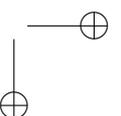
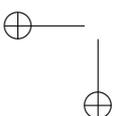
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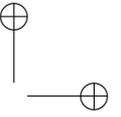
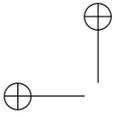
Between science, organisational communication, strategic communication, the protagonists and the public, there are complex relations that are subject to interference, obstacles and contingencies, and fashions, which are not always easy to identify and explain. These relations are marked by time constraints, resources (human and material), and support, or lack thereof.

The School of Sciences of University of Minho (ECUM) assumes a role of strategic relevance in the context of the university’s communication with the outside and has communication needs that imply a proximity and relationship with the public.

The ECUM integrates five departments - Mathematics and Applications, Biology, Earth Sciences, Chemistry and Physics - and to create a new relational energy with the public has developed a program of discussion groups (inspired by the *science café* model) to support the communicational goal. The

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 155-170.





partnership established with FNAC¹ assured the transfer of the ‘café’ space, the disclosure, and the technical logistics for the session’s organisation.

In order to reflect on the different aspects at stake in public science activities, we analyse the ‘Tertúlias FNACiência’,² discussing the two main ECUM stakeholders’ perspectives on the event, firstly based on an opinion survey conducted in two sessions with the public, and secondly by approaching a review of individual involvement, participation, and team motivation of the ECUM elements (researchers, professors) concerning the initiative at stake and science communication in general.

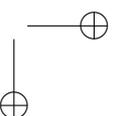
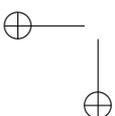
Context

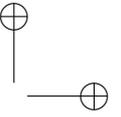
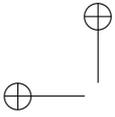
Science Communication in Portugal is a recent phenomenon which is directly linked to political factors (government innovation, technology, and knowledge policies as an engine of national economy), organisational factors (higher education institutions/laboratories and scientists have awakened to the necessity of opening abroad), economic factors (the need to give visibility to the internal work, seeking support and funding, competitiveness, globalization), cultural factors (demands for more students with science degrees, encouraging research and retention of young researchers in the country, building a scientific citizenship, building a scientific culture, national science perception), and social factors (citizenship requires more scientific knowledge for decision making in themes such as nanotechnology, nuclear energy, genetically modified organisms).

To achieve results (attract young people to science, debate controversial issues, expose aspects of a recent discovery still under discussion, give visi-

¹FNAC (French acronym of *Fédération Nationale d’Achats des Cadres*) is a network of specialized retail stores founded in France in 1954. FNAC has stores throughout Europe and Brazil. The sale of cultural products (literature, music, video, photography), and technologies, as well as events in ‘Café FNAC’ (show cases, gatherings, panel discussions, autograph sessions and presentations) is the business axis of this brand.

²*Tertúlias* [Salons, gathering, discussion group, meeting of friends or regulars, usually in *cafés*, to discuss ideas on emerging issues of politics, culture, science and society. The Portuguese adopted the Paris intellectuals’ tradition of gatherings in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Some *cafés* remain historical meeting places for ‘Tertúlias’ such as ‘A Brasileira’ (Braga) where the first session of the ‘Tertúlias de Ciência’ took place dedicated to the theme “Science and Society”]





bility to a scientific paper in particular), it is important to create, promote, and risk new communication strategies, keeping in view the aspects related to the concept of ‘public understanding of science’ (Canavarro, 1999). Informing is not enough; it is essential to know how to communicate. This process involves not only communication skills but also a full understanding of organisational culture and that implies the whole public representation of the entity, in this case, the ECUM.

Alongside other activities - a science communication workshop (for scientists) focused on the needs of strategic communication (individual and organisational), a ‘Science Café’, a Science Festival, a master class and a set of scientific competitions for young students of different education levels - the ‘Tertúlias FNACiência’ were seen as opportunities to establish communication between the scientific world and society.

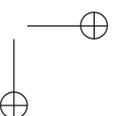
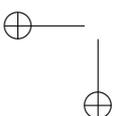
Considering that the University of Minho has campuses in the cities of Braga and Guimarães, the agenda included sessions in both cities, benefiting from the local support of the FNAC stores. The planning considered the mobilization of the public in both cities where the university is present and where important research projects are determinants for the development of the region. Mentioned as example of main anchors of this construction, the International Iberian Nanotechnology Institute (Braga) and the Science & Technology Park - Avepark (Guimarães) - appear as reference entities that the University of Minho helped found and in which it has an important role in terms of research and management.

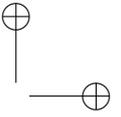
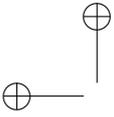
I - Organisational Communication

Organisational communication is ‘the process by which members of an organization add relevant information about it and about the changes that occur within it, and make it circulate endogenous and exogenous’ (Kreps in Ruão, 1999: 182).

Silvestrin et al. (2006) also describe organisational communication as an open system in which communication is organised by the different elements that make up the body (organisation, entity, institution, company), namely, the source, the message, the encoder, the channel, the decoder, and the receiver.

The communication in the organisational context can be seen as a competitive factor that allows highlighting and differentiating the organisation on the





market as Santos (2010) considers by denoting the possibility of communication as a strategic tool that facilitates growth and promotes interactions and relations between the organisation and its audiences (or publics).

To Kunsch (2003), the phenomenon of communication that occurs within organisations brings together four modalities, *institutional communication*, *marketing communication*, *internal communication*, and *communication management*. In the same line of thought, Cruz (2007) adds *cultural communication*, *media* and *information system* that aggregates and manages the different contents and spreads them across the structure.

Communication is the instrument through which the organisation perpetuates its culture and its reference values and transmits it to the public that relate directly or indirectly, its message and inheritance, tuning directions, alignment, and understanding, through convergent flow toward the objectives.

This kind of *sap* seems to be a precondition for the proper functioning of the organisation as explained by Wiio in Rego (2007: 25), who says that, ‘a human organisation is simply a communication network. If communication fails, a part of the organisational structure also fails’. A striking view of communication is also echoed by Kreps in Ruão (1999: 182) when he states that ‘communication allows people to generate and share information, giving them the ability to cooperate and organise themselves’.

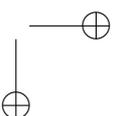
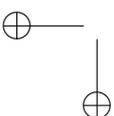
Organisational communication helps to provide visibility, increasing awareness, confirm the identity, and enhance the image of the organisation, combining its interests and objectives with public expectations (Cruz, 2007).

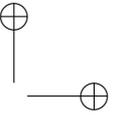
Much of the organisation’s success can derive from communication, as suggested by Melina and Fossá (2006), in terms of *organisational commitment* (ties and bonds that the individual establishes with the organisation to which he belongs).

The authors explore the idea of *culture of commitment*, concluding that this happens naturally in a more informal system embedded with a sort of ‘family spirit’, proximity between individuals, participation in decisions and broader understanding.

Thus, the nature and strength of values such as loyalty and belonging (inherent to organisation culture, leading the individual to appropriate and ‘reinterpret’ those values and ‘redesign’ them) feed the motivation and involvement (Melina & Fossá, 2006).

In the case of universities, and as mentioned by Andrade (1999: 2), the





requirements of practice in terms of argument and rhetoric power ‘should be a good barometer of communication skills that organizations, all of them, require whilst complex systems of action, culture and experience’.

In fact, talking about science and specifically about a science organisation such as ECUM leads us to a story of two different worlds: on one hand the **world of science**, and on the other, the **world of society**. These kind of *isolated aquariums* require the indispensable bridge of communication management to ensure interactivity between the unique culture of comfortable scientific isolation and the needs of understanding the problems of everyday life that science and technologic advances posed to citizens in particular and society in general.

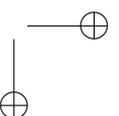
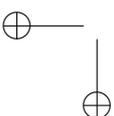
II - Communicating Science: duty and social commitment

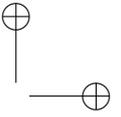
The preamble of the *Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge* by UNESCO (1999) expressed that the development of natural science manifests itself in a concrete social impact, and considering the twenty-first century as a century of knowledge, science must be shared and accessible to citizens who have requested decisional involvement mainly because science and technology are a driving force for economic development. However, this development must be viewed from a sustainable perspective to combat inequality and poverty, as defined in the declaration.

Along with the responsible use of scientific knowledge (framing scientific work in the field of natural sciences, physical sciences, earth sciences, biology, biomedical sciences, engineering, and social sciences and humanities), the commitment to science declared by UNESCO early in the new millennium involves all fields of science and assumes that all cultures can contribute to its enlargement and to the ‘universal value’ of scientific knowledge.

The document stresses the need to put science at mankind’s service by contributing to an effective sharing of in-depth knowledge of nature and society and refers to communication as an essential tool to encourage participation, promote dialogue, overcome the barriers of discrimination and inequality (in access of ethnic groups, minorities and gender), and combat problems such as poverty and environmental degradation. Scientists are given the duty to share knowledge and, more importantly, communicate with the public.

There are two key movements to increase scientific knowledge of the pub-





lic, that is, *scientific literacy* and *public understanding of science* (PUS). The two movements also include the theoretical study of *attitudes toward science*, *science education* and *public engagement with science* (PES) (Wilkinson, 2010).

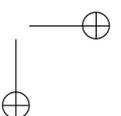
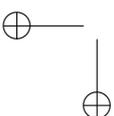
We cannot talk about science communication while ignoring the conceptual elements (Brake, 2010; Burns, 2003, Costa et al., 2010; Silva, 2007; Wilkinson, 2010) that make up the matrix game where all the interaction between science and the public develops. It concerns *scientific literacy*, *science education*, *public understanding of science*, and *public engagement with science*, *culture*, *science and scientific citizenship*.

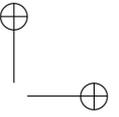
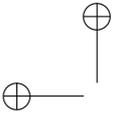
Science expects from society a correspondent commitment to understanding its impact on a daily basis to be effective and facilitate decision making. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), scientific literacy implies that citizens understand science content, facts, and basic concepts of scientific methodology. Part of this knowledge is transmitted in formal education systems, but it has been proved inadequate and discouraging, considering the lack of scientific vocations, accentuated by the general disinterest of young people in scientific areas such as Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. Education is seen by officials as well as science communicators as complementary and an encouragement towards a more efficient public understanding of science.

There is a basic idea: to understand science is part of the condition of being a citizen. The process includes scientists who are called upon to develop scientific dissemination activities and are able to generate citizen interest in science.

The aim of these movements was to avoid the displacement of citizens and emerging ‘anti-science’ trends caused by the lack of information, ignorance, and alienation. In 2000, the ‘Science and Society’ report, written and published by the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology (UK) emerged as an enhancer of the ideology of public commitment to science.

The political incentive (in the perspective of an involved citizenry, even in matters of science) and a new approach on communication matters with citizens (focused on interaction, involvement and presence in science activities), among other things, were referred to as motivational by Wilkinson (2010).





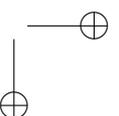
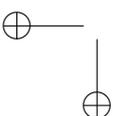
III - Portugal: from scientific backwardness to the top of excellence

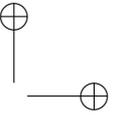
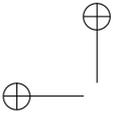
‘Science in Portugal’ is a paperback of one of the most proactive promoters of Portuguese science. The physicist Carlos Fiolhais presents in his essay a generic overview of science in Portugal, exposes the observed change in recent years, especially in the last two decades, and critically discusses future prospects.

From the scientific, cultural, and educational backwardness of 1974, Portugal has become a country among the leaders in science and technology (Fiolhais, 2011). The researcher explains that Portugal ‘has gone from a situation where science was a residual to a plan which science began to have some presence and impact on society’ (Fiolhais, 2010:18). However, we are at the doorstep but still nowhere near the top.

Public investment in science increased from 0.3% of GDP in 1982 to 1.5% in 2010, a development that followed the dynamics of scientific productivity that characterized the first decade of this century in Portugal (number of people formed, number of PhDs, number of scientific articles published in leading journals, the impact of these articles, quotations, internationalization, science and technology parks, research scholarships, the number of patents, participation of Portuguese researchers and scientists in international networks of knowledge). This is remarkable progress, but it requires a constant effort that only makes sense if all the elements and individuals (universities, research centres, researchers, scientists, citizens, the state, and the economic fabric) are engaged in the same objective (Fiolhais, 2010).

In the report ‘Science in Portugal’, prepared by the Committee on Education and Science, under coordination of the deputy José Gomes Ferreira and published by the Portuguese Republic Assembly (2010), science is seen as a ‘free field’, but the public funding of science imposes on scientists the ‘duty of justifying their work in response to citizen’s needs’. In this report, the financial issue is recognized as one of the biggest obstacles to the daily management of some research units in Portugal, but other problems are indicated in the document, particularly in the field of project appraisal, careers, and opportunities. The report does not address the social factor nor the civic component of science, but refers to data on scientific literacy, science education, public understanding of science, and public engagement with science (at European





level), indicating some relevant data pointing to the distance between citizens and science.

Science is a human activity, inseparable from the process of social evolution; it is collective, not individual, and it is economically important action (Brake, 2010). Just as communication does not solve all problems of an organisation, so science is not, by itself, the ‘holy medicine’ for the health of an economy; however, consideration should be given to the depth idea that Carlos Fiolhais (2010:18) exposes when he says that it ‘can’t be just science to save us, but we are definitely lost without science’.

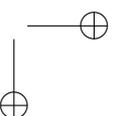
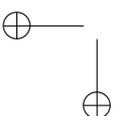
Science is gaining power to influence new behaviours and attitudes of man himself (Brake, 2010), which requires scientists to have an essential relationship with the public. The communication of science and the role of scientists as promoters of science can be viewed under the principles of social responsibility, to the extent that the assumptions inherent to these practices (such as ethics) are present.

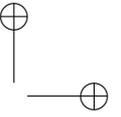
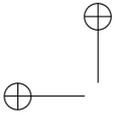
Unfortunately, there seems to be a very difficult relationship between scientists and the public. Distressed by the problematic transfer of information and lack of enthusiasm for science and technology among young students, a group of professors from the University of Porto (UP) held a seminar on science communication to discuss the excitement of doing science (Carrapatoso et al., 2005).

Among other reasons, the group concluded that the probable causes for the reduced demand for science courses by students would be a distinct lack of vocations and demographic reasons, cultural factors, a lack of a positive discourse of science, and an ‘insufficient importance given to public relations professionals of Science and Technology - communicate and knowing how to communicate is essential to create view’ (Carrapatoso et al., 2005).

