Patrick P.K. Ng · Cindy S.B. Ngai *Editors*

Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China

From Academic to Practitioner Perspectives

Springer

Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China

Patrick P.K. Ng • Cindy S.B. Ngai
Editors

Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China

From Academic to Practitioner Perspectives

Springer

Editors
Patrick P.K. Ng
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies
Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong, China

Cindy S.B. Ngai
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies
Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong, China

ISBN 978-3-662-46880-7 ISBN 978-3-662-46881-4 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015940542

Springer Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer-Verlag GmbH Berlin Heidelberg is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Foreword

More than half a century ago, famed cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead paved the way for intercultural studies based on her belief that the cultural patterns of societies were learned and that people could work together to change their traditions and institutions. She said, 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world' (http://www.interculturalstudies.org/Mead/biography.html).

The editors of *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China: From Academic to Practitioner Perspectives* Ng and Ngai have enlisted scholars and practitioners to demonstrate the importance of language-mediated communication in introducing the critical importance of both language and professional practice for the corporate communication profession in Greater China. They have created a resource book for both academics and practitioners of corporate communication by gathering both quantitative studies and government surveys as well as qualitative case studies from reputable corporate professionals. The perspectives of these scholars and practitioners in the chapters of this book also illuminate Chinese cross-cultural communication practices and highlight the implications for Western societies and organisations that engage with them.

The editors set the background for the book with an overview chapter on the development of the corporate communication profession from its colonial Hong Kong origins as traditional public relations through its evolution to become more aligned with leading global practices. In Hong Kong now the profession emphasises both bilingual English-Chinese and trilingual English-Cantonese-Mandarin capabilities of its professionals.

The perspectives of the scholars and the practitioners offer valuable insights into the:

- Definition and development of the profession
- Importance of language, bilingualism, and professional discourse in its practice
- Impact of digital media
- Relationship of the profession to corporate branding
- Understanding and application of the concepts of cross-cultural communication

Their discussions inform the development of effective language strategies for corporate communication in Greater China.

This book illustrates issues and concepts with case studies in banking, corporate social responsibility (CSR), finance, and entertainment. These cases suggest valuable methods and practices that professionals can use to provide effective knowledge and insight for the profession and for its practitioners, analysts, and scholars.

This book provides an invaluable handbook of resources on corporate communication for local and international frontline managers and staff, especially for those who are interested in a career in Hong Kong and Mainland China. It is also an indispensable resource for academic researchers and scholars in language, culture, and communication studies in Greater China and overseas. Since it is written in English, it offers an informative overview of professional development approaches and reviews of language practice and cross-cultural communication issues. Finally this book offers a clear path for university teachers and students engaged in the learning of language related to corporate communication and public relations in Hong Kong and in Sino-US interactions.

New York, NY, USA Michael B. Goodman

Preface

Common sense tells us that in order for a corporation to communicate with its internal and external stakeholders, the message sender is destined to deploy language, verbal and non-verbal ones alike, to do the job. The role of language in corporate communication has long been seen as an under-explored topic mattering to both internal and external communications (Anderson and Rasmussen 2002), albeit increasing acknowledgement of language as a corporate asset (Dhir 2004).

Consider the official slogan of 2008 Beijing Olympics—'One World, One Dream'—relayed by designated torch bearers by the organising committee. Appealing to the internal public of China, the slogan seeks to instil a collective pride of Chinese nationhood in keeping with governing ethos of social harmony; while speaking to the external public of international audiences, it echoes the International Olympics' ethos of global peace through transnational sports competitions. Language ideology here employed by the national corporate host facing an international audience serves a pragmatic end of branding national image and driving international collaborative opportunities!

Henceforth, it piques intellectual and pragmatic interests of language scholars and trainers in bilingual education, intercultural communication, and media and professional discourse studies to join hands with corporate communication professionals in the academia and fields of practice for reviewing the changing role of language(s) in different functional domains of corporate communications, for instance, routine employee communications, CSR initiatives benefiting both internal and external stakeholders, and brand marketing in both Greater China and partners from distinct ethno-linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

This academic-cum-practice book is thus anchored upon the notion of language-mediated communication (LMC) in introducing highly dynamic and functional issues of language skills cum professional practice know-hows in today's corporate communication (CC) profession in the Greater China context. As a resource book for both academics and practitioners in the CC profession, it employs both quantitative (e.g. reviewed industry and governmental surveys) and qualitative (e.g. reputable CC practitioners' case studies) evidence to explore the aforementioned language-mediated communication issues facing the CC profession in Greater China. The topics will address both academic and practitioner readerships whose interests in LMC in CC practices are grounded in language practices in their own industries or sectors.

As such, the dual-focused LMC and CC resource book spans across not only latest trends but also academic and industry practitioner stakeholders' perspectives on language, culture, and functional role issues facing the vastly developing corporate communication (CC) profession in the Greater China region and international counterparts that transact with Chinese CC professionals and stakeholders. It follows that the book will further explore implications for Western societies that engage with the Chinese cross-culturally in CC practices, for example, intercultural workplace communication issues on Anglo expatriates dealing with Chinese subordinates during conflict resolution situations in a Chinese societal context.

There are five cluster themes being featured in the book chapters. It opens with two cluster themes consisting of development of the CC profession and bilingual practices in corporate communication, drawing on Sino-American academic research efforts and insights from Sino-British-American CC practitioners, with an overview discussion of the development of the corporate communication profession from a macro-descriptive, retrospective perspective on where the CC business originated under the traditional label of public relations profession prevalent in the colonial Hong Kong context and a review of its evolutionary path to its current status quo as a more distinct and diversified CC profession emphasising the role of language and particularly bilingualism phenomenon, viz. Anglo-Chinese biliterate and trilingual skills in the post-colonial Hong Kong society.

The remaining three cluster themes move the discussions across corporate social responsibility, employee communications, and media discourse and persuasive communication, through the field insights of academics and those of professional corporate practitioners, from cross-cultural, profession-wide, and bilingual communication issues to applications of heuristic knowledge within industry-specific workplace case contexts. It covers definitions and conceptions of CC in various corporate sectors, latest trends of CC (e.g. CSR) and media practices in Chinese and American contexts and beyond (e.g. Singapore), success norms of CC practitioners, intercultural employee communications, verbal and non-verbal strategies for enabling routine and strategic communication practices, and so forth. The practitioners' authored chapters inform both CC practitioners and various stakeholders in the academia about the methodological and practice issues that language professionals are to be mindful of when serving the CC profession.

On the first cluster theme, the editors reviewed the development of CC/PR in Hong Kong from the 1950s till the twenty-first century and conducted an empirical qualitative investigation into the current trends involving interviews with eight senior PR/CC practitioners from multinational and local companies to inform about the change of role and function, use of social media, language, and communication strategies of PR industries in Hong Kong and China. Likewise, Michael B. Goodman, in *A Review of Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in the US and China*, shed light on the latest trends and practices of CC by reviewing survey findings by the Corporate Communication International on practices and trends in the field in the United States, Europe, South Africa, and China. David Hall in *Becoming a Successful Corporate Communication Practitioner in International Business Consultancy* examines how the most frequently encountered of these responsibilities are discharged and highlights the skills and technical practices that are necessary for their successful execution. It further examines the leadership roles of corporate communication professionals in the corporation, among the more commonly encountered of which include counsel to CEO and the corporation, manager of company's reputation, driver of company's publicity, and manager of the company's image (Goodman and Hirsch 2010).

On the second cluster theme of bilingual practices in corporate communication, from the perspective of oral bilingual practices in corporate contexts, Patrick P. K. Ng, in *Bilingual Practices in Corporate Communication Functions: Verbal Skills in Focus*, examines the status quo challenges of dealing with increasingly complex and integrated internal and external corporate communication settings (e.g. the vast use of social media) and introduces Anglo-Chinese bilingual communication strategies (e.g. code-switching, code-mixing, and bilingual punning) available to a novice trilingual Hong Kong Chinese executive attempting to communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders in the dynamic internal and external corporate work fronts (e.g. locals to locals, locals to Putonghua speakers, and locals to English-speaking Asians and Westerners, inter alia).

From the perspective of written bilingual practices in corporate contexts, Cindy S. B. Ngai and Rita Gill Singh, in *Communication Styles Embedded in the Bilingual E-messages of Corporate Leaders in Greater China,* outline key aspects of our research into corporate leader electronic messages (e-messages) posted on the websites of major corporations in Greater China to identify the preferred language modes, translation strategies, as well as the communication styles/characteristics embedded in these e-messages. Their findings revealed that the bilingual representation strategy was usually adopted, and the authors argue that the bilingual e-messages reflect the different communication styles/characteristics of corporate leaders with their English-speaking versus Chinese-speaking stakeholders, underpinned by leaders' cultural values.

Approaching written bilingual practices from a translation perspective, Dechao Li, in *Translation Strategies in Bilingual Corporate Communication*, raised the following translation-relevant bilingual corporate communication issues: What kind of translation strategies should be used in bilingual corporate communication in order to produce adequate versions in the target culture? What are the general guidelines for CC practitioners during this interlingual text production? What are the intratextual and extratextual factors that should be taken into account in this type of translation practice? Drawing on a model for translation strategies proposed by Chesterman (1997), his paper attempts to answer these questions by making reference to existing Chinese translations of English corporate texts in Hong Kong.

The next three cluster themes are, respectively, *corporate social responsibility, employee communications, and media discourse and persuasive communication.* On the third cluster theme of corporate social responsibility and starting from an academic perspective, Augustine Pang, Angela Ka Ying Mak, and Joanne M. H. Lee, in *Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility in Singapore: Towards More Effective Media Relations*, studied practitioners' and journalists' perception of CSR communication using the agenda-building model (Qiu and Cameron 2008) by examining news coverage of how practitioners and journalists understand CSR, what types of CSR stories get covered in the media, and how are CSR stories portrayed in the media. Their findings and discussions led to a framework of media relations that is proposed based on Pang's (2010) mediating the media model.

Onto practitioners' perspectives and beginning from a Sino corporate context, Valentina Yee Kwan Cotton-Chan, in *The High-hanging Fruit: CSR in the Context of the Chinese Food and Beverage Industry*, explored the development of CSR in China during the last decade and shedded light on the current challenges and future opportunities using the case example of the food and beverage industry. Applying the CSR life-cycle model by Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010) Guzman and Becker-Olsen based on stakeholder awareness and expectations, her findings confirm the hypothesis that China is currently in the early market expansion and growth phase which is characterised by the increase in companies engaging in CSR and in consumer awareness, with good examples of diversified CSR programmes and potential employee recruitment and retention rewards. Crossing over to the US perspective, Christina M. Genest and Jo-ann Straat, in *Corporate Social Responsibility in a U.S. Context*, take a snapshot of contemporary CSR practice in the United States by combining their own real-world experience with findings from the current literature and the results of a survey of current CSR US executives. Six trends emerged: (1) CSR is not PR, (2) CSR drives corporate value, (3) CEOs have a lot to say about CSR, (4) CSR performance is being measured, (5) CSR is evolving incrementally, and (6) CSR is a business imperative and a moral imperative.

On the fourth cluster theme of employee communications and starting from an academic perspective, Shiyong Peng, in *Distributions of Conflict Potentials Among Western and Chinese Employees in Multinational Corporations in China*, reported the findings based on his secondary analysis (2003) analysing work-related conflict distribution patterns among American, French, and Chinese employees in foreign-invested enterprises (FIE) and Chinese employees in state-owned enterprises (SOE) in mainland China. The results of the data analysis generated an emerging pattern of conflict distribution that corresponds to the conflict management patterns of Western and Chinese employees in foreign-invested enterprises. The study attempted to explain the cultural implications of the conflict distributions.

Moving to an internal corporate communication practitioner's perspective, Stella Nga-chi Chiu, in *Can Internal Communication Drive Business? An Overview of Its strategic Values and Practice Tips*, suggests that in Asia-Pacific, people often overlook the strategic value internal communication can bring to a corporation. She addresses the strategic roles of internal communication and how internal communication can impact on business.

Finally, on the fifth cluster theme of *media discourse and persuasive communication*, media discourse, and communication academics, Doreen D. Wu and Wei Feng, in *Pragmatist, Evangelist, or Sensualist? Emotional Branding on Sina Weibo*, introduced Gobe's (2009) notions of emotional branding which is centred around the 'evangelist' age and the 'sensualist' age, whereby they examined the process of emotional branding by top Chinese corporations in China in the changing Internet landscape (via social media platforms such as Weibo and Facebook) and discussed the particular Chinese characteristics as well as the universal psychological principles that govern emotional branding in China.

With respect to persuasive communication in corporate contexts, Patricia B. Scott offers practitioner insights into processes of persuasion from an audience-sensitive and attention-span analytic perspective in the information age. This chapter not only provides tools that can be used to help any presentation or conversation but also concludes that successful corporate communication practitioners will be those who can be concise, make the complex simple, and be the most relevant.

This book as a whole seeks to merge and interrelate academic (including language, intercultural and business communication) perspectives with professional practices in CC contexts in Greater China and beyond underpinned by the chapters distributed in the five theme clusters. We hope the interdisciplinary approach characterised by the rich mix of conceptual, empirical, and professional praxis chapters will engender further interests and insights into conceptual-cum-practice-driven research on language-mediated communication in a Sino-global corporate context.

Acknowledgements

The editors are indebted to the following parties from CBS editorial team and Springer editorial team for their skilled editorial support to enable us to contribute this book publication to the disciplines of language, PR, and corporate communication:

CBS editorial team:
Alice Wing Man Lee (subeditor: communications with chapter contributors)
Peggy Hang Lin Tse (subeditor: textual subediting of chapters)
Neko Ching Lam Chan (student editorial assistant)
Wilson Wai Ting Yip (student editorial assistant)
Vicky Kit Yee Lee (student editorial assistant)

Springer editorial team:
Rebecca Zhu (editor) and her team colleagues

The editors are grateful for permission to reproduce copyright material where appropriate.

Hong Kong, China Patrick P.K. Ng
Hong Kong, China Cindy S.B. Ngai

References

Anderson, H, and E.S. Rasmussen. 2002. *The role of language skills in corporate communication*. Paper for the Nordic Workshop on Interorganizational Research, 12, Kolding, Denmark, 16–18 August 2002, 1–16.

Dhir, K.S. 2004. Language as a corporate asset. In *Handbook of corporate communication and public relations*, ed. S.M. Oliver, 393–414. New York: Routledge.

Gobe, M. 2009. *Emotional branding: The new paradigm for connecting brands to people*. Rev. ed. New York: Allworth Press.

Goodman, M.B., and P.B. Hirsch. 2010. *Corporate communication: Strategic adaptation for global practice.* New York: Peter Lang.

Guzman, F., and K.L. Becker-Olsen. 2010. Strategic corporate social responsibility: A brand-building tool. In *Innovative CSR: From risk management to value creation* , ed. C. Louche, S.O. Idowu, and W.L. Filho, 196–219. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

Pang, A. 2010. Mediating the media: A journalist-centric media relations model. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 15(2): 192–204.

Peng, S.Y. (2003). *Culture and conflict management in foreign-invested enterprises in China: An intercultural communication perspective*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Qiu, Q., and G.T. Cameron. 2008. Communicating health disparities: Building a supportive media agenda. Saarbruecken: VDM Verlag.

Contents

Part I Development of the CC Profession

1 **The Development of the Corporate Communication Profession in Hong Kong** 3
Cindy S.B. Ngai and Patrick P.K. Ng

2 **A Review of Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in the USA and China** 27
Michael B. Goodman

3 **Becoming a Successful Corporate Communication Practitioner in International Business Consultancy** 49
David Hall

Part II Bilingual Practices in Corporate Communication

4 **Bilingual Practices in Corporate Communication Functions: Verbal Skills in Focus** 77
Patrick P.K. Ng

5 **Communication Styles Embedded in the Bilingual e-Messages of Corporate Leaders in Greater China** 91
Cindy S.B. Ngai and Rita Gill Singh

6 **Translation Strategies in Bilingual Corporate Communication** 109
Dechao Li

Part III Corporate Social Responsibility

7 **Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility in Singapore: Toward More Effective Media Relations** 127
Augustine Pang, Angela Ka Ying Mak, and Joanne M.H. Lee

8 The High-Hanging Fruit: CSR in the Context of the Chinese Food and Beverage Industry 149
Valentina Yee Kwan Cotton-Chan

9 Corporate Social Responsibility in a US Context 175
Jo-ann Straat and Christina M. Genest

Part IV Employee Communications

10 Distributions of Conflict Potentials Among Western and Chinese Employees in Multinational Corporations in China 193
Shiyong Peng

11 Can Internal Communication Drive Business? An Overview of Its Strategic Values and Practice Tips 203
Stella Nga-chi Chiu

Part V Media Discourse & Persuasive Communication

12 Pragmatist, Evangelist, or Sensualist? Emotional Branding on Sina Weibo 225
Doreen D. Wu and Wei Feng

13 Persuasive Communication Skill Development for Corporate Communication Practitioners in Sino-American Contexts 241
Patricia B. Scott

About the Authors

Stella Nga-chi Chiu has about 15 years of experience in corporate communications, spanning across internal communications, public relations, media relations, crisis communications, marketing, and corporate social responsibility. She has spent eight years in two regional management roles of external communications and internal communications, respectively, in two multinational companies. The companies she has worked for include BASF, Rockwell Automation, Swire Properties, and Ketchum PR agency. She holds a master degree in interpretation and translation awarded by the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Valentina Yee Kwan Cotton-Chan has recently rejoined her alma mater to lecture in corporate communication and bilingualism subjects after more than fifteen years' experience in the commercial sector with world-class global companies, e.g. PwC and eBay in Asia-Pacific. In roles focused on strategic business development and consulting, her track record includes consulting to many Fortune 500 clients at senior executive and board level. She has a MSc in management with marketing from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom and a BA (first class honours) in Language and Communication from Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She has lived and worked in London, Beijing, and Hong Kong.

Wei Feng is currently a final-year doctoral candidate and has been working as a research associate at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her realm of research centres on discourse analysis, corporate communication, and (new) media studies. She has published a book chapter by John Benjamin's as well as been involved in projects related to Chinese media sponsored by the Hong Kong University Grants Committee. Presently, she is co-authoring a book on business English studies (theoretical approaches and data analysis) to be published in Beijing soon. Ms. Feng's doctoral dissertation examines corporate self-presentation and identity construction on new media.

Christina M. Genest has enjoyed an extensive career in executive nonprofit and board leadership roles. She currently is the associate director of Corporate

Communication International (CCI) at Baruch College, City University of New York. Earlier in her career, she managed Digital Equipment Corporation's (New Hampshire, USA) community relations activities and corporate contributions programme.

She holds graduate degrees in international administration from World Learning's School for International Training (SIT), human services administration from Antioch University New England, and corporate and organizational communication from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Her work, 'Cultures, Organizations, and Philanthropy,' was published in *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* (Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005) and 'Coaching: Leveraging the Art of Communication Across Cultures' in CCI—*Corporate Communication International's Conference on Corporate Communication 2008 Proceedings*.

Michael B. Goodman (Ph.D.) is a professor and director of the MA in corporate communication at Baruch College, City University of New York, and director of CCI Corporate Communication International.

He is a visiting professor at Aarhus University (Denmark), Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Universita IULM (Italy). He has published widely, including *Corporate Communication: Strategic Adaptation for Global Practice* and *Corporate Communication: Critical Business Asset for Strategic Global Change* (in press). He has been a consultant to more than 40 corporations and institutions on corporate communication, managerial communication, problem-solving, new business proposals, change, and corporate culture.

David Hall From 1998 to 2010, David Hall headed Group Communications in Asia for HSBC plc. Prior to that, he was employed from 1994 to 1997 as head of corporate communications in NE Asia for Standard Chartered Bank.

Upon retiring from HSBC he took on various roles: visiting fellow at Hong Kong Polytechnic University; senior counsellor to APCO, the international corporate communications consultancy; and, from 2012 to 2013, an adviser to the CEO of Hang Seng Bank.

He is a Hong Kong permanent resident.

Joanne M.H. Lee received her BA (first class) and MA in communication studies from Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. She examined corporate social responsibility (CSR) among small–medium enterprises, across sectors, and the agenda-building effect of the media in relation to CSR. She has published in top-tier journals and also presented at international conferences. Currently, she works for the Singapore Civil Service specialising in development finance.

Dechao Li is an associate professor of the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He is currently the programme leader of the BA (honours) in Chinese and bilingual studies of the department. His research interests are translation theories, corpus-based translation studies, empirical approaches to interpreting studies, and the history of translation in China.

Angela Ka Ying Mak PhD, is a senior lecturer and head of public relations of the School of Media, Film and Journalism in the Faculty of Arts at Monash University, Australia. She was former chair of the research committee for the IABC Research Foundation. Her research areas are stakeholder engagement, corporate social responsibility, and cancer survivorship. She has published in top-tier journals such as the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Public Relations Review*, and *Journal of Brand Management*. She is an editorial board member for *Journal of Public Relations Research* and has co-edited a special issue on Public Relations in Asia with Dr Augustine Pang in *Media Asia*.

Patrick P.K. Ng is a lecturer at the Chinese and Bilingual Studies Department of Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He completed his undergraduate study in English language and literature at Hong Kong Baptist University (formerly Hong Kong Baptist College) and pursued graduate studies at Chapman University in the United States where he earned a MA degree in English (TESL) and recently received an award of master in social science (MSSc) from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom. His research interests include bilingualism and corporate communication, public speaking, intercultural pragmatics and communication, and media discourse. Some of his journal publications are found in *Critical Arts: A Journal of South–North Cultural and Media Studies*, *Contemporary Linguistics*, and J*ournal of Asian Pacific Communication*. In addition, he recently co-authored a journal paper for *PR Review* and a Chinese book on latest trends of PR and CC field development in Hong Kong and Greater China with Dr Cindy Ngai.

Cindy S.B. Ngai (PhD) is the research assistant professor of bilingual corporate communication in the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research lies in the fields of bilingual corporate communication in Greater China and bilingual representation of Chinese theatre. Her work has appeared in *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *Public Relations Review*, *Babel*, *Translation Quarterly*, *Studies in Culture and Art*, and *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*. Her published books on *New Trends in Corporate Communication—Language*, *Strategies and Practices* and *Introductory Studies to Chinese Theatre Translation* shed light on the development of corporate communication in Hong Kong, as well as critical issues related to translation of Chinese classical theatre.

Augustine Pang PhD, is an associate professor and head of both the Division of Public and Promotional Communication and the Division of Communication Research at Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University. He specialises in crisis management and communication, image management and repair, media management, and corporate communication management. He is the regional editor for *Corporate Communications: An*

International Journal and has co-edited special issues on management consultancy in the *International Journal of Strategic Communication* (published March 2013) and on public relations in Asia in *Media Asia* (published November 2009).

Dr. Shiyong Peng is currently the chair professor and head of the Department of Communication Studies and Languages of Abu Dhabi University in the United Arab Emirates. He is an expert in intercultural communication and has extensive experience in teaching and research in intercultural as well as cross-cultural communication. Over the past 30 years, he has taught in universities in Mainland China, Macao, Oman, Cyprus, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates.

Dr. Patricia B. Scott holds a PhD in communication and has served as a lecturer in the Communication Program at Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, for the past 10 years. She has been invited to speak to the Conference on Corporate Communication four times and serves annually on the programme committee for the conference. Her work has been published in *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Emerald Publications.

Dr. Scott also serves on the advisory board for the master of arts program in corporate communication at Baruch College of the City University of New York.

Rita Gill Singh is a senior lecturer in the language centre at Hong Kong Baptist University. She teaches undergraduate English courses in business communication. She has taught a variety of business communication courses in organisations in Hong Kong. Her research interests include corporate communication, web-based language learning, and materials development. Her projects in the past have included creating an online business English learning platform for university students and integrating speaking activities into language courses. She has presented at international conferences on the subject of corporate communication.

Jo-ann Straat's career in corporate communication and social responsibility spans more than 25 years with both US and global organisations. Her most recent position was head of US Internal Communication and Philanthropy for one of Japan's leading pharmaceutical companies.

She holds a BA in French from Ithaca College and a master in corporate and organizational communication from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Jo-ann has been honoured with numerous communication leadership awards, most notably as a Rising Star by the Healthcare Businesswoman's Association, as a Woman of Influence in Communications by the Women's Fund, and as one of New Jersey's Best 50 Women in Business.

Dr. Doreen D. Wu is an associate professor in the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research interests and expertise have been in the areas of media discourse analysis, multilingualism and multiculturalism, glocalisation, and brand communication in the Greater China region. Her recent paper publications include Glocalizing voice and style of

Cosmopolitan in China; Hybridized images: Representation of the 'modern woman' across Mainland China and Hong Kong TV commercials; and Becoming global, remaining local: The discourses of international news reporting by CCTV-4 and Phoenix TV Hong Kong. Between 2008 and 2011, she edited the book *Discourses of Cultural China in the Globalizing Age* (Hong Kong University Press) and co-edited two special issues: Media Discourse in Greater China for the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* (John Benjamins) and Media Discourses and Cultural Globalisation: A Chinese Perspective for the journal *Critical Arts* (Routledge).

Dr Doreen D. Wu is the co-editor for the book series *Studying Multicultural Discourses* (Hong Kong University Press) and also serves on the editorial board for a number of international, SSCI-indexed, and CSSCI-indexed journals such as *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, *Critical Arts*, *Contemporary Linguistics*, and *Modern Foreign Languages*. Besides, she serves on the advisory board for a number of international as well as local professional associations, including International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS), China Association for Intercultural Communication (CAFIC), China Association of Pragmatics, and Association of Chinese Sociolinguistics.

Part I
Development of the CC Profession

Chapter 1
The Development of the Corporate Communication Profession in Hong Kong

Cindy S.B. Ngai and Patrick P.K. Ng

Abstract Several studies on the development of PR/CC have sprung up at the turn of the century affirming the view on the changing role and function of PR in Hong Kong and China (e.g., Wang, Corporate communication practices and trends: A China study – Phase 2 2008. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/ChinaCorpCom12March08.pdf. Accessed 13 Sept 2013, 2008; Feng JY, Goodman MB, Corporate communication practices and trends: A China study 2010. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/CCIPracticesAndTrendsChinaStudy2010.pdf. Accessed 13 Sept 2013, 2010), yet there remains to be seen more such comprehensive, in-depth, empirical studies locally. Thus, this chapter will present a summary of the development and a review of the current CC/PR industry in Hong Kong, followed by an investigation to document the current trends of the local PR/CC industry in a qualitative approach. Eight senior PR/CC practitioners from multinational and local companies in Hong Kong and China have been thoroughly interviewed to document and examine the change of role and function, use of social media, language, and communication strategies of PR industries in Hong Kong and China.

Several key findings and implications are concluded: (1) the strategic role of PR/CC is mostly found in giant-size corporations, especially multinationals, whereas the role of PR/CC in SMEs is merely tactical and the functions are basically market and media oriented; (2) while there is consciousness about the use of bilingual communication and the production of precise and consistent message in both internal and external communication, in HK and China contexts, there seems to be an underuse of new media and social media to engage stakeholders in this "direct interface" age; (3) despite the due recognition given to establishing a professional body to guide and monitor the practice of professionals to ensure that the status of PR/CC can be perceived as a genuine profession in Hong Kong and China, the establishment of a licensing body remains controversial (Parkinson MG, Parkinson LM, Constitutional mythology in the United States: the arguments against public relations licensing refuted. Intercult Commun Stud XII-2:135–149, 2003).

C.S.B. Ngai (✉) • P.P.K. Ng
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: cindy.sb.ngai@polyu.edu.hk

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_1

1.1 Introduction

Moving into the globalized era, public relations (PR) industry in Greater China, particularly Hong Kong and China, just like any other industries, has to reengineer in form and nature to keep up with the vigorous and dynamic development in their counterparts. Such a structural change has begun in the PR industry in leading countries including the US and European countries. It is observed that PR has moved from market and media orientation to strategic and communicative nature (Goodman 2001, 2003, 2005).

In this connection, quite a number of multinational corporations in Europe and the USA have deliberately integrated the PR into corporate communication (CC) as they considered CC "to be the collective name for all communication disciplines" (Nessmann 1995: 155). It made one wonder whether a similar pattern of development would take place in the PR industry in Hong Kong and China. Several studies on the development of PR/CC have sprung up at the turn of the century affirming the view on the changing role and function of PR in Hong Kong and China (e.g., Wang 2008; Feng and Goodman 2010).

Notwithstanding the emerging scholarly interest in surveying the rapidly changing/evolving PR industry in GC contexts, there remains to be seen more comprehensive, in-depth, empirical studies documenting the changing role, trends, and practices of the PR/CC industry particularly in Hong Kong and China.

This chapter will start with a summary of the development of CC/PR in Hong Kong from the 1950s till the twenty-first century and shift its focus on a review of the current CC/PR industry in Hong Kong. A further investigation is set up to explore the current trend of the PR/CC industry in Hong Kong and China in a qualitative approach. Eight senior PR/CC practitioners from multinational and local companies in Hong Kong and China have been thoroughly interviewed to document and examine the change of role and function, use of social media, language, and communication strategies of PR industries in Hong Kong and China.

1.2 The Development of CC in HK

Rather than suggesting that corporate communication is the extension of public relations or public affairs (Li et al. 2006), it is more appropriate to see it as the next generation of public relations. In an organization, CC is responsible not only for the development and execution of external communication strategies but also for the formulation and fosterage of internal communication plans. Toward drawing the full picture of the industry's development, the starting point should be set at the 1950s, a time when the PR industry started to emerge.

1.2.1 The 1950s to 1970s: The Burgeon of Public Relations

The modern public relations was imported by the British army in the 1950s, at a time when they had established offices responsible for releasing information to the media (Chen and Chen 2006; Zheng 1999). During that period, a lot of governmental and quasi-governmental organizations, shipping companies, foreign-funded airlines, hotels, and public utilities demanded PR services. For instance, various international airlines, including Pan American World Airways, British Airways, Japan Airlines, and Cathay Pacific, established their own PR departments (Zheng 1999).

With a rapid growth of the demand for PR services, numerous international PR consulting corporations started to extend their branches into Hong Kong. The first of its kind, among companies with the name of "PR consultancy," is "Harvey Public Relations Consultancy," established by a retired Director of the British Army PR Department, Major Harvey. As for the first local PR consultancy firm, it is the "International Public Relations Consultancy," founded by a local practitioner, Zhou Daifei (Zheng 1999).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Hong Kong had entered the epoch of economic takeoff. Industrial development was flourishing, and various industries, be it textile, electronics, garments, plastics, or hardware, were drawing tremendous amount of capital into Hong Kong. Hong Kong manufactured products had successfully entered the international market, while PR had become the bridge of communication in the commercial world. At that time, the broadcasting industry was developing well, which helped the corporations to advertise and boost their brand awareness of various media via product promotions, including the strategizing of news stories (the designing of news stories beneficial to the organization based on massive case studies), evening parties, fashions shows, and other featuring programs (Wan and Zhou 2006).

In addition, the functions of PR also had covered liaising, complaint management, and releasing information to the press. It was therefore necessary to maintain good relationships with journalists and to organize gatherings with them to strengthen the bridge of communication (Zheng 1999). PR back then was regarded as a tool for brand awareness enhancement and promotion. Through holding events, practitioners help their client companies to establish image and build connections with the outer world (Chen and Chen 2006). As for PR in the 1960s and 1970s, it is a common practice to distribute advertisements and consumer-related information via newspapers, magazines, radiobroadcasting, television, buses, and the subway trains.

Based on the above observations, "public relations" or "public affairs" in an organization are mainly responsible for image sculpturing and maintaining and protecting the organization from any jeopardy (Li et al. 2006). Thus, PR was seen as a "problem-solving" expert. When issues emerged in an organization, they are always directed to the PR consultant for advice or to the in-house PR department to deal with (Chen and Chen 2006).

During these two decades, the PR industry in Hong Kong was a rising star. An increasing number of PR consultant firms started to station in Hong Kong, say, the renowned Australian PR company, Eric White and Associates, has established a subsidiary company, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, in Hong Kong; another well-known PR company, Burson-Marsteller, has started its branch in Hong Kong too (Zheng 1999). During that period, most PR companies were foreign funded, in which the majority of the employees were non-local Chinese, but American Chinese, Canadian Chinese, and Taiwanese Chinese. In other words, the PR industry back then highly valued a company's internationality (Yeung 2002).

"In the mid-60s, the Chief Editor of Sing Tao Daily, Mr. Zheng Yu Lang was dedicated to developing the PR industry. The first local PR association, 'Public Relations Association of Hong Kong' was established by him in 1966" (Shanghai International Studies University 2010: para. 3). It provided professional PR courses to nurture specialists for the industry. Since the vast majority of the students majoring PR studies in local tertiary education institutions were female, they in turn became the mainstay of PR practitioners in the 1970s (Zheng 1999).

1.2.2 *The 1980s: The Efflorescence of Public Relations*

In 1982, Sino-British negotiations spurred on the discussion over the prospect of Hong Kong. With the opening and the development of the society, the public's expectation toward the government has increased, with stronger and bolder requests voiced out (Chen and Chen 2006). The constitutional reform of Hong Kong has raised citizens' knowledge of civil rights, provided more motivation for the political candidates to canvass, and triggered the emergence of pressure groups and critical crisis (Chen and Chen 2006). PR consultancy companies specialized in governmental and public affairs were therefore developed in Hong Kong.

From the beginning of the 1980s, the opening and cost advantage of the southeast coastal area has enabled a new direction for Hong Kong's economic development. The manufacturing businesses of Hong Kong had been massively shifted to the Pearl River Delta, transforming the industry pattern from light industry oriented to commercial service oriented. Various service industries in Hong Kong developed all-round, accomplishing the second economic transformation of Hong Kong, which also had stimulated the growth of the PR industry. In that stage, most of the local hotels, restaurants, shipping, trading, banking businesses, and industrial and commercial organizations had set up their own PR department, holding all sorts of PR events. Along with the economic change, PR at this stage had expanded into the field of industry and commerce and had become the key administrative tool in "problem prevention" (Chen and Chen 2006).

From then on, PR had entered a new dimension: from being on a need-to-use basis to acquiring the preventive functions. Facing different political organizations, pressure groups, and public opinions, being a "spin doctor" is no longer sufficient for PR (Li et al. 2006). PR consultancy companies started to provide more professional services to public and private organizations, including composing research reports, studying strategic plans, providing community relation service, and assisting an organization in neutralizing conundrums and crisis (Zheng 1999).

With the economic boom of Hong Kong in the early 1980s came the blossoming of the PR industry. “Governmental, industrial, commercial, and charitable organizations had a huge demand in PR services” (Zheng 1999 : 127). Thus, numerous local-funded companies had also entered the PR industry (Yeung 2002). Witnessing the enrichment of local elements in the industry, foreign-funded companies were no longer dominating. At that time, the local PR companies had increased from 6 in the 1970s to 22 in the 1980s (Chen and Chen 2006). A proportion of the local PR companies, which were specialized in governmental and public affairs, were also founded by experienced local journalists (Zheng 1999). Local PR companies started to gain a place in the industry. Due to the smaller scale of the companies (less than 20 employees), they are limited to relatively focused functions, say, the introduction of products and promotional events, while “through-train” PR services were not available yet (Yeung 2002). Due to the fact that some PR companies focused on product promotional events, it is easy to misunderstand PR as an industry similar to marketing. A specific industry entitled “Marketing Public Relations” was even once found in the western countries (Cornelissen 2004). In this stage, there were more men entering and participating PR works; thus, there were quite a number of companies with male directors and practitioners (Chen and Chen 2006).

