

**Summaries of Selected Sessions from the
2008 AMA Winter Educators' Conference
(Austin, TX)**

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10.3 Branding and Marketing Communications (Special Session)

Expressing the Organization's Identity to Manage Positive Perceptions among (Different Types of) Stakeholders

Chair:

Mignon van Halderen, Rotterdam School of Management

Cees van Riel, Rotterdam School of Management

Participants:

The IMC Challenge of Corporate Branding in a Product Branding World: A Managerial Perspective

Gabriel J. Biehal, University of Maryland

Daniel Sheinin, University of Rhode Island

The Interaction between Organizational Identity and Corporate Reputation

Eva Goutzamani, Athens University of Business and Economics

Client-Company Identification: Role Ambiguity in a Creative Context

Shaun Powell, Heriot Watt University

When Do They Believe It's "Real"? A Cognitive Causal Network Approach to Corporate Brand Authenticity

Johan Van Rekom, Rotterdam School of Management

Gabriele Jacobs, Rotterdam School of Management

Klement Podnar, University of Ljubljana

Stakeholder Perception Phenomena Opening Up New Possibilities for Corporate Branding Strategies – Case Study Based Experiences, Hypotheses, and Suggestions for Future Research

Klaus-Peter Wiedmann, Leibniz University Hannover

Testing an Organizational Expressiveness Model for Managing Stakeholders' Perceptions of a Company

Mignon van Halderen, Rotterdam School of Management

Cees van Riel, Rotterdam School of Management

Session Summary Writer: Abdullah Al-Jafari, Oklahoma State University

How do consumers incorporate multiple branding (e.g. Corporate and Products)? Dr. Sheinin addressed this question in his presentation. He also pointed out that there are two perspectives to consider in addressing the issue: customer's perspective vs. manager's perspective. He focused more on the manager's perspective in his paper aiming to build brand equity.

Dr. Sheinin addressed this issue through qualitative research aiming to answer three specific questions. The first question was "How to unlock the power of the corporate brand with customers?" This question was addressed from a corporate-based corporate communication (CCC) strategy. Second, "When should your company develop a CCC strategy?" This point leads to determining the factors that influence the decision. Finally, Dr. Sheinin addressed the question of "How to implement the CCC strategy?" and pointed out that the implementation might be achieved through searching for corporate and product synergies.

Eva Goutzamani presented her research on the interaction between identity and reputation. Her research focused on the factors that influence the interaction between Identity, Image, and Reputation and how that affects identification with organizations. She identified four concepts: Organizational Identity, Corporate Reputation, Construed External Image, and Construed Internal Identity. It is hypothesized that the interaction between these constructs influences trust.

Shaun Powell addressed the influence of role ambiguity in creative context on client – company identification. He showed that organizational creativity affects the relationship with clients. He also pointed out that current literature on creativity addresses individual creativity in detail; however, we

need to know more about organizational creativity. This research suggests that creative transparency leads to trust, rewards, and feeling of unity.

Dr. Wiedmann enriched the discussion by presenting some ideas that might guide future research based on his practical experience in with companies in Germany. He pointed out the importance of “sense-making process”, a skill that managers need to uncover the pattern behind any phenomenon. He contended that business activities should be structured along value chains. That will help in identifying the drivers of sustainable core value.

Johan van Rekom addressed the issue of what determines whether a consumer perceives a feature to be authentic. He highlighted the importance of authenticity in brand positioning. According to van Rekom’s research, consumers will perceive the brand to be authentic if it is close to “real-self”. That is, if the positioning of the brand captures its core value or essence. This research adopted a cognitive approach that links brand essence to authenticity which in terms leads consumers to like the brand.

What should managers tell stakeholders about the company? How should they express that? Dr. Mignon van Halderen addressed this point in her paper. The short answer to these questions is “express your company in a way that makes sense to stakeholders.” She identified three principles for expressing organizational identity: sincerity, consistency, and distinctiveness. Dr. van Halderen contends that these principles have the ability to bridge the gap between organizational identity and managing stakeholder perceptions.