There is a gradual change in the relationship between the Portuguese and science. It is marked by numerous informal activities between citizens (especially young people) and science that involve ‘hands on’ but also the idea of ‘minds on’ and ‘hearts on’ (Carrapatoso et al., 2005).

It is unthinkable that the widespread disaffection of citizens for science resides only on individual reasons, civic attitude, or scientific culture (or lack thereof). It is also important to understand the functioning logic of the organisational structure - in this case, the entity that organised the ‘Tertúlias





FNACiência' - that is, individual attitudes aimed at collective motivation and willingness to participate in activities involving contact with the public.

IV – The ECUM tradition on science communication: open arms to the public

In early 2011, the *Commission for Interaction with Society* was formally founded at the ECUM. This working group integrates representatives of the five departments of the School of Sciences, whose mission is to undertake a range of activities for promotion of science and scientific issues.

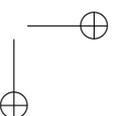
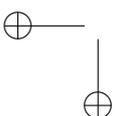
The project 'Tertúlias FNACiência' was born within this working group. It allowed for creating a space for informal discussion in a very unusual context (a shop in a mall) for contacts between scientists and the general public. The holding of monthly sessions, widely disseminated through the institutional email and reinforced by the ECUM communication resources, the rector's communication office support, and a wide range of digital media (in which we highlight the website '*Ciência Hoje*'), allowed the creation of a '*group of followers*' specially composed of secondary and university students and teachers, scientists from different fields of knowledge, teens, adults and elderly citizens motivated to science.

The ECUM activities clearly identified students (secondary and academic) and the general public as targets of the campaigns (disclosure of formative offer, students 'capture', attracting new audiences, and dissemination of science in society).

To implement the initiatives, the ECUM commission for interaction with society tried to mobilize the internal working group (especially in supporting the dissemination of informal sessions) in an effort to achieve dynamics of 'organisational commitment'.

The 'Tertúlias FNACiência' project aimed to bring out the School of Sciences from behind university walls, but there was no venue available that offered the best conditions to informally gather scientists and public. The first session of the 'Tertúlias' was held in November 2010 in the historic *café* 'A Brasileira', in Braga.

The impact was extremely positive and well received by the community (including the academic target). The following sessions were performed at the FNAC store under a partnership established with ECUM that allowed a



new opportunity for involvement around science communication activities and organisational communication practices.

Each session of ‘Tertúlias FNACiência’ matched a theme to be discussed by invited referenced scientists and researchers and the public. After eleven sessions (from December 2010 to June 2011), with the presence of 26 scientists, about 600 people attended the ‘Tertúlias FNACiência’.

The informality of the environment, the context and the public forced the scientists to adopt a more relaxed, more open, more persuasive and less rigid attitude. In some sessions, there was a projection of slides and images collected from simulations and laboratory tests which improved the communication set contributing to motivate the audience and capture attention.

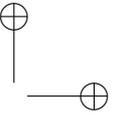
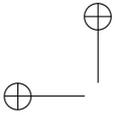
Through this initiative, the ECUM promoted science, crafted a positive image of both the University of Minho and Portuguese researchers and scientists, and added visibility to the ECUM organisational profile.

To evaluate the event, two different opinion surveys were conducted, one among the public (in order to gather information on sessions attendance, topics related to scientific issues, and general assessment of the event), and one with ECUM members (ongoing survey to appraise involvement, motivation, and participation as well as general assessment of the event).

The **opinion survey addressed to the public** was applied in two sessions (total number of sessions: 11), FNAC Guimarães (7 applications received) and FNAC Braga (28 applications received), for a total of 35 valid applications to analyse.

Regarding the public profile, we may say that is mostly female, with an average age around 37 years, academic training or attending university. It indicates, therefore, a motivated public that intentionally participates in the sessions (only three respondents in the survey admitted having attended the session by a mere coincidence). A majority attended indicated one session at least (19) and many between two and five sessions (11).

In terms of the relationship established with scientific themes, the overwhelming majority of respondents chose, from a list of 9 statements about scientific citizenship and the sessions, statements endorsing interest for science issues, importance of science to the development of the country, relevance of the science/society relationship, and the important need to be interested on science as a concerned citizen. Almost all respondents considered the ‘Tertúlias FNACiência’ sessions as interesting in terms of debated themes,



and the majority considered that scientists must have communication skills to interact with public.

The respondents were challenged to identify, among a set of scientific themes, the three that they considered most important and would like to see addressed in upcoming sessions. A large number of respondents indicated 'renewable energy' (16 hits), 'medicines of the future' (16 hits) and 'climate change' (12 hits). 'Global warming', 'nuclear energy', 'Science and Culture', 'natural disasters' and 'science history' were also mentioned.

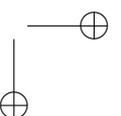
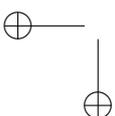
Considering the overall assessment of the sessions, the respondents who attended at least one session rated the initiative as 'very good' (21) or 'good' (12).

Holding informal activities for the dissemination of science confirms that there are people motivated to participate in public sessions that involve the presence of scientists as well as open and informal discussions about 'serious' issues usually restricted to the world of science.

Assuming that communication is, above all, dialogue, there was a need to measure (in the context of the 'Tertúlias FNACiência'), whether the internal public of the School of Sciences (teachers, researchers) manifested corresponding willingness to communicate and discuss, openly and informally, matters of science. That was the goal that motivated the development of a survey (ongoing) among the ECUM teachers and researchers.

The **opinion survey addressed to ECUM internal public** as mentioned, involves a sample size of 198 people (potential respondents). The survey was submitted through an online form disposed by LASICS - Laboratory Information Systems for Research in Social Sciences (University of Minho). In this article, we only report data on inquiries received in the initial phase of the study. During the period between the last session of the 'Tertúlias FNACiência' and the first week after sending the survey, there were 28 valid forms received.

In this case, the respondents' profile slightly changes compared to the general public profile mentioned above. Predominantly it is a male audience (16 men, 12 women), with an average age of 45 years, mid-career academics, mostly teachers from the departments of Physics, Mathematics, and Biology. This is a group that turns out to have attended a greater number of sessions - between two and five sessions (9), and at least one session (8). There is also



a significant number of respondents that did not attend any session (8), which indicates a certain lack of interest.

A significant number of responses reveal that 'Tertúlias FNACiência' sessions propose discussions on interesting topics (27 'fully agree'), that the connection between science and society is important and scientists must know how to communicate with publics (17 'agree'), adding that the circumstance of positive, informal, and motivating public dialogue constitutes an enriching opportunity for contact between ECUM researchers, other scientists, and citizens (nine 'fully agree', eight 'agree').

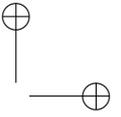
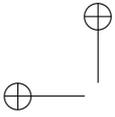
Concerning suggested topics (among a set of 14 scientific themes), there seems to be a convergence with the data collected in the general public survey. In fact, the three most voted themes were 'climate change' (11), 'renewable energy' (8), 'medicines of the future' (7) and 'regenerative medicine' (7). It was also mentioned as important to discuss issues related to research taking place in ECUM centres.

The study that is being developed among teachers and ECUM researchers tends to examine the contexts of communication in organisational entities whose mission is to produce science. The aim is thus to analyse areas such as personal involvement, motivation, and participation of scientists in science communication activities.

Preliminary results indicate that activities promoting the relationship between science and society tend to reinforce cohesion and team spirit (34% 'agree', 9% 'fully agree', 30% 'neutral answer'). In this particular item, data also indicate a tendency to disagreement (17% 'fully disagree' that public science activities contribute to cohesion and to build team spirit). In terms of motivation at the organisational context, data point to a majority of positive opinions (35% of respondents reveal that they are eager to collaborate in the ECUM activities, 17% of respondents reveal 'full motivation').

Relative to individual participation, responses obtained and analysed to date suggest broader rates. Assessing how often respondents participate in events and activities promoted by the ECUM, the answers vary between a majority of 'agree' (35%) and 'fully agree' (26%), and an expressive 'neutral answer' (17%), and 'disagree' (17%). Most of the respondents indicate a positive tendency in terms of collaboration on promotion and organisation of activities and mobilization of colleagues and students.

As noted above, data collection to reinforce this study is ongoing so the



topics discussed here are preliminary, though positive indicators are of an affirmative attitude from scientists in terms of ‘organisational commitment’, indicating as well, a certain dedication to the goals (relationship between ECUM and society) and to the mission of disseminating and producing science and knowledge. After collecting all data, we expect to confirm some of these assumptions and, possibly, other correlations to validate data not covered in this article.

Conclusion

The ECUM is a successful example of an organisation with communication practices that in spite of limited resources promotes activities that involve internal and external audiences.

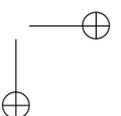
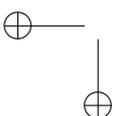
Science has an inescapable role in society today, indicating a dependency of modern life resulting from technology.

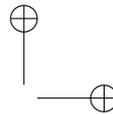
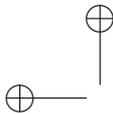
Bringing citizens to science, providing them with information, stimulating critical analysis of the relevant and current scientific issues (with impact on daily life) is part of science communication in an organisational context. Without alienating other goals, it includes personnel recruitment, strengthening bonds of trust, public support, funding support, and consolidation of the image, identity, and organisational reputation.

Science education in Portugal remains confined to theory and some experimental activity. In another line of action (informal education), the approach to science also develops activities aiming at public engagement with science (science fairs, visits to laboratories, summer camps, a network of *Ciência Viva* centres, science museums, and other initiatives).

The performance of the activities is limited by difficulties of time and financial and human resources but seeks to respond pressure promoting the movement of the Public Understanding of Science and Public Engagement to Science.

Within the framework of ECUM initiatives ‘*Tertúlias FNACiência*’ emerged as a relevant element of informal contact between science and society. The context in which the sessions occurred - a café in the historic city of Braga and FNAC stores in two shopping centres in the cities of Braga and Guimarães - provided the touch of informality, relaxation, and uncompromising approach between public and scientists (away from their usual academic



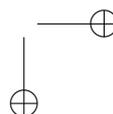
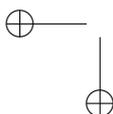


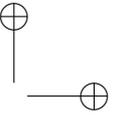
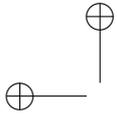
setting). This approach also allowed the open debate of ideas and opinions around scientific topics and moved the public and the scientists towards a practice of democratic civic participation.

The initiative has allowed ECUM to show management skills and to promote and organise activities that contribute to cohesion, notoriety, and a positive image withal of the individual scientific work produced at the University of Minho.

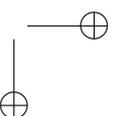
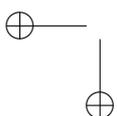
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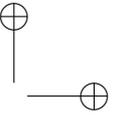


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Strategic and organisational communication in Mexican SMEs. Types of companies according to their integrated communication practices

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Abstract: This proposal covers a study carried out on data stemming from a project financed by the Spanish Latin American Cooperation Agency (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation) to look at Mexican SMEs on the basis of the value they place on communications and to analyse how such strategies can stimulate their development. We studied the practices that these SMEs use to communicate product information, corporate information, and internal information. The project is based on a sample of 105 companies in the states of Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit (Mexico). Various cluster analyses and discriminant analyses of the data the SMEs provided about their communications strategies enabled them to be placed into different groups.

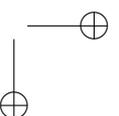
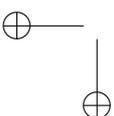
Keywords: SMES, México, communication, corporate and reputation.

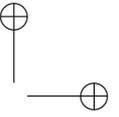
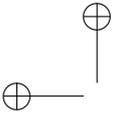
Introduction

SMEs are a key element in the Latin American economy, accounting for 99% of the region's business fabric (Bravo, Contreras, Crespi, 2007). These companies experience serious problems growing and developing. Some of the biggest hurdles include the difficulty of obtaining credit, and their low levels of access to financial services. Meanwhile, they implement image and communications policies - which could help to set them apart from their competition - to only a very limited degree.

The results of this research study provide a general overview of the Mexican SME landscape and of the level of development of their image and communications policies, which makes it possible to understand the setting in which they operate.

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 171-179.





172 Victoria Carillo Duran, Maria Garcia G., J. Luís Tato, G. Melendez Haba

From this starting point, it can be seen that the productive function is still one of the companies' most important roles, but that SMEs are also increasingly implementing image and communications policies as part of their business development plans (van Riel, 1997; Carrillo, Castillo, Gómez, 2005).

Today, the effort that SMEs put into communication needs to mirror their business focus so that they can stay on track for development. This means their image and communication policies and management need to be as strong as the corporate decisions they make in order to improve their business reputation (Villafañe, 1999).

In this regard, communication strategies should incorporate actions aimed at raising commercial awareness of their products and services. This is achieved basically through product communication actions or commercial communication actions designed to build up a relationship with external audiences, as well as corporate communication strategies, such as programmes to develop relations with the media and official bodies, and corporate social responsibility policies. It is also important to note that integral communication strategies need to incorporate an internal communications strategy (Carrillo & Tato, 2004).

Research Objectives

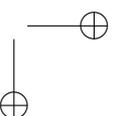
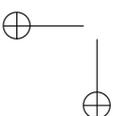
The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To identify the various types of Mexican SMEs on the basis of their integrated communications practices.
2. To classify the factors governing the main differences between them according to the kinds of communications policies they put in place.

Methodology

A research study was drawn up based on a sample of 105 SMEs from the states of Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit (Mexico), which was reduced down to 90 valid cases following a filtering process.

A questionnaire was used, which was divided into four overall sections. Aside from obtaining general information about the SMEs (block 1), it also asked them about their product or commercial communication (block 2),



corporate and image communication (block 3), and internal communication (block 4).

The data were tabulated and analysed using version 19 of the SPSS programme. We selected the different variables and eliminated three cases that were possible *outliers*. We produced a cluster of hierarchical conglomerates using the Ward method and the squared Euclidean distance.

This provided us with an initial solution: the number of conglomerates and centroids. After this, we carried out another cluster analysis using these data, this time using the k-Medias method, which allowed us to conclude how the SME clusters are made up and the number of elements (Table 1).