1.2.3 The 1990s: The Emergence of Corporate Communication

In the early 1990s, with the opening of the China market, more than ten local-based PR consultancy companies entered the mainland market and established branches in China. Apart from that, capitals had entered Hong Kong from China and other foreign countries, thus boosted the proportion of banking and finance industry in the gross domestic product (GDP): from 1991 till 2004, the proportion increased from 9.1 to 12.9 % (Wang 2008). Together with the introduction of “H Shares” in the Hong Kong stock market, the rapid development of the finance industry had created a lot of business opportunities for the PR industry. As a result, various corporations had a higher demand in financial PR consultancy service (Chen and Chen 2006). In brief, PR consultancy companies in this era had been growing quickly, increasing from 6 companies in the 1970s to 22 companies in the 1980s; from 1990 to 1993, 14 more PR companies were established within the 3-year period (Shanghai International Studies University 2010). During that time, the PR industry in Mainland China had started to prosper, while in Hong Kong, the industry had entered a transitional period.

In the 1990s, the PR industry in Hong Kong has gradually evolved into corporate communication. There are two major reasons for the transformation: (1) the abrupt change of external environment and (2) the negative image of the PR industry. At that time, the advancement of information technology had made message delivery more convenient. While the citizens' democracy consciousness and public opinions were growing stronger and the corporate governance was increasingly complicated, corporations in the twentieth century stressed on the brand image, social benefits, and efficient communication with internal and external stakeholders. Facing all sorts of changes and demands, the traditional PR measures were no longer sufficient (Li et al. 2006). Moreover, the early PR measures advocated a single-way praising (Li 2007), which often resulted in an evasive strategy that downplays and glosses over the key issues or even a deliberate misrepresentation to bend the real problem (Li et al. 2006). These practices had led the journalists or even the general public to misunderstand PR; on the other hand, the emergence of corporate communication had provided the corporations a newer and a more dynamic communication strategy, which at the same time enabled the "rebirth" of the PR industry, clearing the previous negative images.

The concept of corporate communication was originated from America and formally imported into Hong Kong in the 1990s. As an extension of the PR industry, CC however was an exceptionally young subject and profession, while there was no professional literature of the discipline until the first of its kind, *Corporate Communication*, was published in the 1994 (Li 2007). Nonetheless, in the mid-twentieth century, corporations already perceived PR and CC as related professions and started to set up a CC department or to reform the PR department into the name of CC, so as to cater to the journalists' and the public's need of open information and two-way communication.

According to Newspaper Clippings Image Database,[1] from 1977 till 1999, there were 203 entries which mentioned "corporate communication" or "Qiye Chuanxun" (the Chinese term for CC). The earliest entry was found in a news report in 1995. The found searches were mostly using the term in association with the professional positions, say, New World First Bus Assistant General Manager (Corporate Communication), the Corporate Communication Manager in The Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry, etc. Thus, it can be concluded that corporations and organizations mostly started the CC-related positions in the mid-1990s to focus on providing various CC functions.

Corporate communication in the 1990s were chiefly focused on assisting a corporation in building and maintaining a vivid image, strategically executing promotional campaigns, and handling media relations and event management. CC was no longer only responsible for holding promotional events for the companies but also was involved in the administrative management level to understand the company's direction and development, so as to prepare the appropriate arrangements and estimate the outcomes; thus, the discipline had acquired the name of CC (Sing Tao Daily 1999). CC corporations with a larger scale not only have provided

[1] Newspaper Clippings Image Database is composed by the integration of all newspaper clippings by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Pao Yue-kong Library from 1977 till 1999. The newspapers include South China Morning Post, The Standard, Hong Kong Economic Journal, Ming Pao, Sing Tao Daily, Oriental Daily News, The HKSAR Government Press Releases, and the Universities Press Releases.

crisis communication, media relations, and investor relations services but also have covered financial relations, China media monitoring, and professional copywriting and translation services for international clients in the mainland market (Chen and Chen 2006).

Apart from CC trainings, professional programs in the name of CC started to emerge from the early 1990s. For instance, School of Journalism and Communication of The Chinese University of Hong Kong has started developing its CC master's program in 1993 (The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2005). From then on, various institutions started CC-related programs one after another, say, the Public Relations Society and School of Professional and Continuing Education (previously as Department of Extra Mural Studies) of the University of Hong Kong have jointly restructured the course of "Introduction to PR" into a one-year Certificate Course in Corporate Communication (Li 2007).

CC practitioners not only should be equipped with timely knowledge but also need to acquire different language skills to cater to the society's demands toward CC. Before the handover of Hong Kong, CC practitioners, especially those from multinational corporations, only wrote press releases in English, but not in Chinese. After the handover, CC started to value the Chinese media, as well as Chinese, the official language of China (Yeung 2002). CC practitioners in Hong Kong must master their biliterate and trilingual skills in order to cater to the needs of people from all parts of the world. Entering the twenty-first century, China has entered the World Trade Organization; thus, corporations are more actively engaged in international economic activities (Jiang 2002), while Hong Kong has also benefited from the event. Hong Kong-based PR companies consecutively establish their branch office in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to assist their clients and organizations in product and service promotions. Putonghua thus has become one of the necessary abilities for the new generation of CC practitioners (Chen and Chen 2006).

1.2.4 The Twenty-First Century: The Growth of Corporate Communication

The twenty-first century sets the expansion stage for the CC industry. Facing the ever-changing societal environment, CC in this period has further evolved, reformed, and tried to reposition. The current CC industry possesses two major characteristics: (1) the extensive application of new media and (2) the professionalization of CC functions.

The economic globalization and the advancement and popularization of information technology and the Internet have greatly motivated the development of the CC industry. The international popularization of the Internet has strengthened the economic connections between countries. The more convenient collection, process, storage, and transmission of information have enabled different governments and corporations to gain access to information more quickly. CC, as an important modern strategic operation and management function, has the primary function of fostering two-way communication between the corporation and the stakeholders. The Internet is adopted by PR as the new media, which transmits information and messages faster and wider. While operating at a lower cost, the Internet also allows interactive communication. Thus, it is better than the traditional media. Moreover, corporations can dissemble internal information throughout the world via the Internet, while the public can access the relevant information from the web, which is highly beneficial for enhancing a corporation's transparency (Jiang 2002). A survey investigation into the development of CC in China indicates that more and more corporations choose to promote corporate social responsibility via corporate websites, online news platforms, and corporate intranet systems (Wang and Goodman 2006).

Not only has the Internet brought CC into a new dimension; the emergence of social media has also transformed the way of operation in CC. According to a report published in March 2011 by an international communication consultancy company, Bite Communications, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, etc., not only have broken the traditional practice of promotion via conventional media but also have altered the corporations' operational pattern in marketing strategies and brand establishment, fostering the continuous development of various communication aspects. The Executive Director (Asia Pacific) of Bite Communications, Mr. Paul Mottram, believes that CC is undergoing a stage of transformation, as a corporate image that no longer solely depends on the sculpturing by CC/PR department, but the customers' criticisms from social media will also directly impact on the image of the corporation. Thus, a CC department is required to understand the distinctive characteristics of various social media and to utilize them in the communication tactics and strategies (Yang 2011).

The President of Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing (HKAIM), Mr. Francis Fong, indicates that social media has been widely accepted and used. Except of personal usage, some companies will even utilize them for commercial purposes. HKAIM earlier has conducted a survey regarding social media. All the interviewees were CC practitioners. About 70 % of them believed that social media can effectively bring positive word of mouth for the corporation, while about 45 % of them indicated that social media was already part of the marketing and media strategies. On the other hand, 20 % of them would consider including social media in the advertising budget (Zhang 2009).

With the rapidly changing society and the increasing demands from the public, the emergence of new media has rendered the work of CC more sophisticated and professional. According to Li's research, the modern CC functions can include "corporate image and reputation management, corporate advertising, media relations management, marketing communication, internal communication, financial communication, corporate social responsibility, government relations, crisis management, and problem tracking and management" (2007). The above scholarly finding suggests that CC has taken on a vast range of functions. Among them, reputation management, media relations management, and Internet relations are the key CC functions (Wang and Goodman 2006).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and crisis management are areas that twenty-first-century CC practitioners need to address. CSR started to become one of the major development foci of corporations since the 1990s, which is also affected by a wide range of factors, say, globalization and trade liberalization. Thus, Hong Kong, as the 9th largest trading economy, must not neglect the importance and influence of CSR toward the decision making of multinational corporations.

The development of CSR reflects the ever-changing roles of community and stakeholders toward a corporation. With the increasing expectations, corporations are finding it imperative to deal with the environmental, societal, and economic pressures. In the Economic Forum held in 2005, Hong Kong Trade Development Council has indicated that "some of the business people have long known the importance of CSR, while the practice of CSR by individual corporations are usually motivated by a strong spirit of religion or philanthropy, aiming to enhance the benefits for the employees and community and to protect the environment" (2005). Thus, corporations nowadays strive to meet the international standard of CSR, say, ISO9000, ISO14000, and SA8000. Meanwhile, CC also strives to promote CSR for corporations.

On the other hand, crisis management has been increasingly important. The former president of Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association, Dr. Linda Tsui, mentioned that "The Hong Kong economy has been rapidly transforming in these years. Facing various difficulties in business, corporations cut costs, undergo mergers and acquisitions, restructure internal organization, and study ways to add value to resources in order to preserve their competitiveness" (2009). Coping with the harsh business environment and the internal and external instability, assisting the organization in repositioning, addressing the above problems, and explaining the companies policy to the media have become the everyday subjects for the PR and management personnel.

Despite the fact that the functions of CC are more delicate and professional, the division of CC, PR, and marketing remains vague and unresolved. Due to the similarities in nature and duties among the three industries, their names are mixed by the public and used in an intersubstitutable manner.

In the short term, the roles of CC, PR, and marketing await to be specified; however, in the near future, CC will keep on developing into a unique profession, which provides high-end communication strategies, executes various details, and is dedicated to fostering the relationship between the corporation and the internal as well as external stakeholders.

1.3 Reviewing the Current CC Industry in HK

Corporate communication emphasizes the communication aspect between an organization and the internal as well as external stakeholders. One of the key functions of CC is to assist commercial, nonprofit-making, and governmental organizations in establishing good rapport with their stakeholders, so as to support the organization in portraying a positive persona and building a well-liked brand image. The following section will briefly review the current CC industry in Hong Kong in six aspects: (1) the functions of CC, (2) the roles of CC practitioners, (3) the employment of the CC industry, (4) the importance of language ability for CC practitioners, (5) the CC courses and programs, and (6) the influence of professional organization on the development of the CC industry.

1.3.1 The Functions of Corporate Communication

Corporate communication covers a vast variety of functions. In brief, the current CC industry in Hong Kong can be categorized into ten major functions: media relations, crisis management, internal communication, image management, community relations, product brand management, government relations, investor relations, customer relations, and marketing communication. The functions are directly influenced by the nature of an organization. For instance, the PR department of Television Broadcasts mainly liaises with entertainment journalists from various newspapers and magazines, so as to promote their TV programs; the CC department of Po Leung Kuk, a nonprofit-making organization in Hong Kong, focuses on designing promotional events and promoting their services to the general public in Hong Kong.

Many big corporations or organizations have set up their own PR departments, but the naming of them varies according to the nature of the company's business. In recent years, a lot of the companies rename their PR department to CC department, as they believe the new name can reflect the nature of work more accurately. "PR" projects an image of "representing the public," but a PR department's works actually also cover the other stakeholders, say, media, government, customers, and employees. To avoid the naming misconception, numerous companies started to rename their department of PR into CC. Besides, government departments in recent years also added PR/CC departments into their structure, which reflects that PR/CC is gradually gaining its recognition and status.

1.3.2 The Roles of Corporate Communication Practitioners

In the corporate communication industry, the nature of jobs is mainly divided into two categories, including (1) practitioners in professional PR/CC consultancy companies and (2) in-house practitioners in PR/CC department of corporations. In brief, the former provide CC/PR service to their clients, while the latter provide their support to their own corporations. As they provide services to different clients, the nature of works among the two categories differs significantly too.

Local PR/CC companies' services cover a wide range of industries and professions; practitioners thus need to provide services to all sorts of clients, including local/foreign companies, commercial/nonprofit-making organizations, and large-scale/

small and medium enterprises. The most significant challenge is that practitioners are required to serve multiple clients and process numerous tasks at the same time. In Hong Kong, most of the well-known large-scale PR companies are multinational, say, Weber Shandwick, which mostly serves international and famous corporations. For the local small- and medium-scale PR companies, their service targets are mostly local and mainland corporations. Comparing with the larger-scale firms, they have less manpower and resources, thus usually focusing their services on a certain function or on a certain industry. For example, Solutions Public Relations' website states that their major services include event planning, press conferences, marketing, product promotions, advertising strategies, etc. Another example would be The Hoffman Agency, an international PR company which is dedicated to tailor-making CC plans for high-tech, telecommunication, and consumer electronic corporations. Practitioners of the professional PR/CC companies are partners of their clients. They propose suggestions and give opinions, while the final decision is always made by their clients. In other words, their role is "consultant" (Zhao 2009).

In-house practitioners in PR/CC department of corporations play an entirely different role than those in consultancy companies. In-house practitioners are the spokespersons of their companies. All of their works are related to the interests of their corporation; thus, they are responsible to their own company. They bridge the corporation to the external world by executing internal and external communication functions. On the other hand, they also provide consultancy service and process all communication materials to be released while at the same time help their companies in planning sustainable and efficient PR strategies, so as to support and assist the senior management in decision making. Their range of tasks is directly correlated to the company's scale and the CEO's ideology and style of work. If they are working in a small firm, the company could only provide limited resources, which therefore may require them to deal with internal administrative tasks and other miscellaneous works. Apart from that, they need to be very familiar with the operations of the company and closely work with various departments. For instance, a practitioner working at the CC department of a bank not only should be capable of performing basic PR/CC tasks but also should understand the development of the banking industry as well as the related professional terminology, so as to be capable of writing good and relevant press releases (Zhao 2009).

1.3.3 The Employment of Corporate Communication Industry

In February 2012, there were 23,647 people employed in advertising- and PR-related positions. Generally speaking, people working in PR service suppliers and in-house CC/PR departments have more chance to take up CC-related tasks. Comparing to the data in 2010, the number of employees in PR service suppliers has increased by about 5 %, whereas that of in-house CC/PR departments has increased by about 20 %. It can be concluded that there is an increasing number of senior management members in corporations who realize the importance of PR/CC toward the operation of a company. Thus, they are more willing to allocate resources to establish CC

Job Level	PR Services Suppliers			In-house CC/PR Departments		
	2010	2012	Comparison	2010	2012	Comparison
Managerial	313	314	+0.0%	631	1 080	+71.2%
Supervisory	490	553	+12.9%	949	1 320	+39.1%
Execution al	1149	973	-15.3%	1501	2 677	+78.4%
Total	**1952**	**1 878**	**-3.8%**	**3081**	**4 036**	**+31.0%**

Fig. 1.1 Employee numbers of PR service suppliers and in-house CC/PR departments (*Source:* Vocational Training Council 2012)

Job Level	Preferred Educational Level	Percentage
Managerial	Bachelor Degree	88.2%
Supervisory	Bachelor Degree	78.0%
Executional	Bachelor Degree	51.4%
Supporting / Technical	Diploma / Higher Certificate / Certificate	63.5%

Fig. 1.2 Preferred educational level of CC/PR practitioners (*Source:* Vocational Training Council 2012)

departments and employ professional practitioners in processing communication tasks. Moreover, although the local PR service suppliers have been developing well, the total number of employees has slightly decreased. While there is a significant increase in the number of supervisory-level employees, that of the executional level has decreased (Fig. 1.1).

In 2012, the total number of employees in the mass communication industry is 34,895. The advertising and PR industry is considered to be a knowledge-intensive sector, requiring more highly educated talents. It is observed that employers generally preferred their employees (85.2 %) to have tertiary qualifications. According to the survey, almost 90 % of managerial-level employees are preferred to have a bachelor's degree. As for the supporting- or technical-level employees, the requirement is slightly lower; about 70 % of employers preferred them to have a diploma/higher certificate/certificate or above qualifications (Fig. 1.2).

1.3.4 The Importance of Language Ability for Corporate Communication Practitioners

To become a successful corporate communication practitioner in this highly competitive industry, mastering the biliterate and trilingual language skills is one of the basic requirements. Over half of the employers of the PR/CC industry indicate

Skill/Knowledge	Rank	PR Services Suppliers	In-house CC/PR Departments
Putonghua	1	55.7	52.8
Spoken English	2	46.2	47.6
Written English	3	43.8	39.4
Written Chinese	4	32.4	34.6

Fig. 1.3 Preferred educational level of CC/PR practitioners (*Source:* Vocational Training Council 2012)

that their employees need to improve their Putonghua ability, so as to enhance their competitiveness in the market. Moreover, over 40 % of the employers believe that their employees need to improve their English ability. In other words, the language ability of a CC/PR practitioner is evidently important (Fig. 1.3).

More and more international PR companies enter the China market in the form of wholly foreign-owned enterprise. They mostly rely on local PR firms' assistance during the process. Apart from that, numerous policies and events also create opportunities for local and mainland PR companies to collaborate, say, closer economic partnership arrangement (CPEA), Asian Games 2010 in Guangzhou, and Expo 2010 Shanghai China. Local PR/CC practitioners therefore must possess the relative skills and knowledge, especially the bilingual language skills of Chinese and English.

Being recognized by the public, the functions of PR and CC have been penetrating among all walks of life, including high-tech manufacturing, telecommunication, automobile, medicine, finance, and insurance industry, which all are profession-oriented industries. They have more high-level and diversified demands; thus, practitioners are required to equip themselves with relevant professional knowledge, good command of foreign language skills, and proficient writing ability to deal with the impact from globalization.

Knowing the way of life of the media, being outgoing, having good communication skills, and understanding the servicing industry are the basic requirements for a PR/CC practitioner, while having a good command of Chinese and English ability, researching and analytic skills, and basic business etiquette can further enhance the working process. Practitioners are responsible for preparing various documents and writings, including proposals, advertisement copies, event rundowns, speeches, and emcee scripts. Thus, proficient Chinese and English writing skills are extremely important in the industry. The Vice President of Hong Kong Association of Mainland Graduates, Ms. Li Huan, who has extensive experience in the PR industry, has briefly illustrated the current PR industry: "The high turnover of staff is one of the characteristics of the PR industry. Soft skills, proficient language skills, perseverance, and endurance are the basics in becoming a practitioner. PR as one of the most interactive professions emphasizes communication" (Hong Kong Association of Mainland Graduates 2011 as cited in Ngai and Ng 2011: 34).

Research Centre for Professional Communication in English of the Department of English at The Polytechnic University has conducted a survey entitled "Language Use in the Professional World in Hong Kong" (1999–2002). The results have shown that the business world in Hong Kong highly values employees' English ability. The leader of the research, Dr. Stephen Evans, further explained that English has increased in importance since the handover in 1997. PR professionals must possess a good command of English communication skills to gain a higher chance in promotions (Chu 2011). In other words, the PR industry demands the practitioners a higher level of language proficiency than the other industries. Even for the novice employees, there is a chance that they will be immediately assigned tasks that involve writing, say, drafting press releases and proposals. Thus, having proficient language skills is a must for the PR persons.

1.3.5 The Corporate Communication Courses and Programs in Hong Kong

Due to the increasing demand in PR/CC professionals, multiple local universities and tertiary institutions have started CC-related courses and programs.

Different institutions offer different degrees of CC-related training. For master's programs, there are MSSc in Corporate Communication offered by the School of Journalism and Communication in The Chinese University of Hong Kong and MA in Integrated Marketing Communication offered by the City University of Hong Kong. For degree programs, there are the Advertising and Public Relations course offered by the School of Journalism and Communication in The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Organizational Communication course offered by the School of Communication in Hong Kong Baptist University, and the BA (Hons) in Chinese and Bilingual Studies offered by the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. For other tertiary education programs, there are Postgraduate Diploma in Public Relations and Corporate Communications and Higher Diploma in Corporate Communications and Management offered by the School of Professional and Continuous Education in The University of Hong Kong, Associate of Arts Programme in Marketing and Corporate Communication offered by The Chinese University of Hong Kong Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Community College, Advanced Diploma in Corporate Communication and Public Relations offered by the School of Continuing Education in Hong Kong Baptist University, Higher Diploma in Corporate Communication offered by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University – Hong Kong Community College, etc. From the above, it is obvious that the Hong Kong education is putting more effort in nurturing CC talents.

1.3.6 The Influence of Professional Organization Toward the Development of the Corporate Communication Industry

Unlike public relations, corporate communication in Hong Kong is yet to become popular. As a result, there are still no associations under the name of CC. On the other hand, some of the existing PR organizations started to include elements of CC, motivating the development of the industry. The nonprofit-making PR organizations include Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association, International Communication Association (Hong Kong Branch), and Council of Hong Kong Public Relations Firms.

Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association publishes their newsletter regularly to review their held activities, say, corporate site visits. It also holds seminars to discuss how social service organizations can build partnerships with the media. Their meetings and conferences foster knowledge and experience exchange, while their PRPA awards encourage and recognize good CC/PR practices of corporations and practitioners.

International Communication Association (Hong Kong Branch) and Council of Hong Kong Public Relations Firms both offer training courses, activities, and exams for their members. Taking Council of Hong Kong Public Relations Firms as an example, its members can participate in the regular exams to obtain professional qualifications. The topics of exams cover industry code of ethics, business knowledge, trends of public relations, etc. International Communication Association (Hong Kong Branch) is even directly related to CC. Its aim is to assist practitioners in learning more about communication, planning strategically, and hybridizing one's own profession to CC, so as to help them build good partnerships with their clients.

1.4 Latest Development of CC in Hong Kong and China

1.4.1 Recent Studies on Trends and Practices of CC in Hong Kong and China

Large-scale PR/CC trend and practice studies including Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: United States and European Communication Monitor have been conducted in Europe and the USA. Their findings have suggested that the PR/CC industry in the USA and Europe has metamorphosed in terms of role and nature.

In fact, the Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: United States (2001, 2003, and 2005) of Corporate Communication International (CCI) and European Communication Monitor (2008, 2009) have clearly indicated that PR/CC plays a major role in planning and decision-making processes, i.e., a strategic role for most organizations in the USA and European countries at the turn of the twenty-first century (Goodman 2001, 2003, 2005; Zerfass et al. 2008, 2009).

Comparing CCI CC Practices and Trends: United States in 2001 and 2011, the key functions of CC have gradually diversified and evolved. Contrast this: only 12 items are found on the list of key functions of CC in 2001, whereas since then, 27 items are on the list in 2011 (Goodman 2001; Goodman and Genest 2011). It is obvious that the role and responsibilities of CC have been evolving and transforming and indeed metamorphosing in the USA and other developed countries (2001: 5, Goodman and Genest 2011: 10). It would be interesting to observe if a similar pattern of development would take place in the PR industry in Hong Kong and China as there are scholars conjecturing that a more strategic role of PR/CC would eventually emerge in corporate China (Hu 2005; He and Xie 2009).

Quite a number of descriptive reviews and quantitative studies are delivered on the practice and development of PR/CC in Hong Kong and/or China (Yeung 2002; Hung, and Chen 2009; Wang and Chaudhri 2009; Li et al. 2010; Ngai and Ng 2011; Li et al. 2012). Apart from the above works, several survey studies on the trends and practices of PR/CC in Hong Kong and China have been undertaken and published by CCI and the Hong Kong Chapter of CCI (CCI- HK) (So et al. 2012).

According to the 2008 CCI study in China, Wang contended that "the role and corporate communication among Chinese companies are primarily driven by marketing and publicity needs" (2008: 5). On the contrary, the findings of 2010 CCI study in China concluded that managing and improving corporate image and reputation are more emphasized than the marketing and publicity needs (Feng and Goodman 2010). Recent findings published in the Public Relations Review have also confirmed the change of role and functions of PR in China (Li et al. 2012). The changing dynamics of their survey findings evidently point to the notion that the nature and role of PR/CC in China have metamorphosed into a strategic position. In fact, similar patterns of development are also found in the Hong Kong studies. CCI-HK has published two survey studies to establish a profile of the CC practitioners and explore the strategic role and functions in Hong Kong (So et al. 2013).

To present a comprehensive view of the industry's development, a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research is required (Oliver 2004: 375–376). Yeung's thesis entitled An Overview of Public Relations in Hong Kong and its Political, Economic and Cultural Context (2002) has covered the development and contexts of the PR industry in Hong Kong by interviewing the PR practitioners. Later on, the changes on role and functions of PR/CC in Hong Kong were also discussed in New Trends in Corporate Communications: Language, Strategies and Practices (Ngai and Ng 2011). However, these studies are either dated or too descriptive.

As suggested by Li, Cropp, Sims, and Jin (2012: 708), "In-depth interviews of Chinese practitioners as well as follow-up practitioner surveys need to be conducted to triangulate the new findings." Thus, an in-depth qualitative study that aimed at interviewing senior and experienced PR/CC practitioners who have been engaged in the change is urgently needed to unfold how PR/CC industry has metamorphosed in terms of its role and functions, and to portray the new landscape of [the] PR/CC industry in Hong Kong and China in a globalizing era was conducted by the authors (Ngai and Ng 2013). Highlights of this study are placed on (1) the strategic role of PR/CC in practice, (2) the language and communication strategy adopted in the globalizing era, and (3) the establishment of professional code and body.

Eight PR/CC practitioners with substantial working experiences in the PR/CC industry in Hong Kong were invited to attend an individual, standardized, and open-ended interview with the authors. These seasoned practitioners have had 13–45 years of PR/CC working experience and served in major multinational or local companies from key industrial sectors in Hong Kong.[2] All of the participants have rich PR/CC working experiences, and their work locations have covered Hong Kong and/or Mainland China. It is believed that interviewing the practitioners with extensive field experiences from prominent international and local organizational brands in key industrial sectors allows us to garner in-depth information and critical understanding of the patterns and developmental trends of the PR/CC industry in Hong Kong and China (McNamara 1999).

Each participant was interviewed with a set of standardized, open-ended questions in a 60-minute face-to-face interview. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using macroanalysis and open coding (Corbin and Strauss 1990) to reveal the related information in response to the research questions.

1.4.2 The Change in the Role and Functions of the PR/CC in Hong Kong and China

As observed in the qualitative study conducted by Ngai and Ng (2013), there is a notable change in the role and function of PR/CC in Hong Kong and China in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Most participants agreed that modern PR/CC in Hong Kong and China has a more diversified role and function. The conventional function mainly dealt with advertising and marketing, whereas modern PR/CC has

[2] The key industrial sectors in Hong Kong include financial services (viz., banking, insurance, and other financial services), tourism (viz., inbound and outbound tourism, transportation), trading and logistics, professional services (viz., covers legal, accounting, auditing, architecture, and engineering activities, technical testing and analysis, scientific research and development, management and management consultancy activities, information technology-related services, advertising, specialized design and related service, etc.), and other selected industries (viz., cultural and creative industries, innovation and technology, medical services, testing and certification services, education service, environmental industries) that are categorized by the Census and Statistics Department of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in its *The Four Key Industries and Other Selected Industries in the Hong Kong Economy Report* published in 2013. Further information could be retrieved from the following web link: http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp80.jsp?productCode=FA100099

extended into the other functional areas in corporations including HR, marketing, public affairs, etc.

One senior practitioner from a global commercial bank cited a wide spectrum of CC responsibilities when he first arrived at his company:

> CC department have to handle media relations, crisis management, speech writing, internal publications, advertising, investment relations and community relations.

He has also made a comment about a lack of definition in the role and function of modern PR/CC:

> CC is in lack of a certain position of definition. CC encompasses a really wide range of disciplines.

A similar annotation has been made by the Director in an international company from the professional service sector:

> The work of CC professionals does not have any specific or concrete job description.

Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that media relations, internal communication, corporate branding, and CSR are the most commonly identified functions of the PR/CC industry in Hong Kong and China (Ngai and Ng 2013).

In addition to the emergence of horizontal diversification of role and functions, modern PR/CC practitioners are also expected to get increasingly involved in the strategic planning of companies (Ngai and Ng 2013). A seasoned practitioner in global financial service claimed:

> Another role of a CC department is to give advice on the operating strategy of corporations. Some senior management may treat CC as a role of saving the face for corporation if there is any problem or crisis but the truth is that CC should play a more important role to take part in strategic planning for corporation so it can maintain the corporate image stably.

The Director from a professional service provider has also suggested:

> CC professionals have to have the ability to handle different kinds of job. The more important thing is that they have to work with the senior management to decide communication and branding strategy of corporations in order to bring corporations to the next level. Otherwise, they are only supporting role of corporations.

And she added:

> From my working experience in the past, the most important CC function does not equal to the CC function practiced the most… CC professionals have a more important role to play in this aspect. They have to give colleagues from other departments instructions of how to maintain good relationship with clients and different stakeholders strategically.

Matching perceptions are also held by the PR agent and Manager from a company of the electrical, mechanical, and building technology sector as the keywords like “strategy” and “strategic” have consistently been brought up in their interviews (Ngai and Ng 2013). It is also noteworthy that the strategic planning work of CC is not confined to communication and branding strategy externally, but also pursued in company policy internally.

1.4.3 Language and Communication Strategies Practiced by PR/CC Professionals in Hong Kong and China

Apart from the change of role and function in CC, all participants believed that language competence in Chinese and English is essential to PR/CC practitioners in Hong Kong and China as both internal and external corporate communication tasks may have to be conducted in an Anglo-Chinese as well as Cantonese-Putonghua biliterate and trilingual manner (Ngai and Ng 2013). Especially for multinational companies operating in Hong Kong and China, internal communication has to be carried out in both Chinese and English as many senior staff and managerial staff are often non-Chinese speaking. The resumption of sovereignty and business expansion to China has, on the other hand, promoted the use of Chinese including Putonghua in corporate communication in the twenty-first century. The adoption of biliterate and trilingual communication could facilitate cross-cultural communication within and outside an organization.

Further to the practice of biliteracy and trilingualism, half of the participants suggested that a precise and consistent delivery of message in both internal and external communication for a corporation to enhance reputation and message persuasiveness is vital in PR/CC nowadays. As quoted from one of the participants:

> The accuracy and sensitiveness of language in communication will definitely enhance stakeholder relations. When you can express a message clearly with the right wording to clients, your company will have a good impression among your clients… If there is consistency within the text and event, it will make the message more powerful and impressive. Also, it will avoid any ambiguity.

Highlight is also given to the consistency between corporate message and corporate value. The participants have reiterated that the alignment of messages and corporate value could enhance stakeholder communication (Ngai and Ng 2013), especially in branding campaign and promotional events.

It is interesting to note that half of the participants confirmed the importance of using social media to enhance communication with young stakeholders. But they did worry about the risk of information leakage and security issues. One participant pointed out that the need for using social media as a communication channel varies from one industry to another. One participant who works for a PR agency has even commented that social media communication strategy may not be useful if the corporation is engaged in business to business service.

1.4.4 Code of Practice and the Need for Professional Body

Several studies in the early 2000s shed light on the inadequacy of PR professionalism in Hong Kong. Local PR practitioners in the 1980s are severely criticized by the media and the public on account of their spinning practices (Li et al. 2006; Ngai and

Ng 2011). It is therefore important to ascertain if such upheld norms have changed since then.

Two-thirds of the participants in Ngai and Ng's study emphasized the importance of dissemination of "true" information, especially in media communication and crisis management (2013). Some of them have highlighted the keyword "honesty" in their views. Here is a direct quote from a senior practitioner in public utility service:

> Of course, we have to be honest about the event but when we have enough information of the event, what we can do is to provide the information we can and we could say anything without reservation. In fact, when we disseminate information, we have to think about the consequence very carefully since the operation of our company is closely related to the public.

It seems apparent that PR/CC executives in Hong Kong and China understand the significance of integrity as reflected in such rhetoric as "truth telling" and "honesty" in building trust with media and general public (Ngai and Ng 2013). At the same time, they still have their stand firm on the protection of corporate interest. As a top PR/CC executive in a global commercial bank contends:

> The role of CC is to intermediate communications to maintain the reputation of companies so CC is a disseminator of information to make sure the reputation of corporations is maintained… it is your job to present a positive view of the company, and it is your job to protect its reputation. At the end of the day, if the results are rubbish, so you need to defend and ensure the least damage being done to your company but not to tell lies.

It seems that PR/CC practitioners today have been trying very hard to strike a delicate balance between "telling the truth" and "spinning" positively when communicating with external stakeholders (Ngai and Ng 2013). One of the possible solutions to make sure "honest" communication is practiced in Hong Kong and China is to establish a licensing professional body to monitor ethical conduct of CC practices/ethics of CC practices (Li et al. 2012). The views of the interviewees are diverse toward this advocacy (Ngai and Ng 2013). Two participants indicated their support toward the establishment of a profession body which could facilitate the official exchange of information and experience between practitioners, while three participants are skeptical about establishing a licensing body for the industry in Hong Kong and China, especially when the profession per se is yet to be defined (Ngai and Ng 2013).

1.4.5 Further Thoughts

At the turn of the twenty-first century, PR/CC in Hong Kong and China has entered into a new phase in which diversified functions and strategic role are observed. The diversification of functions and strategic role in corporate planning are in tandem with the global development of the PR/CC industry (Ngai and Ng 2013). According to the latest survey research (So et al., 2011–2013), there is an increase in the involvement of PR/CC in the planning of communication strategy and corporate policy. Today, PR/CC professionals in Hong Kong and China have acquired more strategic roles and functions in corporations and sizeable organizations.

However, as concluded by the participants, this strategic role of PR/CC is mostly found in giant-size corporations, especially multinationals (Ngai and Ng 2013). In small- to medium-sized local corporations, PR/CC departments or units are still engaged with conventional communication tactics for dissemination of information to stakeholders like the mass media and customers. In other words, their role is merely tactical, and the functions are basically market and media oriented (Ngai and Ng 2013).

Concerning the question on language and communication strategy, most participants are conscious about the use of bilingual communication and the production of precise and consistent message in both internal and external communication. Nevertheless, none of the participants considered the importance of two-way communication strategy to mediate between corporation and dominant stakeholders (Ngai and Ng 2013).

Taking the global trend of CC and the empowerment of stakeholders (Argenti and Barnes 2009) into consideration, there is a stronger need for engaging a two-way communication and dialogue between corporations and stakeholders (Ngai and Ng 2013). One possible way to create an interactive communication platform to encourage a two-way communication between the company and its stakeholders is the use of new media and social media (Ngai and Ng 2013). Argenti and Barnes in their book *Digital Strategies for Powerful Corporate Communications* have suggested that it is essential for communication executive to maintain a corporate blog that "opens the organization up to conversations with all stakeholders, media included" (2009: 85).

Examining the situation in Hong Kong and China, there seems to be an underuse of new media and social media to engage stakeholders in this "direct interface" age (Ngai and Ng 2013). In 2010, there are in total 234 corporations listed in Hong Kong Blue Chips, Hong Kong Red Chips, Shanghai Composite Index, and Taiwan Weighted Index, and 225 (96 %) of these companies have corporate website. Nonetheless, less than 10 % of these corporations are actively engaged in the use of new media and social media. It is obvious that there is much room for PR/CC practitioners to consider using the social media to foster dialogue between companies and their stakeholders (Ngai and Ng 2013).

Eying into the future, it would seem necessary to establish a professional body to guide and monitor the practice of professionals to ensure that the status of PR/CC can be perceived as a genuine profession in Hong Kong and China (Ngai and Ng 2013). Yet the establishment of a licensing body remains controversial. Heated debates and rigorous arguments are sparked off on whether a professional licensing body of PR/CC should be introduced in the USA (Parkinson and Parkinson 2003). The rationale behind the need for establishing a licensing body and the arguments against the licensing is explained and discussed in the study by Parkinson and Parkinson (2003). There is yet a consensus to be reached on the issue, and thus, the licensing of the PR/CC profession is still an open issue in the Chinese contexts (Ngai and Ng 2013).