Table 1. Cluster Analysis

Cluster	1	26.000
	2	48.000
	3	15.000
Valid		89.000
Discarded		1.000

We used these results to carry out a *MANOVA* analysis, which revealed differences between the company groups derived from the cluster analysis. For this reason, we felt the need to finish with a *Discriminant* analysis of the variables giving rise to these differences, so that their relative importance could be understood (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. Results of the test(a)

Box M		1259.029
F	Approx.	3.453
	gl1	231
	gl2	8400.938
	Sig.	.000

Table 3. Self-values

Function	Self-value	% variation	% accumulated	Canonical correlation
1	6.789(a)	52.9	52.9	.934
2	6.044(a)	47.1	100.0	.926

Findings

Three groups of companies resulted from the cluster analysis, with the differences between them relating to a series of variables that were considered to be discriminants after the relevant analysis was carried out (Table 4). No differences were seen in the other variables between the groups, so we will describe the groups essentially on the basis of the variables in which differences were seen.

The **first group** is made up of 13 companies that carry out more complex and global communications actions; these could be called ‘companies with high development of commercial, corporate and image communications policies, fundamentally aimed at external audiences’. They belong to more advanced business sectors, offering products and services of a more intangible nature, with greater added value.

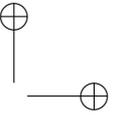
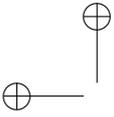
They concern themselves with commercial communication, which in most cases (83% of the companies in this group) is organised and planned from outside the company by specialist professionals.

They also tend to carry out planned and budgeted corporate communications strategies, with the aim of improving their image and boosting their reputation. In this respect, this group has the highest number of companies with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) certification, although it also must be acknowledged that the level of general interest in CSR policies is not very high among any of the three groups.

Within their lines of interest in designing their CSR policies, these companies seem to focus less than the other groups on environmental protection actions, and are less interested in community relations or employee-oriented social responsibility actions than the other groups, although the differences are minimal.

Table 4. Discriminant analysis. Discriminant variables

	Wilks lambda	F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
1.5	.814	9.799	2	86	.000
V7	.678	20.452	2	86	.000
V8	.876	6.101	2	86	.003
V9	.867	6.583	2	86	.002
V15	.846	7.813	2	86	.001
V19	.869	6.510	2	86	.002
V20	.845	7.864	2	86	.001
V21	.876	6.066	2	86	.003
V22	.897	4.955	2	86	.009
V24	.823	9.225	2	86	.000
V30	.824	9.189	2	86	.000
V34	.920	3.720	2	86	.028
V35	.898	4.889	2	86	.010
V36	.841	8.145	2	86	.001
V64	.515	40.571	2	86	.000
V65	.915	3.983	2	86	.022
V66	.760	13.552	2	86	.000
V67	.793	11.248	2	86	.000
V68	.831	8.718	2	86	.000
V69	.401	64.261	2	86	.000
V70	.866	6.629	2	86	.002



Lastly, this group is least interested in internal communication strategies, above all when compared with the degree to which these companies carry out the previously mentioned communications policies.

In general, they have a more balanced audience map, which appears to be coherent with their more diversified and global communications practices.

The second group is made up of 43 companies that produce less specialised goods and services than those in group 1, and offer less added value.

These are companies with an ‘acceptable level in terms of development and planning of commercial or product communication policies, and less interest in corporate and internal communication policies’.

This group carries out less planning than group 1 of commercial and product communication policies. There are no differences between the three groups in terms of their use of communication forms such as spots, radio, Internet, or cinema. However, the biggest differences between the groups of companies, above all between groups 2 and 3 (which are quite similar) and group 1, are in their use of the print media and external advertising.

These companies also carry out much less planning of corporate and image communication actions (by proportion only half the number of companies as in the previous group).

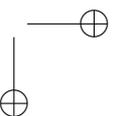
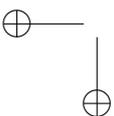
They exhibit the same level of concern about CSR as the other groups, which, as already noted, is not high, and have greater environmental interest than groups 1 and 3 with respect to their level of interest in other issues also linked to CSR.

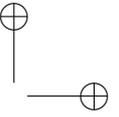
Proportionally, there are fewer companies in this group with any kind of CSR certification, although this number is greater than in group 3 and less than in group 1.

In terms of internal communications, this group exhibits the lowest level of interest in this kind of communication.

Their audience map shows that they are most interested in clients and banks (with interest in the latter being higher than in the other groups). Their interest in clients stems from their greater focus on communication to help them sell their products, with this being primarily aimed at consumers. In the case of banks, their interest is defined by the nature of the environment in which they operate, given that they experience serious problems in obtaining financing.

The greatest difference between this group and the next one is that this





group is more interested in planning communications actions and less interested in internal communications than group 3.

The **third group** comprises 25 companies that are similar to the previous ones in that they have the same level of interest in commercial communication, with particular focus on the print media and external advertising.

This group has the same interest as group 2 in planning and budgeting communications actions, as well as in hiring external experts to carry them out. In general, this group and group 2 have a much lower level of interest in this area than group 1.

Like the previous group, they also plan their corporate and image communication activities to a much lesser degree than group 1.

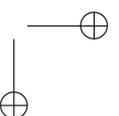
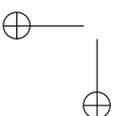
Although there are only a few companies with CSR certification, and their planning of such activities is limited, this group does have a somewhat greater interest in CSR policies than group 2. They are more sensitive towards issues such as communication and employees than on environment-focused ones. These companies seem to be rather more focused on their immediate environment, and their social responsibility actions tend to be more reactive than planned, carried out only as and when they are deemed necessary.

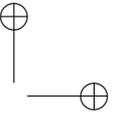
On the other hand, they seem to be more concerned about internal communication than the previous group, although the level is still not very high, and this reflects their greater sensitivity to their employees and their local setting.

As was the case with group 2, clients and banks stand out in their audience map. The reasons for this are the same as in the previous group. Like the previous group, they are largely uninterested in diversifying their map of target audiences, which can be seen in their low level of interest in having any integrated communication strategy.

Conclusions

- It can be seen that two groups of companies are primarily concerned with commercial communication, which is fundamentally aimed at clients, and have a low level of interest in planning communication actions in general and corporate and internal ones in particular.
- Meanwhile, group 1 comprises the only companies that plan a communication strategy encompassing the three kinds of communication





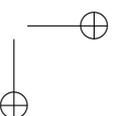
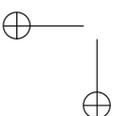
(commercial, corporate and internal), with particular focus on the first two types, with the clearest focus being on improving their image and reputation.

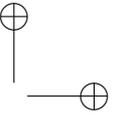
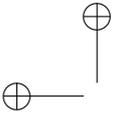
- The lack of concern among all three groups for internal communication is clear, resulting in their lesser focus on their employees as a strategic audience for meeting their organisational image targets. One of the reasons for this lack of interest could be the number of employees in the companies, which is not very high in most of the cases studied.
- Companies with a corporate communications strategy that clearly focuses on improving image do not seem to develop adequate CSR strategies. So far, they do not seem to have incorporated this intangible organisational asset as a resource with the capacity to improve an organisation's reputation. In companies with CSR certification, there even seems to be a certain level of dissonance with regard to the communication actions they carry out in order to publicise this fact.

This could be due to the fact that they have still not incorporated these policies at the same level as other, more traditional, means of improving their image and reputation.

It could be assumed that they are interested in obtaining this certification since it acts as a badge of quality for the organisation, but once they have achieved it they do not make full use of its potential.

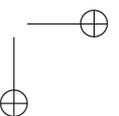
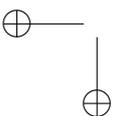
- Lastly, interest in CSR seems to be focused mostly on the environment, and does not extend to other equally important areas, such as community and employee relations. It is possible that the context in which these companies operate leads to their concern for this issue, or it could be due to the fact that the environment and environment-related issues seem to be in fashion, making environmental protection actions more visible than others focused on the community or employees.

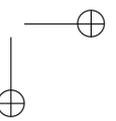
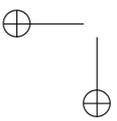
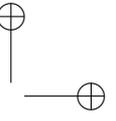
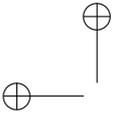


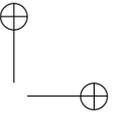
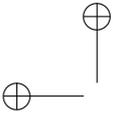


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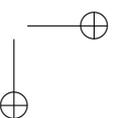
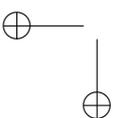


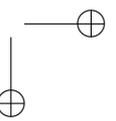
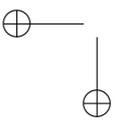
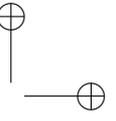
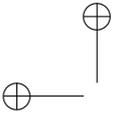


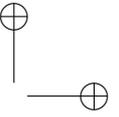
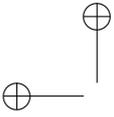


Part IV

BRANDING AND INTERACTIVE CAMPAIGNS







Logomorphism and Liquid Logos: An Analysis of Google Doodles

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Danielle I. Keiser
Ozen Odag

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Abstract: This study analyzes Google Doodles (the decorative changes made to the Google logo) as a potential influence on the company's corporate visual identity and as a means through which Google connects to and identifies with the public. This study finds that Google Doodles influence the flexibility of the company's corporate visual identity allowing Google to emerge as more than an anthropomorphic brand: the defined human characteristics and likeable personality traits change its own logo. This study calls this new strategy logomorphism. As a result, it helps the company to build a deeper and more personal connection with its users.

Keywords: Corporate Visual Identity, Fluid Identity, Google, Google Doodle, Logomorphism.

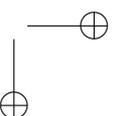
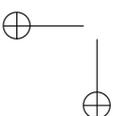
Introduction

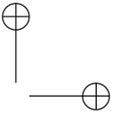
We are living in one of the most artificial visual and image-saturated cultures in human history which makes understanding the complex construction and multiple social functions of visual imagery more important than every before (Kellner, 2000).

Innovations in digital technology have changed the way multi-national corporations are relating to their consumers. Depending on the effectiveness of their branding strategy, they may be able to both define their brand globally and connect to people locally. In this context, Google is a brand to examine because it employs a strategy it calls 'Doodles', or decorating/changing the logo on the main search platform page. Doodles act as a fluid force that maintain and affirm their brand by reflecting broad 'global' values as well as specific national or local traditions.

Exploring this duality, this study analyzes Google Doodles as a potential influence on the company's corporate visual identity and as a means through

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges. . . , pp. 183-206.





which Google connects to and identifies with the public. In order to develop this research, Google Doodles from the years 1998 – 2009 were selected based on ‘global’ labels (as designated by Google) and subject to a multi-method semiotic-based analysis.

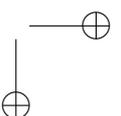
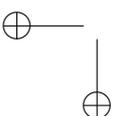
In the first method, a content analysis is employed in which Doodles are categorized in two aspects: thematic purpose and semiotic typology (icon, symbol or index). In the second method, an iconological analysis is employed to determine the deeper significance of the nature of the changes made to the logo.

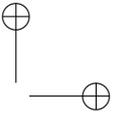
This study finds that Google Doodles influence the flexibility of the company’s corporate visual identity allowing Google to emerge as an anthropomorphic brand with defined human characteristics and likeable personality traits, which, as a result, helps to build a deeper and more personal connection with its users. In this context we created the neologism *logomorphism* in reference to the visual display of this brand anthropomorphism as demonstrated by the periodic changes made to the company’s logo. It also suggested that this imaginative visual strategy is embedded in a Western hegemonic ideology that inadvertently promotes values that may not necessarily be ‘global’, thus potentially compromising the connectivity to its users.

This chapter is divided in 6 parts. The first discusses the research theoretical fundamentals, particularly the concepts of identity and fluid identity, corporate visual identity (brands and logos) and flexible brand identities. The second part introduces the brand, Google, and its specific type of visual identity, the Google doodles. The third part is the methodology where we present our background theory and semiotics followed by our research method. Finally, we reach the results, and end the chapter looking forward to the future.

Fundamental Concepts

The research was based in three pillars: identity and fluid identity, corporate visual identity (specially concerning brands and logos) and finally, how these two notions can communicate with each other creating flexible brand identities.





Identity and fluid identity

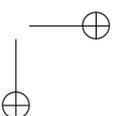
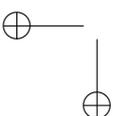
Scholars in many disciplines have challenged the notion of identity as the existence of a core, immutable self. The tropes of academic thought have moved away from defining identity as a permanent, fixed characteristic; instead, ‘identity’ has been termed a continuous process where expressions such as ‘liquid identity’ (Bauman, 2005) and ‘fluid identity’ (Hall, 2006) occupy a more ubiquitous place in the discourse. Hall and du Gay (2002) argue that, ‘the postmodern ‘problem of identity’ is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open’ (p. 18). However, this is not a new development given that philosophy dating back from ancient Greece through Socrates, Plato and Heraclitus had already put forward ideas about the individual and a continual process of transformation and development.

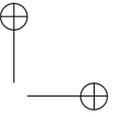
This concept is also significant in realms that extend beyond the individual; for the purpose of this study, we turn to transnational companies and global business enterprises.

In order to remain competitive in today’s fast-paced and ever-changing marketplace, it is of the utmost importance to be consistently evolving, keeping up with, and even leading the technological advancements brought about by modern society. Volatile economic conditions make it very difficult for a business to survive. A company is a ‘living, breathing, changing organism’ (Godin, 2002, p. 24), and as such, it should also be able to withstand and adapt to the fluctuations inherent in a globalized marketplace.

Corporate Visual Identity: Brands and Logos

Different elements of brand marketing work together to generate unique meanings about a company and communicate who and what that company represents. These elements – personality, value, loyalty, essence – accompanied by a visual presence help a company achieve the brand recognition they need to ensure that they survive and thrive in a competitive marketplace (Aaker, 1997; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Calderón *et al.*, 1997; Fatt, 1997; Schreuer, 2000; Simões and Dibb, 2001). The goal of a brand then is to create a long-term association that automatically triggers a distinct memory of those unique meanings; hence, the utmost importance of a well conceived visual communications strategy.





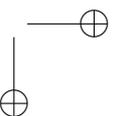
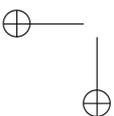
Scholars have described Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) as the outer sign of the inward commitment (Abratt, 1989) — product, environment and communications (Jefkins, 1990) — that emphasizes graphic design and management through official corporate symbols (Balmer, 1995). A CVI is designed to facilitate the attainment of business objectives and is the branding element most responsible for ‘creating strong perceptions in the minds of the public’ (Roberts & Dowling, 2002, p. 110).

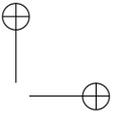
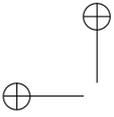
More than just a logo, CVI carries heavier implications in the professional world because it requires considerable creativity and strategy. It incorporates additional visual elements, making it the most critical element of a corporate graphic design system (Roberts & Dowling, 2002). According to Melewar and Saunders (1998), a CVI is composed of five parts: name, symbol and/or logotype, typography, color and slogan. Hynes (2009) aligns the concept of CVI with semiotic analysis of logos. The author tries to understand how and why the ‘triadic relationship between color, design and the evoked meanings of logos’ (p. 545) is crucial for the development of a strong brand and the maintenance of a consistent CVI.

Inherent in basic branding strategy is the instruction that to gain influence and have a strong and solid brand identity, a brand must embrace a logo that is visually clean, bold and consistent because it serves as the foundation for which the relationship with consumers is built upon. Thus, it is of the highest importance for corporations to strategically and emotionally craft these relationships to maintain a positive perception of their brand and ensure brand loyalty (Balmer & Gray, 2003).

While this advice is essential for a basic understanding of the psychology of marketing, the rapid and incredible influence of the Internet shows us something that branding experts could not have predicted: brands are communicating their visual identities in groundbreaking ways that have evolved way past the mere identification of a company’s logo.

Focusing on some of the brands that have utilized the Internet as their most effective link to their consumers, Scolari (2008) applies a semiotic analysis and also identifies the online interface — arguably a defining characteristic of Google Doodles — as a central focus of how brands are constructed. The importance of creating an emotional connection with consumers through the logo is also explored in Biricik’s (2006) analysis of Apple’s and IBM’s logotypes.





Flexible Brand Identity

When we develop flexible identity schemes we need to consider how and why the identity changes, and even if it needs to change at all. This should be as important as the choice of colour palette or typeface. It's a design decision in its own right and, like colour and typography, its choice is loaded with meaning. (Hewitt, 2008, p. 1)

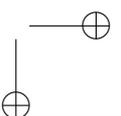
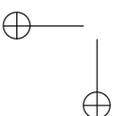
While the traditional or 'static' brand identity model attempts to seek 'recognition through repeated exposure of a consistent visual element' (such as a logo), a flexible brand identity uses 'a consistent visual element that displays, or is juxtaposed with, a varying visual element' (Marriot, 2011, p. 4).

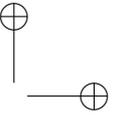
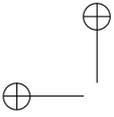
The MTV logo is a widely known (albeit somewhat basic) example of this model: its 'M' is a constant used as a frame to the variable, which, in this case, is an ever-changing multitude of images.

Whilst the MTV identity essentially revolves around a customizable logo, other flexible identities do not conform to this relatively simple formula, instead, within the multifarious group of identities, which could fall under the umbrella term of 'flexible', a host of methods, devices, nuances and idiosyncrasies are evident. Flexible identities may: comprise of sign families linked by rules or premises, fluctuate according to a live data feed, use algorithmic computer programs to make them aleatoric, be transformed by their context or become an entire visual language in themselves but intrinsic to all of these examples is a relationship between a constant element and variable element (Marriot, 2011, p. 4).

This idea is based on a key principle of Gestalt theory, which advocates that the human eye recognizes wholes instead of isolated parts. Applying this notion to brand identity, it implies that the alteration of a part of a logo will not make it indecipherable, as long as the whole remains undamaged. In addition, after being exposed enough times, the consumer comes to expect the changes: 'its variable behavior becomes an anticipated part of the brand identity' (Marriot, 2011, p. 6)

Marriot (2011) also subscribes to the notion that the flexible identity model is not simply a trend, as it seems to encapsulate certain characteristics of contemporary culture. For instance, in a society with so many stimuli, flexible identities are able to more successfully capture the attention of its au-





dience, as opposed to static identities, that have been increasingly losing their ability to create interest and, therefore, communicate.

Google and Doodles

In a world driven by Internet communication, Google has revolutionized the way we find and consume information (Auletta, 2009). If ‘wireless communication has become a delivery platform that covers the entire range of human activity’ (Castells, 2009, p. 69) and a grid of electronic communication overlies everything we do, wherever and whenever we do it (Ling, 2004; Koskinen, 2007), Google’s influence is undeniable. Google’s contribution to the overall flow of information – including the number of different avenues it allows users to connect to each other – virtually defines the Internet and makes the company an intrinsic part of our lives. Google’s chief economist, Hal Varian, explains the relationship between the Internet and Google in a few words: ‘The internet makes information available. Google makes information accessible’ (Auletta, 2009).

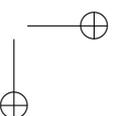
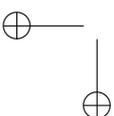
Google has become not only a household name, but also a verb. People do not search for things on the Internet, they ‘google it’. The verb was officially added to the Oxford English Dictionary on June 15, 2006 (Bylund, 2006), and to the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary in July 2006 (Harris, 2006).

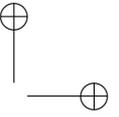
In addition to being the world’s leading Internet search engine, Google also has market dominance with a multitude of other services. Like the search engine, these products are technologically programmed to increase user communications and efficiency in the ways people work, live and play.

Google Doodles

Google’s permanent logo is simple, legible and easily recognizable. According to Ruth Kedar, Google’s graphic designer, ‘we ended up with primary colors, but instead of having the pattern go in order, we put a secondary color on the L, which brought back the idea that Google doesn’t follow the rules’ (Zjawinski, 2008, p. 8).

Historically, corporate identities and brands are seen as solid, strong, and unchanging (Balmer, 1995). Transnational corporations such as McDonalds, Starbucks, and IBM, have powerful, permanent and fixed logos. Google has





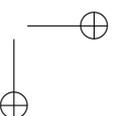
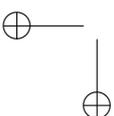
built a brand just as strong, but it has followed a different and more innovative route: in addition to a permanent logo, it also temporarily accessorizes its logo in the form of what they call Google Doodles.

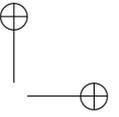
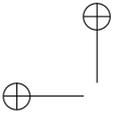
Marketing expert and author David Meerman Scott (...) noted: 'You can contrast what Google is doing to what most organizations do around their logos, which is to have 30-page books detailing how the logo can be used, and which PMS color and how many millimeters it can be from a corner of a page. It is all very rigid. Google is showing they're fun to work with.' (Guthrie, 2010)

Google defines Doodles as 'the decorative changes that are made to the Google logo to celebrate holidays, anniversaries, and the lives of famous artists and scientists' (Google, 2010a). They stay online for 24 hours at a time and then they are added to Google's Doodle Archive.

Google creators Larry Page and Sergey Brin started the Doodle tradition in the summer of 1998 when they both were 'out of office' at Burning Man, a yearly rites festival held in Nevada. They wanted to alert users of their absence in case the site crashed, so they created a small stickman figure, and placed it behind the second "o" in Google (Google, 2010a; Guthrie, 2010). In the first few years, the Doodles were informal and covered mostly US holidays (Guthrie, 2010). Nowadays, there is a six-person team devoted exclusively to creating Doodles (Google, 2010a).

An exploratory qualitative study used in a 'Mapping Time' exhibition by Douglass and Manovich in 2010 analyzed and visually mapped the design variation of Doodles from the original Google logo. Through the implementation of a 2-tiered axes of analysis, Doodles from 1998-2009 were evaluated based on (a), modification from the original logo, and (b), which part of the logo was modified. Their findings reveal a very normal (Gaussian) distribution of total variations ranging from top-heavy decoration in Doodles celebrating national holidays versus complete alteration of style and design in artist-inspired designs. They also concluded that variability has rapidly increased in the more recent years. This focus on 'visualizing a set of artifacts according to their differences' (Douglass & Manovich, 2010, p. 1) shows us how patterns and trends inherent in the development of Google's corporate visual communication strategy can be traced.





Methodology

This research has a strong background on the Semiotics, the science of signs, which grew out of attempts by the first physicians of the Western world to understand how the body and the mind operate within specific cultural domains (Danesi, 1993).

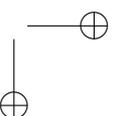
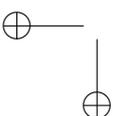
The primary components of this mental process are seen to be the *sign* (a representative image or icon, a word, etc.) the *object* referred to (which can be either concrete or abstract) and the *meaning* that results when the sign and the object are linked together by association. (Danesi, 1993, xxi)

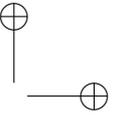
Thus, a main goal of applying a semiotic analysis is to look at the different layers of value rendered in visuals or images that connect what the body (the object) shows and what the mind (the meaning) knows. Therefore, semiotics never reveals what the world is, but circumscribes what we can know about it. A semiotic model depicts not ‘reality’ as such, but nature as unveiled by our method of questioning, thus shedding light on the ‘anatomy of reality’ (Sebeok, 1994).

Semiotics’ fundamental concept deals with understanding that a sign — the basic unit of knowledge according to Saussure — has two parts: the signified and the signifier. The signified is the object and the signifier is the sound associated with the signified. A relationship between the two does not necessarily need to exist, so long as there is a referent that matches the object to its name (Rose, 2007).

In 1867, Samuel Peirce introduced his famous semiotic triadic typology of signs (or ‘representations’, as he called them). These three kinds of signs are differentiated by the way in which the relation between the signifier and the signified is comprehended (Atkins, 2009). They can be understood as follows:

- **Icon** – likeness or imitation of what the image is supposed to represent, such as a photograph;
- **Symbol** – signs associated with conventionalized meaning or that display an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified, for instance, a white dove representing peace;





- **Index** – inherent relationship between the signifier and the signified, or a cause/effect link that can be observed or inferred, i.e., a smoke indicating fire.

Method

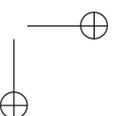
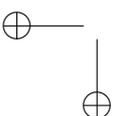
This research examines Google Doodles as an instrument through which Google encourages public dialogue and displays the creative personality of the company. If Doodles are a significant element of Google's CVI, it is our hypothesis that they are a fluid and adaptable interpretation of the often static nature of a CVI.

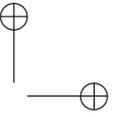
Using Barthian visual semiotics as an umbrella theory, a multi-method analysis is developed and conducted on two levels: the first is equivalent to denotation, and the second corresponds to connotation.

For the first level of analysis (comparable to denotation), a data-driven content analysis is employed. The Doodles are categorized on two levels: (a) thematic purpose and (b), concepts in Peirce's semiotic theory (icon, symbol, index). For the second level (akin to connotation), a Panofsky-oriented graphical analysis is employed to determine the deeper significance of the alterations made to the Google logo.

Most scholars avoid images as a subject of research (Howells & Matson, 2009). Visual research is in its early stages, and no method has emerged as the optimal form of analysis. Scholars commonly choose content analysis because it can be adapted to visuals. However, in comparison to how it is used on documents and other text-based evidence, the adaptation for images is limited (Muller & Griffin, in print). The lack of a solid methodological background might be attributed to the fact that visual analysis depends heavily on interpretation (Rose, 2007). In this context, semiotics and iconography have emerged as useful methods to examine representational and symbolic meanings in images (Ven Leeuwen, 2001).

The decision to have a semiotic approach guide our two methods is based on the simple fact that semiotic theory addresses the relationship between what is there and what ideas or values are represented. Content analysis enables the development of a theory-driven code, which helps to construct meaning and structure data. It also helps reduce the data by sub-dividing the units into codes, thereby creating a coding scheme. For our next step, sampling will be





based on these first level results. At this stage iconography and iconology (albeit not in an art history context) will help us understand pictorial meanings.

Level 1: Denotation

Denotation refers to identification, or ‘the act of recognizing who or what kind of person is there, what he is doing’ (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 94). This is a basic trait in human descriptive abilities that most people are capable of. According to Barthes, since we can only recognize what we already know, this level is relatively unproblematic because it is relatively easy to connect what we see with what registers in our learned pictorial schema, or the encyclopedia of images we have come to understand in our lives (Rose, 2007; Van Leeuwen, 2007).

Level 1: Sampling and Data Collection

We apply *purposive sampling* to Google’s Doodle archive, which consists of over 1000 images. Using *criterion sampling*, Doodles are selected based on two criteria: date and global reach. This study opts to examine the first ten years of Doodles – from 1999 to 2008 – so as to concentrate on the beginning of the phenomena. Furthermore, only Doodles labeled by Google as global are investigated, since they have the greatest international exposure, and, therefore, connect with more users.

When the Doodles are part of a series that unfolded in consecutive days (such as a different Doodle for every day of the Olympic Games), the first Doodle was considered and all subsequent Doodles celebrating that same occasion were excluded, indicating a method of *selective sampling*. This decision guarantees a more *heterogeneous* sample with regards to that one occasion.

After applying the previous filters, the sample totaled 101 images.

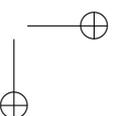
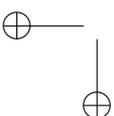


Table 1: Thematic Category

Label	Definition	Indicators	Qualifications or Exclusions	Examples
Holidays	Celebrations usually marked in calendars	They are usually generic and/or recognized in multiple cultures and happen every year, whether or not Google actually celebrates it yearly	It is not related to one specific person (like a birthday is)	New Years, Earth Day, Mother's Day
Sports Athletics	Sport-related commemorations	Athletic recognition of some kind, going beyond common physical limits	World competitions or tests of physical strength	Olympic Games, Soccer World Cup, Anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest
Science Technology	Dates marking important discoveries/discoveries in the science world	Technological innovations, scientific discoveries and the famous researchers behind them	Important words in any science field	First hot air balloon flight, Invention of the Laser, Alexander Graham Bell's birthday
Arts	Significant dates in the arts	Artistic contributions and, more commonly, artists themselves	Important names in any type of art; not restricted to the so-called fine arts	Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Birthday, Mozart's Birthday, Vincent Van Gogh's Birthday
Miscellaneous	Dump category	Everything that did not fit the previous categories	As long as it is excluded from the other categories, it should be included here	Lego's Anniversary, Nobel Prize Centennial Award Ceremony

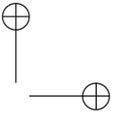
Level 1: Data Analysis

Content analysis is used in the first (denotative) level to find out which themes and semiotic categories the Doodles could fit into. The coding scheme contains two main groupings — one related to thematic category represented by the Doodle, the other related to Peirce's Semiotic signs. This is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

It is important to note that the categories in both dimensions are not mutually exclusive because one Doodle can be celebrating more than one occasion (i.e. January 1, 2008 Doodle celebrates both New Years and the 25th Anniversary of TCP/IP) and/or contain more than one sign (August 13, 2003 – Alfred Hitchcock's birthday includes both a caricature of his profile and a bird, which are considered an icon and an index, respectively).