Currently, the Hong Kong Public Relations Professionals' Association (PRPA) has been responsible for promoting the Code of Professional Standards and providing professional PR/CC training in Hong Kong since 1995. Nevertheless, the PRPA is not an official licensing organization and cannot monitor and supervise professional practices. It is hoped that PR/CC practitioners and related government bodies in Hong Kong and China could consider constituting a professional licensing body in the future for benchmarking professionalism of PR/CC practices in Greater China.

References

Argenti, P.A., and C.M. Barnes. 2009. *Digital strategies for powerful corporate communications*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Chen, J.H., and N. Chen. 2006. *Guang gao • Gong guan xin si wei yu xiang gang ye jie dui tan*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.

Chu, E.P. 2011. *Ying yu shuo shi ke cheng zhang wo zhuan ye ying yu zhi shi zhu shi ye geng shang ceng lou*. Retrieved from http://eduplus.com.hk/search/article_detail.jsp?article_id=5528&article_catid=7&quick_keyword=&quick_school.

Corbin, J., and A. Strauss. 1990. Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluation criteria. *Qualitative Sociology* 13(1): 3–19.

Cornelissen, J. 2004. *Corporate communications: Theory and practice*. London: Sage.

Feng, J.Y., and M. B. Goodman. 2010. *Corporate communication practices and trends: A China study 2010*. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/CCIPracticesAndTrendsChinaStudy2010.pdf. Accessed 13 Sept 2013.

Goodman, M.B. 2001. *Corporate communication practices and trends: United States 2001*. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/0102_goodman.pdf.

Goodman, M.B. 2003. *Corporate communication practices and trends: United States 2003*. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/Report2003.pdf.

Goodman, M.B. 2005. *Corporate communication practices and trends: United States 2005*. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/MergedReport2005.pdf.

Goodman, M.B., and C. Genest. 2011. *Corporate communication practices and trends: United States 2011*. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/CCI_2011PracticesAndTrendsStudyFinalReport.pdf.

He, C.H., and J. Xie. 2009. Thirty years' development of public relations in China Mainland. *China Media Research* 5(3): 1–6.

Hong Kong Association of Mainland Graduates. 2011. *Beijing careers tour review*. Retrieved from http://www.hkamg.org/download/Beijing_Careers_Tour_Review_Final.pdf.

Hong Kong Trade Development Council. (2005). *Qi ye ye hui ze ren: Dui gang shang de ying xiang*. Retrieved from http://info.hktdc.com/econforum/tdc/chinese/tdc050202c.htm.

Hu, C.X. 2005. Zhong guo gong gong guan xi fa zhan qu shi. *Productive Research* 12: 107–108.

Hung, C.F., and R.Y. Chen. 2009. Types and dimensions of organization – Public relationships in greater China. *Public Relations Review* 35: 181–186.

Jiang, L. 2002. *21 Shi ji qi ye gong gong guan xi gou zhu*. Beijing: China Fortune Press.

Li, J.W. 2007. *Cui xiu qian kun: Qi ye chuan xun*. Retrieved from http://paper.wenweipo.com/2007/10/09/OT0710090008.htm.

Li, Y.A., H.L. Yin, and S.N. Li. 2006. *Ming li shuang ying — Qi ye chuan xun ru he da zao pin pai*. Hong Kong: Infolink Publishing.

Li, C., F. Cropp, and Y. Jin. 2010. Identifying key influencers of Chinese PR practitioners' strategic conflict management practice: A survey on contingent variables in Chinese context. *Public Relations Review* 36(3): 249–255.

Li, C., F. Cropp, W. Sims, and Y. Jin. 2012. Perceived professional standards and roles of public relations in China: Through the lens of Chinese public relations practitioners. *Public Relations Review* 38: 704–710.

McNamara, C. 1999. *General guidelines for conducting interviews*. PhD thesis, Minnesota.

Nessmann, K. 1995. Public relations in Europe: A comparison with the United States. *Public Relations Review* 21(2): 151–160.
Newspaper Clippings Image database. Retrieved from http://ebase.lib.polyu.edu.hk.ezproxy.lb.polyu.edu.hk/news/.
Ngai, S.B., and P.K. Ng. 2011. *New trends in corporate communication – Language, strategies and practices*. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press.
Ngai, C.S.B., and P.P.K. Ng. 2013. Transforming into the new era: Public relations industry in Hong Kong and China. *Public Relations Review* 39: 575–577.
Nian yi shi ji gong guan qu shi. 1999. *Sing Tao Daily*, D05, February 23.
Oliver, S.A. 2004. *Handbook of corporate communication and public relations*. London: Routledge.
Parkinson, M.G., and L.M. Parkinson. 2003. Constitutional mythology in the United States: The arguments against public relations licensing refuted. *Intercultural Communication Studies* XII-2: 135–149.
Shanghai International Studies University. 2010. *Xiang gang gong gong guan xi de fa zhan li shi*. Retrieved from http://pr.shisu.edu.cn/s/19/t/50/0b/25/info2853.htm.
So, W.C., S. B. Ngai, D. Wu, and P. K. Ng. 2012. *Corporate communication practices and trends in Hong Kong 2011–2012*. Retrieved from http://www.cbs.polyu.edu.hk/CCIHKC/reports/Corporate_Communication_Practices_and_Trends_in_Hong_Kong_2011-12.pdf.
So, W.C., S. B. Ngai, D. Wu, P. K. Ng. 2013. *Corporate communication practices and trends in Hong Kong 2011–2013.* Retrieved from http://www.cbs.polyu.edu.hk/CCIHKC/reports/CC%20Practices%20&%20Trends%20in%20HK%202012_13.pdf. Accessed 13 Sept 2013.
The Chinese University of Hong Kong. 2005. *The 40th anniversary.* Retrieved from http://www.com.cuhk.edu.hk/en-GB/news/news-archive/176-events-2005-09-003.
Vocational Training Council. 2012. *2012 Manpower survey report – Mass communication industry*. Retrieved from http://www.vtc.edu.hk/html/en/about/manpower_publications1501.html.
Wan, H.F., and J.S. Zhou. 2006. *Pin Pai Guan Li*. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press.
Wang, J. 2008. *Corporate communication practices and trends: A China study – Phase 2 2008.* Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/ChinaCorpCom12March08.pdf. Accessed 13 Sept 2013.
Wang, J., and V. Chaudhri. 2009. Corporate social responsibility engagement and communication by Chinese companies. *Public Relations Review* 35(3): 247–250.
Wang, J., and M. B. Goodman. 2006. *Corporate communication practices and trends: A China benchmark study 2006*. Retrieved from www.corporatecomm.org/studies.html.
Yang, N. 2011. The changing face of PR and marketing today. *China Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.cdeclips.com/en/business/The_changing_face_of_PR_and_marketing_today/fullstory_65463.html.
Yeung, I.Y. 2002. *An overview of public relations in Hong Kong and its political, economic and cultural context*. PhD thesis, University of Southern California.
Zerfass, A., P. Verhoeven, R. Tench, A. Moreno, and D. Verčič. 2008. *European communication monitor 2008.* Retrieved from http://www.zerfass.de/ecm/ECM2008-Results.pdf.
Zerfass, A., P. Verhoeven, R. Tench, A. Moreno, and D. Verčič. 2009. *European communication monitor 2009.* Retrieved from http://www.zerfass.de/ecm/ECM2009-Results-ChartVersion.pdf.
Zhang, Y.X. 2009. *Xiang gang hu dong shi wu shang hui jiu shi chang ye wu ren yuan dui she jiao mei ti jin xing wen juan diao cha*. Retrieved from http://itevents.hkpc.org/ClientFolder/itevents/Library/Tree/HKAIM/Social2.0_Press_Release_Chi.pdf.
Zhao, Y.Z. 2009. *Gong guan nei wai*. Retrieved from http://www.prpa.com.hk/pdf/et%20column_090821.pdf.
Zheng, J.H. 1999. Xiang gang dong guan hang ye de guo qu, xian zai yu wei lai. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31: 123–144.

Chapter 2
A Review of Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in the USA and China

Michael B. Goodman

Abstract For almost two decades, CCI (Corporate Communication International) has conducted research on practices and trends in the field in the USA, Europe, South Africa, and China. This chapter reviews the results of those studies done in the USA and China (www.corporatecomm.org/studies).

2.1 Introduction

The communication role in corporations has evolved dramatically in response to an explosion of new digital communication technologies. Corporations have also adapted to expanding global networks within organizations. Communication is more complex, strategic, and vital to the health of the organization and will only gain in its importance in an economy driven by information. It is tied to the messages created for all audiences – internal and external, paying and nonpaying. This definition reflects the importance of communication for successful corporate performance:

> Corporate communication is the term used to describe a variety of strategic management functions. Depending on the organization, corporate communication includes: public relations; crisis and emergency communication; corporate citizenship; reputation management; community relations; media relations; investor relations; employee relations; government relations; marketing communication; management communication; corporate branding and image building; advertising. (Goodman and Hirsch, *Corporate Communication* 2010, p. 15)

Even in the best of times, the motives of global businesses are brought into question by media communication experts such as *New York Times* columnist David Carr, which in turn influences the distrust of business by the general public. Such daunting public skepticism of corporate business practices – such as the accounting fraud by Enron in 2001 or the collapse of the financial markets in September 2008 triggered by the subprime mortgage scandals – demands that corporations constantly and consistently demonstrate their ethical behavior. The transformational

M.B. Goodman (✉)
Baruch College, The City University of New York,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: Michael.Goodman@baruch.cuny.edu

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_2

impact of social media and the Web requires corporations to cultivate both media and technological expertise. The changes in technology have made the corporate communication function even more strategic and important for the role of corporate communication to create trust.

2.2 CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends US Study 2013

The CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends US Study 2013[1] confirms that corporate communication is a strategic management function. Chief communication officers identified the strategic importance of corporate communication as "the ability to develop trust [with] … our customers, our shareholders, the communities where we live and work, and our employees…" as well as the creation, maintenance, and repair of the "… overall reputation of the firm," by "… incorporating corporate communication in the decision-making process." The results of the CCI Study 2013 have significant implications for professional practice worldwide, centered on these ten key findings:

(1) The transformation of the discipline accelerates with new emphasis on internal communication, specifically employee engagement, corporate culture, and the Intranet as well as external communication with an emphasis on media and public relations and corporate citizenship. The ubiquity of these functions defines the discipline of corporate communication in 2013: strategy and policy,

[1] Christina Genest, CCI Associate Director, and Kelley Bertoli, Susanne Hoelzlwimmer, Lauren Wolman, Research Assistants, worked on all aspects of the 2013 study. For 2013, the overall goal of the CCI Corporate Communication International "Practices and Trends Study" was to outline and analyze the *state of the art* for corporate communication practice in publicly traded, multinational companies. It was determined in the first CCI study in 2000 to focus on publicly traded companies for several reasons. First, information in such companies is public and more readily accessible. Second, public companies are often in the vanguard of corporate practices because of the pressures of the capital market, their need to respond to the media, and the realities of the global marketplace. And finally, public companies have a greater understanding that their "license to operate" comes from public approval and is maintained by public trust.

The CCI Study 2013 continues the studies from 2000 to 2011. CCI Corporate Communication International determined that the practices and trends study could be conducted every two years, and this cycle of research was implemented with the study in 2005. In years the practices and trends study was not conducted, the focus of CCI's research has been on particular issues that have an impact on the profession. In 2006 and 2008, CCI conducted benchmark studies of the Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in China. A CCI study was also conducted in China in 2010 and reported in June 2011 at the CCI Annual Conference in New York City. In 2008, CCI, along with research partners in South Africa, conducted a benchmark study in South Africa. Information gathering for these benchmark studies was based on previous CCI research studies as well as other studies of public relations and public affairs such as Chen (2004).

For the 2013 research, we also compared the results with the CCI studies from 2000 to 2011. The results of these studies are posted on the CCI website at www.corporatecomm.org/studies.

employee engagement (internal), media and public relations, executive communication, crisis communication, Intranet communication, and reputation management. Empowering both employees and customers presents an excellent opportunity for success.

(2) Global economic uncertainty creates continued pressure. More robust budgets reflect the increased need for corporate communication. Steady but moderate staff increases reflect corporate caution in response to the global economic uncertainty. Communication executives remain optimistic that their budgets will not be "among the first to be cut," reflecting the value of the function. Nevertheless, limited resources continue to drive corporate communicators to identify priority actions and to accomplish even more with reduced resources. The opportunity remains for executives to leverage the corporation's culture and its employee "ambassadors" through media technology to provide strategic advantage and value for the enterprise.

(3) Renewed emphasis is placed on building positive corporate culture and employee engagement (corporate character) in response to volatile global conditions, changing business and media models, "big data," and the networked enterprise. This internal focus acknowledges the essential role that employees play in the networked enterprise, and it underscores the urgency to boost employee morale. Chief communication officers characterized the influence of uncertainty – political, financial, technological – on the practice of corporate communication as "the economic realities [that] pervade our messaging," "made transparency far more top of mind" as executives "communicate more, but carefully." Uncertainty also fuels the reluctance to hire full-time staff. The opportunity to position the enterprise for a slow global economic recovery or protracted global economic weakness is a result of the "focus on business imperatives"; corporate officers seek communication "…advice or counsel… more frequently."

(4) Social media loses a bit of its luster despite dramatic increases in complexity and speed in corporate practice. Reversing a 4-year upward trend, in 2014, communication officers reported decreased responsibility for the social media function (76.8 %, *down 7.5 % from 2011*) and its budget (relatively flat at 73.2 %, *down 1.3 % from 2011*). They also reported decreased use of vendors for social media (24.1 %, *down 14.7 % from 38.8 % in 2011*). However, Intranet responsibility at 91.1 % was up 2.9 % and Intranet budget was up 3.3 %. The shift to focus on internal audiences through social media underscores the demographic changes in media use among younger professionals who prefer social media over e-mail.

(5) Communication executives continue to see their primary role as "counsel to the CEO" and "manager of the company's reputation." Strategic communication counsel has been cited as the primary role for corporate communication officers since the first CCI study more than a decade ago. Nevertheless, reputation management has cooled in importance and in budget allocation as employee engagement takes on a higher priority. Executives now consider their employees as corporate ambassadors to external audiences, and that shift in focus becomes an important element in reputation management.

Respondents *Ranked* the Following Functions that Best Describe Their Role*

1. ***Counsel to the CEO and the Corporation (3.94)***
2. ***Manager of company's reputation (4.27)***
3. Manager of employee relations (internal comm.) *(5.00)*
4. Manager of the company's image *(5.04)*
5. Source of public information about the company *(5.52)*
6. Advocate or "engineer of public opinion" *(5.64)*
7. Driver of company publicity *(6.34)*
8. Branding and brand perception steward *(6.59)*
9. Corporate citizenship champion *(6.96)*
10. Manager of relationships – co. and *all* key constituencies *(7.09)*
11. Member of the company's strategic planning leadership team *(7.63)*
12. Manager of relationships – co. and *non*-customer constituencies *(8.15)*
13. Support for marketing and sales *(9.32)*

**Response average: lower number equals higher ranking – 1–13*

They identified several actions necessary to manage the corporation's reputation successfully: "Consistency in communication and corporate strategy," "strong alignment with all stakeholder communications," and "authenticity." One executive outlined such positive behavior as "awareness of perceptions and attitudes about your company, acceptance of those attitudes, and a willingness to take bold steps to change them."

(6) Although still relatively low, responsibility for the management of the investor relations function enjoys a limited comeback (17.9 % or 2.2 % higher than in 2011) and 13.6 % of communication officers report an increase in their IR budgets. Corporate communication continues to retain overwhelming responsibility for the annual report function and budget responsibility. Communication with shareholders, the capital markets, and other stakeholders remains essential. The opportunity remains for executives to develop and communicate strategic understanding of the volatile business environment.

(7) Political, financial, and technological uncertainty drives sharp focus on business imperatives. "It has made corporate communication a part of every important discussion and decision, and executives now run their teams 'like a never-ending political campaign with polling, qualitative listening, messaging, and rapid response….'" The speed and complexity of information exchange and communication makes transparency and engagement more effective management strategies than command and control. The post-email environment offers an opportunity, as well as a strategy, to move beyond third-party intermediaries and engage internal and external audiences directly.

(8) Chief communication officers characterize the success factors for reputation management as "Integrity, transparency, performance, board/leadership buy-in." The forces of transparency, corporate culture, and social media reward

corporations whose actions are aligned with the expressed social values of the enterprise. Leading practice empowers employees, executives, and customers to build a positive, ethical, and effective corporate culture that also makes a profit.

(9) Use of vendors for issues management increases. By contrast, use of vendors decreases for Internet (down 13.8 %), Intranet (down 12.8 %), and social media (down 14.7 %). Communication executives use vendors primarily to help with critical functions such as public relations, media relations, advertising, annual report, and crisis and emergency communication. Chief communication officers have returned to the development of the capability and expertise internally while retaining the ability to ramp up as necessary with vendors, "interns," and "contingent workers." Nevertheless, global agencies continue to offer expertise without long-term employment commitments.

(10) Top corporate communication officers are younger (21.9 % 20–44) but still middle aged (52.8 % 40–55). There are fewer baby boomers. They are paid comparatively well. Their salary remains high despite a sluggish economy (40.8 % above $300 K). They are better educated (50 % hold a master's degree). In a significant *reversal of a 6-year trend*, the number of female communication executive officers who responded increased 16.1 % from 2011. The trend continues toward an expanded skill set with greater emphasis on business acumen (1 out of 4 holds an MBA). As the discipline continues to evolve, there is a unique opportunity to leverage the leadership experience of managers and the competencies of new staff.

In the interviews CCI conducted, communication officers identified *their top critical issues* in corporate communication. They noted the "relevance and credibility" and "scope and breadth of corporate communication." Many cited the "blurring line between marketing and promotion and communication and engagement." In related observations, they cited "New Media and noise" and "staff not intellectually curious, too focused on tactics." They are increasingly required to be "able to work in the global marketplace" and in "emerging markets" and to measure "performance and value" by "linking corporate communication efforts and outcomes to large organizational goals and objectives."

When asked about the impact of greater transparency and disclosure on the complex relationship between ethics and advocacy in the practice of corporate communication, one executive said, "…ethics and advocacy go hand in hand…we also try to hire people that acting in an ethical fashion would be how they would normally be." Another noted that "…accessibility to leaders, accessibility on topics and debates, and accessibility to what we think defines us, our corporate culture and character…once people know us, like us, trust us, understand us, even if they disagree with us, they might be more likely to advocate on our behalf on specific issues or more broadly."

2.3 Corporate Communication in China[2]

For companies doing business there, China can be an enormous, complex nation and culture. Communication in that context can be daunting. Marco Polo made errors and exaggerations in his narrative reports about the people, government, economy, and culture of China. Generations of westerners since have also been baffled by what holds the country together, making numerous contradictory observations. As with any complex topic, to focus on a manageable part is realistic. It is, however, useful to be mindful of the parable of the three blind men describing the elephant – the one who held the tail described the huge beast as like a rope.

Beginning in 1978 with changes made by Deng Xiaoping, the economy of China has undergone a transformation that reflects the challenge of taking its more than 1.3 billion people from an agrarian and rural culture into the modernity of the twenty-first century. The change has created the economic miracle the Chinese are extremely proud of. It is once again taking its place as a global economic power. In 2010 China became the world's second largest economy, according to the World Bank, and Chinese companies have served as one of the powerful engines driving the nation's economy forward. Since the implementation of reform policies to open up world trade, these companies have adopted the "market-oriented" principle. They now compete fiercely in both the local and global marketplaces.

Along with this position comes a great deal of self-examination. For example, the one-child policy, relaxed in 2014, is hotly debated as a generation of Chinese now enters adulthood having the benefit of being treated royally by two parents and four grandparents. Some say the focus on the one child will have long-term changes in attitudes toward the society as a whole. Other issues include the effects of explosive growth and inflation, social discontent with the reality that the economic expansion has not included vast segments or Chinese society, choking pollution in its over 160 cities of over one million, and a looming housing bubble, similar to one that created the recession in the West in 2008, in Beijing, and in other major cities.

Indeed, Greater China is at the crossroads of enormous changes in the global economy. Americans and Europeans cannot have enough information about China. For the last several years, each edition of *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Financial Times* has had several stories on China related to global manufacturing, outsourcing, media and censorship, transparency in corporate operations, government scandals, international investment, and environmental accidents.

The news reports have much to do with corporate communication strategy – transparency, corporate citizenship and social responsibility, crisis communication and environmental stewardship, employee and labor relations, investor relations, communication

[2] The discussion of Corporate Communication in China is based on my paper: "Tradition and Innovation: The China Business Communication Study," in *Journal of Business Strategy*, 28:3, 2007, pp. 34–41; the CCI Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: A China Study 2010 at the CCI website www.corporatecomm.org/studies, and Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in Hong Kong 2011–2013 conducted by Dr. Daniel So posted on the CCI website at www.corporatecomm.org/studies

and trust, and government relations. It is a reflection of the importance the world places on what is happening in China, a gradually developing openness of the media in China to a more Western model and the fundamental changes to Chinese society brought about by the power and influence of a burgeoning professional middle class.

Anecdotes about business communication in China are numerous. For instance, after building a relationship for several years with Chinese officials and partners, one executive of a Fortune 1000 financial services company flew to China to open its new offices. On the flight was another American executive who revealed that his company had recently closed a plant, the workers had taken it over, and they were holding their plant manager hostage. He was on his way to negotiate the manager's release. Another executive of a $2 billion privately held company with a partnership in China was told on his arrival that there had been a serious accident in their manufacturing plant. Since the American company insisted that US OSHA standards be used at the plant, including hard hats and safety shoes and clothes, the worker involved was alive in the local hospital with severe head injuries. In another example, a multinational consulting firm decided at the last minute not to bid on the transportation system for the 2008 Olympics because it was "too risky" financially. And a European investment bank insisted on environmental sustainability assurances before underwriting a dam construction project in China. Experiences such as these underscore the vital need for a company to have a communication strategy focused on the Chinese business community.

It was not widely known to the world outside of China, until the strikes in 2010 at the Honda automobile factory in Zhongshan, that industrial unrest is hardly unusual there. Grievances by a new generation of migrant workers are both deep and widespread. Despite top management involvement in the communication process, as well as the advisory role of the Chinese communication executives to the CEO, the role of corporate communication in forging relationships – with employees and external constituents – has been until recently a lesser priority as companies focus on image building and branding. Leading practices in global multinationals would consider this as an unacceptable risk factor that could lead to disgruntled employees and vendors, dissatisfied consumers, and a disaffected community.

For Chinese companies, the transition from a controlled economy with government-managed communication to a private communication model was significant. Growing discontent among Chinese workers and the disadvantaged communities the economic boom has left behind has not gone unnoticed by the Chinese Government. Better employee communication will certainly arise for pragmatic as well as social and political reasons.

2.3.1 The Value of Communication for Corporations

It is the corporation that has to step up in a crisis, not its products or brands. Indeed, in the Corporate Communication International China Benchmark Study 2006, corporate communication is perceived as critical to the success of the organization and corporate leaders. All respondents strongly agree or agree with this statement: "In a complex environment, honest, clear and coherent communication can drive the rewards of success toward the organization and its leaders."

A further illustration of the importance that Chinese companies are assigning to corporate communication is that in most companies the chief executive officer is the top person responsible for corporate communication functions. There is a clear involvement of top management – the CEO as the "top person" and the board chairman or the head of the Communist Party. This shows that corporate communication is not relegated to the lower echelon of the Chinese corporate hierarchy. It also suggests a declining role and reduced influence of the Communist Party in corporate communication, even though in some companies the Party head remains involved.

2.3.2 Media Relations and Censorship

Reports of censorship of the media in China are legendary from the incarceration of *The New York Times* researcher Zho Yan in 2006 to the restrictions on the ability of Google and *Rolling Stone* to operate in China. (In 2010 Google relocated to Hong Kong because of the government censorship.) The media in China are also undergoing remarkable transformation since the reform began two decades ago. The notion that they still play the sole role of a "propaganda" mouthpiece no longer holds true. Most of them are now "for-profit" organizations and must respond to audience information needs to attract advertising. Such a change has significant implications for corporate communication practices. With the explosion of media outlets (including the Internet media) in China, it is no wonder that managing media relations is considered a critical part of the corporate communication function.

In spite of that, according to the CCI studies, functions typically associated with public relations, such as executive, internal, and crisis communication, are lower down on the list of priorities for Chinese communication executives. Similarly, issues management, corporate social responsibility communication, labor relations, and even investor relations were lower priorities by comparison. This suggests that corporate communication practices among Chinese companies are more driven toward consumers and the general public, as opposed to internal stakeholders and investors. As capital markets and industrial investment mature, more calls for transparency and communication with global organizations, the emphasis will become more balanced.

For the corporate communication executive in China, whether it was the company website, the Internet news media, or the company Intranet, it seems that digital media have become one of the most preferred tools for communicating. In addition to the Internet for communication, there is also a preference for "internal" communication vehicles such as corporate brochures, printed material, and other internal corporate media, particularly when sending messages to company employees on the company's community and socially related activities.

By contrast, "external" channels such as broadcast and billboards were not highly rated, possibly because of the need to maintain focused and targeted communication, as well as the cost of such communication. While radio (national and local) ranks last, newspapers (national and local) and trade magazines seem the preferred communication channels among the traditional mass media tools.

2.3.3 Crisis Communication

A robust crisis communication function has become a ubiquitous practice among multinational corporations for mitigating risk. Chinese corporate communication executives were asked if their company had set up a dedicated function for crisis management and communication, and only a little over half had established such an internal function. Crisis communication is clearly a function in transition. Here is an area that is a major red flag for foreign investors and potential partners, who expect a sound crisis communication capability as an integral part of the business and corporate strategy. Development of a crisis communication capability in companies has become the focus of much research at Chinese universities.

2.3.4 Key Functional Responsibilities of Corporate Communication Officers

When asked what functions, of 26 listed, were included under corporate communication officer responsibilities, more than 90 % of the executives in the US survey included these areas:

- Media relations
- Public relations
- Crisis communication
- Executive communication
- Employee relations
- Communication policy and strategy

Each of these functional responsibilities involves strategic coordination with the executives of the corporation and strict adherence to the regulations for transparency, particularly with publicly traded companies.

By contrast, Chinese corporate communication officers had clearly different priorities, with the top five most mentioned functional areas being:

- Brand strategy
- Media and public relations
- Internet communication
- Corporate advertising and marketing communication
- Corporate identity and the Intranet

The development of Chinese corporations will adopt and add to the leading practices of global multinationals. The Chinese companies indicated that brand strategy and media, followed by Internet communication, were seen as the key functions of corporate communication. This reflects the current movement in China toward the emphasis on branding among Chinese companies in developing their competitive advantages. To build their business, this emphasis makes sense, just as a comparable development in new corporate ventures anywhere in the world has a similar focus.

The use of vendors and agencies by Chinese corporate communication executives reinforces their emphasis on identity and brand building. Companies use external agencies and specialized vendors for select corporate communicate functions such as brand strategy, corporate identity, and public relations. Companies were also using agencies for help with designing communication strategy and for crisis communication.

On the other hand, corporate communication functions such as internal and employee communication, ethics code, and executive communication are not included in the "outsourcing" list – most likely, these are considered sensitive and best managed by "internal" teams. The Chinese assembly line workers who held a strike at the Honda facility did so in spite of the laws that prohibit any union actions outside of the official Chinese unions. Honda gave the workers substantial pay raises. Reforms in working conditions followed an outcry in the Chinese press after a series of suicides at the Foxconn Technology, a major supplier to Apple, Dell, and Hewlett-Packard facilities in Shenzhen. Foxconn is one of the world's largest electronics manufacturers. It has more than 400,000 workers in Shenzhen. There has been much discussion in the Chinese press of the impact of the growth in Chinese society as a result of its economic success. The Foxconn suicides have certainly brought working conditions into open discussion. The generation of workers born under the one-child policy tends to be different than their parents. They want more from life, not like previous generations content to work as hard as they had done on the farms.

Other "internal" functions such as preparing annual reports and devising communication policy also ranked low among functions that these companies used agencies or vendors for. This seems to reflect the state of development of the capital markets in China. As the capital markets mature, the number of companies practicing investor relations and producing annual reports will probably increase accordingly.

Almost all executives reported that they had a corporate identity program in place. The majority accomplished this since 2001. Though it seems to be a recent phenomenon, more than a third reported having a program for corporate identity for more than five years. This is consistent with the drive toward branding and image building among Chinese companies.

2.3.5 The Perceived Role of the Corporate Communicator

Depending on the company and the industry, corporate communication often has different meanings for different companies. To better understand the role of corporate communication in contemporary China, executives were asked to rate a series of statements on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree"). The primary responses in this category pertain to managing the company's image, reputation, and publicity and to providing support for marketing and branding strategy. Corporate executives also gave high marks to corporate communication's advocacy function, such as engineering public opinion in favor of the organization, and for its role to serve as a source of public information about the company.

Functions typically associated with public relations, such as executive, internal, and crisis communication, are lower down on the list of priorities for Chinese communication executives. Similarly, issues management, corporate social responsibility communication, labor relations, and even investor relations were lower priorities by comparison. This suggests that current corporate communication practices among Chinese companies are more driven toward consumers and the general public, as opposed to internal stakeholders and investors. As capital markets and industrial investment mature, more calls for transparency and communication with global organizations, the emphasis will become more balanced.

As noted, China's ranking of image, publicity, branding, and marketing differ significantly from the practices of global multinational companies. For the corporate communication executives of publicly traded Fortune 1000 corporations, "counsel to the CEO" and "manager of the company's reputation" have ranked one or two (from a list of 12 descriptive phrases) in every CCI study since 2002.

2.3.6 Corporate Citizenship and the Global Enterprise

A company is expected to be a good citizen and make money. With the rapid development of the economy, Chinese companies are becoming important social institutions in that country. The Chinese Government and the general public now have higher expectations of Chinese companies (and, for that matter, multinational companies in China) to not only deliver economic benefits but also contribute to building a "harmonious society," a concept promoted and encouraged by the Chinese Government.

There seems to be broad agreement on the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the part of Chinese companies. Nearly half of the respondents agree that it is important for their firm to contribute resources for societal development and well-being and a fairly large percentage support "doing good," while about one fifth are neutral on the issue. None of the companies disagreed with the idea that business has social obligations.

What motivates companies in their pursuit of CSR? The primary drivers in China, not surprisingly, include improving corporate image or reputation, satisfying customer expectations, and creating corporate culture. Closely following these three are meeting the expectations of the general public and realizing business strategy. The idea of pursuing CSR purely to make contributions to social development was low on the list, as were competition and adherence to government policy and advice.

Chinese companies prefer to focus their CSR efforts on environmental protection, energy conservation, disaster relief, and workplace health and safety. In practice, however, it seems that most CSR activities revolve around disaster relief activities, with support for higher education coming in a distant second. While energy conservation and workplace health and safety were rated highly among important focus areas, only a little over half of the companies actually seem to engage in initiatives in these areas. Chinese companies are less interested in advancing civil rights, improving international relations, and promoting arts and culture – since they see these areas as belonging to the government.

2.3.7 Promoting Corporate Citizenship

Most companies saw the value of communicating their "good work," both internally and externally, which may seem contrary to a cultural preference against self-promotion. Among those that favored "some promotion," a little over half were in favor of internal CSR promotion, while just over a third were for external communication. On the other hand, among those that favored "a great deal of promotion," the scale of support tipped slightly in favor of external, as opposed to internal communication. In general, there seems to be more support for internal rather than external communication. Whether the predominant focus is internal or external, as a starting point, it seems that consistent with their counterparts in the more developed markets, there is growing awareness of CSR communication among Chinese companies.

2.4 Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: A China Study 2010

The 2010[3] study is an extension of the two previous studies conducted in China by Jay Wang and Michael B. Goodman in 2006 and in 2008, and discussed in 2007 (Goodman and Wang 2007). The findings from this CCI study of China's corporate

[3] Feng, Jieyun, and Michael B. Goodman. (With the assistance of Nan Zhang and Liyuan Tian). "Corporate Communication Practices and Trends: A China Study 2010." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Corporate Communication, June 7–10*, pp. 169–190, New York, US.

Underwritten by Prudential Financial, Inc., this investigation in 2010 identifies the corporate communication practices and trends in China. Specifically, this study addresses the following questions:

- What are the main roles that corporation communication plays in China?
- What are the main functions of corporation communication in China?
- For what purposes do Chinese companies use third-party agencies or vendors in their activities and programs of corporate communication?
- Is the top management in Chinese companies directly involved in corporate communication, and to what extent is it involved?
- To what extent is crisis management emphasized as part of corporate communication?
- What are the core competencies that define excellence for corporate communication personnel practitioners?
- What are the similarities in the three China studies concerning corporate communication practices?

communication practice, and trends in 2010 reveal a rapid development of this important management function:

(1) Corporate communication is primarily to manage corporate branding and reputation and to support marketing and sales. Similar to the findings of the previous CCI studies, what they value most in corporate communication is whether it can improve corporate image and reputation and whether it can support marketing and sales, rather than forge relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
(2) More than half of the companies reported *not* having set up an internal department specifically for crisis management.
(3) The CEO in many Chinese companies is the top person responsible for corporate communication, and that suggests that Chinese companies are assigning much importance to it in the form of increased budget, staffing, and recognition of the importance of this function.
(4) Corporate communication is not likely to bear the brunt of corporate cutbacks and its department would be impacted "neither sooner nor later" than other departments.
(5) The core competence of an excellent corporate communicator includes professional knowledge, good communication and interpersonal skills, and PR abilities.
(6) Chinese companies use third-party agencies or vendors mostly for advertising, training and employee development, and brand strategy.
(7) Some local Chinese enterprises have not fully recognized the importance of corporate communication and do not allocate enough budget for it.

Attitudes toward corporate communication in China have underscored these gradual changes, and, at first, the function was not considered important. However, both corporate image and reputation are now assuming growing importance in the

---

As the latest study concerning corporate communication in China, this investigation provides information and insight into the development of corporate communication practices in the world's largest emerging economy. This study was undertaken in September–December 2010, using a convenience sample of 114 Beijing-based Chinese companies. The inclusion of companies of varying sizes in a variety of industries was to provide a "representation" of the Chinese enterprise landscape.

The survey questionnaire consisted of two main parts. Part one was multiple-choice questions that focused on the structure and practice of corporate communication in China. The questions for the Chinese study were largely based on the corporate communication survey conducted by CCI (Corporate Communication International) among US companies and translated into Chinese and modified for Chinese cultural understanding of key concepts. Part two involved open-ended questions which address the challenges facing corporate communication, its contribution to a company's success, and the core competencies of an excellent corporate communicator.

The questionnaire was originally developed in English and translated into Chinese by professional researchers in Beijing. The Chinese translation was checked and reviewed by two bilingual researchers, and discussions were held to reach an agreement on the final translation. As part of the data collection and analysis procedure, the names and affiliations of the respondents are held in strict confidence and are not associated with individual responses. In order to motivate the respondents to provide detailed answers and spend adequate time on the questionnaires, they were informed that the research findings of the present study would be provided for them after the study was completed.

Chinese marketplace, and many consider it as an integral part in the survival and success of a modern company.

2.4.1 Function of Corporate Communication

The concept and practice of corporate communication can be interpreted through a wide range of business functions and budgetary responsibilities, and we were also interested in finding out what specific functions constituted corporate communication in these Chinese companies. Respondents were asked to identify the ones they viewed as part of corporate communication in their companies from a list of more than 20 functions. Brand strategy (mentioned by 76.6 % of the respondents) and corporate culture (69.4 %) were seen as the key functions of corporate communication among the respondents. On the other hand, corporate citizenship, community relations, and corporate crisis management were lower down on the list. Similarly, labor relations, and even investor relations received less than 50 % of the responses.

2.4.2 Use of Third-Party Vendors for Corporate Communication Activities

Companies use external agencies and specialized vendors for select corporate communication functions, such as advertising (42 %), training and employee development (41.1 %), and brand strategy (30.4 %). The participating companies were also using agencies for help with media relations and marketing communication. On the other hand, corporate communication functions such as internal/employee communication, Internet communication, corporate philanthropy, and crisis communication are not included in the "outsourcing" list. It is likely that these are considered sensitive or confidential functions and that they are best managed by internal teams.

2.4.3 Importance of Corporate Communication – Corporate Communication: An Indispensable Function?

With Chinese businesses increasingly operating in a market-oriented environment, one of the first issues regarding corporate communication in Chinese companies is how important this function is viewed by communication executives. To gauge its importance within Chinese companies, respondents were asked whether their department would be the first to bear the brunt of corporate downsizing. A majority of them (72.9 %) reported that their department would be impacted "neither sooner nor later" than other departments within the company. About 15 % did believe that their department and its budgets would be the first to be cut in the event of financial misfortune, while 12.15 % said that they would be the last to go.

2.4.4 Spending on Corporate Communication Activities

Nearly 60 % of companies spend no more than 1 million yuan on corporate communication activities, and only 8.7 % of companies are willing to pay more than 10 million yuan on corporate communication.

2.4.5 The Staff and Budget

To support the growing role of corporate communication, respondents were asked about the increase in their staff size in fiscal year 2009. Only 3 % of the companies reported cutting staff size, while 54 % of companies stayed unchanged, and 43 % of companies reported an increase. Of those reporting an increase, 65.12 % increased by a cautious figure of 5 %, and 18.6 % of companies increased by 10 %. Another indicator of the increasing importance of corporate communication among Chinese companies is the level of resources devoted to the function in each fiscal year. Compared with the year 2008, more than half of the companies increased their budget in the fiscal year 2009, of which about half increased budget by 5 % in 2009. This positive trend in resource allocation certainly attests to the perceived importance of corporate communication in the executive suite. Of the companies surveyed, 44 % have less than five employees engaged in corporate communication, 21.5 % have 5–9 employees, 19 % have 10–29 employees, and only 15.5 % have more than 30 employees.

2.4.6 Top Management Involvement in Corporate Communication

A further illustration of the importance that Chinese companies are assigning to corporate communication is that, according to the respondents, the chief executive officer (CEO) is the top person responsible for corporate communication functions in most companies in this study (58.77 %). This result continues to support the findings of Wang (2006, 2008), which suggest that corporate communication is not relegated to the lower echelon of the Chinese corporate hierarchy.

2.4.7 Crisis Communication

Respondents were asked if their company had set up a dedicated function for crisis communication. A large majority (57.89 %) of the companies do not have a specific position to cope with enterprise crisis, and 40.35 % of companies have such a position. This reinforces the earlier finding by Wang and Goodman (2006) that crisis communication was not widely included as a strategic corporate communication function in China. Companies in China have made some progress; however, they remain inadequately prepared for crisis communication management.

2.4.8 The Title of the Executive Responsible for Corporate Communication

Respondents were asked to provide the title of the highest level person responsible for corporate communication. Almost half (47.06 %) of the companies gave the title "chief officer," 38.82 % used the title "manager," and only 9.41 % adopted "president."

2.4.9 Gender and Age Distribution, Educational Background, Overseas Learning Experience, and Income

In terms of the highest post for corporate communication in Chinese companies, the number of men is greater than the number of women. Men accounted for 47.37 %, while women were 37.72 %. It is apparent that men continue to play a larger role in the top management. Age distribution for the top management in corporate communication is relatively young compared to the USA and Europe: 48 %, 30–40; 25 %, 40–45; less than 1 %, over 50; and 11 %, 20–30. Almost half of the respondents (46.24 %) reported having a bachelor's degree (BA) as their terminal degrees. About one quarter had an MA. About one fifth had an MBA. Undergraduate majors ranged across communication, management, computer science, finance, engineering, international business, marketing, and language studies. Less than one third (30.5 %) reported to have had an overseas learning experience. Over a fifth (21.59 %) of top management in corporate communication received income of over 300,000 RMB, and 21.59 % reported an income of 100,000–150,000 RMB. In addition, 20.45 % of people earned 50,000–100,000 RMB; 15.91 % of respondents had an annual income below 50,000 RMB. Only 6.82 % reported an annual income between 200,000 RMB and 300,000 RMB.

2.5 Responses to Three Open-Ended Questions

In response to *the first question* "What are the biggest challenges or problems in corporate communication at home of China?" more than one third of those surveyed thought that people at the higher level of management didn't recognize the importance of corporate communication and might even have little awareness of what is corporate communication, especially for entrepreneurs in the private sectors. One respondent wrote, "I have worked at … one of the four biggest accounting firms in the world and in a local financial institution. The former attaches great importance to corporate culture and public relations, while the latter doesn't take it seriously. The biggest problem is that management does not recognize the value of corporate communication." By contrast, 13 % of the respondents argued that corporate communication would cost a great deal of money, and most of the companies might not allocate enough budgets for these communication activities. Of those surveyed, 10 % said that even if some companies undertook some corporate communication activities, they tended to choose traditional channels and showed a lack in originality and creativity. One in ten thought that corporate communication employees lacked professional knowledge, and 6 % considered their actions dull and boring. Some mentioned that some of the corporate communication activities needed the approval of the relevant government departments due to legal requirements and that the government would sometimes strongly interfere with the company's communication efforts. An influential minority (15 %) considered that the biggest challenges for corporate communication were the lack of social responsibilities, intercultural conflicts, no awareness of the role of CSR, dishonesty, and no public relations development.

The second question "In what aspects does corporate communication make important contribution to the development and success of a company?" as many as 45 % of the respondents considered that corporate communication contributed a lot to the improvement of corporate brand and reputation, which was considered as an integral part of corporate assets. Only 14 % said that well-planned corporate communication could increase sales volume and bring more business opportunities and consequently facilitate the future development of a company. Almost one tenth (9 %) felt that successful corporate communication could enhance its competitiveness. Only a few (8 %) mentioned that corporate communication could boost the formation of corporate culture and create a good working environment for the staff.

The third question asked, "As a corporate communication employee, what core competitiveness or qualities should corporate communication personnel have?" Almost 15 % of respondents said it was important to have some professional knowledge about corporate communication, followed by good communication skills (13 %) and good interpersonal skills and PR ability (12 %). At the same time, 12 % considered that having a keen sense in market observation was as important as good interpersonal skills for the successful accomplishment of corporate communication. Nevertheless, having some relevant working experience (9 %) was considered as a key to its success. Some (8 %) viewed having innovative ideas as important in conducting corporate communication. Apart from the qualities listed, several respondents also mentioned that the core competence of an excellent corporate communicator should include the following: good teamwork spirit, self-confidence, responsibility, learning capability, ethical behavior, and ability to work under pressure and to work hard.

2.6 A Brief Comparison of the Three CCI Studies Conducted in China

The following is a brief comparison of the three studies[4] and discussion of their similarities.

2.6.1 Role of Corporate Communication

The three studies have a great deal of consensus on three most important roles of corporate communication. The results of each study consider the value of corporate communication because of its ability to improve corporate image and reputation, to support marketing and sales, and to forge relationships with all internal and external stakeholders.

2.6.2 Functions of Corporate Communication

Brand strategy and management are considered the most important functions of corporate communication in the three studies, regardless of industry sectors. These two functions underscore the importance of branding and managing the company's image, over the other corporate communication functions.

2.6.3 Use of Third-Party Communication Service Providers

All three studies indicated that companies use external agencies or specialized vendors for brand strategy. The 2010 and 2008 studies indicated a substantial increase in the use of agencies for advertising.

[4] CCI conducted three studies concerning corporate communication in China: by Jay Wang and Michael B. Goodman (2006, 2008) and Jieyun Feng and Michael B. Goodman (2010).

2.6.4 Corporate Communication: An Indispensable Function?

In response to the question “if your company had to reduce overall costs, would cuts to the corporate communication department budget be among the first to be cut?” the three studies revealed that Chinese companies began to attach some importance to corporate communication. In 2010, 72.9 % of the respondents, 65 % in 2008, and 73.9 % in 2006 reported that their departments would be impacted “neither sooner nor later” than other departments to cut the costs. These responses indicate that corporate communication is now regarded as an indispensable function in Chinese companies.

Concerning crisis management, respondents in the three studies were all asked if their companies had set up a department specifically for crisis management and communication. It turned out that more than half of participants in the 2010 study and in the 2008 study said that they had not set up a crisis communication department. Another important similarity is that more than half of the participants in the three studies (58.77 % in 2010, 76.7 % in 2008, and 69.6 % in 2006) all pointed out that the CEO was the top person responsible for corporate communication. These responses consistently emphasize that companies in China assign much importance to corporate communication.

Chinese companies studied, then, regard corporate communication primarily to manage corporate branding and reputation and to support marketing and sales, similar to the findings of the previous CCI studies. They value the ability of the corporate communication function to improve corporate image and reputation, to support marketing and sales, rather than its capacity to build relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Chinese companies continue to lack a specific crisis communication capability. Overall, Chinese companies value the importance of corporate communication through budget allocation and hiring, although local Chinese enterprises have not fully recognized the importance of corporate communication and do not allocate enough budgets for it. The core competencies of a corporate communicator include professional knowledge, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and public relations abilities.

2.7 Hong Kong: Confluence of East and West

After more than 150 years of British influence, Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Think of that city as a locus for Eastern and Western managerial values. Hong Kong’s diverse character is a mixture of its national culture and its business environment. Each of these influences as an impact on how an individual thinks and behaves. However, these business and national cultures tend to work in different directions. The influence of national culture tends to perpetuate differences, while the global environment tends to standardize business practices and emphasize similarities. National, ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and economic diversity of the nations, countries, and states offers challenges and opportunities for foreigners working there. Since Marco Polo's journey centuries ago, relations between the East and the West have presented a continued challenge and opportunity, and each side has influenced the other.

Hong Kong and Singapore are examples of what happens when East meets West. A hybrid emerges, blending some values and beliefs that are the result of business practice, as well as some that are the result of national culture. Hong Kong developed under British capitalism, and so it has a business environment similar to that of the United States. It also retains the strong cultural influences of Confucian tradition and Chinese customs. The result of this blending of cultures, however, is not easy to predict. Strong cultural and business values suggest that the Hong Kong business culture is more than a simple mix of Western and Eastern values. Hong Kong can best be understood as a unique and independent business culture that has developed its own values and practices.

2.8 Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in Hong Kong 2011–2013[5]

The 2011–2012 study of Corporate Communication Practices and Trends in Hong Kong concluded that:

- Corporate communication practitioners in HK are mostly well-educated women.
- The corporate communication departments are relatively small in both size and budget.
- No clearly established titles exist for the department and its head, yet almost half of the department heads report directly to the CEO.
- Corporate communication departments located in Hong Kong serve major clients and perform major functions.
- Major challenges for the corporation and the corporate communication professionals are mainly related to the global economy, the demand for corporate branding, and social media relations, including social media.
- Competent corporate communication practitioners should have good communication skills, emotional maturity, intellectual skills, and sociopolitical awareness.

[5] Daniel W.C. So, Cindy Ngai, Doreen Wu, and Patrick Ng. In connection with benchmark studies on this topic conducted about the Chinese mainland (Feng and Goodman 2010), the European Union (Frandsen, and Johansen 2008), South Africa (de Wet et al. 2008), and the United States (e.g., Goodman 2011), this three-year longitudinal study, conducted under the auspices of the Hong Kong Chapter of CCI (CCI-HKC) on an annual basis from 2011 to 2014, was initiated to help contribute to the construction of reference points about practices and trends of CC in, respectively, HK and major polities worldwide. This study was made possible by funds provided by the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies (CBS) of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU). Also this version of the report is the one presented at the CCI Conference of 2013 held in June. The investigators wish to acknowledge hereby the valuable assistance provided by their project associates: Chermaine Yam and Tony Wei.

This finding further affirms that corporate communication is essentially a people-oriented profession.
- There is a concern that most graduating students have neither the necessary personal capabilities nor the necessary professional training for the profession.
- Local universities could do for the profession in terms of enhancing the training of communication skills, providing grounding for the profession especially via mentorship programs, practical experiences, and involving practitioners in the educational processes.

In the 2012–2013 study, the findings indicate that the situations remain largely the same. Skill and training in corporate social responsibility emerges as a major professional challenge, as does the need for "providing the graduating students grounding for the profession" over the need for communication skills training.

Two trends have emerged. First, there is a strong demand in the industry for educational institutions to offer programs and courses that provide a solid foundation for the profession, specifically communication skills, availability of mentorship programs, practical experiences, and internships. To accomplish this, several professionals suggested the use of more authentic case studies in the courses, and students with this sort of grounding would be preferred recruits. Implementation of these suggestions calls for closer collaboration between industry and universities.

Second, corporate scandals in 2012–2013 in Hong Kong have led to the emergence of corporate social responsibility as one of the top challenges facing the industry, in addition to economic uncertainty, corporate branding, and media relations. There is an awareness, particularly during times of stress, developing among corporate communication practitioners in Hong Kong that the perception of a corporate brand is more and more influenced by how the media covers its corporate actions.

2.9 Building Trust, Corporate Citizenship, and Transparency in Chinese Companies

A new era of transparency has created an opportunity for building trust through strategic corporate communication initiatives. Corporate communication executives indicate a clear need to build trust with all audiences (see www.corporatecomm.org/studies for 2002, 2003, 2005. 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, as well as the three CCI studies in China 2006, 2008, 2010).

In practice this means that the corporation's relationships with external and internal communities matter a great deal. "Formal trust includes the rule of law, transparency, and publicly evident rules. Informal trust is culturally defined by the values and norms that allow people to communicate and deal with others who share those values" (Goodman 2005, p. 33).

Increasing interest in corporate communication and the recognition of its value has forced Chinese companies to confront the challenges of undertaking corporate communication functions within their organizations. Crisis communication management and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are two critically important functions. To address these challenges and to facilitate better communication among all its stakeholders, Greater Chinese companies need to embrace more international dialogue and a greater exchange of ideas.

The business case is a simple one – the license to operate is either granted, or revoked, by the society the company is in.

References

CCI corporate communication practices and trends studies: 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013. Retrieved from www.corporatecomm.org/studies.

CCI corporate communication practices & trends: A China study 2008 – Phase II. *Conference on corporate communication 2008*, *June 2008*.

CCI corporate communication practices and trends: A China benchmark 2006. *Global communications forum, New York*, *NY. March 2007*.

Corporate communication practices and trends in Greater China: A benchmark study 2006. *ABC International Convention*, *October 2006*.

Chen, R.Y.R. 2004. Effective public affairs in China: MNC-government bargaining power and corporate strategies for influencing foreign business policy formulation. *Journal of Communication Management* 8(4): 395–413.

de Wet, G., C. Meintjes, I. Niemann-Struweg, and M.B. Goodman. 2008. *Corporate communication practices and trends: South Africa benchmark study 2007/8*. New York: CCI. [Paper presented at *the International Conference on Corporate Communication*, *June 6–9, 2008*, Wroxton, England.]

Feng, J.Y., and M.B. Goodman. 2010. Corporate communication practices and trends: A China study 2010. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Corporate Communication*, New York 169–190, June 7–10.

Frandsen, F., and W. Johansen. 2008. *Corporate communication practices and trends: A European Union benchmark study 2008*. New York: CCI. Retrieved from http://www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/EUPreliminary13_3_2008%20final.ppt.

Goodman, M.B. 2005. Restoring trust in American business: The struggle to change perception. *Journal of Business Strategy* 26(4): 29–37.

Goodman, M.B. 2011. CCI corporate communication practices and trends: US study. *Proceedings of the international conference on corporate communication*, New York 105–107, June 7–10.

Goodman, M.B., and P.B. Hirsch. 2010. *Corporate communication: Strategic adaptation for global practice*. New York: Peter Lang.

Goodman, M.B., and J. Wang. 2007. Tradition and innovation: The China business communication study. *Journal of Business Strategy* 28(3): 34–41.

Wang, J., and M.B. Goodman. 2006. *Corporate communication practices and trends: A China benchmark study 2006.* New York: CCI. Retrieved from www.corporatecomm.org/pdf/ChinaBenchmarkStudy.pdf.

Wang, J. (with the assistance of Michael B. Goodman, Vidhi Chaudhri and Deng Lifeng). 2008. *Corporate communication practices and trends: A China study 2008 – Phase II.* New York: CCI. Retrieved from www.corporatecomm.org/studies.

Chapter 3
Becoming a Successful Corporate Communication Practitioner in International Business Consultancy

David Hall

Abstract Corporate communication practitioners have a very wide range of professional responsibilities ranging from the almost ubiquitous, for example, media relations, public relations, communication strategy, crisis communications and public policy, to those that are less common, such as investor relations, government relations, technical communications and ethics (Goodman MB, Hirsch PB, Corporate communication: strategic adaptation for global practice. Peter Lang, New York, 2010).

This chapter examines how the most frequently encountered of these responsibilities are discharged and highlights the skills and technical practices that are necessary for their successful execution. It further examines the leadership roles of corporate communication professionals in the corporation, among the more commonly encountered of which include counsel to the CEO and the corporation, manager of the company's reputation, driver of the company's publicity and manager of the company's image (Goodman MB, Hirsch PB, Corporate communication: strategic adaptation for global practice. Peter Lang, New York, 2010).

It is these leadership roles of corporate communicators that highlight their importance both internally and externally in protecting, maintaining and enhancing the company's reputation. It also conditions the relationship of corporate communicators with those executives who have primary responsibility for critical programmes, such as investor and government relations, where corporate communicators have a secondary role. It is the task of corporate communicators working as a team with directors and senior managers to formulate and agree a coherent narrative that best represents the company's activities, aspirations and strategy.

In undertaking this work, corporate communicators may call on the support of communication consultancies (and they may themselves choose to spend part of

D. Hall (✉)
The former Head of Group Communications (Asia) at HSBC,
Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: dhallhkhk@yahoo.com

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_3

their careers in consultancy), and the chapter discusses their differing roles and how optimum results can be achieved from their combined efforts.

If you consider your favourite brands, your estimation of their products and services and your view of them as companies of quality and integrity and analyse all your other reasons for admiring them, your impressions will in part have been influenced by the work of corporate communication professionals. For these professionals, when building, maintaining and protecting a corporation's reputation, their core tasks and objectives (Cornelissen 2008) are to provide stakeholders with professionally relevant information about the corporate's operations (Cornelissen 2004), for example, via annual reports and shareholder meetings and other appropriate channels for major investors and other shareholders and via advertising, sales promotions, in-store communications and information about products and services for existing and prospective customers. All of these communications help form your impressions of a corporation (Cornelissen 2004).

Corporate communication is thus the discipline that nurtures and enhances perceptions of an organisation and seeks to protect its reputation when problems, which threaten reputation, arise (Doorley and Garcia 2007). Goodman (2006) has defined corporate communication as a number of management functions that include reputational management. Argenti and Forman (2002) shared the belief of this chapter that corporate communication counteracts the persistent scrutiny and negative attention that businesses face. Further, that technological advances have enhanced the scope of public scrutiny, reinforcing the need for good strategy not only to offset any potentially overwhelming criticisms, but also essential to protect a corporation's long-term reputation (Argenti and Forman 2002).

The success of a company's communication strategy is largely contingent on how closely the communication strategy is linked to the strategy of the business as a whole (Clutterbuck 2001). To work effectively, corporate communication professionals must have a thorough understanding of their employer's business (or if a consultant, the client's business) and its values, products, services and strategies. This understanding will condition everything they do.

The audiences that must be addressed to achieve success will include customers (actual and potential), suppliers, distributors, the company's own employees (and potential employees; being seen as a bad employer makes recruitment of good staff challenging), investors, communities in which the company operates and, depending on the industry, regulators and government. All these audiences have in varying but significant degrees an influence both on the conduct of a company's business and how it is perceived, hence influencing a company and its prospects. Investors can sell down their shares, thereby reducing the value of a company. Governments often control the issuing of vital licences – broadcasting, for example – or the awarding of contracts, notably in areas of government procurement. Regulators can have a powerful impact on some company operations, such as those in the finance industry, who have been instructing banks to increase their capital. Customers, of course, can decide to obtain their goods and services from an alternative supplier.

And general impressions of the company will not be confined to the quality and pricing of its products and services. A corporation builds its reality and engages with its constituencies not only by means of visual manifestation, including names, brands, symbols, self-presentations and corporate sponsorships, but, most significantly, its vision (Argenti and Forman 2002). Additionally, those with whom it deals can also influence the views of customers and other key audiences.

Potentially, its suppliers, wherever they may operate, can be a source of reputational damage. If, for example, the company buys garments from a factory in Bangladesh that has collapsed or from factories that employ child labour, then its reputation will be damaged and, probably, its sales impacted. And there will be NGOs (nongovernmental organisations) and journalists that will work to ensure that news of these connections will be disseminated internationally. In these circumstances, corporate communication professionals must have a clear and thorough understanding of their employer's business and the environment in which it operates.

In the area of customer perceptions, certain problems can do substantial damage to a reputation that has taken years to build. For many businesses, be they car manufacturers, cosmetic producers or beverage specialists, the most public and significant risk is that of a defective product which leads to a recall, necessitating wide publicity. Even the suspicion or allegation of product problems can lead to sharply falling sales. Examples in recent years have included melamine-contaminated milk from China and Toyota cars with alleged problems of accelerators being jammed wide open. In 2010, British Petroleum (BP), one of the six oil and gas 'super majors' and a highly regarded company, had its reputation severely damaged by the oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, which had a massive impact on the environment. The spill also gave rise to considerable health consequences and economic losses.

Further, certain categories of customer can be a problem. For banks, offering services to those who are thought to be tax evaders can present major regulatory issues. Some industries, such as forestry, are increasingly shunned as borrowers on the grounds that their practices are not sustainable.

A company's sensitivity to the environment, green issues, is another critical factor, especially for those engaged in extractive industries such as mining and oil. In particular, the practice known as fracking by the oil and gas industry has recently attracted opposition from local communities in many parts of the world and, in France, an outright ban on hydraulic fracking for shale gas.

So while corporate communication professionals have a critical role in promoting the company's business, they must also be skilled in damage control. What this means in practice is that in addition to having a clear understanding of their employer's business, they must also have an acute awareness of the broader environment in which the company operates.

3.1 The Roles and Responsibilities of Corporate Communicators

The wide range of these responsibilities is one of the factors that make a career in corporate communications interesting and satisfying. The two following tables demonstrate how this works in practice. These tables draw on practice in the United States, but many of the disciplines and techniques they address are standards for international corporate communicators.

Table 3.1 (Goodman and Hirsch 2010: 17) was compiled in 2009 by corporate communication international (CCI) Studies (Goodman et al. 2009) and was based on ranked descriptions of the leadership role of corporate communications in major companies by chief communications officers. The percentages are derived from those who ranked each function first.

Two prefatory comments are required before considering the list. The first is simply that large companies, which are international in reach and publicly traded, are only broadly indicative of professional practice. Smaller companies and different organisational structures such as governments and government departments, trade associations, NGOs and charities, for example, will have different profiles.

Secondly, many professionals work for consultancies rather than in-house, which creates a different approach to dealing with communication issues. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

That said, Table 3.1 provides valuable professional insights.

First, the priority accorded to counselling the CEO and corporation demonstrates an awareness of the critical importance of communication issues. Second, the apparent overlaps of the various categories in the list hint at a degree of confusion either in professional terminology or the scope of activity encompassed by particular roles. For example, it is difficult to see clear distinctions between 'manager of

Table 3.1 Ranked descriptions of the leadership role of communication professionals in the corporation

23.3 %	Counsel to CEO and the corporation [16.7 % #2]
18.0 %	Manager of company's reputation [14.8 % #2]
12.9 %	Source of public information about the company [14.5 % #2]
10.2 %	Driver of company publicity
9.7 %	Manager of the company's image
6.8 %	Advocate or 'engineer of public opinion'
5.8 %	Manager of relationships – co. and NON-customer constituencies
5.0 %	Branding and brand perception steward
3.5 %	Member of the strategic planning leadership team
3.4 %	Manager of employee relations (internal comm.)
1.9 %	Manager of relationships – co. and ALL key constituencies
1.8 %	Support for marketing and sales
1.8 %	Corporate philanthropy (citizenship) champion

Source: Adapted from Goodman and Hirsch (2010, p. 17)

Table 3.2 Core functional responsibilities of corporate communication

Function	Responsibility (%)
Media relations	100.0[a]
Public relations	98.4[a]
Communication strategy	96.9[a]
Crisis communication	93.8[a]
Communication policy	92.3
Executive communication	87.7[a]
Reputation management	84.6[a]
Employee communication	81.5[a]
Social media	78.0
Internet communication	76.9
Intranet communication	76.6
Annual report	75.4
Corporate identity	69.2
Issues management	67.7
Community relations	61.5
Mission statement	56.9
Corporate citizenship	50.8
Brand strategy	50.8
Marketing communication	41.5
Advertising	41.5
Corporate culture	40.0
Investor relations	32.3
Government relations	15.4
Technical communication	13.8
Ethics	9.2
Training and development	7.7
Labour relations	4.6

Source: Adapted from Goodman and Hirsch (2010, p. 18)

[a]Almost ubiquitous

company's reputation' and 'manager of the company's image' or how these compare with 'branding and brand perception steward'.

However, the major conclusions to be drawn from this research are apparent. In addition to the importance attached to the corporate communication function by business leaders, it is viewed as a strategic role in respect of the organisation's audiences both internally and externally.

The CCI Studies also asked communication executives to indicate their core functional responsibilities drawn from a list of possible functions proffered by the researchers. The results are set out in Table 3.2 (Goodman and Hirsch 2010: 18).

The most immediate and striking indicator from this research is the primacy of media relations and related professional activities, such as communication strategy and policy. Also, crisis communication is largely played out in media, even if the problem sometimes ends up in the law courts. In the case of BP, described above, the devastating consequences of the oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico have ended up in the US courts, where many people who were not directly impacted by the spill have nonetheless been granted compensation.

As for public relations – 'the predecessor to the corporate communication function' (Argenti 2007) – this is often an older synonym for corporate communications that some people still use as is clear from Table 3.2, while social media is an increasingly significant reputational factor for senior management in any large organisation. With the extraordinarily high levels of interactivity and transparency enabled by the Internet, the elemental practices of corporate communication, including corporate reputation management, are made unrecognisable to earlier practitioners, especially in the transparent web of social media that has had a profound impact on the speed and extent to which stakeholders can interact with the corporation and with each other in ways that have both positive and negative implications for the corporation (Goodman and Hirsch 2010). Social media will be discussed separately later in this chapter.

There is a particular link between these findings and those in the preceding table that set out the leadership roles of corporate communication professionals. It is the potential impact of media both positive and negative that requires counselling for the CEO and the corporation.

This is an area of sensitivity for two reasons, the first derived from the nature of media and the second derived from the role of directors and senior managers.

3.2 Core Responsibilities

3.2.1 Media Relations

Media relations, in common with many of the activities and roles listed in the two tables, is an intermediated form of communication. What this means is that to reach your target audience with your message, you have to work through go-betweens or intermediaries. For example, if you give an interview to a journalist, she or he may quote you, accurately or otherwise, but how they interpret the message will be their decision. Subsequently, subeditors and editors will review the copy and decide whether or not and how prominently to run the story. A simple scan of differing media will confirm the wide interpretations accorded with any one news item.

Directors and senior managers are often required to be the public face or voice of the corporation. Different individuals will approach this task with very different levels of enthusiasm. Some will enjoy the exposure, the chance to air their views publicly. Some will seek to avoid it whenever possible. They see it as a high-risk activity they would prefer to avoid. Professional advisers need always to keep in mind that those who are most desirous of talking to journalists are not necessarily the most skilled at doing so, especially when they have not prepared properly for the encounter.

There are many risks involved in dealing with interviews and comments to media. And the risks are not just oral. In filmed or live interviews, the risks of body language, looking bored or disengaged when dealing with a serious subject or being inappropriately dressed so that many viewers will only remember the strange dress or violently patterned tie have to be considered.

Interviews conducted at weekends or during leisure time carry particular sartorial risks. For a senior, middle-aged man to appear in a tee shirt does not work, while wearing a suit and tie would be equally inappropriate. Similar rules apply to women, who at least have a wider choice of attire from which to choose.

There are a number of essentials for any successful media encounter. The most basic, although often overlooked, is that the interviewee has something interesting to say.

She or he must be quite clear what the message is, that it accords with corporate policy and be satisfied that it is likely to match the interests of the interviewer. This analysis is straightforward when discussing major events – financial announcements, significant product developments, business acquisitions or disposals – but less so on other occasions. To seek interviews when there is no significant news value to offer risks overexposure for the executive and indifference or irritation on the part of journalists.

Timing is also important. Trying to give an interview about a new factory investment or a store opening on the day of a government budget announcement is unlikely to arouse much media interest. Selection of the time of day for an interview needs to take account of news deadlines and their impact on the work of journalists. Very few reporters will be tempted by an invitation to an early breakfast encounter.

And for any international organisation with offices in different time zones, when planning major announcements, consideration must be given to how the news will be released in different parts of the world. The usual decision-making process is that head office will decide what best suits them (together with a calculation for listed companies of stock exchange regulations) and then seek to fit everyone around their chosen time. Inevitably, somewhere in the world, it will be 3.00 am.

For the corporate communication professional, the key to success is preparation. For inexperienced executives, unaccustomed to dealing with media, training programmes can be sourced, but these are never a substitute for proper planning ahead of an interview.

First, the judgment has to be made about the news value of an interview and what the message should be. This needs to be discussed and agreed with the interviewee, who will need to be clear about what should be covered in the interview and what should not. A written brief may be appropriate, together with a background note about the journalist if the executive is unfamiliar with them.

Also vital is a discussion – probably supported by a note – of the likely questions that may arise and how they should be answered. Warnings should be given about the dangers of going ‘off the record’, a suggestion that interesting information will be divulged for background only and not to be reported. Such agreements are not necessarily honoured. And recording the encounter is useful in case of any dispute about what was or was not said during the interview.

Some executives will find these preparatory steps irksome, being confident that they know how to behave and what to say and are comfortable that they know the journalist well. These situations are not easy to deal with, and accidents will happen, with a piece being published or broadcast that differs significantly and embarrassingly from the intended message. The most difficult issue to deal with is an executive taking an unplanned call from a journalist and chatting either on or off the record. This tendency must be discouraged.

Executives have to learn, one way or another, that journalists are not their friends – nor their enemies – but professional people with a job to do, get a newsworthy story, and that the executive has a professional job to do, deliver one, as planned.

It should be clear by now that talking to media is not a simple task. In order to manage the flow of corporate information and to ensure it is both accurate and on message, it is of critical importance that only those (few) people who have the necessary skills and experience are allowed to do so. A list of those who are authorised to speak to media should be maintained, and it must be made clear that nobody else is entitled to do so.

It is likely, but not invariably so, that an interview opportunity will have been triggered by the issuance of a press release, a summary of a potential news item circulated to media by the corporation. The corporate communication department will be responsible for drafting the release but will need to liaise with, and seek the approval of, those who have an interest in the subject of the release.

This list will include those who are to be quoted; those with a material interest in the subject, such as product or service managers, financial staff and potentially lawyers, depending on the sensitivity of the news; and those members of senior management who have the responsibility for signing off the final draft.

It is critical from the outset that the member of the corporate communication department responsible for the master copy is clearly identified so that various changes, of which there will be many, can be integrated without confusion or error.

The final version, which may or may not closely resemble the original draft, must meet certain criteria: it should be short, not always possible with complicated issues such as financial results, make its points clearly and be in simple language. Jargon should be avoided. Even with complex issues, it should be easily grasped by a nonspecialist reader.

If the release is to be circulated internationally, corporate communications will be responsible for translating the text. For example, if the draft is in simplified Chinese characters, traditional Chinese characters and English may be required. Discussions among translators and comparisons of various versions to ensure the original meaning is not corrupted and the style is elegant and appropriate can be time consuming, so the translators will wish to have the earliest possible view of a working draft, provided of course it will not be at a stage when it may be subject to radical alteration.

If the subject matter is confidential until the moment the release is circulated, a note will need to be kept of those who are entitled to see the text and steps taken to ensure that nobody else reads it. Information leaks from all types of organisation are quite common, always deplored, and in the case of highly sensitive information, such as the financial results of publicly listed companies, extremely damaging.

Major or sensitive releases will require a briefing for senior management on likely questions and appropriate answers. For international organisations, gathering and refining this material from relevant departments and managers takes time and effort: not everyone approached will share the sense of urgency of those asking the questions.

After the release has been distributed, corporate communication staff must be prepared to respond to calls from media seeking clarification and further information.

It will also fall to the corporate communication department to prepare lists of those to whom releases should be sent. Such lists will be tailored to corporate requirements and consist of individual journalists, news outlets and media organisations that are interested in the organisation and its field of operations. These lists should always be available and updated to ensure the contents remain accurate.

For major occasions, a press conference will be called. The first decision to be made is whether or not the subject of the proposed press conference is of sufficient value to justify the time and expense of its organisation. This is not just an internal calculation. Inviting media to a conference or briefing and having just a handful turn-up is not good news either internally with management or externally with media who will not respect the corporate communication team's professional judgment.

The decision made, the invitation list needed to be prepared, the logistics of setting up the venue agreed and executed and those appearing on the platform will require prepared statement, and rehearsals for them will have to be booked. With financial result announcements, separate briefings for financial analysts may be required. And, of course, preparation and approval of the press release will be taking place simultaneously.

3.2.2 Social Media

Social media have brought huge benefits to our lives. They enable us to communicate instantly with family and friends, to access swiftly information that previously might have taken weeks to research, to contact like-minded social groups or to exchange information about the quality of commercial products and services. They provide entertainment and games. Online shopping can be a great boon, while posing a significant threat to traditional retailers. They also present at a more sinister level vast opportunities for surveillance and the invasion of privacy, as revealed by Edward Snowden's leaking of NSA documents. Social media have also enabled an aspiring US President, Barack Obama, to raise very large sums of money for his first presidential campaign.

It is both the ubiquity and the global reach of social media that pose the opportunity and the challenge to corporate communicators; from our point of view, social media are simply a global grapevine. As noted elsewhere in this chapter, grapevines, those informal networks common to all organisations that circulate information, rumours and gossip among staff, are uncontrollable and ineradicable; further, while frequently and conventionally deplored by senior management, most people are enthusiastic participants.

In dealing with social media, corporate communicators have to accept some potentially unwelcome realities. The first, and most critical, is that the emphasis on the management of corporate messaging that features elsewhere in this chapter is simply not possible. The targeting of selected media in controlled circumstances through intermediating journalists cannot be achieved with social media, although some efforts have been made by fashion houses that invited widely followed fashion bloggers to couture shows.

However, in a world where celebrities can number their Twitter followers in hundreds of thousands, selectivity among audiences is difficult to achieve. Prudent engagement rather than message management becomes the necessary approach. But this is constrained by the second reality: that comment in social media is frequently vigorous, if not downright abusive, and seldom posted with any concern for accuracy or with any attribution. While picking up the phone to a journalist who may have published an inaccuracy is straightforward, responding to an anonymous post is next to impossible.