Table 2: Semiotic Signs Category

Label	Description	Indicators	Qualifications	Examples
Icon	Likeness or imitation of what the image it is supposed to represent	Photo-like depiction	Most signs could qualify as any of this categories depending on what it is trying to portray. The rule is applied based on the relationship between signified and signifier.	Picture of the Earth seen from afar represents our planet
Symbol	Conventionally accepted representations	Couched in cultural values and perceptions		Hearts as a representation of love and, by extension, Valentine's Day
Index	Inherent cause/effect relationship between signifier and signified	If a link can be observed or inferred		Mondrian's artistic style represents his work



Level 1: Preliminary Findings

Creating thematic and semiotic categorical codes for the Doodles allowed for a surface-level analysis of the fluidity of Google's CVI, hence more research is needed at the connotative level to determine the broader meanings of the Doodles. Although obvious, the fact that they change their logo is a major finding in and of itself.

Table 3 shows the categorical breakdown of global Doodles. The majority of Doodles are classified as Holidays, with Science and Technology coming in second. This means that, in addition to acknowledging the significance of more customary and time-honored holidays, Google wants to celebrate dates, achievements and people connected to the same field as Google itself — the so-called 'nerdy' aspects of human development, i.e. the Invention of the Laser, the 50th Anniversary of Understanding DNA, the Spirit on Mars Expedition, and Google's own Birthday.

Table 3: Breakdown of Sample by Thematic Category

Thematic Category	# of Doodles
Holidays	49
Sports/Athletics	8
Science/Technology	25
Fine Arts	18
Miscellaneous (dump)	3

When broken down by semiotic category (Table 4), the high number of icons and symbols indicate that Google tries to make Doodles as easy to understand as possible so that they can be interpreted without confusion or ambiguity. This suggests that the viewer does not need to question if a connection exists between the signifier to the signified, because the connection is familiar to him/her, either explicitly as an icon or culturally as a symbol.

The only case where there is an abundance of indexical signs (as seen in Table 5) is the celebration of famous artists birthdays, wherein the Doodle is designed in the style of or with an obvious indicator of the artist's work. This can be explained by the fact that an artist's signature style or most famous work is usually more recognizable than a picture of the artist himself hence this research considered his or her work as an indicator of said artist's legacy.

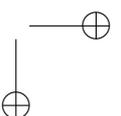
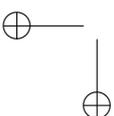


Table 4: Breakdown of Sample by Semiotic Category

Semiotic Category	# of Doodles	%
Icon	42	38.18
Symbol	48	43.64
Index	20	18.18

Table 5: Thematic and Semiotic Cross Categorization

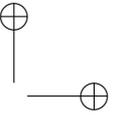
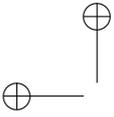
Category	Icon	Symbol	Index
Holidays	15	36	0
Sports/Athletics	8	3	0
Science/ Technology	13	9	6
Fine Arts	5	0	15

In other words, if the artist is the fire (the signified), the smoke (the signifier) is the painting or style that makes that artist unique or recognizable. This is demonstrated with the example of the Doodle celebrating Vincent Van Gogh's birthday on March 30, 2005 (Image 1).



Image 1: March 30, 2005, Vincent Van Gogh's Birthday (Google, 2010a)

This Doodle would be classified as an index because Google is showcasing its logo in the artistic style of Vincent Van Gogh. Vivid colors, thick



brush strokes, and stellar sensations of movement imitate his most famous work, *The Starry Night*.

Level 2: Connotation

Connotation is the layer of the broader concepts, ideas, and values that explore what is being expressed through what and how it is being represented. This second layer assumes that what is seen has already been identified (denotation). It grapples with ideological meanings as well as socially and culturally formed concepts (Van Leeuwen, 2001; Rose, 2007).

It can come about either through the cultural associations which cling to the represented people, places and things, or through specific 'connotators', specific aspects of way in which they are represented, for example specific photographic techniques (Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 97).

Level 2: Sampling and Data Collection

The two categories explored on the previous level are crossed (as seen in Table 5) to create a purposive sampling strategy based on two stages: first, selective criterion sampling is used to find Doodles that fit the criteria of having multiple categorical identifiers and second, stratified sampling is used to select the Doodles that will be used for the iconological analysis. This involves working backwards chronologically (most to least current) and selecting the most recent Doodle from each newly formed cell in the cross-section (Table 6). This technique is employed so that the sample size is suitable for an iconological analysis.

It is hypothesized that the selection of the newest Doodle from each cell of the cross-section will represent the more innovative Doodles in the previous sample of the first 10 years of Doodles labeled as global. This also guarantees a *representative* and *heterogeneous* final sample. It is our hope that by selecting the most recent Doodles the final sample will most closely parallel where Google Doodles are at the present moment.

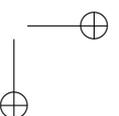
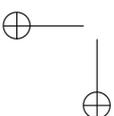


Table 6: Level 2 Sampling

Category	Icon	Symbol	Index
Holidays			x
Sports/Athletics			x
Science/Technology			
Fine Arts		x	

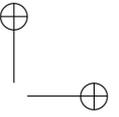
Level 2: Data Analysis / Panofsky's Visual Analysis

Panofsky (1970) proposes an image analysis that goes beyond appearance and concerns itself with the subject matter and the meaning behind it. The pillars of his method are Iconography and Iconology.

While iconography shows concern for the cultural and conventional meanings present in the work of art, iconology tries to hint at what that says about the artist or the civilization where it came from.

(...) when we try to understand [The Last Supper] as a document of Leonardo's personality, or of the civilization of the High Italian Renaissance, or of a peculiar religious attitude, we deal with the work of art as a symptom of something else which expresses itself in a countless variety of other symptoms, and we interpret its compositional and iconographical features as more particularized evidence of this "something else". The discovery and interpretation of these "symbolical" values (which are often unknown to the artist himself and may even emphatically differ from what he consciously intended to express) is the object of what we may call "iconology". (Panofsky, 1970, p. 31)

The author proposes three levels of analysis:



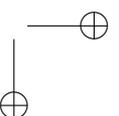
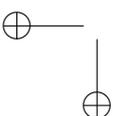
- **Pre-iconographical level** – also called primary or natural subject matter, it is a description of elements as they look;
- **Iconographical level** – also known as secondary or conventional subject matter, this stage uses conventions and culture as basis for analysis;
- **Iconological level** – also named intrinsic meaning or content, it concerns itself with interpretation, deeper meaning, and what the image says about its creator. ‘Interpreting those understandings requires a grasp of the historically specific inter-textuality in which meaning depends’ (Rose, 2007, p. 151).

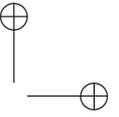
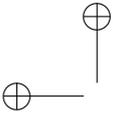
Findings

At a first glance, one can see that doodles are not always formulated in the same manner and therefore the classification of its type of semiotic element fluctuates. Whereas Holiday Doodles were mostly classified as symbols, artist’s birthdays were usually identified as indexes (see analysis of Van Gogh Doodle in the preliminary findings). This happens because, while an artist’s work is usually more easily recognized than the artist’s appearance, Holidays symbols are stronger references than picture-like icons of individual holidays themselves (which would be difficult to express anyhow). For example, Season’s Greetings/Happy Holidays Doodles almost always include symbols of end-of-year festivities/cold climates such as snowmen, gifts, Christmas lights, or animals that live in cold climates (i.e. penguins or polar bears).

On the other hand, a deeper multi-method analysis reveals that Google Doodles are a channel through which Google expresses a more flexible CVI. Doodles are indications that Google, as a company, cares not only about celebrating holidays, but also the lives of famous artists, scientists and other influential people, discoveries and technological advancements that have propelled human creativity and progress forward. Furthermore, these acknowledgements are so important to Google that it affectively changes the one element that has traditionally remained a constant and unwavering characteristic in brand marketing, even if it only changes its standard logo occasionally.

The ability to ‘play with’ or make fluid one’s logo using associations to art, science and celebrations indicates *brand anthropomorphism*, a term that refers to the ability of a brand to take on human characteristics or a defined





‘personality’ (Flatt & Grey, 2010). However, we believe that Google Doodles take this notion one step further, which we describe as *logomorphism*.

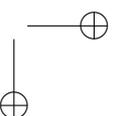
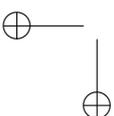
Logomorphism is the visual display (through a flexible brand identity) of this brand anthropomorphism. In this particular case, Google not only incorporates human characteristics, it changes its logo periodically to reflect them. As a strategy, *logomorphism* acknowledges the two-way street that exists between a multi-national corporation and its consumers. A flexible brand identity with *logomorphic* characteristics enables the face of the company to transform from a commercial enterprise into something more: a fellow patriot, a worldly friend, a genuine person. A *logomorphic* brand shares how it is interacting with the world by outwardly showing what this interaction is all about. For Google, it is sharing and showing what is significant for the company (and possibly a part of its users) about that particular day. For instance, that is what happened in July 24, 2011, when it opted to change its logo to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the rediscovery of Machu Picchu.

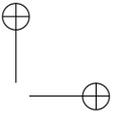
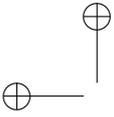
Looking at a collection of Google Doodles from a previous year gives the impression that one is looking into someone else’s calendar. The important days are marked, holidays are made special and your friends’ birthdays are remembered. By celebrating the same kinds of dates as its user, Google creates the longest lasting impression of all – it becomes your friend or even part of your family. This personification creates the deeper connection at the heart of *brand essence*. Moreover, Google’s friends are ‘famous’, ‘remarkable’ and ‘legendary’, lending all of those qualities to Google (and its users) by association.

As a result, in order to maintain its relevance and appeal in the highly-competitive, fast-paced information-driven world, Google’s choice to employ a *logomorphic* strategy reveals that just like its users, it is a living, breathing entity that is playful, creative, worldly and geeky.

Another trait evident in Google’s *logomorphism* is the reinforcement of family values. Roses are a common symbol when celebrating Mother’s Day; they represent love, appreciation and domesticity. Neckties at Father’s Day reflect a patriarchal kinship structure in which the father provides for and brings money home to support his family.

Within its *logomorphic* strategy, Google strives to be non-controversial by carefully examining which important dates to celebrate and how to convey them. This seemingly strategic non-affiliation helps to ensure that Google will



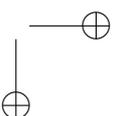
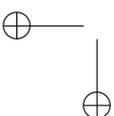


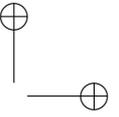
not produce Doodles that could be considered offensive to part of its users. However, this must be examined in a way that acknowledges the Western hegemonic values and principles that Google rests its 'Global' doodling upon. Doodles attempt to be non-religious because holidays with specific religious origins are not celebrated (i.e., Easter, Passover or Ramadan). Doodles also attempt to be non-political because it is not apparent that they take a side on any particular political party or cause.

Although seemingly neutral, it must be noted that, in the labeling of certain important dates as 'global', a reinforcement of Western values occurs. Doodles are often inaccurately labeled as global and could potentially alienate users who do not share the values Google promotes as 'global', i.e. not every country celebrates Father's Day the third Sunday in June. Although Western values are circulated in many more ways than Google Doodles, i.e. the media and entertainment industry or political punditry), there is no defined 'global culture'; it would be a false claim that argue that any values, regardless of their origin, are uniform throughout the world and can be regarded as 'global'.

Google's Doodle decisions are made internally within the Doodle team: what is celebrated and when the doodle goes online is entirely up to the team (although Google does state that it accepts emailed suggestions of holidays, artists or events to commemorate in the future). Although they most likely have incredibly strict hiring requirements for Doodlers who are culturally competent and hyper-aware of potential offensive visuals, this presents a dearth in the diversity of their perspectives because (a) the doodling team is formed of only six people, and (b) those six people live in the USA and (even if they happen to have diverse backgrounds) they are influenced by a Western perspective.

Google does however hold a 'Doodle 4 Google' (D4G) contest elementary school children have the opportunity to 'doodle' the Google logo. The winner's drawing appears on his or hers country's homepage for 24 hours, just like a regular doodle. Although D4G has already occurred in over 15 countries (Google, 2010b), the winners of these contests have never been displayed in a 'global' manner, and should not be considered a real effort to diminish the Western influence.





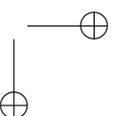
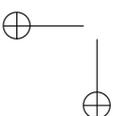
Looking Forward

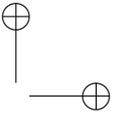
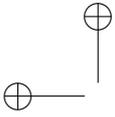
Literature on corporations in general and branding in particular tend to have very traditional and rigid views on company identity. A quick look at Google, an important company in today's world, is enough to consider that it might be time for these ideas to change. Therefore, Google's new, fluid way of expressing CVI requires further exploration by scholars.

Localized Doodles remain untouched and in need of research. Why are some labeled as local and what makes them so specific that they can't be shared with the rest of the world? A comparative communication research on the characteristics of global Doodles versus local Doodles could be very telling.

On the other hand, as Google's identity continues to evolve, so do their Doodles. In 2010, a new dimension was added to Doodles, which started to become dynamic and interactive. For PacMan's anniversary in May, the famous 1980's computer game and his original 256 levels were recreated for Google's homepage — this Doodle was online for a longer period of time to allow enthusiasts of the game to reach the most advanced level. In September, users could interact with the Particle Logo and the Buckyball's Anniversary Doodle using their mouse. In October, the first video Doodle launched. It celebrated John Lennon's 70th birthday using hand-drawn animation and the song 'Imagine' (Google, 2010b).

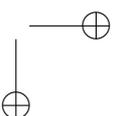
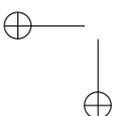
These developments show that Google is trying to incorporate the user into the Doodle equation, either by making the Doodles interactive or giving children the opportunity to design the logos. It is integrating the world into how it presents itself to the world. In other words, it is making its own identity even more fluid in newer, avant-garde and democratic ways. Therefore, a closer examination of what these developments mean are essential steps to better understanding Google's new model of identity.