This presents the third reality: dealing with social media is a labour-intensive activity, and some corporations are slow to make the investment, either because they are reluctant to commit the resources or because they are nervous of engagement. But social media cannot be ignored.

How best to engage and how not to do so are best illustrated by two examples. In 2013, Amazon launched its instant delivery service using a combination of traditional media and Twitter/YouTube, underscoring the point that conventional and social media are not mutually exclusive channels. Its achievement was to start a conversation about the next steps in delivery service and to highlight its positioning as an innovative company.

In the same year, J.P. Morgan, the largest US bank defined by assets, had a less happy experience with Twitter. The bank had been hit by billions of US dollars in fines since the financial crisis of 2008/2009 and was thus a prominent institution in any discussion of the finance industry. Towards the end of the year, they announced they would host a Twitter conversation and invited people to tweet questions. The volume, variety and frequent hostility of the questions and comments were such that the event was cancelled. J.P. Morgan appeared to have believed they could focus the conversation in a way that was not achievable in social media.

Finally, a note about Twitter: celebrities, sports stars, movie stars and, yes, the President of the United States, all Twitter. It is just conceivable that prominent business figures whose names are synonymous with the companies they lead may be able to justify doing so. For every other business leader, it is a mistake for the same reason they should not blog: they have too little of value to offer. Twittering should be left to those who live in the public eye.

3.2.3 Crisis Communications

Crisis communications, the process of dealing with sudden significant problems or events, in many organisations will or should be covered by a plan. No crisis plan can cover every contingency in detail, nor should it attempt to do so, or senior management will be confronted with a vast document at the very moment when they have to think and act quickly. Plans should deal with two categories of responsibility: how disruption to the work of the organisation will be minimised and normal activity restored and the identity of those who will manage the crisis and its attendant communications. The chain of command and who should be informed and consulted and when should be addressed.

In a crisis, rapid response is vital. At the most basic level, it may avoid further damage to the business or even, on extreme occasions, help save lives. A major event – passenger plane crash, building fire, terrorist attack, computer network collapse and kidnapping of senior executives – will prompt close media scrutiny. Recent examples include the sudden shutdown of the world's most prominent Bitcoin Exchange – Mt. Gox – in February 2014 and the tragic disappearance of Malaysian Airlines' flight MH370 in March 2014, both of which have attracted tremendous media coverage and emotional discussion.

Apart from reporting the drama of the event, media will be looking for immediate responses from management and, failing such a response, are likely to fill the vacuum with suggestions the management is slow to respond or, even, incompetent. Once such a story is circulated, it is extremely difficult for management credibility to recover.

As will be obvious, the customary time-consuming processes of press release preparation are not possible in these circumstances. Nor can staff when preparing a management crisis plan anticipate the nature of every crisis and the manner in which it will develop, so there is unlikely to be a ready-made press release on file.

The most important rule when making the first response to a crisis is not to say too much. Hurried speculation as to cause, extent of damage, attribution of responsibility and other sensitive matters are almost certain to be inaccurate and may subsequently be used against the corporation. The best approach is to express sympathy or concern for those affected, be they customers, staff or members of the public, and assure that management is focusing on the issue and to give an assurance that further information will be given as soon as it is possible (accurately) to do so. On 16 April 2014, a South Korean ferry, MV Sewol, carrying 476 people and cargo between Incheon and Jeju, capsized and sank. Initially, South Korean officials reported that most people on board had been rescued, a statement subsequently proved to be extremely inaccurate. Tragically, many more had been lost (note to editors that no final number as yet confirmed). This misleading statement, plus subsequent allegations that the ferry was overloaded with cargo, led to the resignation of the South Korean Prime Minister before the end of the month.

While being clear about what to say, it is also important to be clear about who is to say it and who not. The rules about who is permitted and who is not allowed to talk to media, referred to above, may break down under stress. In these circumstances, general speculative comment from members of staff, at any level, can be as damaging as it can be inaccurate, which brings up two related issues: internal communications and the deployment of corporate communication staff.

The chain of command and communication procedures in the crisis plan should set out who should be told immediately when a major event occurs. Head office personnel dislike intensely learning about a major problem in the business from news headlines rather than from colleagues. Similarly, staff at all levels prefer to hear from line management or internal communication channels about the impact of a crisis. So relaying the news and broad details of what has happened together with the approved response within the organisation is vital. It should also be made clear that nobody other than approved spokesmen should make any comment at all to media.

In deploying his or her resources, the head of corporate communications must consider where her media team should be located. For her, the decision will be clear: the plan should locate her at the central command team management office so that advice may be given on critical communications issue and these may be executed promptly.

The rest of the communication team will either be in their own offices or back-up offices if their own are disabled, while some should if possible be located at the site of a serious event. That is where teams of news media will gather and where management of the communication process will be important. While media have every right to discuss events with fire, police and other emergency responders, interviews with individual members of staff should be avoided.

The on-site corporate communication team must maintain an open channel with the head of corporate communications to ensure they have the most recent approved statements. And they can update the crisis managers on what is happening on the ground. Consideration will also be given to communication, where appropriate, with customers, suppliers, regulators and local government or any other critically interested party.

During a crisis, close attention must also be paid to social media, if such a process is not already routinely in place, and corporate communication teams must be prepared to engage as and when appropriate. Where those postings do identify themselves, then referrals to frequently asked question (FAQ) sites and websites can be made. The assumption is made in nearly all crisis plans, as indeed in this discussion, that crises are driven by a single and very sudden event. This is not, however, invariably the case.

For example, in the winter of 2002 in Asia, there were rumours of increasing numbers of pneumonia cases in southern China and, subsequently, in Hong Kong. These were initially dismissed as a seasonal phenomenon. Later, when cases multiplied, some governments recommended health and cleaning precautions; the virus H5N1 was identified as the cause of the disease that came to be known as SARS, severe acute respiratory syndrome.

Corporations, along with the medical profession, had to devise plans to deal with SARS, which appeared to be highly contagious, although the exact means of transmission was not at that time identified. It was believed that Tamiflu, an existing medication, was helpful in treatment, and the world was scoured for supplies.

Large companies split work teams to avoid entire critical functions being disabled, set up regular intensive office cleaning of programmes and issued face masks. All these and other measures had to be communicated to staff.

From this experience, there are two lessons to be learned: first, not all crises can be anticipated and, second, crises can arrive silently and by stealth.

3.2.4 Internal Communications

The focus of attention properly devoted to communications with external audiences should never ignore the importance of communicating positively and effectively with an internal one, an organisation's own staff.

Staff are critical to an organisation's success. Indeed, for those companies operating in the service sector, they are possibly the most significant assets. Staff performance dictates the quality of service delivery, and while general managerial competence, or lack thereof, is important, it is also itself a determinant of how staff perform.

Organisations rely on a variety of channels to effect these communications: intranets, emails and, occasionally with very large organisations, their own internal television programming. The key point to grasp with internal communication programmes is that to be effective, staff must find them sufficiently interesting, in whatever format they may be produced, to pay attention to them. Four factors are key: relevance, good content, professional production values and trust.

Relevance is straightforward: the matter has to be of interest to staff in the context of their working lives and it must be timely. Information and comment from senior management immediately following the release of the company's financial results will be interesting, a hot topic. Two or three days later, it will be of far less interest. Media will have covered the results in detail and there will be little left to add. It will be old news and stale views.

To avoid these issues, those in charge of internal communication programmes must work to ensure that senior management pay appropriate attention to planning internal communications as well as external when making major announcements.

Maintaining staff interest in internal channels entails constant updating with a corresponding level of resources to meet these demands. An intranet that is updated on a weekly basis is an irrelevance. Daily is a minimum, and in times of major events or crises, more often will be needed.

Good content can be defined as relevance, described above, plus professional presentation – sharp and well written, illustrated and presented – together with subject matter that appeals to its audience. Internal communication programmes are by definition business communications. However, people at work are social beings as well as workers. They have interest in their colleagues and any social programmes the company may offer. A balance between, sometimes dry, business content and social issues must be maintained.

This raises the issue of presentation and production values. On a daily basis in their private lives, whether online or via conventional communication channels, staff are exposed to highly professional and often beautifully executed programming. Anything that falls far short of this level will be dismissed as amateur and uninteresting. While non-media organisations may lack the resources and skills of media companies, they must, nonetheless, strive for the highest standards.

This raises the issue of the deployment of the most senior management. They are occasions when a straight-to-camera message from the CEO or chairman is important. They have something significant to say, and their appearance will underscore the importance of their message as well as giving staff, who may seldom encounter them in person, the chance to see them in action.

There are, however, two constraints. The first is the risk of overexposure. A CEO who is constantly exposed on the intranet or internal TV station will find her value at some point diminished by the sheer familiarity of her face or voice. The second point is that CEOs are not generally gifted broadcasters. That is not why they are hired. Thus they will need training, guidance and rehearsal to ensure that when they do speak, they do the best possible job.

Occasionally, a CEO will be tempted to blog. This should be avoided. While CEOs as private citizens will have through the breadth of their experience interesting views on many issues of public importance – with few repercussions from any offence caused by their publication – the same does not apply in their directorial role. As CEO they will be constrained by their responsibilities so that their blog will likely be indiscreet, infrequent or too trivial to be of much interest to staff.

But however well these channels are managed, staff still like to be kept informed through traditional line manager communication. They want to hear the message from their boss or boss's boss. This reinforces work place relationships as well as confidence in management. If a major announcement, either positive or negative, has been made, the ability of a manager to respond to a team's questions or to provide further background is important.

Advance briefing notes to managers, where confidentiality and regulatory restrictions permit, are valuable. But not every manager is a born communicator, and they will often find reasons why they are not able to take part in a line communication exercise. Training, practice and encouragement are then needed.

The value of an effective internal communication programme can be critical in building and maintaining staff morale. This raises the last of the four criteria mentioned above, trust.

Staff do not expect to be given highly sensitive or confidential information that, by definition, has to be restricted to a small group of people. On the other hand, as competent and professional people – and if they are not, the company may not remain in business for very long – they expect honesty and openness from their senior management. They will resent what they feel is propaganda or, worse, deception.

All organisations have grapevines, those informal channels of communication through which gossip, information and disinformation flow. Sometimes, this information, or just rumours, reach the outside world and appear in media. It should be noted that information also reaches the outside world in the form of leaks, when someone deliberately and anonymously speaks to a journalist.

These events are a not uncommon feature of corporate life. They become a particular concern for staff when they touch upon their own welfare, above all when there are leaks about possible cuts in staffing.

These leaks place senior managers in an extremely difficult position. For example, if staff cuts are in prospect, they demand careful planning – there are often contractual and legal issues to be resolved as well as logistics – and until these issues are resolved, nothing can be said or put into effect.

Thus, when they are confronted with such a leak, senior managers have a major problem. If they deny the report, they are lying. If they confirm, they may find implementation extremely difficult. There is nothing they can say.

Even if the report is untrue, to deny the leak or rumour can be fatal, as thereafter whenever reports of staff cuts appear and management refuses to deny them, they will in effect have confirmed the reports that will then spread everywhere.

The ability to keep information confidential is a vital but not always recognised quality in senior management. The other lesson to be noted is that the greater the number of people with access to a piece of confidential information, the greater the risk of a leak.

3.2.5 Values, Culture and Brand

Returning to the first table in this chapter that listed leadership roles, it was noted that managing the company's reputation was very important for corporate communicators. So far, the discussion has tended to focus on the defensive aspects of this responsibility, how to avoid accidents in interviews or respond in a crisis, but the primary task for professionals is actively to promote the company, its values and its brand.

In the second table that deals with functional responsibilities, the corresponding items that cover this practice are reputation management, brand strategy, marketing communication and advertising.

All companies have a corporate culture and a set of values, beliefs and practices that determine how they run their business, interact with their customers and manage their staff. They may not have written down their culture or formalised it into a statement, but it will exist.

In respect of brand, the word started life as a trademark thus related to corporate identity, while for many professional people, it has evolved as a term that describes the sum of consumer perceptions of a company.

For the present discussion of the role of corporate communicators, these distinctions are not critical. What matters is that he or she should have a thorough understanding of the business, its culture and its values.

This is essential not merely so that any internal and external expression of the company and its products and services should be consistent with these qualities. It is also important in the event the senior management of the company at any time plan to embark on a course of action that is inconsistent with its culture and values. The task of the corporate communicator is then to advise of the possible consequences reputationally of their decision. If the senior management still judge they have proper grounds for proceeding, then it falls to the corporate communication team to present the decision in the best possible light and to manage any negative response.

Thus, the core of corporate communications is the promotion of the culture and values of the company whether that is through a projection of the values and business of the corporate entity or of its component products and services. In carrying out the latter tasks, the corporate communication team will also work with relevant line managers and their staffs.

3.3 Shared Responsibilities

3.3.1 Brand and the Marketing Department

A consideration of both tables one and two makes clear by the allocation of percentages that while certain roles and responsibilities are common to almost all professionals, others are not. Media and crisis communications have already been highlighted as among the almost universal tasks that fall to corporate communicators, but in respect of other roles, the job description and the list of responsibilities will vary from company to company.

Among these variations, already referred to above, are brand strategy, reputation management, marketing communication and advertising. Many large companies have marketing departments with explicit responsibility for these activities. In this context, brand is given its broader interpretation as the sum of consumers' thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the company, its products and services.

It is at this point that interpretations of brand, corporate culture and corporate values tend to overlap, at best, or become confused. There is also a lack of clarity, as may be deduced from the two tables, as to who has pre-emptive rights to particular tasks.

Marketing is seen by its practitioners as a process of analysis to identify target markets and particular customer groups within those markets, a process known as segmentation, and then devising or positioning products and services to appeal to them. This work inevitably involves consideration of distribution and price.

There are three critical points arising from this: First, the nature of their work places marketing personnel close to the core strategy of the business. Second, the budgets allocated to research and advertising are very large thereby increasing their influence within the company. Third, their work is focused on control, control of message, control of distribution and control of price.

The issue of control differentiates marketing and corporate communications in those organisations in which the two roles are separate. As noted earlier, in respect of corporate communications with media, there are intermediaries such as journalists, who interpret a corporate message before it is relayed to its intended targets, readers, listeners and viewers. Managing this message transmission requires particular skills.

The content of advertising, at least within the bounds of the law, regulation and concerns for public decency is entirely within the control of those paying for the advertisement. In making decisions about design and content, in-house advertising executives will be guided by research – usually commissioned externally – and by their advertising agency, who will probably also advise on the choice of media employed to maximise impact on the target audience.

Nonetheless, it is important for the organisations they serve that corporate communicators and marketers cooperate sufficiently to ensure that there are no variations in how they view the company's brand and values and how these are represented internally and externally.

But there are areas in which the skill set and methods of operation of marketing teams are unsuited to managing image. Crises, as discussed above, are played out in media and are not always susceptible to advertising's influence. Further, the need for flexible execution of an agreed strategy conducted through intermediated channels is a mode of operation alien to most marketers. Similarly, major financial announcements such as results, acquisitions or disposals involve consideration of media reactions, the views of financial markets and other key audiences. The team working on these projects will involve corporate communication professionals, either internal, external or both. Marketers are unlikely to be involved.

3.3.2 Corporate Citizenship

Community relations and corporate citizenship, sometimes described as corporate and social responsibility (CSR), are an area of activity that often but not invariably falls within the corporate communication portfolio. They are influential in building and enhancing a company's image.

In older companies, CSR often has its roots in philanthropy, charitable giving and a policy of providing financial and other forms of support for areas of societal need. Issues supported often cover health, education, disaster relief, environmental causes and care for the elderly.

Over time, companies tend to focus on particular programmes in order to maximise their impact and adopt internal administrative procedures to ensure funds are channelled to the best-managed projects and are properly spent. Funds can be distributed locally, regionally or internationally.

These activities have become more prominent as national and international single-issue groups, or NGOs, have grown in number and influence. Companies are exhorted not just to give money but also modify their behaviour, avoiding, for example, trading with other companies that are judged to be either unethical or showing a proper lack of regard for the safety of their employees. Companies may also come under pressure to modify their business practices to avoid damaging the environment. NGOs are highly effective in running such campaigns.

The core activities of certain industries, especially extractive industries such as mining or drilling, are under particular scrutiny, while the environmental impacts of a company's own business, its suppliers, associates or customers are closely monitored.

Managing these programmes, which can flare into a crisis and which frequently play out in media, requires skills that typically are the province of corporate communicators.

3.3.3 Investor Relations

Investor relations is a practice usually confined to publicly listed companies, who need to communicate with financial analysts and rating agencies in order to explain and elucidate the progress and strategy of the business.

Financial analysts typically work for insurance companies, banks and investment banks, and their task is to produce reports both for internal and external consumption that may mark a company's stock on which they are reporting as either a buy, hold or, less frequently, a sell. These analysts are known as 'sell-side' analysts.

'Buy-side' analysts, who typically work for holders or potential holders of the company's stock, do not publish research or buy, hold or sell recommendations.

Also significant for investor relations are rating agencies, such as Moody's and Standard & Poor's, who are concerned with the company's ability to pay back its debts. They award credit ratings to the company's issued debt based on their analysis, and the nature of that rating may affect the cost to the company of raising money.

Investor relations is customarily the responsibility of the finance department, who has the technical skills necessary both to explain the presentation of the company's business in the accounts and to deal with technical questions. However, when announcing financial results or major events, such acquisitions and disposals, close cooperation is necessary with finance and corporate communications to ensure that the presentation to both audiences is aligned, accurate and properly understood.

3.3.4 Government Relations

Government relations, often called lobbying, is a highly specialised activity that sometimes forms part of the corporate communication portfolio. Otherwise, line reporting is to other senior corporate managers or board members with a particular interest or expertise.

Sometimes, the services of external consultants are employed to assist the company to achieve its goals. The issues influencing the choice and balance of in-house and external consultancy are explored later in this chapter.

Although government relations is probably more highly developed in the United States than elsewhere, it is nonetheless an almost universal phenomenon. The reasons are simple: even in economies that have a very low proportion of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the influence of government on the business sector is huge. In these circumstances, seeking to influence government policy is an obvious, if not inevitable, course of action.

Government policies and legislation that touch business in even the most avowedly capitalist economies include, but are not limited to, corporate taxation, health and safety legislation, employment law, interest rates and fiscal policy, environmental restrictions, tariffs and, where they exist, government subsidies.

Many other interests will also be clamouring for government attention: electorates, NGOs, political parties, foreign governments and various departments within the government itself that will be competing for scarce resources. Consequently, it is unsurprising that companies often devote considerable resources of their own to influencing government.

The techniques employed in the conduct of government relations will vary depending on the national context. Broadly speaking, companies have two different but not mutually exclusive avenues of approach: to work through a trade association – probably one of the best known in the United States is the National Rifle Association (NRA), which has successfully resisted almost every effort to tighten US gun controls despite occasional massacres – or a chamber of commerce. Or they can create their own lobbying programme.

Techniques include simple persuasion through arguing a case or making a formal presentation, offering financial support for a party or candidate, advertising campaigns and the creation of alliances. Borrowing an example illustrated by Argenti (2007), in 2001, Microsoft had been lobbying against copyright violators resulting in a government crackdown on software privacy. It was only later that year, in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks that Microsoft was able to cite the incident to succeed with its allies in persuading the Bush administration to go further by allotting over $70 million to improve 'cybersecurity' in America.

Clearly, there are risks that such activities may be seen as an improper use of funds, and corporate communicators always need to be aware of what may be seen as legitimate activity and what may be considered, rightly or wrongly, improper activity liable to damage the company's reputation.

3.4 Remaining on Message

As was made clear in the earlier discussion of media relations and internal communications, being sure you have something interesting and newsworthy to communicate and then delivering it clearly and consistently is vital to corporate communication success.

More broadly in the context of corporate reputation, values, culture and brand, a consistent vision of a company's business that is understood and valued by customers and other critical audiences is vital to success. Delivering this goal requires a great deal more than briefing a director on the message to be conveyed in an interview. It requires more than the hard work of creating a strategy and vision for the company or group. It demands discipline.

There is a natural tendency to regard a company as a single entity, a seamless brand. Whatever the industry, we are likely to have views about major players such as Alibaba, Lenovo, Apple, Facebook, Mercedes-Benz, Louis Vuitton or Bank of China that take little account of the diversity of their products or divisions.

For companies, their brands have enormous value. They are carefully nurtured to promote sales and to gain an edge over competitors. They are also, to some extent, an illusion. International companies can include different products manufactured by separate divisions and often by units scattered around the globe. Or the final product may be an assembly of components sourced from independent suppliers in different continents. Service companies, such as giant financial institutions, will have different products for different market segments and will often be constrained in their national offerings by local regulation. Taking Apple as an example, it is no news that the majority of its components are produced by overseas companies. According to a well-researched report (Duhigg and Bradsher 2012) published on The New York Times, all iPhones contain hundreds of parts, an estimated 90 % of which are manufactured abroad. The positioning of iPhone as a prestigious product crafted by the United States is to a considerable extent an illusion.

Further, international companies have to take account of local tastes when developing a new, or modifying an existing, product. Any company in the luxury good business that does not listen to its Chinese managers and heed the tastes of its Chinese customers is unlikely to have a prosperous future in one of the world's largest markets.

'The process of glocalization is that of hybridization, a continuum of adaptation between the global and the local' (Wang 2000, p. 108), which is an essential strategy for multinational companies in regional marketing for its local success. Taking Rolls-Royce's adaptation of its Ghost for the Chinese market as an example, it launched a limited edition Extended Wheelbase model with added length, in response to Chinese demands for more room in the back.

Within the company itself, different divisions will have different customer bases and be competing for investment and resources with other divisions, while at the most senior level decisions about future direction, expansion into new markets, or exiting existing markets, or discussion of acquisitions and disposals is likely to be the subject of vigorous debate.

All such internal differences are essential for a company's health and, on a lesser scale, will be echoed in small businesses everywhere. They can nonetheless complicate the delivery of clear and consistent messages by corporate communicators.

As suggested by van Riel and Fombrun (2007), one of the key tasks of corporate communication is to develop initiatives that bridge the company's desired identity and brand features for effective brand differentiation. To achieve this goal, it is the task of the board to create a coherent and efficient entity from the above diverse elements, select target markets in which the company can compete successfully with the competitors and create a strategy that delivers profits.

To assist the process, some companies produce mission statements that set out in a few short paragraphs, goals, ambitions and values. Much work and research will be devoted to branding and related promotion. And all this will provide context for the demanding logistics of creating, pricing, distributing, promoting and selling products.

The work of corporate communicators is to ensure that the strategy, brand, positioning and direction of the company are clearly understood both internally and externally. Their task is to ensure that those who are briefed and cleared to deliver such information do so when called upon and other people do not.

Ensuring this happens across a large company demands absolutely clear lines of responsibility and control. However, accidents will happen. Someone, somewhere, will offer an opinion on the record that is off-message, or a leak will occur.

Additionally, those variances in conditions between different international markets mentioned above ensure that what is perceived to be important in New York or Stuttgart will look very different in Delhi or Shanghai, and vice versa. In such circumstances, the communications from head or regional offices can often be locally discounted or ignored.

The implicit assumption in this section so far is that the messages from the top will always be clear. This is not always the case.

Sometimes, a strategy will be in the process of creation. Possibly, the case for an acquisition or disposal may not be as compelling for an external audience as it appeared to the board when the decision was made. Occasionally, corporate communicators may be given a two-hour-long PowerPoint presentation and told to turn it into a press release.

This task requires skill as well as tact. Any project, strategy or policy, however long, that cannot be reduced to a summary paragraph – at a stretch two – does not exist. That is why the discipline of producing a release can be of great value.

However, it is not the task of the corporate communication team to tell the CEO or the chairman that they have produced nonsense. Its work is to produce the summary that will serve as a professional release and satisfy the board, plus its legal or other relevant advisers.

This conclusion takes us back to the tables introduced this chapter. Corporate communication team must work closely with the CEO and other senior managers to ensure that the business is clear in its aspirations and goals and that clarity is communicated internally and externally.

Achieving this demands the ability to render complicated issues in a coherent and succinct format, plus the management skills to control how and by whom such information is delivered.

3.5 In-House and Consultancy

While people who work in-house (they are employed full time by a single corporate entity) and those employed by consultancies (they sell their services to companies and any other entity that wishes to avail themselves of their work) employ the same skills and techniques with broadly shared objectives, the differences between them are such that a consideration of their differing operations is useful when making corporate communication career decisions.

This does not mean that a choice of either consultancy or in-house is a career-long decision. People can and do move backwards and forwards between them. And many companies have their own corporate communication departments and still choose from time to time to take on consultants. That said, some people are temperamentally better suited to one path or the other.

The major difference between in-house and consultancy is defined by cash flow. Those who work in-house generally enjoy a more reliable cash flow; those who work in consultancies are constantly searching for new business to maintain it.

Those working in-house are not entirely spared from financial pressures. In common with their colleagues, they will be subject to internal competition for resources, annual budgets and performance targets. They may, when economic times are challenging, be subject to budget and resource cuts. Nonetheless, they will on a daily basis operate on a reasonable assumption that they have the resources to get through the year and can thus focus on meeting performance targets.

Apart from more junior staff, all consultants will have new business targets set for them. New business is needed not just to grow the consultancy but also to avoid contraction.

Consultancies operate on two bases: project work and retainer work. Project work by definition comes to an end. Even long-term retainers end eventually as individuals, either in the consultancy or in the client, move on, or the client decides to open a contract renewal to competitive bids or any number of other causes. The challenge therefore is to ensure that the volume and value of business coming in comfortably exceeds that which is being lost. Some people enjoy the constant search and pitching for business more than others.

The potential upside for consultants, especially those who are new to the corporate communication business, is that the variety of the work they are required to do is likely to be more varied and thus the opportunities for learning greater. People who work in-house always have internal clients whose needs must be properly addressed, but the consultant may have clients who work in different industries, while involvement in pitching for different companies, even when the contract is not won, can offer considerable variety.

Pitching for new business involves a particular and vital skill: setting fees that ensure the business is profitable for the consultancy. There are consultancies that are sufficiently competent and prominent in their field of operation to enable them to charge fees with substantial margins, but they are a minority.

For most consultancies, the eternal problem is overservicing (or undercharging, which is a different expression of the same phenomenon). The pressure to win the business and then keep the client happy creates a mismatch between time committed and income generated. This can be a particular problem in Asia where clients are often not sufficiently familiar with corporate communication work to allocate funding appropriate to its benefits. People who work in-house are likely to enjoy better and more stable resources.

When working for a client, the consultancy will wish to have strong relationships with the most senior people, preferably the chairman or CEO, they are able to reach. The more senior your client, the greater budget they will have at their disposal, and the more interesting the work is likely to be. This is potentially a source of friction with the in-house corporate communication team who will strive to maintain control of the consultancy while extracting the maximum amount of work for the lowest possible level of fees.

The reasons for a company with in-house resources to hire corporate communication consultancies fall broadly into two categories: a short-term requirement for particular skills or resources such that it would be impracticable to seek out, hire and dispose of in-house personnel or the need for particular skills that are either absent or under-resourced in-house. The former could be as simple as junior support staff for a major event. The latter could cover areas such as government relations or financial expertise, work for which highly specialised consultancies exist.

In respect of the latter, in-house staff will potentially be unhappy. The consultancy will be interacting with their internal clients, who may regard the consultants as an interesting new toy, and absorbing cash which otherwise could have been deployed in-house. The skill required of the consultants is to avoid such friction. Making enemies within your client organisation is not clever. The combination of professional authority, tact and occasional deference necessary for a consultant's role is a skill set of useful general application.

From a career point of view, experience of both in-house and consultancy is valuable. Having been a consultant highlights the need to identify and service internal clients for the greater corporate good. It also creates a degree of flexibility that can sometimes be absent from those who have spent many years within the same company.

And for those who work in-house, there is both the opportunity and the need to get to understand in depth how a business functions. Consultants may become extremely close to a company on a single issue or campaign, but they are not around long enough to have broader and deeper knowledge.

3.6 Measurement, Accountability and Success

How do you measure success? How can you tell when you have done well? Your boss praises you, pays you a bonus or gives you a good year-end appraisal?

Well, perhaps, but these rewards merely prompt the question: On what basis are they granted? Where are the hard data that support the accolades, or are they attributable to your personal charm, ingratiating manner and willingness to listen to your boss's anecdotes?

Your job description and objectives for the year (where these exist; some corporations are surprisingly lax about such things) are a good starting point, guiding your work and providing you with a checklist. They are a useful basis for any discussion of your performance.

However, unlike those managers who have revenue targets for the year and other hard goals that are easily measured, corporate communicators are at a disadvantage. They do not have clear metrics. Many attempts have been made to resolve this difficulty. None is entirely satisfactory.

Measuring media coverage achieved has been one such solution, modified with a recognition that allowance has to be made for prioritising good coverage over bad when considering the achievements of corporate communicators.

Further qualifications can be made based on the perceived quality of the media, with a piece on local radio in a remote town where there are few customers being judged of lesser value than an interview on, say, a major business channel such as Bloomberg. Trying to assess the performance of the interviewee, which can affect impact, is a controversial area.

Your CEO's Bloomberg interview may be acceptable, no obvious mistakes having been made, but a discussion about raising the level of that performance should be restricted to a private discussion rather than featuring in a free-ranging assessment of your performance at the end of the year.

Occasionally, attempts are made to ascribe a monetary value to coverage achieved based on advertising rates for equivalent space or airtime. These efforts are seldom judged to be credible.

There are two substantial objections to the general approach described above. The first is that maximising media coverage is not necessarily an appropriate or desirable objective. There will be times (awaiting financial results, during the discussion of acquisitions, mergers or disposals, pending staff reductions, in the course of crises) when absence of coverage and leaks is a critical goal. The preferences of individual CEOs will also make a difference. Some will be temperamentally disposed to court media; others will be media shy and encourage others to follow their example.

In such circumstances, corporate practitioners are deprived of their metric or put in the impossible position of trying to prove a negative – the crisis coverage would have been so much worse if we had not taken the steps that we did to modulate reporting.

The second objection is simply that the methodology focuses attention on just one criterion, media coverage, thereby overlooking other programmes such as internal communications, or, as noted above, crisis communication efforts, or CSR work.

There are indeed some highly experienced corporate communicators who say that their work defies measurement given some of the qualifications described above. But before a premature concession of defeat, it is worth looking at the issues of accountability.

When views are formed about the performance of any manager, consideration will be given to soft as well as hard targets and qualities. The soft issues will include considerations of management style and perceived abilities, whether or not the manager is a natural follower or a strong leader, temperament issues (is the manager calm in a crisis or prone to panic?), whether or not the manager is a team player and an assessment of that most elusive quality – 'judgment'.

Judgment in this context refers to critical insight and discernment. For example, your CEO or board may be about to take a decision – a controversial price increase, the site of a new factory or an investment in a country the government of which is widely considered to be oppressive – that may be controversial. Your input is requested on the scale of the controversy to which this may give rise. Will it pass quietly? Will it be manageable or seriously damaging to the company's reputation? Should the project be abandoned? In some industries, such as the extractive industries or tobacco, these questions will arise more often.

The timid response may always be to suggest that it is best not to proceed, but that will make you both predictable and useless. Your judgment will be assessed on the basis of how often you get the answer right.

These soft skills will become ever more important the more senior you become, and while they may not be as easy to measure as hard data targets, consensus among your peer group and superiors as to your possession of these vital qualities will form quickly.

The last aspect of accountability is your ability to manage the full range of your responsibilities. Your job description and your contract will define the person or persons to whom you report. As has been shown in the tables at the beginning of this chapter, at the most senior level, the CEO will occupy much of your time and attention. However, if you are actively promoting the company, its values, its brand and its products, then you will have many other internal customers.

These internal customers will likely include subsidiary managers, where you may have staff deployed; product, brand or service managers; and finance, legal and even security. An important ingredient of your success will be correctly identifying these customers, building relationships with them and ensuring they receive from you and your staff the level of attention appropriate to their needs.

3.7 Success: Do You Have What It Takes?

So far this chapter has discussed technical skills and some of the broader management skills that success in corporate communications requires. Some of those soft skills are common to almost all senior management positions, but others are required to a greater degree for corporate communicators – judgment calls about internal and external reactions to controversial decisions, for example.

Another factor of a corporate communicator's life that can be stimulating, or distressing, depending on your point of view, is a lack of predictability. You can create plans and timetables for your year, but to an uncommon degree, you will be susceptible to disruption. Any unusual event in the organisation that has implications for internal and external communication implications will involve you and your team. Dealing with these disruptions successfully while maintaining a clear focus on your strategic plans to project the company's brand, products and values and protecting its reputation is key to longer-term success.

As discussed earlier, the ability to grasp quickly and accurately a variety of complex issues, summarise them in a form that can be grasped by nonexperts, and achieve this in a way that contributes to a narrative projecting the company's brand and values is essential.

Cultural sensitivity – knowing how to deal with different cultures and how these differences influence communication – is important. In this context, language counts. Whatever the primary language in which you operate, and this may change as you move from one organisation to another, a second or even third language is fast becoming an essential attribute.

And last, you should have a grasp of business culture and its dynamics. This contributes to an understanding of what your colleagues – or your clients – are trying to achieve and how they go about doing so. Some people gain the necessary experience from other career paths – journalists, accountants, lobbyists, even diplomats and politicians – before becoming corporate communicators, while others learn through academic and training programmes.

In a modern economy, tasks that were once performed by people are increasingly being performed perfectly adequately by technology. The skill set required to be a successful corporate communicator as set out in this chapter, especially those that revolve around complex judgment calls and cultural sensitivity, is unlikely to be easily replicated by nonhuman means. Thus, corporate communications as well as providing the prospect of a stimulating, varied and exciting career also brings the prospect of a long one.

References

Argenti, P.A. 2007. *Corporate communication* (Intl ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Argenti, P.A., and J. Forman. 2002. *The power of corporate communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Clutterbuck, D. 2001. Linking communication to business success: A challenge for communicators. *Communication World* 18(3): 30–32.

Cornelissen, J. 2004. *Corporate communication: Theory and practice*. London: Sage.

Cornelissen, J. 2008. *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice*, 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Doorley, J., and H.F. Garcia. 2007. *Reputation management: The key to successful public relations and corporate communication*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Duhigg, C., and K. Bradsher. 2012. How the U.S. lost out on iPhone work. *The New York Times*, A1, January 22.

Goodman, M.B. 2006. Corporate communication practice and pedagogy at the dawn of the new millennium. *Corporate Communication: An International Journal* 11(3): 197–213.

Goodman, M.B., and P.B. Hirsch. 2010. *Corporate communication: Strategic adaptation for global practice*. New York: Peter Lang.

Goodman, M.B., C.M. Genest, D. Cayo, and S.Y. Ng. 2009. *2009 CCI corporate communication practices and trend study: United States*. New York: Corporate Communication Institute.

van Riel, C.B.M., and C.J. Fombrun. 2007. *Essentials of corporate communication*. New York: Routledge.