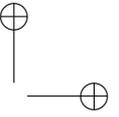




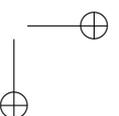
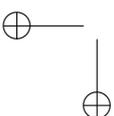
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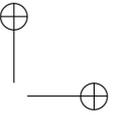
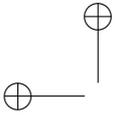
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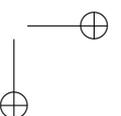
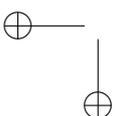


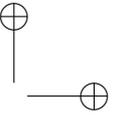
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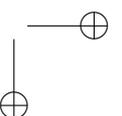
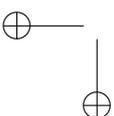


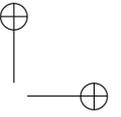
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Branding Events: The Continuous Experience

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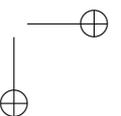
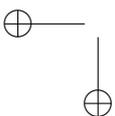
Abstract: Branding is expecting to earn more terrain on consumers' lives. Publicity stunts are no longer enough; new media, the Web, collective deeds are on the verge of converging into 'continuous experiences'. Those working on brands, believe that in these agitated times, brands are causing the birth of a "brandology". The turning point is that branding is changing society. More than ever, it is a branded society in media, vehicles, clothes, lifestyles, clubs, and networks. Put another way, it means brands, media businesses, and consumer behaviour blends and remains as part of something bigger: a 'continuous event'. For most brands, it is a new age of multinational, savvy consumers.

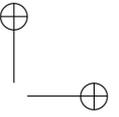
Keywords: Branding, Trends, Digital, Events, Media.

1. Trends And Media - Introduction

Since the 1960s a wide range of artistic experiments have relied on the concept of 'event'. Over the 1970s 'rallies' and public manifestation was synonymous with reaction. Each mass of people gathering in a public square was a reactive event. Over time, 'action' and 'reaction' have been considered secondary when compared to 1990s 'concepts' such as 'interaction'. Thanks to technology and especially the personal computer we all have access to interactive media. Suddenly the existing buzzwords were all crunched into a 'collective', 'continuous' experience. Advertising was eclipsed and advertisers now stare at the avalanche of news produced by other communication agencies. The Web is no longer a medium and it is not detached from the computer either. Both computer and Web are one entity alone. After the 'individualisation' epoch of late 1980s and early 1990s a new time arrived, a perfect moment for social phenomena, public events, street performances, artistic stunts and live shows. It is a very different world this one in which we live in. There is the Web, digital media, smartphones, touchscreens, broadband, HD, 3-D, and most importantly there are social networks taking advantage of all the gear. It is also a 'we' time. 'We', the people, now change things. Our environment,

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges... , pp. 207-222.



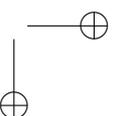
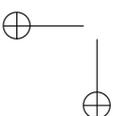


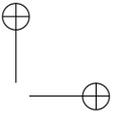
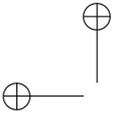
our surroundings are affected by our way of life. We are more aware of our actions and interactions. Now we know we need to do more with less, we have to become a more ‘optimized society’.

In this new world digital media, social networks and post-Internet enterprises are our coordinates. Users and technicians do not change the world, yet all of them together do change the world. It began with President Barack Obama’s presidential campaign: ‘Yes, We Can’, which was coupled with another one: ‘We Can Change’. Nintendo’s latest home videogame console is also called ‘Wii’, as in ‘weeeeeeeee’ (childish phonetics) or as a ‘We’ collective thing. At the age of personal customisation of almost every good there is more social highlight in practically everything we do. Obama reunited the world with the US and Nintendo reunited family at home. No more were people separated due to entertainment, selfish entertainment.

Let us focus on branding, advertising and also on people’s experience, for instance. Multi-User Displays (MUDs), Skype video chat and other tools have turned the world into a smaller place. Global, local, bigger and smaller are getting identical. One thing actually typifies Web 2.0 and its sister the 3.0 generation: media are what we make of them. We are the media Old sayings were recalled: every person is necessary, in advertising, testing software, participating in flashmobs, branding events and even ‘cloud computing’. It is a collective world. And I think to myself: ‘what a collective world’. Either we are all at war or we are all at crisis, so let us change communication altogether too. Like William Gibson once said in *Zero History*, nobody knows more than everybody. The Web is proof of that point of view. It is harder and harder to stay off the grid.

What exactly is ‘everybody’, what for sure does it mean? It means everybody is a composition of people, of us, you and me, everyone. Ever since *Time* magazine said on its cover that ‘we’, *the information age computer user*, would be the person of the year brands relying on the collective were much more empowered. ‘You’ meant ‘we’ are the chosen, the elected ones. Nobody is less important than each and every one of us. This time ‘you’ matters. Take for instance Toyota magazine and how it addresses a different voice by playing with typography, as ‘Toyota’ changes to ‘ToYOU’. A magazine ‘for you, for us’, behaves just as the brand itself: a continuous experience. Following the ‘lovemark’ (Roberts, 2004) stream, what we have here is an endorsement in a more personal, sensitive and continuous voice. Hence, intimate.



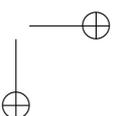
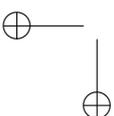


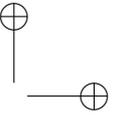
Typography also plays with ‘Toy’ (perhaps considering vehicles such as the Prius?). But what exactly is this ‘continuous experience’ about? Well, it is an information technology concept; the more brands such as Microsoft Windows 7 and Apple iTunes track their users, the more information will be gathered. Brands learn with the collective and redesign themselves to sell better goods to their audiences. Unlike previous brandings, we are having a harder time detaching ourselves from corporate brands. We turn the switches off and brands fight back in Facebook, Amazon, mobile phones and in television. Because it is becoming impossible to stay off the grid, brands invest on ‘self-marketing’, which is basically ‘personal branding’, according to Jeff Beals (2008: 7); is it a corporate strategy or a solution to a problem known as ‘massified’ goods?

2. Discussion on The Digital World

After decades of investments based on masses and large groups today we witness a return to the person: ‘user-generated contents’ (Lendrevie et al., 2010: 25) and custom-made clothes were just the beginning, respectively in the networks and the streets. Over the last century, communication was based on physical presence. In order to do something together we had to be physically together, as Jeff Howe explains in *Crowdsourcing: Why The Power of The Crowd is Driving The Future of Business* (2009). Unlike before, now we may be together yet not physically present, thanks to the virtual crowd, computer and social networks. People are driven by common interests; that is why they gather; it is what drives them, thus being a new thing.

From the point of view of strategic communication, contemporary times seem to approve strategies where dialogue is imperative and consumer empowerment is the new rule. Today’s ‘emotional architecture’ involves people, likeness, sharing, interests, contents and a way of life. Any ‘communicator’ of our time knows survival requires establishing a ‘connection’. In response to that, brands place the client in the core of his world, interlinked to everything he wants. From the consumer perspective it is a Web present time: ‘we dare to Google this and to Google that’. Each citizen is a user and a player, both an active and an interactive subject. Brands are chasing consumers on their mobile media, streets are being painted and covered and crowds are being called and summoned to perform something new. At the same time two realities are



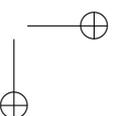
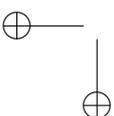


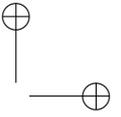
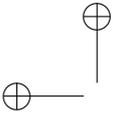
mixing up, the street reality and the Web reality. Upon this blend a paradigm is consolidated: each person's reach matches her customized media.

Another point of discussion is 'where really are the new consumers?'; the answer lies in all of us. Which time is best for brands to reach us? Any time is the response; and what exactly are brands doing to us? They are not just selling. That is for sure. Communication professionals call it 'consumer management'. Not only does the brand manage the consumer but the consumer also manages his resources, his media, interests and information. All around us now is mobile media, for phone calls, Web access and optimized social networks. There is too much media. We need to deal in a new way with reality. Depth is becoming a problem. Things do not happen on the other side of the screen, only on this one. Thus, brands fight back with 'guerilla advertising', trademark stunts and aesthetic deeds on behalf of brands, hoping to take the street, and eventually shake up the screens, yet not departing from them entirely.

In the age of smartphones we have 'smart crowds' and 'smart mobs' (Rheingold, 2002). Nobody believes in the promises of old advertising. Products are no longer the substantial part of the business. Ideas, concepts, 'emotional branding' (Marc Gobé, 2001) and collections of lovable items are the new trend, the future beyond brands. People consume the brands they trust. Brands need to reconnect with people in a deeper and more emotionally satisfying way. Unknown brands have to promote what they sell more loudly. People believe and like what they think they already know. The opposite is true too; brands believe and work for the audiences they think they already know. Well, people change, and when they do, so do brands, and games, culture, society and technology also. For these reasons one major idea has thrived: 'any brand disregarding people is doomed'. Consumers shop and live, not relying on byproducts but on brands.

Ultimately products are entirely secondary. In the meantime, audiences get older and the new crowds are very flashy and dynamic. Young people think all existing things shine on the Web. If things exist, they are actually available online. It does not make sense for them if they do not. Every year we witness the release of more new brands. The cluster of brands is so huge that 'choosing' is problematic. What to choose is a hard thing. 'Choice' in the age of unlimited demand and supply is a difficult thing to do (Anderson, 2007). How do people make their decisions? In a continuous form. People are fond of



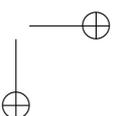
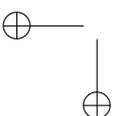


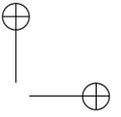
convincing brands and they stay up to them. Sometimes they try other brands but not forever. The power of the brand says that any brand has to survive its test: social scrutiny and collective review, opinion makers and hard bloggers. Since everybody shares and shows off his own ideas and productions, people are led to believe in each other. Corporate branding seems more unreliable on some occasions, whereas on others, institutional communication looks more official and serious.

In short, people believe people. We believe in 'We'. It is again the 'you' thing which wins the battle. After all we are the chosen ones in the age of information networks. The kind of symbolic value prospering here is the brand, and eventually it manages to overtake and replace the product. According to this context, we can say that regardless of what the future may hold to branding, one thing is certain: 'branding events' capable of making the target audience feel younger and fond of new things are the big trend. Portuguese vegetable goods company Guloso attempted to captivate new audiences by creating a new product 'Refogado Guloso', and the image they chose was a tomato battle resembling the 'Tomatina fiesta' in Spain. Their copy stated that 'your fight with tomato and onion has ended', a way of promoting a cooking sauce.

Two things may be retrieved from this situation: one is 'continuation' and the second is 'branding'. Let us sum it in 'brand extension', just as Lipovetsky and Serroy (2010: 116) regard it. In fact, brands are seeking this: turning consumers into extensions of their discourses. Why they want it is simple: average consumers have decoded most narrative strategies, so the best way of gathering the consumer's attention is by organising a 'branding event', a media event. Once something happens as a real situation would, or as choreographed performance, the brand manages to reach out of its flat world of outdoors, brochures, catalogues and TV ads.

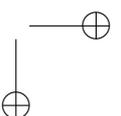
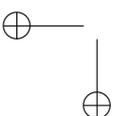
Networks are responsible for bringing more people to the equation. This is the time of 'flashcrowds'. People gather and do it, all of a sudden, regardless of what is at stake. Thinker Hans Bertens mentions how we are losing the idea of 'society' in favour of one of 'sociality' (2005: 225) in *The Idea of The Post-modern* (1995). From now on social networks and consumers are dictating the rules we should follow. Relying on brands we must 'engage', 'interact', 'dialog' and 'share'. Branding improves its discourse as we follow corporate data and twist it a little with Web 2.0 custom data. Brands have to 'respect' peo-

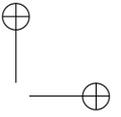




ple. On this background it seems relevant that ‘brands must not speak to the consumers only, they have to talk with them’. The concepts we are all following come from digital culture. ‘Interaction’ comes from biology and interface design, progression comes from construction; immediacy and ‘added value’ depends on marketing, yet ‘sharing’ and ‘dialog’ are contemporary with Web 2.0. Take for example a Portuguese campaign for ‘Nestlé Pensal – Cevada Solúvel’ a cereal drink, where the motto was based on a cup design: ‘A Little Bit to Share’. Other clever approaches, such as Renault’s ‘Welcome to The Community’ campaign for the Renault Clio automobile presented every individual showing marks of the gear lever on the palm of their hands. They were unaware of the fact that they were ‘belonging’ to a community. Among technology users ‘belonging’ works more as a e-community concept. Lendrevie et al (2010: 24) speak of ‘e-communities’, which are the kind of communities living and sharing ideas, values, practices and hobbies online. Today, even offline communities may behave as online ones.

To better discuss these changes in the branding world, one has to remember that new subjects of discussion and campaign mottos are in place now. ‘Ecology and branding’ means smart products and green production. ‘Social media’ make people do things collectively and ‘outdoor performance’ is a healthier way of taking people from the desktop computers. ‘Sustainability’ as well is underlying all these issues and ‘green marketing’ too, by appealing to the colour of nature. For corporate branding it is all a big business renewed, synonymous with growth and harmony. Culture Jamming is an arty, not fast-forward stunt in these days. Actually there is not much time to keep up with today’s demands. Too many things are taking place. See for instance Vodafone’s ‘Flash Concerts’, which vanish as fast as they are happening. MP3 is not a format to deserve a battle; brands have absorbed it so much that a business needs music to bring emotion to audiences. We should not forget that ‘Branding Should Be Consistent’ and that like Gilles Lipovetsky assures, ‘I consume, therefore I am’. It is like the world is upside down, though it is not. Ugo Volli (2003) explains it to us: ‘brands are the product reaching beyond the consumer goods’. Because of this, products keep saying so many things about us, who purchase and use them.



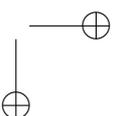
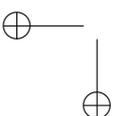


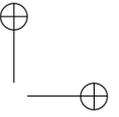
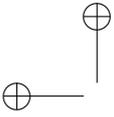
3. Challenges on Media and Audiences

If there ever was a time when we had time to think about challenges to come, that time seems to be further and further away. Our time presents us challenges that demand almost immediate resolution. The World Wide Web is the most inventive and prolific medium of communication strategies ever. Another fact is that the Web is something we just cannot uninvent. In a McLuhanesque sense it changed culture, and it did so much that 'for the very first time a manufactured culture appears, not made by an intellectual and social elite, but made by 'everybody', with no class or social borders whatsoever' (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2010: 88, translation is ours). This is one major challenge in itself; not only are all things, both good and bad global, but whatever we do is for ourselves.

Take a look into the past: television is rising despite being outmatched by the Web. Eventually they might blend with one another. One strategy that television is already applying is 'the return to live TV'. They began live and they will return to live broadcast. We have to be in front of the box to see the show. No piracy is possible. Secondly, the place where we watch TV has changed. A profusion of places and mediums came; TV is no longer equal to 'living room'. On the extreme of the equation lies the 'street'. That is right, the forgotten realm of TV media, though it was the favourite of advertising and radio, is now the stage for everyone on Wi-Fi stream Webcasts. Wherever we go we have access. Media are everywhere. Audiences pick everything they want online and most communities created today are 'concentric', that is, they are fond of content.

We should think of current challenges and we must discuss the demography issue. The perfect target for television, young people beginning their lives in their early 20s are not in front of the TV. They are surfing on the Web. Not only are they smarter but they are faster as well, and they do not buy lifestyles that easily. SMS, Web, email and social networks blend with fashion. Video clips are their religion and movies and TV shows get their attention even so. Males between the ages of 18 and 25 years, the demographic we are looking for, are not in front of the TV box anymore. What else can we say about this audience? Well, they are not 'viewers', they are Web users, generally speaking media users. Such a young crowd is 18-35 years old at maximum and enjoys purchasing relatively cheap pieces of equipment. Whoever said these



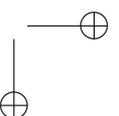
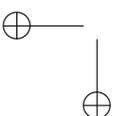


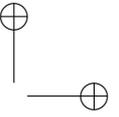
are a niche is wrong. It is a massive thing yet unlike the ‘mass’ of the past. These people are very savvy, they get what they want. In the end, their education could be summed up in 50 years of television and 20 years of the Web. As matter of fact they know a lot of things. On the other hand what does it mean for communication professionals envisioning the application of strategies? It means we do not have to teach audiences, or particularly the techie young ones. We have to learn with them. Communication needs to adapt to the audiences.

Whenever young people are downloading any files from the Internet, they are not committing crime, they’re paying for ‘choice’. That is the difference. Broadband brought us lots of choice. In the aftermath of this all that surrounds us, this massive cluster of icons and brands, Web 2.0 aesthetics and touch-screen wireless media is only a part of a ‘fun culture’ (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2010: 173). This is why we should think in a strategic form in order to best comprehend what is really going on. Jeff Beals rather considers using the SWOT analysis. It is all about ‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats’ (2008: 142). It means before doing something somewhere we’d better weight every ‘good’ and ‘bad’ issue.

For those who still do not understand what kind of consumer we are talking about here, let us make it pretty clear: this is the ‘heavy consumer’. Perhaps the biggest challenge of all is to create an ‘emotional bond’ with the consumer. We need him to remind us, believe, belong to the brand. He has to be loyal. Once we connect to his rational side there is a relationship which happens to make much sense: link to our world. Strategies being considered envision both brands and audiences creating content which manage to be ‘valuable globally’ We are not alone. The things we do are being researched, read and pursued by the other half of the world. ‘We are the world’ right now, so let us keep it in mind and make the best of our capability to distribute our content globally by ourselves Much as brands, we will survive best if we have ‘lovemark relationships’, a mirror for the kinds of families we need, what we share.

New things are also full of sense: niche markets are no less important; low-relevance brands could be the next giant; General Motors is a dinosaur and Microsoft is already too big. As Kevin Kelly (1998) said once in *New Rules For The New Economy* the companies of our time are the size of software houses. See, for example, Google, which is the size of a local town



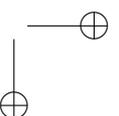
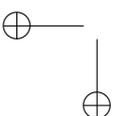


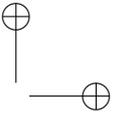
supermarket. Size does not equal power. Another lesson we, as strategists in communication, are drawing from this, is that communication plans need to consider investing online: outward classic control. Due to this, enterprises and advertising agencies are facing people as individual consumers, and not numbers, as the government does. In the age of the 'World Web War', the first 'information war' that happens to be the WikiLeaks case, according to John Perry Barlow (2010), even one person or a small group of people alone, may cause havoc. So if information disruption may come from the 'power of the one', let us think of communication strategies for each one: we can all belong to something special, and 'branding events' are the answer for providing to audiences a meaningful 'continuous experience'.

4. Strategic Collections

Options are just what we have in excess. Brands make us feel involved in products, many products. In fact things progress to such a degree when no longer are there products but 'systems of objects' as in the way announced by French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1970). Most brands want to physically and psychologically surround and pursue the consumer. A person is no longer free of choosing. And despite some illusions of choice there is a new event triggered by the next generation of branding, a continuous event. It is like a strategic event rendered unstoppable. Just as a chain reaction never stops, a continuous event is unstoppable branding. Brands pursue consumers, managing them as software files. Strategists around the world figured out how to predict what consumers think as they position themselves as consumers. We should invoke George Felton's famous statement: 'don't act like the consumer, be the consumer' (2006). The only way to do so is by thinking in terms of personal branding. We need to plan what people do with branded products. Jeff Beals writes about this and claims 'you need a strategic plan and a tactical communications system for your personal brand' (2008: 141).

Two things to be more accurate are standing out in the realm of involving strategies: the 'collective' and the 'collection'. Consumers need to read on Web sites, handle tablet PCs, purchase items online and later check out streaming movies. Not only do we buy tickets to films but we watch their sites previously, we search the Web for missing links, users' opinions and riddle disassembling. We are more than spectators; we are a new breed of

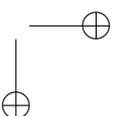
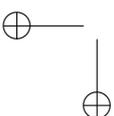


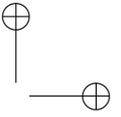


consumers for whom difference is quite perceived. Our way of life is very multimedia, not to mention the Web as an environment. Although people refer to it as a medium, that is a misguided concept. The Web is a collective medium and due to its social inclination, brands are planning more collective experiences and social events, that is, things that start before the product and carry on beyond it. This is the age of both the collection of data and byproducts, and also the age of social networks and collective action.

From the point of view of consumers, this is a whole new thing, a next-generation revolution altogether. Consumers do not need brands to tell them everything. We like to search and find, to put pieces together and to conclude. We are making branding a 'continuous event' and it is relying on the feeling of 'belonging'. Ugo Volli is one of those people saying that brands indicate 'belonging' (2003: 117). If 'no man is an island', perhaps now we are much more aware of how we are a collective species. Many brand strategies consider this idea, from mobile phones to Internet service providers. Corporate discourses are actually 'activating brands' on consumers. Advertising remains trapped, placing products and buying surfaces for ads. Commercials are not just on the streets, they have evolved onto a new realm of screens. In response, advertising fights back with 'guerilla advertising', flashmobs, dances, graffiti, make-up scenes, live commercial shootings, and so on. User-generated ads are now 'digitally native'. Advertising is in the new media now. Marc Gobé already noticed that 'in our new virtual world where rules are reinvented every nanosecond, logos are not merely physical markers'; they are 'cultural connections' (2006: 131).

Strategic thinking today demands the right self-definition for a brand. Identity statement should go beyond, though industrial products are branded for new purposes. It is not a 'quality' or 'status' issue anymore. People are concerned with the social aspect of their products. Consumers begin to accumulate, digitize, organise and archive. Buying is not the primary task, but rather is a secondary one; it happens only to occur first. Databases of brand items, narratives, Web sites, images and many other kind of files are transcending the purchase logic. Every 'collection' needs a 'collector' so people manage to search and archive, getting to know and saving data for some time in a near future. Why this is happening is a more complicated question but it has to do with storage space. Products are almost the same basically reassembled or assembled in new designs, yet their stories are presented in revolu-

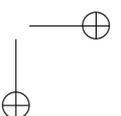
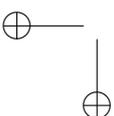


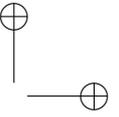


tionary fashion and brand new concepts. An iPod is merely a notebook hard drive with headphones. Even so, people prefer to buy the concept of music everywhere, which Sony introduced as the Sony Walkman decades ago.

Viewing commercials is not preceding shopping and the product is not all. The 'way of life' of users and shoppers matters a lot these days, much as their job, age, place of birth, 'geo-profiles' are important. Lendrevie et al. speak of a new current of 'Geomarketing' concerned with population statistic data analysis, the places where people live and where they go to (2010: 24). On the communication world strategies are envisioning both the 'streets' and the 'screens'. Viral marketing is considered, in the same trend as mobile marketing, crowd sourcing, cinematic presentations, network activity and theme-park amusements. Two types of events are standing out: the 'smart mobs' and the Web events. Corporate speakers invest on both strategies in order to have the best of the online world and the offline world. As a result, branding starts unfolding in networks, among collectives of users and later expands in the streets, as something physically real. After Rheingold spoke of the influence of the mobile phone in his book and Jeff Howe mentioned in May 2006 in *Wired* magazine that there was a 'Rise of Crowdsourcing' taking place, everything changed. Basically, crowdsourcing is about delivering tasks usually addressed for professionals to a collective of amateurs. A mob, a crowd, a network of people is able to take care of the job. Well, from the strategic communication point of view is a perfect plan to consolidate 'dedicated crowd management'. What once was performed by corporate brands (contacts and product management) is now performed by Web communities (consumers' management).

As we examine further some examples and strategies we are able to better comprehend the importance of the network for collectors and the collective. People need the Web to find, publish and search for everything. Brands need extensions for their commercial discourses, so the hybrid zone is the privileged zone. Eventually, consumers and users will form 'intersubjective communities' and rely on each other's opinion when they have to pick one product or service. Everyone finds the idea of having 'guerilla advertising' making most of 'unconventional means' amusing. Intervention means 'difference and surprise'. Bold stunts have the purpose of surprising passers-by and to 'transport' people into new experience domains. It happened with 'Guerilla Drive In': car projectors and camping generators allowed independent collectives to



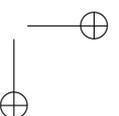
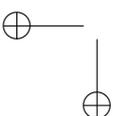


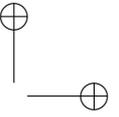
cast short films in old urban areas in Los Angeles. This was an example of an ‘advertising-event’.

After the Web became a faster environment, full of widgets and easy-to-use software, users got used to more optimized content. Corporate branding upgrades itself and understands that it has to establish advertising relationships in every territory. In the present time there are 420 million people speaking English in the world. Consider writing to them, telling stories to them. Yes, this is ‘your audience, your environment’, and in this new world of continuous advertising, media channels themselves became brands, ‘emotional brands’. Dynamic logotypes are flashing online and in screens; since TV shows began this online era there is no series deprived of animated logotypes. Screen spots are suddenly considered as piece of real estate. TV shows as Bionic Woman, Dexter, Lost, Heroes and Flashforward are presenting dynamic logos flashing as a communication strategy to introduce new contents to ‘collectors’. Things have evolved so much that these strategies have helped to redesign advertising in introduction titles and in the middle of the webcast. The secret is to embed advertising in the media stream; everybody gets happy. Broadcasters get happy because it prevents channel flipping.

Other cases are relevant too, even if due to different reasons. The Portuguese electric energy supplier, EDP, promotes the idea of people leaving their own automobiles at home and driving shared vehicles in the city. ‘One car less and we’ll enjoy even more our city’. Again, the concept is the ‘collective’ vehicle. Regarding the same type of product, automaker Fiat presented the 500 model in Lisbon as an MTV event. Behind the strategy there was the concept of both Fiat and MTV as ‘young brands’. ‘Sustainability’ campaigns are on the go also, as Carris, the public transportation company, used their Web site [www.menosumcarro.pt] to promote new parking forms in the city. Their goal was to make Lisbon drivers to feel more responsible and that ‘mobility’ could be sustainable. As we speak, key concepts such as ‘collective’ and ‘mobility’ are again pushing us into the ‘mobs’ theme. ‘Sharing’, another Web famous key word is in the edge too. ‘Mob - Car Sharing’ sells clever car renting for young, smart and techie urban people.

By appealing to new crowds, instead of the old grey suits, brands such as IBM (International Business Machines), which circa thirty years ago decreased their interest in software, unlike Bill Gates who believed the future was richer in programming, have adapted to new concepts. IBM’s campaign

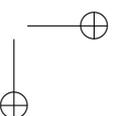
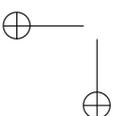




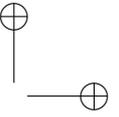
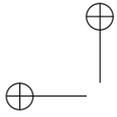
places people saying to themselves they are 'IBMers', and because of that they defend a 'living data planet'. For them, users, sustainability is a strong matter, as they are convinced the planet is alive with data. In the commercials we see patterns of traffic vehicles. Electric grid sparks and electrons, and binary digits as well. IBM's focus is based on behaviour, our own. It is said that should we analyse all the data, then we'll make the planet a better place. Hence the 'Smart Planet' motto. Of course this smart Earth has something to do with the 'smart mobs' across the Web. Smart people are on the go these days, collecting, retrieving, searching and publishing. The very same smart crowds are following shoemaker Adidas' global slogan: 'Celebrate Originality'. And the smart crowds are not stopping by on shoes, they are accessing the Web site of Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, [www.ferrariworldabudhabi.com/] and getting ready to be part of the collective visiting the largest indoor and first Ferrari theme park, located in Abu Dhabi, UAE, with over 20 attractions.

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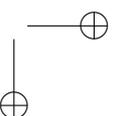
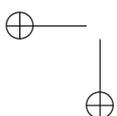
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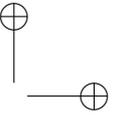


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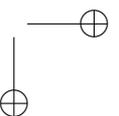
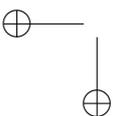
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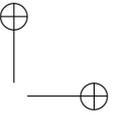
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The bad, the bold and the beautiful: conflicting attitudes towards advertising

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Abstract: Advertising is commonly perceived as the voice of the market, operating as an interface between brands and consumers, reflecting different needs and correspondent satisfaction in the form of products, services, and experiences. Such a comprehensive flow of values would expectedly aggregate significant agreement. Yet views on advertising are far from consensual as it inspires complex, multiple, ambiguous feelings and reactions. This paper will analyse advertising perceptions by advertisers themselves, taking into account literature review and also several exploratory interviews to advertising professionals, made in the frame of an ongoing PhD project on Advertising, Consumption and Citizenship.

Keywords: Advertising, criticism, reputation, consumer, professionals.

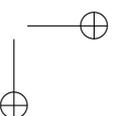
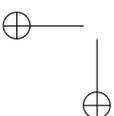
- When I grow up I want to be a big advertising agency director.
- Ah, then you will have to walk a lot of streets distributing advertising leaflets in mail boxes...

Casual dialogue between two 11-year olds, April 2011.

The above viewpoints, *naïf* as they are, portray the essential contradiction of attitudes towards advertising, projecting both one image of glory, glamour, and success and one of anonymous underrated and undervalued hard work. But contradiction is not limited to the idea of advertising as a profession. Its social dimension is also branded by oppositional feelings. On one hand, advertising is seen as intrusive of privacy and intimate space and polluting daily life and the urban landscape; on the other hand, it is the source of information that supplies valuable data for the consumers' decision processes and a door always open for the land of opportunity, that is, the market.