Wang, Jian. 2000. *Foreign advertising in China: Becoming global, becoming local*. Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

Part II
Bilingual Practices in Corporate Communication

Chapter 4
Bilingual Practices in Corporate Communication Functions: Verbal Skills in Focus

Patrick P.K. Ng

Abstract The notion of Anglo-Chinese bi- or trilingual verbal communications in the Hong Kong business and educational contexts is not a novel one (Westcott K (1977) Survey of the use of English in Hong Kong. Hong Kong, Unpublished mimeo, 1977; Luke KK, Richards JC (1982) English in Hong Kong: functions and status. Engl World-Wide J Var Engl 3(1):47–64, 1982, as cited in Gibbons J (1987) Code-mixing and code choice: a Hong Kong case study. Multilingual matters, 27. Multilingual Matters Ltd., Avon, 1987), while receiving increasing attention from different societal stakeholders (e.g., the bilingual education and professional communication academics, the Hong Kong Government, employers, practitioners, and professional bodies in the PR & CC professions alike) spanning across internal and external CC functions. In fact, the Hong Kong Chinese corporate professionals are facing a realistic demand for a "glocalizing" workplace diglossia (or linguistic division of labor): while on the one hand, English is resilient and a required skill asset for local professionals to advance in the corporate business workplace (Evans S, Green C (2003) The use of English by Chinese professionals in post-1997 Hong Kong. J Multilingual Multicult Dev 24(5):386–412, 2003), on the other hand, it is equally demanding for the local executives to be locally responsive to address both internal and external corporate stakeholders in their local languages (Anderson H, Rasmussen ES (2002) The role of language skills in corporate communication. Paper for the Nordic workshop on interorganizational research, vol 12, Kolding, Denmark, pp 1–16, August 16–18, 2002).

A proficient trilingual (Cantonese, English, and Putonghua speaking) CC professional in today's HK CC workplaces is more likely to succeed, given the dominance of Chinese capital in the local economy. This chapter examines both the status quo challenges of dealing with increasingly complex and integrated internal and external corporate communication settings (e.g., the vast use of social media) and introduces Anglo-Chinese bilingual communication strategies (e.g., code-switching, code-mixing, and bilingual punning) available to a novice trilingual Hong Kong

P.P.K. Ng (✉)
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: patrick.ng@polyu.edu.hk

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_4

Chinese executive attempting to communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders in the dynamic internal and external corporate work fronts (e.g., locals to locals, locals to Putonghua speakers, locals to English-speaking Asians and Westerners, inter alias).

4.1 Introduction: Why Bother with Bi-/Trilingual Communication Skills in Corporate Hong Kong?

There is little doubt that oral language, or more precisely *rhetoric* or *speech arts*[1], has a special place in ancient Greek civilization and accordingly lays the very foundation of modern Western culture for at least the past two millennia. Indeed, a foremost contemporary language-genre researcher, Bakhtin (1981, 1986, 1990, 1993), argues about the dialogic nature of all texts, be they spoken or written. In a similar vein, discourse researchers, Wu et al. (2004), further contend that oral language is distinct stylistically from written language in terms of discourse, genre, and communicative strategies, pervasive in different social contexts. In professional domains, like the corporation communication sector, scholars are also quick to endorse the critical role of language(s) as a corporate asset (Dhir 2004) and its obvious link to creative thinking and corporate culture (Jocabs 2004). Such scholarly definitions concerning nature and value of rhetoric point to the essential role of language to be functioning alongside linguistic (stylistic) forms in a *communicative* sense and in socio-professional contexts.

This view of the functionality of language in corporate communication context is particularly potent in the case of the bilingual and multicultural Hong Kong workplace. The reason is quite obvious: ever since its reversion to her sovereign state, China, the Hong Kong government is smart to market the city's positioning as a dually regional and international financial hub and has thus resorted to a strategic branding slogan as "Asia's World City,"[2] in order to stay competitive as her keen inland metropolitan competitor, Shanghai. Henceforth, at the dawn of the postcolonial era, the Hong Kong SAR Government took the lead to embrace the official ethos for students to attain a high level of biliteracy (written Chinese and English) and trilingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua, and spoken English) as articulated in the foreword of a public consultation document[3] published by the Department of

[1] In the classical root of the oral language concept, it resonates with Aristotle's idea of rhetoric (based on his masterpiece work, *Art of Rhetoric*) in the sense of public speaking and debates for persuading the masses in ancient Greece.

[2] See the details of the government's branding slogan on the official website: http://www.info.gov.hk/info/sar4/easia.htm

[3] See the seminar speech entitled "The Demands on and the Challenges of Education for Hong Kong in a New Era" delivered by Mr. Anthony Leung (on May 9, 1997), an Executive Councillor at the time and former Chairman of the University Grants Committee and Education Commission Chairman (as cited in So 2002).

Education in 1997 (as cited in So 2002). Indeed, according to a questionnaire survey study of 1,475 professionals working at different levels in five key occupational fields in the public and private sectors in Hong Kong (Evans and Green 2003), the higher a Hong Kong Chinese professional advances in his/her field, the more likely he/she is to have to use English. Yet, for multinational enterprises operating abroad and particularly in non-English-speaking markets, it is also important that the "major task of the subsidiary is to be locally responsive – to be in contact with customers, stakeholders, and others in their local language" (Anderson and Rasmussen 2002, p. 3). Such strong official statements and academic opinions serve to spell out a paramount, pragmatic need for trainee corporate communicators in Hong Kong to become confident Chinese-English bilingual executives in order to prosper in the increasingly bilingually and multiculturally demanding corporate sectors.

4.2 Bilingual Communicators and Oral Corporate Communication Activities in HK

On the whole, the bilingual corporate communicator in Hong Kong must in one way or another grapple with the two broad functional dimensions of the profession: "*Corporate communication* is the communication issued by a corporate organization, body, or institute to all its public(s). 'Publics' here can be both internal (employees, stakeholders, i.e. share and stock holders) and external (agencies, channel partners, media, government, industry bodies and institutes, educational institutes and general public)" (Wikipedia, n.d., Introduction section, para. 1). In light of the huge impact factor of the niche Mainland China market for Hong Kong (whether as domestic or outbound targets), it becomes all the more critically necessary for local corporate communicators to demonstrate good Putonghua proficiency in dealing with such a premium "public" or clientele stakeholder group during routine transactions in the corporate workplace. In Hong Kong's public sector, typical examples of bilingual communicators may comprise government officials or spokespersons (e.g., in the capacity of information officers), politicians and pressure groups, spokespersons for government-subsidized bodies, nongovernmental organization (NGO) spokespersons, spokespersons for public utilities companies, academics, and so on. Whereas for the private sector, notable examples are chief executive officers (CEOs) of business enterprises, chief communication officer (CCO), brand marketing executives, employee communications executives, public relations and/or public affairs executives, in-house media relations officers or journalists working for media companies, and just about any other professionals in Hong Kong. In terms of performing common oral communication tasks in corporate contexts, junior corporate communication executives may assist in acting as MCs for corporate ceremonial events, liaising with the critical stakeholders (e.g., government, corporate partners, professional bodies), running recruitment and new staff induction briefings, informational and promotional seminars related to corporate branding for internal or external clientele, press or media conferences related to crisis communications, issue-based or routine CSR events dealing with the public, etc.

Above all, on both the internal and external fronts, there are at least four relational dynamics for the bilingual corporate communicator to come to terms with in performing day-to-day oral communicative activities in Hong Kong, namely, (1) dealing with interpersonal relations (engaging both internal and external stakeholders), (2) increased use of social media for internal corporate clientele management, (3) collaboration with marketing and sales teams (engaging mostly external stakeholders), and (4) involvement in advertising and publicity campaigns (engaging both internal and external stakeholders).

4.2.1 Dealing with Interpersonal Relations: External Clientele vs. Employee Communications

A big part of a corporate communicator's daily routines involves handling people's relationships in various social networks serving the interests of the corporation where he or she is employed. On that level of analysis and on the external liaisons front, the bilingual corporate communicator is to be particularly mindful of using verbal means such as speeches, socializing, lobbying, and just about any form of negotiation and persuasion, so as to build up and maintain good rapport and friendships with stakeholders in the corporate, social networks. More importantly, in daily social intercourses, apart from attending to corporate etiquettes gracefully (e.g., throwing reception parties, banquets, arranging pickup services) when receiving VIP Putonghua-speaking stakeholders from Mainland China and Taiwan or those prestigious partners from different English-speaking parts of the world, the bilingual corporate communicator in Hong Kong simultaneously lubricates frictions among all stakeholders and strives to enhance corporate image at all times through his/her ambassadorial role for the organization. In fact, to move beyond exchanging pleasantries and receptions with target stakeholders, the bilingual corporate communicator needs and has to get engaged substantially in corporate communication planning and research work on a more strategic, nonroutine end of his/her job portfolio.

On the internal liaisons front, the bilingual corporate communicator in Hong Kong may be dealing with a frequently linguistically (Cantonese/English/Putonghua + others) diverse, if not always culturally, workforce inside the sizeable corporation and communicating back in respective linguistic codes with the key management stakeholders in the boardroom. His/her role in this regard transcends that of a human resource (HR) manager (whose prime interest is on concrete or operational-level HR policy implementation), focusing instead on communicating the management's overall messages reinforcing corporate identity as well as goodwill, respect, and trust toward the employees and the trade union. Typically, to achieve such a lofty end of ensuring workforce harmony and strong sense of belonging with the corporation, the bilingual corporate communicator and his/her team need to be wary of multiple communication channels to reach out to these internal stakeholders. In reality, many such spoken channels are face-to-face encounters managed by the

CC team and held between the management representatives and the employees in part or as a whole. For instance, in order to understand their views and needs of their working conditions, the CC manager may need to take on communication research tools such as focus group surveys, interviews, telephone hotlines, corporate blogs, seminars, and incentive award schemes to interface directly and indirectly with employees. Specific practices could range from open staff forum, briefing/debriefing meetings and press conferences with union representatives, corporate teambuilding, welfare and CSR events organized for employees and their families to other promotional activities targeting different types of internal stakeholders.

4.2.2 Increased Use of Social Media for Internal Corporate Clientele Management

In today's globalized cyberspace era, an in-house corporate communication team is wise to jump on the bandwagon of using social media connected to the corporate website or intranet, especially corporate blogs and company Facebook pages, if the management is not to be kept in the dark about the mundane and critical internal issues facing the diverse employee populations within the vast corporate family tree.

It is no longer an unreasonable demand for the committed internal workforce across ranks to post their uncensored ideas, feelings, and criticisms, via unimpeded access to well-managed corporate server, on routine company operational and staff welfare matters as well as their stakes arising from important corporate change issues. Henceforth, the notion of corporate blogging strategies is pervasive (Lee et al. 2006), which is fast becoming an internal management strategy as well. The idea is to synergize corporate cohesion using a corporate blog or other relevant social media tools for not only maintaining corporate identity but also harboring from internal strife in critical change management process like layoffs and restructuring during merger and acquisition. Principally, the whole underpinning rationale of using an internal corporate blog is to guarantee a creative, free, equitable, and management-reciprocal blogging environment from small to challenging big issues that matter to both management and employee stakeholder groups within the corporate family (Wright 2006). In a sense, when the internal or employee communication team opens up the blogging or social media platform for genuine direct interface with internal stakeholder clients, the management is ready to dialogue with its worthy workforce arms for concerted movements!

4.2.3 Collaboration with Marketing and Sales Teams

A line is to be drawn between external corporate communication and marketing communication, although there is a certain degree of overlap in managing external clientele relations between CC department and the marketing and sales teams of an organization, especially in the profiteering, private sector. Seen from another angle, the corporate communicator is actually working interdependently with his/her CC team and the marketing and sales teams. While the bilingual corporate communicator may not get involved in routine product and service consumption (or customer service) transactions, it is likely expected to take a lead or at least contribute to managing the aggregate information flows dealing with the "publics" or stakeholders (be they shareholders, government agencies, employee groups, the press/media, or the general consumer public) over issues or operations that directly concern the corporate brand name or reputation. In this day and age, the bilingual corporate communicator in Hong Kong is never to deal with the local stakeholder groups alone when carrying out such higher-end external CC functions but rather speaking in three tongues (Cantonese, English, Putonghua) so as to meet the demands of both local and international (Mainland China and overseas) clientele, not to mention to leverage corporate opinions targeting such "publics," when interfacing with them in corporate blogs on different online platforms, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.

4.2.4 *Involvement in Advertising and Publicity Campaigns and Crisis Communications*

Unlike corporate advertising campaigners in the marketing/advertising team, who see upon their shoulders to produce advertising campaigns that promote immediate sales-related messages, the corporate communicator involved in publicity campaigns enjoys a subtle division of labor from the corporate advertisers for investing in the future image needs of the corporation. This aspect of the bilingual corporate communicator's job portfolio is perhaps the most creative of all the strategic planning side of business, demanding highly adept uses of his/her cross-lingual and intercultural communication resources for achieving the long-term corporate branding and reputation construction and enhancement goals. It is true that both the advertising team and the corporate communication team may resort to the media for delivering the corporate campaign message. Whereas the corporate advertisers are out to push the instant-attention-grabbing, or even over-the-top, impression down the end consumers' throat, the bilingual corporate communicator delicately and softly tells the "credible" or "closer to life" corporate story on behalf of the company's boardroom, akin to the CPU of a mainframe computer. Oftentimes, the corporate advertisement is but a small portion of the entire publicity campaign spearheaded by the chief communication officer, who works with the advertising team on the one hand and on the other hand oversees the execution of the campaign details every step of the way and reports to the CE throughout the campaign process. Many publicity campaigns today related to corporate branding are also linked to corporate social responsibility initiatives (CSR), tied in with bettering social and environmental conditions of the society in which the corporation runs its operations. A good case in point to cite is that of a famous and successful local fast-food restaurant, Fairwood, which was the first fast-food chain to ban smoking in Hong Kong in 2003, aiming to bring about a clean new look to the restaurant chain as part of the rebranding campaign (note that Hong Kong's public smoking ban was only enforced in January 2007) (Ng 2008). The antismoking CSR initiative is part of its branding publicity campaign aimed to redefine and present the company's modern dining concept to customers.

A common practice nowadays is for the CC team to feature (via corporate promotional videos to be posted on different in-house and external media) an award presentation ceremony for best employees, especially frontline ones, together with snapshots of post hoc interviews between the management and the awardees. Alternatively, the CC team may even decide to enter a citywide competition on best practices so as to brand and showcase the management's CSR commitment to being a sustainably caring employer to the employees and the community. For an example, the Best Practice Awards organized by the Best Practice Management Group runs annual awards on such corporate best practices among reputable corporate brands in Hong Kong (Best Practice Management Group 2011).

Admittedly, not all events and issues facing the corporation are within the management's control or purview. There are times that the corporate communication team is entrusted with the daunting task of coordinating sound and timely corporate messages in response to outbreaks of corporate crisis that threatens both short-term survival and long-term reputational interests of the corporation. It is in moments like these that the bilingual corporate communicator is especially prized for cross-lingual verbal tact, interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, and above all the ready access to corporate and social networks within and outside the company for coordinating and disseminating both information-loaded and emotionally settling messages in a bid to persuading targeted stakeholder audiences during the crisis communication.

4.3 What's in It for the Novice Bilingual Corporate Communicators in HK?

On a professional communication front, there is little mistake in assuming that even the less experienced bilingual communicator in Hong Kong regularly performs language-mediated tasks well beyond translation chores but constantly seeks to convey identical messages specially packaged to adapt to audiences of distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Professor Daniel So (2005), an authoritative scholar on bilingual education policy studies, considers the ideal model of bilingual communicative competence founded upon "the ability to relate to within-culture and between-culture variation in communications, and context-driven variation in the interpretation of meaning of linguistic symbols and signs" (p. 7), which is closely akin to the notion of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence explored by Western scholars (Gudykunst 2004; Zegarac and Pennington 2000 as cited in So et al. 2005). In that sense, the bilingual communicator working in the corporate fields must be well equipped with the capabilities to use cross-lingual forms flexibly and meaningfully to exchange ideas and oftentimes persuade in accordance to demands of both monolingual-cultural and cross-lingual-cultural stakeholder audiences set in respective industrial and societal contexts. To be more exact, apart from possessing a good command of the aforesaid trilingual skills, the proficient bilingual corporate communicator in Hong Kong is also knowledgeable about Anglo-American and Chinese cultural norms of target stakeholders and sensitive enough to apply pragma-linguistic skills when interacting with such distinct audiences socially and professionally.

4.4 Oral Recipes for Novice Executives Performing Corporate Branding Tasks in Hong Kong

4.4.1 Bilingual Emcees in Ceremonial Events

One area within the business environment in which intercultural awareness is a necessity is in the business speech and presentation. However, when one is asked to give a speech and presentation to an audience from a different culture, there are intercultural factors that can hinder the success of a speech and presentation. So, one of the ways to address this intercultural corporate communication gap in a public speech event could be by way of employing bilingual or cross-lingual corporate spokespersons as emcees. A common and likely bilingual-trilingual strategy application for novice corporate executives in Hong Kong is to take up the role of an emcee for either an in-house or external company event. A case in point is where you have two emcees in dyad or pair gracefully engaged in befriending cross-lingual dialogues when inaugurating a big event for the corporation or even the industry, in some cases.

For instance, in a media-covered, corporate branding, physical-exercise-based CSR event organized by a sizeable transnational enterprise, *Swirlwind*[4], in Hong Kong recently, you have two young executives speaking Cantonese and English in their partnered roles as event MC named "Walk up Swirlwind Tower 2009." Here is an excerpt of their bilingual exchanges in the opening speech segments (note that they do not actually translate each other explicitly):

Johnny: Good Morning, everyone. Welcome to the Walk UP Swirlwind Tower 2009! I am *Johnny Koo* from *Reliable* Logistics Services and this is *Lisa Chan from Loyal* Property Management Co. We are both Swirlwind Delegates and will be your MCs for the event this morning. Throughout the event we will be making announcements through the loudspeaker.

Lisa: 各位來賓早晨, 歡迎大家參加 [齊步上旋風塔2009] 。我喺 [忠誠物業管理] 嘅 Lisa Chan, 我拍擋喺來自 [可靠物流] 嘅 Johnny Koo。我哋兩個都喺旋風大使, 亦喺今日嘅司儀, 喺今日活動中為大家宣佈各項消息!

[4] Original company name and names of individual emcees and location altered to protect privacy needs of the parties concerned, albeit the scenario, are based on a real-world corporate ceremonial event.

Literal translation:
[Lisa: Good Morning, everyone. Welcome to the Walk UP Swirlwind Tower 2009! I am Lisa Chan from Loyal Property Management Co. and this is Jonny Koo from Reliable Logistics Services. We are both Swirlwind Delegates and will be your MCs for today. During the event we will be making announcements.]

In a similar vein, the respective closing remarks and lead-in on ribbon cutting ceremony by the two conversing emcees employed a spoken "parallel-text" strategy in delivering the equivalent complimentary and informational messages almost in tandem:

Johnny: This wraps up our prize presentations and I would like to thank all our VIPs, sponsors, participants, Friends of Delegates and fellow delegates for bringing huge success to this event! Up next is an exciting moment of a ribbon cutting ceremony, and on a count of 3, we will cut the ribbon…

Lisa: 各獎項已經頒發, 亦實至名歸, 係度恭喜各位得獎者, 同埋再次代表大會, 衷心感謝各位來賓、贊助機構、參賽者、協辦團體、以至一眾旋風大使, 令到今日活動能夠相當完滿、順利完成。宜家我哋有一個簡單而隆重嘅剪彩儀式。

[Lisa: All prizes have been presented to worthy winners and I wish to congratulate each and every winner. Once again, the company wishes to thank every VIPs, sponsors, participants, co-organizers, all the Swirlwind Delegates, for making today's event truly smooth and complete. Now we have a simple yet important ribbon-cutting ceremony.]

On a related subject of presenting a keynote speaker to the audience during an award presentation ceremony, the following is an example of a speech of introduction bilingually in English and Putonghua, either by two chatting MCs (or even the same MC code-switching):

Rosa: Good evening and welcome to our annual Greater China-International New Media Awards Banquet. It is such a pleasure and honor to witness the making of new recipients of these awards this year and revisit proud faces of past recipients in our audience this evening…a special, warm welcome to all of you.

David: 各位晚上好! 不經不覺又聚首在今年的城中盛事。我們 一 年 一 度的 [大中華國際新媒体頒獎晚會] 現在序幕! Rosa 呀, 您知道我們今晚眾多嘉賓中, 除了包括往年与今年的得獎者, 還有一位重量級人物嗎?

[David: Good Evening to everyone! How time flies now that we gather at this 'talk-of-the-town'event. The annual Greater China-International New Media Awards Banquet now unveils! Hi Rosa, do you know, among the many VIPs including the winners of this year's and last year's, who is the one special VIP?]

Rosa: Of course I know. Actually I had the privilege of conducting a personal interview with this new media superstar-guru in USA before our award ceremony tonight! And he is the founder of…

David: Wait! Rosa. Don't give it away! Let me guess. 他就是 [臉書] Facebook 的創辦人, 來自美国的…

[David: …He is the founder of Facebook, who comes from USA…]

Note that the above example illustrates how English-Chinese spoken parallel-texting in ceremonial speechmaking transcends mere cross-lingual message replication between the two MCs. Instead, the two corporate spokespersons seek to preserve only the core message but deviating meaningfully from the formal text translation mode while delving into cross-cultural and cross-lingual humors underpinning turns of introductory remarks.

4.5 Oral Recipes for Running Cross-Lingual Stakeholder Forums/Conferences in Hong Kong

Consider the following discourse structure or schemata in hosting a public or private forum targeting designated panelist stakeholders in your corporation or organization, whereby you are acting as the panel moderator or host and the panelists are corporate representatives and floor audience are the press or media representatives, respectively (see Vasile and Mintz 1993).

1. Make sure panelists have name cards on desk for identification purposes.
2. Background information of discussion topic.
3. Provide background information of discussion topic.
4. State discussion topic and objective.
5. Inform the audience when to question the panel.
6. Introduce panel members. You may also mention whether the panelist's position is pro or con.
7. Allow each panelist to make a brief opening statement.
8. After the opening remarks, allow the panelists to talk and question each other.
9. Be prepared to throw a question or two at the panelists to trigger discussion in case interaction is not immediate.
10. Remain impartial but be ready to question individual panelists if the discussion starts to lag or veer off course or if an opinion needs clarification.
11. When you feel that the discussion has just about run its course, or if a time limit has been established, ask the panelists to summarize their views; allow one to two minutes.
12. Present a summary of major ideas or concepts expressed from both viewpoints.
13. Open the discussion to the audience.
14. When the time is up, thank the audience and the panel.
15. Be tactful but firm if you have a panelist who's monopolizing the floor. Try to speak some response from the more reticent members.

Below are some case scenarios illustrating cross-lingual interactional or discourse strategies employed by the host, panelists, and the press during the press conference held by a reputable Mainland Chinese bank based in Hong Kong:

Opening the Press Conference by the event moderator
各位新聞界朋友, 午安:
歡迎各位出席XX銀行二零零三年中期業績發佈會。
[Good afternoon to every friend of the press. Welcome to attending the Interim Results Announcement by the XX Bank.]
Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining our interim results announcement.

As shown in the example above, an English speech typically opens with a "thank-you" note in welcoming the audience, whereas it may not be the case in a Chinese (Putonghua) speech. Again, despite general guidelines on conducting a certain event genre, care should be taken to adapt register (vocabulary choice) style when addressing the mixed target audience with distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds, instead of resorting to conventional translation tactics in performing the oral task. Besides, in terms of contrastive rhetoric, this bilingual speech sample depicts two dissimilar address forms for the English-speaking and the Putonghua-speaking audiences: in the former case, a congenial and befriending tone in the address form of "各位新聞界朋友"(every friend of the press) in shortening power distance between the addresser and the addressees is observed, whereas in the latter case, a slightly more formal and power distancing address form of "ladies and gentlemen" is opted instead. However, the overall speech overtone seems more personable with the English sample, as denoted by the consistent use of personal pronouns "you" and "our" as opposed to the relatively detached tone of "各位" (everyone) in the welcoming note of the Chinese sample.

Prefacing the crisis communications with a sympathetic, yet credible factual brief[5]

Sample 1

Good afternoon, everyone. Today's conference is held by our company, Health100. Last Friday our company was informed by the Health Department that there were two drug poisoning cases related to the subscription of the Health 100 Vitamin C capsules with a serial number TA123XXX. After the local press coverage of the incident, our customer service hotline has received more than a hundred enquiries and requests for returns. In order to address your worries and dispel the doubts and fears of the public, we are here to address and explain the situation.

Sample 2

Good Afternoon to you, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Health 100 Conference on a recent incident concerning one of our products, Health 100 Vitamin C capsules. My name is Alison Yeung, the Public Relations Manager of Health 100… Recently, two users have been found feeling uncomfortable after using our vitamin C capsules. First of all, I'd like to take this opportunity to express our regret to the whole society concerned. We hope today's conference with the Q&A session will give all of you a clear picture of the situation.

In the two excerpts above, it can be seen that both opening statements present a factual summary or brief on the crisis incident in terms of its nature, its impact, and the rationale of the press conference in relation to the crisis. Notably, apart from maintaining a rather neutral, non-commentary tone in prefacing the origin of the incident, both texts deliberately employ a dose of empathy as reflected in the choice of registers acknowledging the vulnerable emotional states of the immediate ("poisoned consumers") as well as the wider ("the public") audience. Here, the use of emotional appeal coupled with respective rhetorical strategy is set against a calm and factual speech backdrop of the crisis incident.

Handling the hostile press or stakeholder audience cross-lingually

Sample 3

記者: "哪你可不可以說一下你們的產品是不是一定適合所有年齡的人服用的呢? 你們有沒有清楚的指示說明一下適合年青人与老年人服用的份量嗎?

[5]These following excerpts are speech samples for illustration purpose only, which are based on modified corporate scenarios with altered names of companies and individuals for privacy protection of stakeholders in context.

[Reporter: Well, can you comment whether your products are definitely suitable for consumption by people of all ages? Did you clearly indicate the dosages of consumption for young and elderly persons?]

發言人**1**: 沒有。

[Spokesperson 1: No.]

記者: 沒有, 哪可能這 一 次會導致這 一 次事件囉! 是不是這 一 個問題?

[Reporter: No? Then this may have caused this incident! Is this not the problem?]

發言人**2**: 其實喇, 維生素C是適合所有年齡的人服用的。還有, 在我們產品包裝上已經清楚注明了每 一 個階段的人該服用的 capsule 劑量。每 一 天服用的份量, 已經在包裝紙上已經有清楚注明了, 所以我覺得, 也許我們可以在包裝上可以再改良, 但是己經標明得相當清楚了。

[Spokesperson 2: Actually, Vitamin C is suitable for consumption by people of all ages. Besides, in our product packaging we have clearly indicated the right dosage per capsule in each stage of life. The daily consumption dosage is already clearly indicated in the packaging. Therefore I feel that even though there is room for us to further improve our packaging, the (dosage) indications have been clear enough.]

發言人**3**: 好, 讓我再補充 一 下。其實任何顧客在購買我們產品以後, 我們會給他們 一 個免費的服務, 他們就可以上來我們的公司, 我們的營養師就會根據他們的身体狀況, 給他們 一 些建議, 他們應該服用什麼產品, 或者是應該每天服用多少。我的意思說, 就算我們的顧客是老人家, 或者是青少年, 他們除了可以在那個包裝上看到說明, 他們也可以聽到那些專家的建議, 每天應該服用多少。

[Spokesperson 3: Well, let me supplement the answer. In fact any customer upon purchasing our products will be offered a free service, where they come to our office to seek free advice on what sort of products to take, or what daily dosage to consume, depending on their physical conditions. What I mean is, even for elderly customers or youngsters, apart from reading the indications stated on the packaging, they can hear about the advice and daily dosages from the experts.]

The above excerpt features the Q&A exchanges taking place between the three panelists in the management defending the corporate interests of Health100 and the charging journalist who pounds the responding panelists with presumptuous wrongdoings in product labeling. Notice how both sides began the enquiry and responses with relatively neutral-tone fact-finding and fact-clarifications. However, the press representative quickly lashed on the factual response by the first panelist with a follow-up leading question and comment –"沒有, 哪可能這 一 次會導致這 一 次事件囉! 是不是這 一 個問題?" (No? Then this may have caused this incident! Is this not the problem?) Sensing that the first panelist accidentally stepped on this mini landmine, the second panelist swiftly supplemented the response by impartially and categorically stating the standard and clear labeling and packaging practices regarding dosage indications, with only a redress or small concession to the need of further upgrading product packaging but not a refusal to any admission of unclear product labeling. It was at this point of juncture where the third panelist intervened with a further elaboration, adding that the purported concern over unspecified dosage indications for different age groups is to be adequately addressed by their free offer of their medical experts at their offices.

What is intriguing about the verbal tactics at force here is the rather seamless language-mediated relaying teamwork on the part of the panelists, who tackled the insinuating allegation in a rather "cool," timely manner and by insisting on built-in, improper, operational practices while offering small concessions to further upgrading of current service standards. For one thing, the three panelists addressed the query rather than the accuser. For another, the consistent use of hedging and downtoning discourse markers, e.g., “也許”(maybe), “或者”(perhaps), and “讓我再”(let me again), bolstered by the adoption of plural second person pronoun serving as a solidarity prone marker, “我們”(we), reinforces the unified corporate view the panelists stand for throughout the turns of response to the query. In this regard, one can observe the intricate combination of rational appeal emphasizing the factual-logical aspects of the panelists' counterarguments, seasoned with just a soft pinch of emotional appeals offering friendly after-sale service to customers.

The above scenarios illustrate the potency of bilingual-trilingual strategies deployed by Hong Kong corporate communication professionals as they grapple with routine and strategic as well as internal and external corporate functions facing different stakeholders of distinct backgrounds. The Hong Kong corporate workplace is certainly getting ever increasingly cross-lingually and multiculturally demanding in terms of requiring the bilingual communicator to readily language code-switch with respect to respective interpersonal, institutional, and national cultural norms often cascading at the same event setting. Thus, being equipped the abilities to blend strong English-Chinese bilingual strategies (like politeness discourse markers and address forms) with persuasive verbal tact (such as rational and emotional appeals), empowered with knowledge and wisdom of stakeholder and situational analyses, is seen as a basic panacea for corporate communication success.

References

Anderson, H., and E.S. Rasmussen. 2002. *The role of language skills in corporate communication*, vol. 12, 1–16. Paper for the Nordic workshop on interorganizational research, Kolding, Denmark, August 16–18.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1981. *The dialogic imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1986. *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1990. *Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1993. *Toward a philosophy of the act*, ed. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Best Practice Management Group. 2011. *Best practice awards 2011*. Retrieved January 27, 2014, from http://www.bestpractice.com.hk/special12.htm.

Corporate Communication. n.d. *Wikipedia.* Retrieved January 27, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_communication.

Dhir, K.S. 2004. Language as a corporate asset. In *Handbook of corporate communication and public relations*, ed. S.M. Oliver, 393–414. New York: Routledge.

Evans, S., and C. Green. 2003. The use of English by Chinese professionals in post-1997 Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 24(5): 386–412.

Gibbons, J. 1987. *Cod-mixing and code choice: A Hong Kong case study. Multilingual matters, 27*. Avon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Gudykunst, W.B. 2004. *Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Jocabs, G. 2004. Communication for creative thinking in a corporate context. In *Handbook of corporate communication and public relations*, ed. S.M. Oliver, 380–392. New York: Routledge.

Lee, S.M., T. Hwang, and H.H. Lee. 2006. Corporate blogging strategies of the Fortune 500 companies. *Management Decision* 44(3): 316–334.
Luke, K.K., and J.C. Richards. 1982. English in Hong Kong: Functions and status. *English World-Wide: A Journal of Varieties of English* 3(1): 47–64.
Ng, P. 2008. Corporate rebranding campaign – The case of Fairwood. In *Case studies section of companion website of the public relations handbook,* 3rd ed. London: Routledge, August. Retrieved January 27, 2014, from http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415428026/casestudy_fairwood.asp.
So, D.W.C. 2002. Whither bilingual education in Hong Kong: Stakeholders' views (1974–1999) and their implications on the way forward. In *Education and society in plurilingual contexts,* ed. Daniel W.C. So and Gary M. Jones, 199–229, Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press.
So, D.W.C., Y.P. Lee, P. Ng, and D. Wu 2005. *An innovative, integrated approach to enhancing communicative skills: Bilingual Communication Workshops (BCWs) at PolyU*. Paper presented at Redesigning Pedagogy: Research, Policy, Practice, organized by National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, May 30–June 1.
Vasile, A.J., and H.K. Mintz. 1993. *Speak with confidence: A practical guide*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.
Westcott, K. 1977. *Survey of the use of English in Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Unpublished mimeo.
Wright, J. 2006. *Blog marketing: The revolutionary new way to increase sales, build your brand, and get exceptional results*. New York: McGraw-Hill Professional.
Wu, D., X.B. Qin, and P. Ng. 2004. 香港報刊語言口語化的表現形式和功能 [Orality in Hong Kong print media]. 當代語言學 [Contemporary Linguistics] 6(3): 248–256. Beijing, China: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
Zegarac, V., and M.C. Pennington. 2000. Pragmatic transfer in intercultural communication. In *Culturally speaking: Managing rapport through talk across cultures*, ed. H. Spencer-Oatey, 165–190. London: Continuum.

Chapter 5
Communication Styles Embedded in the Bilingual e-Messages of Corporate Leaders in Greater China

Cindy S.B. Ngai and Rita Gill Singh

Abstract The significance of leader-stakeholder communication to the competitiveness of corporations in the Greater China region has been recognized. This chapter outlines key aspects of our research into corporate leader electronic messages (e-messages) posted on the websites of major corporations in Greater China to identify the preferred language modes, translation strategies, as well as the communication styles embedded in these e-messages. The findings are that e-messages are increasingly used by corporate leaders to communicate with their stakeholders worldwide although monolingual Chinese messages predominate. On analyzing the nonliterally translated Chinese messages into English, it is revealed that the bilingual representation strategy was usually adopted, and the authors argue that the bilingual e-messages reflect the different communication styles of corporate leaders with their English-speaking versus Chinese-speaking stakeholders, underpinned by leaders' cultural values. Our research offers explanations for these findings and the implications for corporations.

5.1 Introduction

Corporate leaders such as CEOs, presidents, chairmen, and managing directors play an integral role in establishing the corporate communication strategy and articulating the culture and vision of a business (Kitchen and Schultz 2001). Effective communication between leaders and stakeholders is a prerequisite for successful management and financial success (Segars and Kohut 2001). Hitt et al. (2005) argue that there are different groups of stakeholders, such as capital market stakeholders (shareholders and banks), product market stakeholders (customers and suppliers),

C.S.B. Ngai (✉)
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: cindy.sb.ngai@polyu.edu.hk

R.G. Singh
Language Centre, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, China

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_5

and organizational stakeholders (employees and managers). With the realization that stakeholders are critical to organizational success (Kitchen and Schultz 2001), organizations are increasingly relying on communication from their leaders as a strategy to build relationships with their stakeholders.

Stakeholders from various functional, diverse cultural, and linguistic backgrounds take seriously what leaders say (Amernic and Craig 2006). e-messages via corporate websites are currently the main mechanism that corporate leaders use to communicate with their external stakeholders. The rise in the number of global corporations in the Greater China region, which comprises the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Weidenbaum 1993), has led leader-stakeholder communication to become more important. In particular, China is one of the world's largest growing economies. Approximately 600,000 foreign-invested corporations including 450 out of Fortune 500 global corporations have their business operations in China (Fang and Faure 2011). China became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2001, and in 2009, 37 Chinese multinational firms were found on the Fortune 500 list as opposed to only 22 firms and six firms in 2007 and 1999, respectively (Fang and Faure 2011). With this rapid economic progress and increased competitiveness, research on communication in China has warranted more importance.

Effective Web-based communication from leaders to stakeholders from different linguistic backgrounds and regions will enable multinational corporations to enter the Chinese market while also helping Chinese corporations to enter the global arena (Wu 2008). Our previous study corroborated the finding that the use of bilingual e-messages by corporations to convey important themes to stakeholders is of interest to both researchers and practitioners in Greater China (Ngai and Singh 2014).

In this study, we review the current research on leader e-messages and analyze leaders' e-messages from listed corporations in major stock markets in Greater China to unfold the recent typology of leaders' communications. We also examine the communication styles embedded in the bilingual e-messages in listed corporations in Greater China.

5.2 Literature Review on Leader e-Message Studies in Greater China

Many studies are concerned with communications with an emphasis on financial reporting through CEO/leader letters. Most emphasize the following aspects: (1) textual analysis (Prasad and Mir 2002); linguistic-related analysis, including meta-discourse (Hyland 1998), rhetorical discourse (Bournois and Point 2006), discourse analysis of letters and annual reports (Garzone 2004), linguistic markers in annual letters (Amernic and Craig 2007); and symbolic representations (Amernic and Craig 2004); and thematic analysis (Conaway and Wardrope 2010); (2) the effect of CEO/leader letters on organizational performance (Chang et al. 2003; McClelland et al. 2009; Pegels and Yang 2000; Rogoff et al. 2004; Short and Palmer 2003); and (3) the relationship between corporate reputation and leaders' letters (Amernic et al. 2010;

Fanelli and Grasselli 2005; Fiol 1989; Kendall 1993; Palmer et al. 2004; Prasad and Mir 2002). The few studies concerning the messages of CEOs/leaders primarily concentrate on linguistic stylistics, suggesting that messages should be precise and concise when communicating with stakeholders in Western countries (Briggs 2007).

Horton (1995) describes corporate messages as "instruments of or complements to actions" (p. 180), intended to contribute to the achievement of business objectives and success. A leader's address is, however, a formal speech targeted at stakeholders. E-addresses and e-messages from leaders are both examined in this study. As methods of formal and regular communication, they cultivate relations between leaders and stakeholders and include information about the corporation, its values and strategy, corporate social responsibility, business objectives, and other updates.

The growth of the Internet has led to messages of this type becoming more common and important in recent years. The trend toward "informalization" (Fairclough 1992) and "personalization" in communication (Kitchen and Schultz 2001, p. 29) has encouraged leaders to use techniques such as narrative discourse when communicating with stakeholders (Segars and Kohut 2001). Globalization, foreign direct investment (FDI), and global education have had an impact on China in terms of exposing it to global knowledge and information (Fang and Faure 2011). There is a need for more comprehensive research into this important contemporary communication tool, especially in the business context of China, an economic superpower of the world.

5.3 Research Objectives and Questions

We examined the content of leader messages and addresses from the websites of major listed corporations in the Greater China regions of Taiwan, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. We also believe that communication, like other practices, stems from cultural contexts (Edwards and Rees 2011) and it involves interactions with others and is underpinned by issues of power and control (Tayeb 1998). Our aim was to examine the communication styles of leaders when communicating with stakeholders from different regions by analyzing the content they include.

Following on from a previous exploratory study on CEO communication in Greater China in 2010 by Ngai and Singh (2014), we recognized the need for a more up-to-date review on the recent developments of the typology of language use and communication styles in the regional corporate world of Greater China.

Our research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What were the languages used on the corporate websites and in the e-messages by corporate leaders in major regions within Greater China in 2010 and 2013?

RQ2: When communicated bilingually, what were the distinct technical characteristics of leaders' e-messages in major regions of Greater China in 2010 and 2013?

RQ3: What translation practices were undertaken in the e-messages of corporate leaders, and what communication styles were embedded in these e-messages in major regions of Greater China in 2013?

5.4 Research Design, Method, and Sample

Our research builds on the study of CEO messages in Greater China by Ngai and Singh (2014) and focuses on a thorough review of typographical changes in leaders' e-messages and addresses from 2010 and 2013 to construct an up-to-date corpus to examine the technical characteristics and communication styles in corporate leaders' e-messages in Greater China.

The following steps were undertaken. First, the typology on Web-based communication of major corporations in Greater China between 2010 and 2013 was compared and contrasted. The typology of leaders' messages in 2010 was retrieved from our previous study (Ngai and Singh 2014). 234 corporations listed in the three stock market indexes in Greater China in 2010 were selected: all 38 blue-chip and all 96 red-chip corporations from the Hong Kong Hang Seng Index, 50 listed corporations from the Shanghai Composite Index, and 50 listed corporations from the Taiwan Weighted Index. Of the 234 corporations, 45 (19 %) included leaders' messages on corporate websites.

For 2013, information was collected from the 250 corporations listed in three prominent indexes: the Hong Kong Hang Seng Index, Shanghai Composite Index, and Taiwan Weighted Index from the three major stock markets in Greater China in 2013, comprising all 35 blue-chip and all 115 red-chip corporations from the Hong Kong Hang Seng Index, all 50 listed corporations from the Shanghai Composite Index, and all 50 listed corporations from the Taiwan Weighted Index. These corporations were included in our study as they are considered to be the leading corporations in Greater China and represent the typical communication styles of their regional areas. Of these 250 corporations, 62 (25 %) have incorporated leaders' messages on corporate websites for communication purposes.

Purposive sampling method was adopted to ensure we had sufficient samples to analyze the data. Then, we adopted form-oriented content analysis (Smith and Taffler 2000) to examine the language use, word count, sentence length, and sentence number of the messages. These data were collected by a trained research assistant as separate files for analysis.

In an attempt to identify the translation practices underlying the communication styles embedded in leaders' e-messages in Greater China, we have selected 32 (2013) leaders' messages out of 62 (2013) messages identified. Only e-messages that aimed to foster communication between the corporate leaders and their stakeholders were selected in our study, whereas messages that focused on reporting financial performance were excluded. We first examined whether literal translation of e-messages was common. Then, for the e-messages, which were not translated literally, we explored whether Ngan's (2009) bilingual representation strategy might have been employed by translators to enable them to be more communicative in a certain language as opposed to another one. The bilingual representation strategy could also reveal the underlying communication styles in leader-stakeholder communication.

5.5 Findings

RQ1: Languages used on corporate websites and in e-messages of corporate leaders in major regions within Greater China in 2010 and 2013

To examine the changes in CEO messages/addresses from 2010 to 2013 from a linguistic perspective, we generated descriptive statistics to ascertain any regional variations in language use and mode and the technical characteristics in the messages.

From 2010 to 2013, the number of listed corporations operating in Greater China increased, and Table 5.1 shows a significant growth in the use of monolingual corporate websites, particularly in Hong Kong blue-chip (HKBC) corporations and those listed in the Shanghai Composite Index (SCI). The number of HKBC corporations and those in the SCI operating monolingual corporate websites doubled, with a corresponding slight decrease in the number of bilingual websites. The corporate leaders of HKBC corporations communicate with their stakeholders in English, while those in the SCI use Chinese.

Table 5.1 shows that the number of leader e-messages and e-addresses grew sharply from 2010 to 2013. Of the 209 bilingual corporate websites visited, 45 had leader messages in 2010, increasing to 62 by 2012. There was also a sharp rise in the number of messages posted by Hong Kong red-chip (HKRC) corporations and those in the SCI. The observation by Segars and Kohut (2001) that multinational corporations prefer to use CEO messages or letters on their websites seems to be true for Greater China corporations in 2013. Table 5.2 also shows a significant rise in the use of bilingual messages in HKRC corporations (+233.3 %) and those in the SCI (+42.9 %). Overall, there was a decrease in the use of monolingual messages in HKRC corporations, those in the SCI, and in the Taiwan Weighted Index (TWI).

The increase in the number of monolingual websites in HKBC corporations and those in the SCI as shown in Table 5.2 and the corresponding decrease in the use of monolingual messages displayed in Table 5.2 suggest that these corporations prefer to communicate with their domestic stakeholders in their first language. Corporations in Shanghai have strong regional ties and predominantly Chinese stakeholders, so their preferred language for communication is Chinese. Table 5.2 shows that most leader messages and addresses from 2013 were bilingual, particularly those from HKRC corporations, suggesting that leaders placed more emphasis on global communication and used both Chinese and the global lingua franca, English.

To analyze the linguistic characteristics of leader communications, we selected 32 messages and addresses, excluding any that focused primarily on financial performance/policy. Of these, 2 were from Hong Kong blue chips, 15 from Hong Kong red chips, 9 from corporations included in the Shanghai Composite Index, and 6 from those included in the Taiwan Weighted Index (see Appendix A for the list of selected corporations).

RQ2: Distinct technical characteristics of leaders' bilingual e-messages in major regions of Greater China in 2010 and 2013

A significant interregional variation in message length was apparent. Table 5.3 shows that the messages of the HKRC corporations were shorter than those of the

Table 5.1 Language used on corporate websites in major regions of Greater China (2010 and 2013)

		Hong Kong blue chips (*n*: language use)	Hong Kong red chips (*n*: language use)	Shanghai Composite Index (*n*: language use)	Taiwan Weighted Index (*n*: language use)	Total
Total no. of corporations investigated in 2010 and 2013	234/250	16.2 % (38)/14 % (35)	41 %(96)/46 % (115)	21.4 % (50)/20 % (50)	21.4 % (50)/20 % (50)	100 %
% change	+6.8 %	−7.9 %	+19.8 %	0	0	
No. of corporate websites identified	225/234	17 % (38)/15.0 % (35)	40 % (90)/42.7 % (100)	21 % (47)/20.9 % (49)	22 % (50)/21.4 % (50)	100 %
% change	+4 %	−7.9 %	+11.1 %	+4.3 %	0	
No. of monolingual corporate websites (Chinese/English) in 2010 and 2013	16/25	0 % (0C,0E)/8 % (2:2E)	37.5 % (6:6C,0E)/24 % (6:5C,1E)	37.5 % (6:6C,0E)/48 % (12:12C,0E)	25 % (4:4C,0E)/20 % (5:4C,1E)	100 %
% change	+56.3 %	+200 %	0	+100 %	+25 %	
No. of bilingual/trilingual corporate websites (Chinese, English, and other languages) in 2010 and 2013	209/209	18.2 % (38)/15.8 % (33)	40.2 %(84)/45.0 % (94)	19.6 %(41)/17.7 % (37)	22.0 %(46)/21.5 % (45)	100 %
% change		−13.2 %	+11.9 %	−9.8 %	−2.2 %	

Remarks:
1. Companies listed in multiple stock markets were included in the index where their home company was registered
2. Inaccessible and incomplete corporate websites were not counted

Table 5.2 Mode and language use in leader messages and addresses (2010 and 2013)

		Hong Kong blue chips (*n*: language use)	Hong Kong red chips (*n*: language use)	Shanghai Composite Index (*n*: language use)	Taiwan Weighted Index (*n*: language use)	*Total*
No. of leader messages, addresses, speeches, and statements identified in 2010 and 2013	45/62	7 % (3)/6.5 % (4)	33 % (15)/53.2 % (33)	38 % (17)/27.4 % (17)	22 % (10)/12.9 % (8)	100 %
% change	+37.8 %	+33.3 %	+120 %	0	−20 %	
No. of leader messages, addresses, speeches, and statements selected in 2010 and 2013	26 (57.8 %)/32 (51.6 %)	11.5 % (3)/6.2 % (2)	34.6 % (9)/46.9 % (15)	23.1 % (6)/28.1 % (9)	30.8 % (8)/18.8 % (6)	100 %
% change	+23.1 %	−33.3 %	+66.7 %	+50 %	−25 %	
Language use in leader messages, addresses, speeches, and statements						
No. of monolingual messages (Chinese/English) in 2010 and 2013	18 (14C,4E)/11 (11C)	0 % (0)/9.1 % (1:1C)	33.3 % (6: 5C,1E)/27.3 % (3: 3C)	55.6 % (10:8C,2E)/63.6 % (7:7C)	11.1 % (2:1C,1E)/0 % (0)	100 %
% change	−38.9 %	+100 %	−50 %	−30 %	−100 %	
No. of bilingual/trilingual messages (Chinese, English, and other languages) in 2010 and 2013	27/51	11.1 %(3)/5.9 %(3)	33.3 %(9)/58.8 % (30)	25.9 %(7)/119.6 %(10)	29.7 %(8)/ 115.7 %(8)	100 %
% change	+88.9 %	0	+233.3 %	+42.9 %	0	

Remark:
Messages, addresses, statements, and speeches in monolingual messages, with those focusing on financial performance, were not selected for our study

Table 5.3 Regional variations in language use and linguistic characteristics of leader messages and addresses (2010 and 2013)

	Hong Kong blue chips		Hong Kong red chips		Shanghai Composite Index		Taiwan Weighted Index	
	English	Chinese	English	Chinese	English	Chinese	English	Chinese
Word count (2010/2013)								
Maximum	208/355	426/589	464/560	1313/768	725/940	1205/1811	695/832	2842/1469
% change	+70.7 %	+38.3 %	+20.7 %	−41.5 %	+29.7 %	+50.3 %	+19.7 %	−48.3 %
Minimum	191/209	243/258	79/24	157/65	130/98	176/162	221/230	379/379
% change	+9.4 %	+6.2 %	−69.6 %	−58.6 %	−24.6 %	−8.0 %	+4.1 %	0
Variability	46/103	101/234	118/130	322/199	217/326	368/586	192/245	772/450
% change	+123.9 %	+131.7 %	+10.2 %	−38.2 %	+50.2 %	+59.2	+27.6 %	−41.7 %
Average	171/282	241/424	280/290	564/427	305/382	508/794	495/602	1074/1003
% change	+64.9 %	+75.9 %	+3.6 %	−24.3 %	+25.2 %	+56.3 %	+21.6 %	−6.6 %
Number of sentences (2010/2013)								
Maximum	10/14	10/15	42/39	31/14	25/40	23/34	85/38	56/29
% change	+40 %	+50 %	−7.1 %	−54.8 %	+60 %	+47.8 %	−55.3 %	−48.2 %
Minimum	5/8	2/3	2/1	2/1	4/3	3/3	10/10	5/5
% change	+60 %	+50 %	−50 %	−50 %	−25 %	0	0	0
Variability	¾	4/8	12/8	8/3	8/13	7/11	24/10	16/9
% change	+33.3 %	+100 %	−33.3 %	−62.5 %	+62.5 %	+57.1 %	−58.3 %	−43.8 %
Average	8/11	6/9	14/12	10/7	11/14	8/13	26/25	19/17
% change	+37.5 %	+50 %	−14.3 %	−30 %	+27.3 %	+62.5 %	−3.8 %	−10.5 %

Remarks:
1. Variability is expressed by the standard deviation and the average is expressed by the mean
2. The SD and mean numbers are rounded up to the nearest integer
3. The 2010 data is extracted from the study Ngai and Singh (2014)

HKBCs, SCI, and TWI and decreased in length from 2010 to 2013. The decrease in the maximum word count of the messages from the HKRC corporations and in the minimum word count of the messages from both the HKRC corporations and those in the SCI suggest that Chinese leaders were more inclined to use shorter messages by 2013. We also recorded a corresponding decrease in the number of sentences in both the English and Chinese messages of the HKRC corporations.

A typical short message with a minimal number of words and sentences from an HKRC corporation was that of China Foods Limited (HKRC 04). Here, the Chairman of the Board used one sentence to summarize the company's mission and shareholder relationship:

English version:

China Foods Limited is firmly positioned in the brand food and beverage sectors, and aims at the maximization of value and benefits to shareholders.

Chinese version:

中國食品有限公司定位於經營品牌消費食品及飲料業務,希望通過為消費者奉獻營養、健康、美味的優質食品來實現股東、客戶和員工的價值最大化

(Literal translation: China Foods Limited positioned itself in the brand consumer food and beverages industry. The company wishes to maximize value for shareholders, customers and employees by providing the most nutritious, healthy and tasty food to consumers.)

Other examples of the use of short sentences by the HKRC corporations are the English language messages from China Nonferrous Metal Mining (HKRC 03) and Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (HKRC 13). These consist of short, straightforward, and conversational phrases, such as "One world, one dream," "The answer is yes," and "I also lived it." Short phrases and sentences such as "无农不稳" (The agricultural industry could help stabilize a society) were also found in the Chinese message of Sinofert (HKRC 11).

In both the English and Chinese messages of the HKBC corporations and those in the SCI, there was an increase in the word count and number of sentences. The messages from these corporate leaders included more information about future plans, corporate governance, and employee relationships.

RQ3: Translation practices adopted in e-messages of corporate leaders in major regions of Greater China in 2013

We observed that four (HKRC 03, HKRC 08, HKRC 13, and SCI 04) out of 32 e-messages posted on the bilingual websites revealed nonliteral translation with the use of a different style of writing such as a deliberate omission of detailed information and the adoption of a businesslike tone in the English version of the message when compared to the corresponding version in Chinese. These nonliterally translated messages posted by Hong Kong red-chip corporations and corporations listed in the Shanghai Composite Index have been highly naturalized (Aixelá 1996) to gear toward an English-speaking audience.

For instance, the message posted in Chinese by the leader of China Nonferrous Metal Mining (HKRC 03) included six-character parallel couplets quoted from classical Chinese writing such as "器大者声必闳, 志高者意必远" and "士不可以不弘毅, 任重而道远." This was rendered into English as "The greater your ambition, the higher you get" and "A person with high aspirations should be magnanimous and strong-willed regardless how heavy the burden and how long the road should be." The former couplet came from the prologue of *Jia Xuan Ci Xu* in Song Dynasty and the latter from the famous *Analects of Confucius.*

Another typical example is from the Chairman statement of China Merchants Bank (CMB) (SCI 04). The Chinese statement covered an overview of the challenges, five major strategies adopted by CMB in overcoming the difficulties, and the vision of the future in 1,810 words, whereas the English version only provided an overview of the challenges encountered and CMB's achievement using 108 words.

5.6 Discussion

5.6.1 A Contrasting Practice on Language Modes on Corporate Websites and in Leaders' Messages

We compared the language mode and use of leader messages to examine whether leader communication changed from 2010 to 2013. In our findings, there was an increase in the use of monolingual websites by both blue-chip corporations in Hong Kong and China-based corporations (i.e., those in the SCI) in 2013 when compared with 2010. This suggests that the Chinese language is predominant in the Web-based leader messages of corporations from Greater China. Most stakeholders in these corporations are Chinese, so leaders prefer to communicate with them using their native language. This finding lends support to Johnson's (2009) view that a regional lingua franca such as Chinese is important in enabling leaders to connect with their target audience. Using the native language helps to build the bond and national identity between the leader and stakeholders. As Child (2002) suggests, globalization tends to reinforce the identity of the local people.

From 2010 to 2013, a noticeable increase in the number of leader messages from HKRC corporations and those in the SCI was observed. This increased use of messages suggests that leaders are willing to communicate more regularly with their stakeholders via messages, which can be explained by the cultural differences in power distance (Hofstede 1997) and leadership styles in different regions of Greater China (Popper and Zakkai 1994). The power distance is higher in China than in Hong Kong (Hofstede 1997), with a greater level of anxiety and insecurity in business operations. To address this, the leadership style is usually more charismatic, with the leader connecting more often with stakeholders and keeping them informed while reassuring them with regular messages. As the power distance is lower in Hong Kong, people feel more secure in business, and a transactional leadership style is more appropriate, focusing less on communicating through messages. A transactional leadership style, which focuses mainly on tasks and involves a mechanism of "exchange relations" between the leader and subordinates, is usually adopted in corporations where there is no "sense of impending threat or anxiety" (Popper and Zakkai 1994, p. 6).

Our analysis of the selected 32 leader messages found an increase in the use of bilingual leader messages in the HKRC corporations and those in the SCI in 2013.

These corporations aspire to enter the global market and are therefore more inclined to communicate with their stakeholders in both English and Chinese. This is congruent with Johnson's (2009) finding that China has "embraced the power of English language for the dual purpose of national development and personal success" (p. 147).

We found that the bilingual leader messages posted by HKRC corporations were shorter in length, while those of HKBC corporations and those listed in the SCI were longer in both the Chinese and English versions in 2013 compared to 2010. Hong Kong red-chip corporations exhibit high uncertainty avoidance because of the volatile business conditions associated with their operations (Hofstede 1980, 1997). In such corporations, there is a tendency for more formal concepts of management, hierarchical controls and roles, and a belief in expertise (Hofstede 2001). The business nature of these corporations embedded in their cultural and institutional context may lead leaders to only communicate concise, factual information to their stakeholders and not overwhelm them with unnecessary information, which may add to their anxiety. Hong Kong is considered to have low uncertainty avoidance and medium power distance (Hofstede 1997), so leaders in blue-chip corporations are more willing to communicate with stakeholders. Corporations listed in the Shanghai Composite Index are rooted in mainland China, a high-context society with relatively higher uncertainty avoidance and power distance compared with Hong Kong, so their willingness to communicate may stem from pragmatic reasons, as their strategic business intent is to achieve business objectives by influencing stakeholders when entering the global market.

5.6.2 Adoption of the Bilingual Representation Strategy and Communication Styles Revealed in e-Messages

Some of the e-messages posted on the bilingual websites of the HKRC and SHCI corporations indicated a predominance of Chinese rather than English words, which suggests they were not literally translated into either Chinese or English. Literal translation, which can be defined as "simply reexpressing the meaning of the lexical items of the source language (SL) with lexical items carrying a similar meaning in the target language (TL)," was rarely practiced (Ngan 2009, p. 41). For instance, leaders of HKRC corporations, who communicate with their domestic stakeholders primarily in Chinese, provide detailed information as well as employ a cordial and engaging tone by expressing their gratitude and using copious slogans and couplets in their e-messages. This was most likely done to enhance leaders' communication with their Chinese-speaking stakeholders. Our findings are in line with those of Ngan's (2009), who suggests that translators may adopt "bilingual representation in order to be communicative" when translating business discourse from Chinese into English and vice versa (p. 41). Ngan (2009) found that promotional material in Chinese is usually more elaborate, informative, and "more lively," with detailed explanations and expansion on ideas (p. 55). In contrast, the equivalent material in English tends to be more businesslike (Ngan 2009).

Leaders' adoption of the bilingual representation strategy might have been determined by their cultural values, which have in turn influenced their communication with English-speaking versus Chinese-speaking stakeholders (Ngai and Singh 2014). The use of an open communication style in Chinese, which involves being informative and building a sense of cultural solidarity, may be attributed to the fact that the target audiences of HKRC and SHCI corporations are primarily Chinese readers with a similar cultural background as the corporate leaders, whereas the reserved communication style in English of conveying less information in a businesslike, brief, and professional tone could be explained by the fact that leaders are not willing to articulate and impose their cultural values, which are inextricably tied to their linguistic styles, onto their English-speaking stakeholders. In an effort to avoid foreignizing the English messages, the leaders did not include literally translated Chinese proverbs or four-character couplets. This observation suggests that the cultural values of Chinese leaders may determine their corporations' translation strategies since they choose to deliver information concisely in a professional tone in their English messages.

Fang and Faure's (2011) communication characteristic model may shed more light on the Chinese communication style. They draw on yin and yang in the communication theory proposed by G. Chen (e.g., 2008; Chen and An 2009) by placing more emphasis on the paradoxes inherent in Chinese communication. The Chinese view all things "as being created by dual cosmic energies called Yin and Yang" (Fang and Faure 2011, p. 325). Yin refers to female energy like femininity, whereas yang refers to male energy like masculinity (Fang and Faure 2011). According to the yin/yang perspective, contradictions or paradoxes are a natural part of life, and the Chinese view things as "both-and" rather than "either-or" (M. Chen 2002; Fang 2003). These contradictions are reflected in the language, for example, "one country, two systems" and "socialist market economy" (Faure and Fang 2008, p. 196). The yin/yang approach is integral to an understanding of why Chinese leaders can communicate in a reserved, formal, and businesslike manner with some stakeholders, while the same leaders can be informal, open, and cordial to other stakeholders (Fang 1999). Fang and Faure (2011) adopted Fang's (2005–2006) yin/yang approach to identify changes in Chinese communication, and they also drew on the five-point Chinese communication characteristic framework of Gao et al. (1996) and Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) by conceptualizing their framework, which includes five pairs of contradictory Chinese communication characteristics. Two of these characteristics are particularly relevant to our analysis.

The first characteristic is implicit communication versus explicit communication with the former referring to reserved and indirect communication (Gao and Ting-Toomey 1998), while explicit communication refers to informative and assertive communication (Fang and Faure 2011). Referring to the characteristics inherent in some e-messages of corporate leaders, it is apparent that leaders tend to be more implicit in their communication with English-speaking stakeholders since they provide them with brief information using a businesslike tone, whereas the same leaders are more explicit in their communication with their Chinese-speaking stakeholders of HKRC and SHCI.

The implicit and explicit communication styles are also closely tied to the insider communication versus outsider communication style proposed by Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) which suggest that the Chinese tend to speak to people they know (insiders) and avoid speaking to strangers (outsiders). This insider communication characteristic is based on the concept of guanxi (personal connections) and family, and the Chinese tend to build relations especially with their family, friends, and workplace through guanxi (Fang and Faure 2011). In Fernandez and Underwood's (2006) study of the experiences of CEOs of multinational corporations in China, they found that guanxi was an important quality of an effective manager in China. Guanxi and professionalism are contradictory to each other but can both be applied to business. With globalization and the increased use of the Internet, outsiders' personal competence and professionalism are increasingly valued by corporations to enable them to sustain their business, and as such (Fang and Faure 2011), Chinese corporations are increasingly connecting with their English-speaking stakeholders and building trust in them.

Based on the above characteristics, it is apparent that with regard to the characteristics embedded in the nonliterally translated e-messages, corporate leaders tend to be more implicit and outsider communication oriented when communicating with their English-speaking stakeholders, while these leaders are more explicit and insider communication oriented with their Chinese-speaking stakeholders.

5.7 Conclusion, Limitations, and Further Research

Our study has shown that e-messages were more frequently used by leaders of corporations in most Greater China regions in 2013 compared to 2010. Communication is embedded in the cultural context (Edwards and Rees 2011) and underpinned by institutional forces such as economic forces and power (Tayeb 1998). In this regard, Fang and Faure's (2011) research suggests that China's unprecedented economic development and increased intercultural relations with other nations have led to the development of its new communication style, which is paradoxical in nature although it coexists with its old communication style. Chinese corporate leaders' communication style as reflected in their e-messages seems to indicate that they are more speaking centered rather than listening centered since they are more willing to actively and openly communicate with most of their stakeholders. With the phenomenal growth of corporations, increased foreign direct investment, and the Internet becoming an integral part of Greater China corporations, it is plausible to suggest that e-messages as a communication tool to engage both domestic and foreign stakeholders will become more prevalent in the future. Corporate leaders should harness the power of the Internet to connect with their stakeholders from diverse regional and linguistic backgrounds.

Our study has also found an increased use of monolingual websites by blue-chip corporations and corporations in the SCI in 2013 when compared to 2010. Chinese is the major mode of language in e-messages in the Greater China region, and this is substantiated by Johnson (2009) who argues that a regional language can allow leaders to build relations with their local audience more effectively. Although this is true, the use of monolingual Chinese messages may deter prospective English-speaking stakeholders from doing business with or entering the Greater China market, and this in turn may have far-reaching implications for Greater China corporations intending to transition successfully onto the world stage.

In addition, we found that communication styles underlie some e-messages and if corporate leaders are aware of and employ these communication styles effectively, this may contribute to corporations' business success. By drawing on Fang and Faure's (2011) contradictory Chinese communication characteristics, we found that corporate leaders' communication style with their English-speaking stakeholders appears to be characterized as being implicit and outsider oriented, whereas it is more explicit and insider oriented with their Chinese-speaking stakeholders. Ngan's (2009) bilingual representation strategy suggests that translators may attempt to be more communicative in a certain language as opposed to another one with more detailed information provided to the audience whose target language is the same as the corporation in a particular cultural or regional setting. This indicates that the leaders of Chinese-based corporations may be keener to connect with their Chinese stakeholders than their English-speaking stakeholders since they adopt a more engaging tone when communicating in Chinese. As a result, English-speaking stakeholders are likely to perceive these China-based corporations as providing insufficient information about their business operations and not proactively trying to develop closer relations with the English-speaking world.

In order for these corporations to succeed in this competitive and result-driven globalized age, their leaders should attach more significance to communication in English and try to connect with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds with the same warmth that is extended to Chinese stakeholders. Given the fact that China is an economic superpower and e-messages are increasingly used by leaders of major corporations, understanding the communication style of Chinese leaders is of paramount importance for corporations with aspirations to enter the Chinese market and for those engaged in business with China. As stated, the Chinese communication style is paradoxical in nature, and therefore it is important for corporate leaders to be sensitive to these paradoxical values.

This study has a few limitations. First, the findings cannot be generalized to all Greater China corporations since only 32 bilingual e-messages were analyzed. Second, for multinational corporations aspiring to enter the Greater China market, they should note that sweeping generalizations about the cultural values of Chinese corporate leaders and the communication styles that underlie these values may only be useful to a certain extent as the Greater China region is complex and culturally diverse (Leung 2008). Fang and Faure's (2011) research has suggested that the Chinese may lean toward both dialectical contradictions such as guanxi and professionalism rather than just adhering to the former and paradoxical values in the

Chinese culture which are constantly changing to reflect the dynamically evolving Chinese culture and the forces of globalization. Apart from this, the social behavior of the Chinese may be driven by traditional cultural values, whereas their business behavior might be affected by the competitive climate and institutional structure (Leung 2008). Therefore, multinational corporations need to be attuned to these differences and aware of cross-cultural differences in the social and economic realms.

Further rigorous research could be undertaken to examine whether leaders' adoption of the bilingual representation strategy is influenced by their contradictory Chinese communication characteristics, which impact their communication style with English-speaking as opposed to Chinese-speaking stakeholders. Research can also examine the linguistic assumptions underlying the bilingual representation strategy adopted by Chinese corporations and the relationship between these assumptions and the dialectical cultural values (Fang and Faure 2011) of Chinese corporate leaders. Furthermore, research should be conducted on how paradoxical values in the Chinese culture and globalization have had an impact on Chinese Web-based communication. More research could be done to examine the applicability of the two pairs of contradictory Chinese communication characteristics to the e-messages of corporations in Greater China.

Appendix A

Selected corporations with leaders' messages in Greater China (2013)

No	Index listed	Company name
1.	HKBC 01	China Life Insurance (Overseas) Company Limited
2.	HKBC 02	CITIC Pacific Limited
3.	HKRC 01	China Daye Non-Ferrous Metals Mining Limited
4.	HKRC 02	China Gold International Resources Corp.
5.	HKRC 03	China Nonferrous Metal Mining (Group) Co., Ltd.
6.	HKRC 04	China Foods Limited
7.	HKRC 05	Far East Horizon Limited
8.	HKRC 06	CHTC Fong's Industries Company Limited
9.	HKRC 07	Founder Holdings Company Limited
10.	HKRC 08	Franshion Properties (China) Limited
11.	HKRC 09	China Minmetals Corporation
12.	HKRC 10	Poly Property Group Co., Limited
13.	HKRC 11	Sinofert Holdings Limited
14.	HKRC 12	Sinotruk (Hong Kong) Limited
15.	HKRC 13	Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation
16.	HKRC 14	Yue Da Mining Holdings Limited
17.	HKRC 15	Yuexiu Transport Infrastructure Limited
18.	SCI 01	Baosteel Group Corporation
19.	SCI 02	China CNR Corporation Limited
20.	SCI 03	China State Construction Engineering Corporation

No	Index listed	Company name
21.	SCI 04	China Merchants Bank
22.	SCI 05	CSR Corporation Limited
23.	SCI 06	China Hainan Rubber Industry Group Co., Ltd.
24.	SCI 07	China Kweichow Moutai Winery (Group) Co., Ltd.
25.	SCI 08	Shandong Gold Group Co., Ltd.
26.	SCI 09	China Petrochemical Corporation
27.	TWI 01	ASUSTeK Computer Inc.
28.	TWI 02	China Development Financial Holding Corporation
29.	TWI 03	Chunghwa Telecom
30.	TWI 04	Delta Group
31.	TWI 05	Hotai Motor Co., Ltd.
32.	TWI 06	Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited

References

Aixelá, J.F. 1996. Culture-specific items in translation. In *Translation, power, subversion*, ed. R. Alvarez and M.C. Vidal, 52–78. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Amernic, J.H., and R.J. Craig. 2004. 9/11 in the service of corporate rhetoric: Southwest Airlines' 2001 letter to shareholders. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 28: 325–341.

Amernic, J.H., and R.J. Craig. 2006. *CEO-speak: The language of corporate leadership*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Amernic, J.H., and R.J. Craig. 2007. Guidelines for CEO-speak: Editing the language of corporate leadership. *Strategy and Leadership* 35(3): 25–31.

Amernic, J.H., R.J. Craig, and D. Tourish. 2010. *Measuring and assessing tone at the top using annual report CEO letters*. Edinburgh: Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland.

Bournois, F., and S. Point. 2006. A letter from the president: Seduction, charm and obfuscation in French CEO. *Journal of Business Strategy* 27(6): 46–55.

Briggs, D. 2007. Keeping the CEO's message simple. *Strategic Communication Management*, 11(6, October/November): 13.

Chang, K.C., J. Jackson, and V. Grover. 2003. E-commerce and corporate strategy: An executive perspective. *Information and Management* 40: 663–675.

Chen, G.M. 2008. *Bian* (Change): A perpetual discourse of *I Ching*. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 17(4): 7–16.

Chen, G.M., and R. An. 2009. A Chinese model of intercultural leadership competence. In *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence*, ed. D.K. Deardorff, 196–208. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Chen, M.J. 2002. Transcending paradox: The Chinese "middle way" perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* 19: 179–199.

Child, J. 2002. Theorizing about organization cross-nationally. In *Managing across cultures: Issues and perspectives*, ed. M. Warner and P. Joynt. London: Thompson.

Conaway, R.N., and W.J. Wardrope. 2010. Do their words really matter? Thematic analysis of U.S. and Latin American CEO letters. *Journal of Business Communication* 47(2): 141–168.

Edwards, T., and C. Rees. 2011. *International human resource management: Globalization, national systems and multinational companies*, 2nd ed. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.

Fairclough, N. 1992. *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Fanelli, A., and N.I. Grasselli. 2005. Defeating the Minotaur: The construction of CEO charisma and the US stock market. *Organization Studies* 27: 811–832.