Perceptions of advertising have been traditionally complex and ambiguous (O'Donohoe, 2001; Shavitt, 1998; Otnes et al., 1997; Pollay et al., 1997;

The Dialogue Imperative. Trends and challenges..., pp. 223-234.



Andrews, 1989). They change according to context, media, advertising format and type, reception environment, previous experiences and literacy, to mention just a few variables.

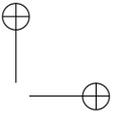
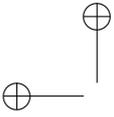
The expanding of advertising borders due to the communication paradigm shift from conventional to digital and alternative media, consumer empowerment, and last, but not least, economic constraints, is converting this industry in an even more complex field. Advertising, hereby understood in the broad sense of strategic integrated communication, is often assuming formats that are not traditionally identified as advertising, such as ambient media, gaming, product placement, branded content, and so on. This new media, this new form of advertising, works as a kind of instrumental undercover, enabling advertising to be present in people's lives without being intrusive. In fact, not only is the brand involvement it provides frequently consented to and even recommended by its users, but also it establishes an alternative profit opportunity for the industry.

The main criticism leveled at advertising covers a wide range of faults, from manipulation and intrusive omnipresence to a lack of objectivity, to put it mildly. In its use of persuasion techniques (Dillard & Pfau, 2002), advertising is seen as misleading, not only because it creates false expectations and artificial needs, but also because it induces symbolic artificial value to a product or service (Baudrillard, 1981[1972]; Ritson & Elliot, 1995), thus leading to conspicuous consumption¹ and consumerism (Elliot, 1997).

Often criticized for being manipulative and not trustworthy, advertising is also celebrated because of its creative boldness and power to inspire crowds, motivate and renew concepts, merge and remix ideas into new cultural interactions and rituals, discover and build enlightening insights, all in an impressive demonstration of its power to amaze. In this sense, some recognize its educational and entertainment value (Turow et al., 2009; Leiss et al., 2005; Jhally, 2000; Shavitt, 1998).

As the mediator between the product and the consumer, advertising is also seen as a factor of economic development and social structure and integration (Pollay & Mittal, 1993), whether by forging a sense of belonging to individuals and groups, or by providing contemporary storytelling sets guiding values and acceptable behaviours (Jhally, 2000).

¹Veblen used this expression for the first time in 'The Theory of the Leisure Class' (1899)



The conflicting attitudes mentioned above reflect the paradoxical nature of advertising, which leads to the central issue of trust, or, to put in another perspective, distrust. According to a recent study concerning the Portuguese case,² consumers' relationship with advertising is quite comprehensive: 89% of the respondents assume they watch ads: 83% of them see advertising as a matter of general interest, something they talk about with family and friends. Yet, when it comes to whether they rely on advertising to make consumption decisions, evaluation changes: only 60% value trustworthiness as the main feature of an ad. But as we try to focus on the trusting value of advertising, the percentage drops dramatically: only 15% acknowledge advertising as a trustful source of information and 12% of the respondents assume they trust advertising. Although the consumer is deeply immersed in an advertising environment, the data reflects a declining pyramid of trust and thus an unfriendly environment.

Truth, or the lack of it, has become a stigma for advertising and even a source of inspiration: 'This is true, not just advertising'.³

But how do advertisers themselves cope with this overall suspicion? How do they look at their own activity? How do they relate with change and associated challenges? What is their perception of society's view on advertising and on their professional status?

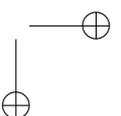
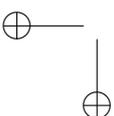
Trying to find an answer to these questions, we conducted a series of interviews with Portuguese advertising professionals as an exploratory approach to a deeper insight of advertising as part of an ongoing Ph.D. project on Advertising, Consumption and Citizenship.

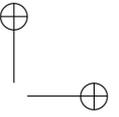
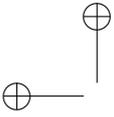
Research and Method

As these interviews were exploratory, we were interested in finding the inputs that would lead us to further paths of investigation, namely, on the concept of advertising and its evolution, on the perception of advertising by advertisers, communication and brand managers, and consumers and society at large. The

²GFK Metris Study, APAN, Nov 2010, in <http://www.apan.pt/preparados-para-mudar>, accessed in February 2011.

³'This is true, not just advertising' / 'E isto é verdade, não é só publicidade' was the original slogan of the retail chain Jumbo in 2006 (Melo, 2008)





first part of the interviews focused specifically on these questions, although the interviews' scope was much broader.

The corpus of this study was defined on quite open criteria. As we needed a long-term, relevant, and diversified perspective, we focused on the most representative advertising agencies, defined by the ranking of advertising agencies,⁴ the longevity of professionals in the Portuguese market (at least 10 years of working experience in relevant positions), and recognition by specialised media (all interviewed professionals work for agencies that have a presence on Portuguese communication and marketing press).⁵ We also interviewed the president and the general secretary of the Portuguese Association of Communication and Advertising Agencies (APAP). They responded in the dual position of advertisers and industry representatives.

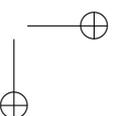
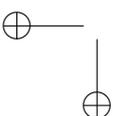
Process

The first approach was a letter asking these busy professionals for one hour of their time to be interviewed and to reflect on advertising, consumption and citizenship, followed up by phone calls for operating arrangements. All the professionals that accepted were asked permission for recording the conversation and were given information on the general content of the interview and intended use of collected data.

For the time being, 10 interviews were made, covering five advertising agencies and APAP. The current formal positions of the respondents were significantly relevant and covered a broad range of professional advertising tasks: CEO, president, secretary general, creative director, account service director, strategic planning director.

⁴Ranking issued by APAP – Associação Portuguesa de Agências de Publicidade e Comunicação, March 2011.

⁵All interviewed professionals and/or agencies and/or work were mentioned on 'Meios & Publicidade' and 'Briefing', the most representative specialized magazines.



Interview Profile

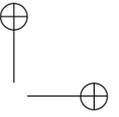
No. of interviews requested	15	Companies	Current position
No. of interviews completed	10	B+ Brandia Euro RSCG J.Walter Thompson Partners APAP*	CEO Creative director Account service director Strategic planning director

*APAP - Portuguese Association of Advertising and Communication Companies

Personal data	
Male	7
Female	3
Average age	39.7

Education: High level (graduation/master)	
Journalism	3
Advertising and Public Relations	2
Communication Design	1
Tourism	1
Management	1
Law	1

Professional data	
Average years in advertising	18.4
Average years in current position/company	6.6



Provisional results

Taking into consideration the insights of advertising professionals, we tried to assess their view on the business and their own profession; these are the results so far:

General

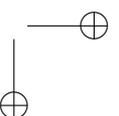
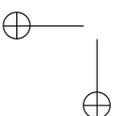
Regarding what concerns the way the advertising concept is viewed by society in general, the respondents agree there has been an evolution. Advertising is more mature as an industry and the general perception reflects it, shifting from the hard selling stigma of exaggerating the products or services to a more truthful activity that leads to a better acceptance of advertising by society at large. This acceptance is connected to a bigger concern for truth, resulting partly from the consumers' empowerment and awareness for their rights and from an ever more strict regulation. Yet this does not mean that consumers trust advertising. A significant number of respondents claimed that, although society looks for information in advertising, there is still a feeling of suspicion. 'There is a process of distrust as a result of praise, trivialization, exaggeration', one of the interview subjects stated.

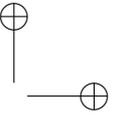
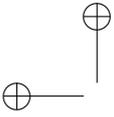
Friends and family

Recognition of an artistic status to the advertising profession together with curiosity and appreciation appears to emerge from the interviews regarding what concerns the perception of the advertising activity from the friends and family of the respondents. Although they are curious about the job, 'they do not realize exactly what I do. It is related with drawing, graphics, funny stuff...' and it proves to be a paradoxical assessment as, 'they do not realize why I work so much since it is so loose and cool'. In this specific group of friends and family there seems to be a kind of fantasy knowledge of the advertising activity still very much influenced by the boring/enjoyable dichotomy over professional activity: 'It is a fantasy profession almost. It is not boring.'

Peers and colleagues

The portrait constructed by the perception of advertising inside this professional field is, so far, quite pessimistic: 'Before advertising was bright,

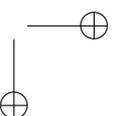
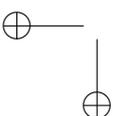




colourful, exiting. Now I only see grey, grey, grey.' Asked about the way their peers and colleagues look at advertising, the main ideas highlighted by the respondents are shadowed by an overall negative perception, ranging from tiredness and disillusion to greyness and uncertainty - 'There is an identity crisis. No one knows exactly what's going on' - and fear - 'People live in fear. There are no more flashes.' This general feeling is aggravated by significant reports of professionals changing to other activities, whether because they are fired or by their own option, the latter motivated by a lack of thrill they used to have in the profession: 'Many advertisers are changing for the sake of survival and because they are stagnating.'

Clients, marketing, and brand managers

The main idea that is underlined by the respondents is the hard relationship between agency and clients, with a significant imbalance of power in which the advertiser is the weaker part: 'There is a subjugation from the agency to the clients.' According to this notion, the advertising professional's input is undervalued and underrated. Clients are reported not to respect professional activity and are not professional themselves ('There is a high wear-out rate in the relationship between agency and client'), putting too much pressure in the agency's performance, that is, the time/money ratio and exercising a final word prerogative frequently with no objective justification. A significant number of respondents agreed, though, that professional advertising contribution is especially valued and recognised in specific situations when daring strategic thinking and creative talent is required: 'We are a valuable partner for special complex projects.'



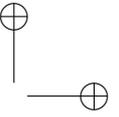
Questions	Main words/ideas
Society general view on advertising	Advertising is more mature Change of perception: stigma > acceptance Bigger concern for truth (consumer rights, strict regulation) Distrust
Perception by friends and family	Recognition Curiosity Fantasy knowledge Artistic status
Perception by peers and colleagues	Identity crisis Tiredness; disillusion; Fear Greyness
Clients, marketing/brand managers	Conflicting fields Advertisers professional value devaluation Instrumental partnership

Conclusion

Attitudes towards advertising have been traditionally controversial, reflecting opposite viewpoints and even conflicting opinions. The landscape we researched, with a special focus on the inner perspective of advertising professionals, does not differ significantly from this and actually emphasizes a divide, or what one could designate as the paradoxical nature of advertising: information vs. persuasion; manipulation vs. entertainment; economic development vs. consumerism; meeting consumer needs vs. creating ever-growing artificial expectations. Yet, a few considerations should be made on some specific observations:

There has been an evolution on the way advertising is perceived towards a more respected and accepted form of communication.

Advertising is recognised by its economic development and entertainment value, is recognised as helping with making consumption decisions, yet it is still not trusted as a source of reliable information.



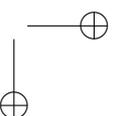
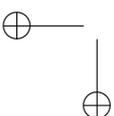
The advertising industry is living in a critical moment due to globalised financial and economic constraints in the western world. However, there is a pressure on the advertising field recognised by all interviewed professionals and visible by a general downsizing, with a consequent rethinking of the management and organisational models and processes, namely on the traditional big structures that are facing competition from far more flexible creative hubs.

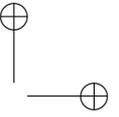
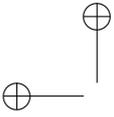
On the other hand, there is a clear paradigm shift from traditional to new media and even to no media. This shift is motivated and influenced by a number of factors: technological communication advancements, omnipresence, connectivity, interactivity, and mobility that converge to new media uses, consumer empowerment, and a reconstruction of the advertising landscape. Although there is a general agreement on the evolution of advertising to a more mature industry, more professionalized and specific, there is also an identity crisis recognised by all respondents and frequently identified with the blur of the advertising activity's traditional borders with public relations, journalism, art, urban intervention, citizenship, and politics, as well as with media usage like online, offline, below the line, ambient media, sense advertising, no media, gaming, entertainment, product placement or content creation and authoring, just to name some.

The professionals themselves seem to build up a dramatic image of advertising branded by a general pessimistic feeling and few exits for the future. There is an overall impression of hopelessness, disillusion, and disenchantment only enlightened by booming new media, social media, and very innovative ways of making advertising that they absolutely have to discover, explore, and catch up with.

Tagged as a creative industry, advertising is now entering new undiscovered communication dimensions and is facing new challenges, the main one being to balance all the pressures to dare and innovate, as was always advertising's prerogative, with a loss of control to the consumer, a call for better accountability and more transparency, more strict regulation and the need to provide an industrial output, both in quantity and quality, essential to advertising survival. As this is an ongoing process, the outcome is still unpredictable, but the challenge is set up and running:

There's never been a more powerful and magical time in advertising. Ours is the industry where people with earth-shaking creativity thrive... big cre-





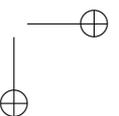
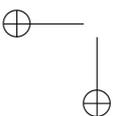
ative ideas that inspire and renew the connection between consumers and brands . . . began as little sparks at an advertising agency. Nowhere else! We educate. We entertain. We challenge. We breed competition. We generate progress. Unique? Yes! Indispensable? Definitely!

Anthony J. Hopp⁶

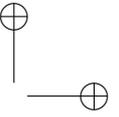
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⁶Anthony J. Hopp, American Advertising Agencies Association Chairman and CEO (2006)

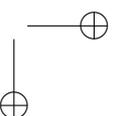
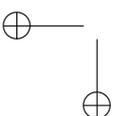


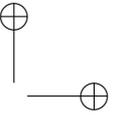
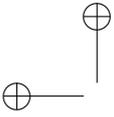
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This paper is based on research developed within the framework of the ongoing Ph.D. program on Communication Sciences: 'Advertising, Consumption and Citizenship'.





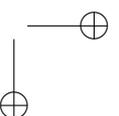
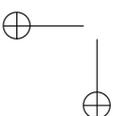
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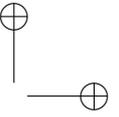


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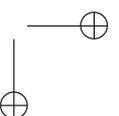
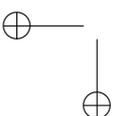
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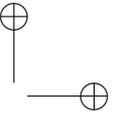
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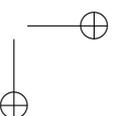
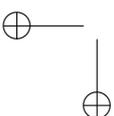


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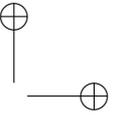
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