Fang, T. 1999. *Chinese business negotiating style*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Fang, T. 2003. A critique of Hofstede's fifth national culture dimension. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 3: 347–368.
Fang, T. 2005–2006. From "onion" to "ocean": Paradox and change in national cultures. *International Studies of Management & Organization* 35(4): 71–90.
Fang, T., and G.O. Faure. 2011. Chinese communication characteristics: A Yin Yang perspective. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 35: 320–333.
Faure, G.O., and T. Fang. 2008. Changing Chinese values: Keeping up with paradoxes. *International Business Review* 17(2): 194–207.
Fernandez, J.A., and L. Underwood. 2006. *China CEO: Voices of experience from 20 international business leaders*. Singapore: Wiley.
Fiol, C.M. 1989. A semiotic analysis of corporate language: Organizational boundaries and joint venturing. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 34: 277–303.
Gao, G., and S. Ting-Toomey. 1998. *Communicating effectively with the Chinese*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Gao, G., S. Ting-Toomey, and W.B. Gudykunst. 1996. Chinese communication processes. In *The handbook of Chinese psychology*, ed. M.H. Bond, 280–293. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
Garzone, G.E. 2004. Annual company reports and CEO's letters: Discoursal features and cultural markedness. In *Intercultural aspects of specialized communication*, ed. C.N. Candlin and M. Gotti, 311–342. Bern: Lang.
Hitt, M.A., R.E. Ireland, and R.D. Hoskisson. 2005. *Strategic management: Competitiveness and globalization*. Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing.
Hofstede, G.H. 1980. *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
Hofstede, G.H. 1997. *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Hofstede, G.H. 2001. *Cultures' consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Horton, J.L. 1995. *Integrating corporate communications: The cost-effective use of message and medium*. Westport: Greenwood.
Hyland, K. 1998. Exploring corporate rhetoric: Metadiscourse in the CEO's letter. *Journal of Business Communication* 35: 224–244.
Johnson, A. 2009. The rise of English: The language of globalization in China and the European Union. *Macalester International* 22: 131–168.
Kendall, J.E. 1993. Good and evil in the chairman's "boiler plate": An analysis of corporate visions of the 1970s. *Organization Studies* 14: 571–592.
Kitchen, P.J., and D.E. Schultz. 2001. *Raising the corporate umbrella: Corporate communications in the 21st century*. New York: Palgrave.
Leung, Kwok. 2008. Chinese culture, modernization and international business. *International Business Review* 17: 184–187.
McClelland, P.L., X. Liang, and V.L. Barker III. 2009. CEO commitment to the status quo: Replication and extension using content analysis. *Journal of Management* 36: 1251–1277.
Ngai, C.S.B., and R.G. Singh. 2014. Communication with stakeholders through corporate web sites: An exploratory study on the CEO messages of major corporations in Greater China. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 28(3): 1–43.
Ngan, H.Y.W. 2009. Developing biliteracy through studying the bilingual representation phenomenon in translation texts. *Babel* 55(1): 40–57.
Palmer, I., A.W. King, and D. Kelleher. 2004. Listening to Jack: GE's change conversations with shareholders. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 17: 593–614.
Pegels, C.C., and B. Yang. 2000. The impact of managerial characteristics on strategic assets management capabilities. *Team Performance Management* 6: 97–107.

Popper, M., and E. Zakkai. 1994. Transactional, charismatic and transformational leadership: Conditions conducive to their predominance. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* 15(6): 3–7.

Prasad, A., and R. Mir. 2002. Dipping deep for meaning: A critical hermeneutic analysis of CEO letters to shareholders in the oil industry. *Journal of Business Communication* 39: 92–116.

Rogoff, E.G., M.S. Lee, and D.C. Suh. 2004. "Who done it?" Attributions by entrepreneurs and experts of the factors that cause and impede small business. *Journal of Small Business Management Success* 42: 364–376.

Segars, A.H., and G.F. Kohut. 2001. Strategic communication through the World Wide Web: An empirical model of effectiveness in the CEO's letter to shareholders. *Journal of Management Studies* 38: 535–556.

Short, J.C., and T.B. Palmer. 2003. Organizational performance referents: An empirical examination of their content and influences. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 90: 209–224.

Smith, M., and R.J. Taffler. 2000. The chairman's statement: A content analysis of discretionary narrative disclosures. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal* 13: 624–646.

Tayeb, M. 1998. Transfer of HRM practices across cultures: An American company in Scotland. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 9(2): 332–358.

Weidenbaum, M.L. 1993. *Greater China: The next economic superpower? Center for the Study of American Business*. St. Louis: Washington University.

Wu, D. 2008. Glocalization and the discourses of cultural China: An introduction. In *Discourses of cultural China in the globalizing age*, ed. D. Wu, 1–10. Pokfulam/Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Chapter 6
Translation Strategies in Bilingual Corporate Communication

Dechao Li

Abstract The concept of “corporate communication” (hereinafter referred to as CC) first emerged in the USA as an encompassing term to refer to the practices of companies to conduct communication activities, both internally and externally, in a centralized way to ensure the consistency of the message to be delivered. Although CC was not officially introduced to Hong Kong until the beginning of the 1990s, it has witnessed a rapid growth in Hong Kong since the mid-1990s when most of the companies developed either corporate communication functions or the communications and public affairs offices “in response to the demand for an open and bidirectional communication between the companies and journalists as well as the general public” (Ngai SB, Ng PK, New trends in corporate communications: language, strategies and practices. Nanjing University Press, Nanjing, 2012, p. 10).

Different from the practice of adopting one language (i.e., English) as the sole medium in conducting CC in almost all companies in the USA, CC functions in Hong Kong increasingly use both English and Chinese, all of which are official languages in the territory, to present the same message to their stakeholders and audiences. Since Chinese and English are two distantly related languages which have their own communicative norms, it is of vital importance to translate corporate messages in such a manner as to make the target texts not only convey the original contents but also meet the generic expectations of the target audience so that the messages can be disseminated across all audiences in a consistent and effective fashion. But what kind of translation strategies should be used in bilingual corporate communication in order to produce adequate versions in the target culture? What are the general guidelines for CC practitioners during this interlingual text production? What are the intratextual and extratextual factors that should be taken into account in this type of translation practice? Drawing on a model for translation strategies proposed by Chesterman (Memes of translation: the spread of ideas in translation theory. Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1997), this paper attempts to answer these questions by making reference to existing Chinese translations of English corporate texts in Hong Kong.

D. Li (✉)
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: dechao.li@polyu.edu.hk

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_6

6.1 Introduction

The concept of "corporate communication" (hereinafter referred to as CC) first emerged in the USA as an encompassing term to refer to the practices of companies to conduct communication activities, both internally and externally, in a centralized way to ensure the consistency of the message to be delivered. Although people still differ on all the subsets that should be included under a department of CC (Ngai and Ng 2012, p. 102), it is generally believed that it should at least include communication activities within a company (e.g., communication between senior management and their subordinates as well as communication between different departments) and with its stakeholders and customers (e.g., investor relations development, crisis management, brand building and dealing with media).

Although CC was not officially introduced to Hong Kong until the beginning of 1990s, it has witnessed a rapid growth in Hong Kong since the mid-1990s when most companies have developed either corporate communication functions or the communications and public affairs offices "in response to the demand for an open and bidirectional communication between the companies and journalists as well as the general public" (Ngai and Ng 2012, p. 10).

Different from the practice of adopting one language (i.e., English) as the sole medium in conducting CC in almost all companies in the USA, CC functions in Hong Kong increasingly use both English and Chinese, all of which are official languages in the territory, to present the same message to their stakeholders and audiences. This bilingual trend is set to continue in the foreseeable future as more and more foreign multinationals want to tap the vast opportunities of China—the second largest economic power in the world—and aspiring Chinese companies that intend to open up markets and build their brands in the world market (Wu 2008), in which English is the default language for international trade. Indeed, as Ngai and Singh (2014) have observed, among 234 representative corporations listed in the stock markets in Greater China (including Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taiwan), 91 % of their websites used both English and Chinese as the medium of communication (p. 359), which indicates the general prevalence of using bilingual corporate messaging as a major mode of communication to address the needs of stakeholders of different cultural backgrounds by global and local companies in these regions.

Since Chinese and English are two distantly related languages which have their own communicative norms, it is of vital importance to translate the corporate messages in the areas in such a manner as to make the target texts not only convey the original contents but also meet the generic expectations of the target audience so that the messages can be disseminated across all audiences in a consistent and effective fashion. In addition, functionally equivalent versions of corporate texts that demonstrate equal respect for English and Chinese will help to build a consistent bilingual corporate identity. Currently, despite frequent application of such concepts as "dynamic equivalence" (Nida 1964) or "communicative translation" (Newmark 1981) in translating commercial texts, detailed studies on how to conduct translation process effectively in bilingual CC, which can only be broadly categorized as a branch of commercial translation, are still much wanting. In fact, most of the relevant studies on interlingual practice in bilingual CC are mostly restricted to Greater China area.

6.2 Studies on Interlingual Practice in Bilingual Corporate Communication: A Literature Review

Despite the boom of CC industry in recent decades, original or serious studies on the interlingual practices in the context of bilingual corporate communication are still few and sparse. Proquest, a large online database that collects almost all important scholarly journals, comes up with only two search results with the keywords of "bilingual corporate communication." CNKI, a Chinese online journal and dissertation database, yields nothing with the same search keywords.

One of the main reasons for such a dearth of studies on this topic might be due to the fact that English is the de facto lingua franca used by most of the major multinational corporations (including the top ten companies from Fortune 500 2014, such as Wal-Mart, Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil and BP) or international organizations in the world to conduct business or release corporate information, a common practice which makes the use of translation unnecessary. The fact that CC as a profession grows most quickly in the West, especially in English-speaking countries where mass media are highly developed, further reinforces the impression of using English as the sole medium in corporate communication.

But corporate translation service for producing either bilingual corporate promotional materials or corporate messages is still deemed indispensable in the firms in countries or regions (such as Ireland, Canada, Singapore and Hong Kong) where more than one official languages are used. Take the corporations in Greater China, for example, 91 % of the 234 major listed corporations in this area resort to both English and Chinese as the medium of communication in their web sites (Ngai and Singh 2014, p. 359).

Some of the bilingual corporate texts as a result of this interlingual process, accordingly to some researchers, show particular textual patterns which also suggest the cultural traits of the regions in which translation activity takes place. For instance, Lee et al. (2006) compared the English and Chinese websites of McDonald's and five corporations within the aviation industry and found out that different corporate identity, culture and citizenship were projected on the different versions of the websites of the same company. Their findings remind us that the corporate communicators actually use English and Chinese differently in "consolidating corporate identity, promoting corporate culture and corporate citizenship" (p. 277).

The inter-linguistic variations in the bilingual texts to promote corporate identity and positioning were further explored in Lee and So (2007). By examining 47 bilingual (English and Chinese) corporate slogans adopted by corporations operating in Greater China, Lee and So identified their linguistic and rhetorical patterns and to see whether certain ways of crafting bilingual slogans “appear to be more effective than the others” (p. 65). The investigation revealed that two common practices in phrasing bilingual slogans used by the sampled corporations were direct translation and parallel drafting. While direct translation refers to the literal (or word-to-word) rendition from one language to another, parallel drafting means the flexible reconstruction of the original meaning to transmit the intended message to the target readers. Their analysis of the bilingual versions of the slogans also found that the practice of parallel drafting was generally more effective than direct translation “in terms of communicative felicity and rhetorical propriety” (p. 67), in spite of the fact that the focus indicated by source text (ST) and target text (TT) might be quite different.

Rather than stating which strategy was the most effective in producing bilingual corporate messages, Ng and Lee (2009) left the question to five bilingual (Chinese and English) CC professionals, who have been interviewed to “define and interpret effectiveness” (p. 194) of some bilingual corporate messages in Hong Kong, aiming to reconstruct their criteria for evaluating the textual effectiveness of these messages. Some of the important criteria for effective bilingual corporate communication these practitioners have agreed on are, inter alia, “consistency, alignment, complementarity of media, differentiation, specific, measurable actionable, realistic and targeted” (p. 198) for external communication and “consistency, clarity, motivation and encouragement, mutual beneficial relationships, two-way communication” (p. 199) for internal communication.

Whereas Lee and So (2007) suggested that parallel drafting should be a more preferable strategy than direct translation, Ngai and Ng (2012) found out that in reality, 14 out of 23 online bilingual (Chinese and English) “words from Chairman” published by these Hang Seng Index companies were literal translations from their STs and only 6 were results of parallel drafting (p. 57), though they also echoed Lee and So’s views that corporate messages directly translated from the originals were “difficult to read and to understand” due to the “differences in culture, vocabulary and grammar” (p. 59) between Chinese and English.

Ngai and Singh (2014) continued to focus on online bilingual corporate information by analyzing the “extratextual and intratextual characteristics” (p. 352) of English and Chinese CEO messages published by major corporations in Greater China. One of their interesting findings was that English CEO messages posted by Hong Kong red chips and indexed companies in Taiwan packed in “substantially more themes and information” (p. 380) than their Chinese counterparts, which clearly suggested that a purposeful rewriting process had taken place during the interlingual transmission process.

All the researches reviewed above are concerned themselves with the bilingual (Chinese and English) corporate practices taken by multinational companies in Greater China area. One might wonder what the bilingual corporate writings of other language pairs look like and how they contribute to corporate citizenship and identity. Entrusted by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, a government body to promote the use of the status of the Gaelic language in Scotland, Puzey et al. (2013) analyzed bilingual versions (English and Gaelic) of corporate designs (such as name, slogans and graphics) and controlled corporate communication (including signage, online content, etc.) in order to "propose general guidelines for corporate identity demonstrating equal respect for English and Gaelic" (p. 1). Given the fact that Gaelic was a minority language in Scotland, they recommended that "high-status national or regional organizations" should make clear commitments to promote their corporate identity in a bilingual manner so as to contribute to the "subjective ethnolinguistic vitality" (p. 71) these bilingual communications brought to the targeted readers and to strengthen these organizations' "sense of place" (p. 71) and reinforced their distinctive images.

The studies above convincingly demonstrate that some multinational corporations (especially those in Greater China area) are now increasingly resorting to bilingual corporate messaging—an important area of strategic communication which still awaits more research—as part of the overall corporate communication strategy to create a coordinated corporate identity and culture. Despite bringing readers' attention to the inter-linguistic and intercultural commonalities and differences between bilingual versions of particular corporate messages, these studies still fall short of delineating the specific strategies or procedures for the related bilingual production process. The concepts of direct translation and parallel drafting in rendering bilingual corporate texts as mentioned in Lee and So (2007) seem to be too general and encompassing to provide specific guidance for the translation process—arguably "the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos" (Richards 1953, p. 250). These two concepts, which are more or less the same as the long-standing dichotomy of "literal" versus "free" translation in translation theory, will prove as sterile as the other similar dichotomy concepts to be discussed in the next section, because they too do not "encourage further examination of the internal and external contextual constraints which affect the translation strategy and function" (Hatim and Munday 2004, p. 230). Furthermore, whereas the definition for direct translation might be straightforward, the one for parallel drafting can be much more problematic and difficult to pin down, because all the possible translation methods that can be subsumed under this category can be compared to a continuum, with the most free and the least free translation methods at each end. Without clear translation guidelines and an awareness of the factors figuring in the translation process, it will be difficult for bilingual CC practitioners to adopt a felicitous strategy out of this multitude of possible ones to translate the message effectively.

6.3 Translation Strategies for Bilingual CC

It is no exaggeration to say that the discussion of strategy has marked the study of translation for centuries. In fact, the first dichotomy of translation strategies (i.e., literal vs. free) was first raised by Cicero and St. Jerome in the fourth century when they were translating the Greek Septuagint gospels into Latin. However, as Chesterman (2005) has noted, the concept of translation strategy is sometimes confused with such terms as "techniques of adjustment," "procedures," and "transformations," all of which often mean more or less the same thing. In Chinese context, this term is frequently mixed up with translation skills or translation methods, which are used to refer to very specific operational procedures in translation process, including changing the part of speech for some original words, adding inferred information in the TT, omitting redundant words in the original, etc. (Zhang 1980). To avoid this confusion, translation strategy here is defined as "a teleological course of action undertaken to achieve a particular goal in an optimal way" (Kearns 2009, p. 282), which comprises various specific translating procedures that lead to its ultimate goal in arriving at certain translation effect.

According to Molina and Albir (2002), there are two strands of translation strategy: (1) the one that focuses on translation as a procedure and (2) the one that explores translation as a product (p. 507). The study of the procedural sense of translation strategy is mostly seen in psycholinguistic and cognitive approaches to translation, which largely deal with the cognitive processes in translation and/or interpreting and the cognitive constraints and parameters on such processing. The second sense of translation strategy, which the present paper adopts, regards translations as linguistic artifacts which resulted from a number of textual procedures. It is assumed that strategy in this sense is used consciously and purposefully by translators in order to produce the best version they can come up with.

Admittedly, the discussion on the practical application of translation strategies in guiding the operations which translators carry out in order to produce a satisfactory translation has become one of the central themes in translation studies, especially since the beginning of the 1980s when translation was emerging as an independent discipline. However, quite a number of these strategies proposed by different scholars are still "global translation strategies" (Jääskeläinen 1993; Lörscher 1991; Séguinot 1989), which pertain to broad questions of the general effect, the style of translation and the choice of moving the target text to the original author or to the target reader. A good example of the dichotomies of these strategies can be found in distinctions between "formal" and "dynamic" equivalence (Nida 1964, pp. 159–177), "semantic" and "communicative" translation (Newmark 1981, pp. 38–56), "documentary" and "instrumental" translation (Nord 1991, pp. 72–73), "direct" and "indirect" translation (Gutt 1991), "adequacy" and "acceptability" (Toury 1995), "foreignizing" and "domesticating" translation (Venuti 1995) and "overt" and "covert" translation (House 1981, 1997). These overarching strategies, though can be used to describe a translator's higher-level decisions on the broad questions mentioned above, are still not specific enough to guide a translator to solve a concrete translation problem (usually at the linguistic level) in order to arrive at tentative translation solutions. It may be safe to say that what most bilingual CC practitioners need here, in order to achieve better translation effects, are "local" translation strategies that "relate specifically to the translation of particular language structures and lexical items" (Kearns 2009, p. 283).

By far several scholars have proposed their taxonomy of local translation strategies that specifically relate to the production of the TT. But some of them are too outdated to accommodate the recent development in linguistics, especially text linguistics (e.g., Catford 1965; Nida 1964; Vinay and Darbelnet 1958); some are too abstract and idiosyncratic to be of practical application (e.g., Malone 1988), some are only tailor-made for the translation of specific genres, such as narrative fiction (e.g., van

Leuven-Zwart 1989). The categorization proposed by Chesterman (1997), since it is both comprehensive and easily operable, will be largely adopted here as the framework for illustrating various translation strategies that can be used in the bilingual text product in CC. Chesterman's model is largely based on the comparison between Western languages, despite the claim that his model is "not language-pair-specific" (p. 93). Some of his categories are actually not applicable to the translation between English and Chinese—two socially and culturally distant languages. Thus, some categories in his model are either deleted or slightly modified (especially the overlapping ones) to make them fit the new linguistic context.

To illustrate the application of each strategy in Chesterman's model, existing Chinese translations of corporate documents from bilingual webpages of companies in Greater China area (especially those from Hong Kong and mainland China) will be analyzed. The aim is not to explore particular translation problems in detail but just to present a set of translation strategies the bilingual CC practitioners, especially those in Hong Kong, may be able to use, in the similar contexts.

Chesterman (1997, pp. 92–112) proposes three categories of translation strategies, namely, syntactic/grammatical strategies, semantic strategies and pragmatic strategies, under which there are a couple of more specific strategies.

6.3.1 Syntactic/Grammatical Strategies

All the translation strategies under this group are concerned with changes of original syntactic structures to a certain extent. The resulted TTs are manipulated forms of the STs in different levels of linguistic units, such as phrases, clauses, and sentence structures. Chesterman (1997) actually lists ten specific methods under the heading of syntactic/grammatical strategies, but only five of them are expounded here. In the present paper, some of his strategies are regrouped into a new one (i.e., Sect. 6.3.1.4) because of the similarities between them. Some (i.e., strategies of loan, calque and scheme change) are rebranded into strategies of semantic types because of the nature of the translation shifts resulted from them are more related to content than form. One (i.e., level shift) is omitted because it overlaps with strategies of transposition and unit shift. The following is a refined and reduced list of his model.

6.3.1.1 Literal Translation

In translation studies, the term "literal translation" can be used to refer to: (1) the retention of the exact or primary meaning of a word or words, (2) the way of modeling the form of the TT on the original structure, or (3) the retention of the meaning and the form in a verbatim manner. Here, Chesterman (1997) largely adopts the term from the third perspective, defining it as meaning "maximally close to the SL form, but nevertheless grammatical" (p. 94). Specifically, he refers to the dependence on the form of the original sentence with almost all the original meaning retained. For example,

ST: People are our greatest asset.
TT: 人才是我們最寶貴的資產。
[Despite the slight semantic difference between "people" and "人才" in the example above, the target form is an exact imitation of the word order in the original. As a strategy, literal translation is much more frequently used in the translations of the same language family (e.g. German and English) than those of a different one. It is also most frequently used to translate short sentences, like the example above.]

6.3.1.2 Transposition

Transposition,[1] which was first proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) as a translation procedure, refers to the change of original word class in the TT. This strategy is categorized as a syntactic one as such changes in the translation normally involve structural changes in the TT. For example,

ST: Other than the ever-increasing labour cost, the labour shortage problem is *aggravating* particularly at the Hong Kong International Airport. [verb]
TT: 除了人力資源成本日益增加外,勞工短缺的問題在香港國際機場特別嚴重。[adjective]
[Transposition strategy enables bilingual CC practitioners to deal with ST flexibly and render it in such a manner that conforms to the linguistic norms of the target language while retaining almost all of the original meaning. This strategy, if properly used, can help to avoid translationese in translation.]

6.3.1.3 Unit Shift

First proposed by Catford (1965), the term "unit shift" refers to the translation of an ST linguistic unit (such as morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph) into a unit of different rank. Thus, it is possible to have a multiple of unit shifts of different types in practice, as long as an ST unit is translated into a different one in the TT.

Compared with transposition strategy, this strategy is used more frequently by bilingual CC practitioners to achieve a more liberal style of TT that usually reflects the expectation of the target readership. For example,

ST: I would like to take this opportunity to share our record breaking of handling 209 flights on 18th April 2014…
TT: 我們於今年4月18日, 處理了209班航機, 再創新高。
[One English sentence into three Chinese clauses.]

[1] Note that the term "transposition" used here is different from that used by Jakobson (1959), who claimed that "creative transposition" (i.e. recreation or liberal translation) was the only way to translate poetry, which he deemed untranslatable.

6.3.1.4 Intra-Sentence Structure Change

This strategy, which roughly combines the strategies of phrase, clause or sentence structure changes in Chesterman's model, comprises a number of changes that are taking place at the level of clauses within a sentence. Included are changes from active to passive voice (or vice versa) and the adjustment of constituent order (i.e., subject, verb, object, etc.) within a sentence in the translation. For example,

ST: It is reflected in the increase in both meal and flight volumes by 6.9 % and 7.4 % respectively when comparing with the same period last year…

TT: 膳食生產量及航機處理量與去年同期比較，分別提升 6.9 % 和 7.4 %。

[The subject in English "it" is replaced with "膳食生產量及航機處理量" in Chinese, which is the translation of the object complement in ST. The English passive is also changed to Chinese active. Note that the above example also involves unit shift (one English sentence into two Chinese clauses] and transposition (the noun "increase" is translated into verb "提升" in Chinese).

6.3.1.5 Cohesion Change

A cohesion change occurs when an addition or deletion of cohesive device, such as reference, ellipsis, substitution, repetition or connectors, takes place in TT. Depending on whether the translator makes the lexical patterns of cohesion explicit or implicit by using this strategy, the resulted TT either holds textual elements more consistently or more when compared with ST. For example,

ST: In view of the foreseeable challenges in 2014, our direction is to "Get Our Priority Right". These priorities include 4 dimensions…

TT: 面對 2014 年可預見的挑戰, 我們的發展方向是「建立正確的發展優先次序」, 當中包括四方面:…

[English inter-sentence cohesion is via the repetition of the noun "priority" in the previous sentence. This intra-textual reference is made unnecessary in Chinese as it combines the two English sentences into one by adopting unit shift strategy. The omission should not lead to any misunderstanding among target readers because of the proximity between the noun phrase "優先次序" and its following explanatory clause.

6.3.2 Semantic Strategies

Semantic strategies refer to various ways of dealing with lexical semantics that lead to either retention, adaptation, manipulation or omission of the original lexical meaning. Some of the strategies, which were first proposed as methods of modulation by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), are specific ways of rendering meaning at different levels. Note that this definition is different from Chesterman's original one which equates semantic strategies with changes of lexical meaning in TT.

Out of the nine specific semantic strategies listed by Chesterman (1997), some (i.e., synonymy, hyponymy, abstraction change) are regrouped into one general strategy (i.e., Sect. 6.3.2.1) to avoid the ambiguous meaning and overlapping reference inherent in their definitions. Some (i.e., antonymy, emphasis change) are omitted because it overlaps greatly with the strategy of intra-sentence structure change. The following part details the revised strategies under this category.

6.3.2.1 Approximation

This strategy comprises a number of methods that manipulate the semantic relations in TT in such a manner as to make them more or less equivalent to the original. These include the use of synonyms, hyponyms and superordinates to express the nearly the same meaning of a word or words in ST. For example,

ST: We hope that political situation in Bangkok will resume *normal* soon and air traffic will be back in the rising trend.
TT: 我們盼望曼谷的政局可以盡快穩定下來, 令航空交通可重回上升軌道。
[The English adjective *normal* is replaced with a Chinese verb phrase 穩定下來, which is more or less synonymous with the meaning of English. Note that the translation also uses the syntactic strategies of transposition (the adjective "back" is translated to the Chinese verb "重回" and unit shift (one sentence is split into two Chinese clauses).]
ST: Now with the ageing population and rising cost of *healthcare*, people are reviewing their protection needs.
TT: 今天, 隨著人口老化和醫療費用上漲, 越來越多人正重新審視對保障的需要。
[The English word "healthcare" is a superordinate of the Chinese translation "醫療". The translator here omits the other layer of meaning "保健", which makes "醫療" a hyponym of "healthcare". Note that the strategies of unit shift (two English clauses into three Chinese ones) and transposition (the adjective "ageing" is translated as a Chinese verb "老化") are also applied in the translation.]

6.3.2.2 Converses

Converses refer to the use of linguistic structures from the opposing viewpoints in TT to express the same original meaning. Converses frequently change the original syntax, involving such syntactic strategies as unit shift and intra-sentence structure change. The purpose of this strategy is usually either to make TT conform to the stylistic conventions of target culture or to emphasize a certain tone in TT. For example,

ST: All these achievements cannot be materialized without the efforts and supports from our business partners and our colleagues!
TT: 我們能取得如此佳績, 完全有賴各業務夥伴及同事的支持及努力!
[The English uses double negative structures "cannot be materialized without" to emphasize the importance of the contributions made by their partners and colleagues. This positive meaning is rendered simply by an affirmative statement "完全有賴" in the TT. Note that the translation also involves unit shift (one English sentence into two Chinese clauses) and intra-sentence structure change (the English subject "achievements" is moved to the object "佳績" of the Chinese translation)].

6.3.2.3 Distribution Change

This strategy changes the semantic components of the original words or expressions by either adding more semantic items or deleting some in TT. The resulting text is either a more explicit text (or what Chesterman terms a "diluted" version) with wider distribution of information or a more implicit text with a denser distribution of information. For example,

ST: Brand perception hinges on something more *cerebral*: …
TT: 品牌形象的認知往往植根在消費者的心裡…
[The abstract English adjective "cerebral" is expanded with more concrete meaning "植根在消費者心裡" in the TT, thus presenting a more vivid picture for the target readership. The addition of the noun phrase "消費者" also gives the TT a personal touch that is absent in the objective description of the original.]
ST: To match with the recent healthcare reform and trend of healthy living attitude among the public, …
TT: 為配合醫療改革以及越來越重視健康生活的趨勢,…
[The English phrase "recent healthcare reform" is simply rendered as "醫療改革". Note that the adverbial "among the public" is also deleted in the TT which makes it with a compressed meaning when compared with the original.]

6.3.2.4 Paraphrase

This strategy is more or less equal to free translation which leads to target texts that only partially resemble the original semantic contents. According to Chesterman (1997), paraphrasing aims at achieving equivalence of higher linguistic units such as "a whole clause," rather than correspondence "at the lexeme level" (p. 104). The strategy is typically used in translating idiomatic expressions that are unique in source culture. For example,

ST: Protection has always played second fiddle to investment in Hong Kong.
TT: 先有健康, 才有財富。在投資以外, 為個人健康甚至生命作出適當的保障乃不可或缺。
[The English idiomatic expression "played second fiddle" is completely rewritten in TT. The first Chinese sentence "先有健康, 才有財富" is also a very liberal interpretation of the relationship between "protection" and "investment" in the ST. With all the added and paraphrased information, the TT reads more like a rewriting than a direct translation from the original.]

6.3.2.5 Rhetorical Device Change

This strategy combines Chesterman's methods of scheme change and trope change, which are actually inseparable from each other. Generally speaking, schemes and tropes are all rhetorical techniques of persuading listeners or readers to consider a statement from a different perspective. Since the modification of schemes naturally leads to the change of their meaning, it is more appropriate to list scheme change, which is originally defined as more than a syntactic strategy in Chesterman's model, as a semantic one. Note that both original schemes and tropes can be retained, changed or omitted in TT. For example,

ST: Our work also has no finish line as we…
TT: 所以, 我們的工作也不會休止。
[The metaphor "finish line", which is used in the English to indicate the ending of a course, is replaced with a paraphrased meaning of the metaphor (也不會休止) in the Chinese TT. The original trope is completely omitted.]

6.3.2.6 Loan, Calque

Loan or calque refers to the direct borrowing of individual items in phrases, proper names or names of organizations, companies and special events. The strategy is listed as a syntactic one in Chesterman's model. However, as the borrowing often results in a literal translation that maintains frequently the surface meaning of the original, this strategy is actually more concerned with content than form. For example,

ST: This is often coined as the "Brand DNA" of a company.
TT: 這就是我們所謂的品牌 DNA。
[The English phrase "Brand DNA" is directly borrowed into Chinese TT as "品牌 DNA". Note that the translation is a special form of calque in which some source language form ("DNA" here) is also directly borrowed in the translation. Generally there are two reasons for such a borrowing: 1. the corresponding translation for the borrowed term is too complicated to pronounce easily; 2. The SL form tends to enjoy a higher value in the TL culture (see Pym 1992, p. 76). Here the first explanation fits more than the second one, as the Chinese for "DNA" is "脱氧核糖核酸", which is so technical and complicated even for educated Chinese audience.]

6.3.3 Pragmatic Strategies

Rather than dealing with the issues on pragmatics as a linguistic branch in translation, pragmatic strategies in Chesterman's model (1997) actually refer to the various methods to manipulate the original meaning and syntax in the translation in order to make the TT meet the reading expectation/habits of the prospective readership as envisaged by the translators. Compared with syntactic and semantic strategies, pragmatic strategies "tend to involve bigger changes from the ST" (Chesterman, p. 107) and focus on the message on clause or sentence level. In addition to the consideration for the target audience, factors affecting a translator's decision in adopting pragmatic strategies also include target-culture awareness, his/her global translation strategy for the text concerned, and his/her knowledge of the generic convention of the text. Though Chesterman lists 9 specific pragmatic strategies in his model, quite a number of them (e.g., culture filtering, explicitness change) are just reinventing some semantic strategies listed under Sect. 6.3.2. Some seem to overlap with each other (e.g., information change and partial translation) and need to be combined into one. Listed below is a reduced and revised list of pragmatic strategies from Chesterman's model.

6.3.3.1 Information Change

Compared with the semantic strategy of distribution change (see Sect. 6.3.2.3) that is largely adding or deleting some semantic items in TT, information change involves more radical transformation by either adding totally new information that is not traceable to the original in the translation or deleting ST information that is considered as unnecessary or irrelevant by the translator due to one or several reasons listed in Sect. 6.3.3. For example,

ST: Infrastructural projects are under development at the airport that is expected to improve the connectivity of airport to other parts of Hong Kong and China.

TT: 機場正不斷進行各項基建工程項目, 預計可以改善機場與香港及中國其他地方的連繫, 定當大大提升香港國際機場的領導地位!

[The Chinese information "定當大大提升香港國際機場的領導地位" in the TT is not inferable from any semantic items of the original. This clause is purely added to highlight the long-lasting impacts that the infrastructural projects of the airport might bring to the Hong Kong airport, information which the translator thought might make the CEO message in the original more appealing to the stakeholders in Hong Kong.]

ST: That 2G Strategy has driven our past successes and will guide us on our journey toward prosperity on the global stage. At the heart of the 2G Strategy is a virtuous cycle, as the growth of our people lays the foundation for the growth of the company, and vice-versa.

TT: 這種良性迴圈結構的 '2G 戰略' 不斷培育著鬥山的全球競爭力。

[The TT can at most be termed a summarizing translation of the original. Quite a lot omitted information cannot be inferred from the existing translation at all. It is this that makes this strategy different from the semantic strategy of distribution change (see Sect. 6.3.2.3) which sometimes condenses the original information that can be inferred from its context.]

6.3.3.2 Interpersonal Change

Interpersonal change occurs when the overall style of the original and the relationship between the author/speaker and reader are altered in the TT because of the changes in the formality level, the personal involvement, and "the degree of emotiveness" (Chesterman 1997, p. 110). Typically such a change is caused by a shift of the narrative perspective, such as the change in point of view. For example,

ST: To fulfill our vision of becoming the "Proud Global Doosan", our employees around the world are doing their utmost to maximize corporate value and deliver customer satisfaction.

TT: 此時此刻我相信世界各地的鬥山員工以'令世界驕傲的鬥山'為目標, 奔波忙碌於各自的崗位, 為創造更大的企業價值和實現客戶滿意而竭盡全力。

[Whereas the English subject "our employees" presents the information in an objective manner, the Chinese subject "我" gives the TT a more personal and subjective perspective that helps to shorten the gap between the speaker and the reader. The change also makes the TT less formal too.]

6.3.3.3 Illocutionary Change

The strategy involves the change of illocutionary force of the original by modifying the mood of the verb. This includes the change between the following class of acts such as stating, questioning, reporting, telling, requesting, etc. The additions of rhetorical questions and exclamations in TT can also result in illocutionary changes. For example,

ST: On behalf of all WuXi employees, I want to thank you for your continued trust and support.

TT: 在此，我謹代表藥明康得全體員工，對各位客戶和合作夥伴長期以來給予我們的信任和支持, 表示真誠的感謝!

[The translation adds an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence to lay an extra emphasis on the original message. Note that the example also involves interpersonal change when the intimate pronoun "you" is rendered into a more distant or "aloof" explanation of "各位客戶和合作夥伴".]

6.3.3.4 Transediting

The strategy of transediting was first proposed by Stetting (1989) to deal with a grey area between editing and translating, an area which was often ignored in contemporary translation studies. Specifically, it refers to the radical reorganizations and extensive editing done by translators to the poorly written original texts before translating them. In other words, this practice combines both the activities of editing and translating, the latter of which often involves other pragmatic strategies such as information change, interpersonal change and illocutionary change mentioned above. Because of the great extent of the editing work done during the translation process, this strategy is more akin to a global strategy than a local one. For example,

ST: Finally, thanks to the trust and support from our partners, thanks to every colleague who fought alongside. Let us join hands and work together in the future to take more solid pace which leading to the magnificent peak!

[The English text, which is the last paragraph of a CEO's message, contains many grammatical mistakes and stylistic infelicities. The first sentence lacks a proper subject. The metaphors of "fought alongside" and "leading to the magnificent peak" sound not only strange, but also irrelevant in this context. The text needs drastic re-ordering or rewriting on a general level before it can be properly translated into Chinese.]

6.4 Conclusion

Despite the rapid development of CC in recent years, studies on the effective ways to communicate messages between two languages in CC so as to present a consistent image of a company or organization to target groups are still lacking. By making reference to Chesterman's model of translation strategies, the present paper attempts to partially fill up the void by giving a comprehensive description of translation methods that are applicable in bilingual CC profession in Hong Kong. Same as those listed in Chesterman's model, these specific translation methods are categorized into three broader types, namely, syntactic/grammatical strategies, semantic strategies and pragmatic strategies, which correspond to the three major planes of language that often factor in the decision-making process of translation. It is hoped that with the revised model, some ill-defined terms that have been proposed in the previous studies on translation in bilingual CC context (e.g., the method of "parallel drafting" in Lee and So 2007) will be better explained.

When translating a corporate text, a CC translation practitioner can start from a top-down approach, proceeding from general pragmatic strategies to more specific syntactic and semantic ones. The practitioner also has to take into account intratextual factors (e.g., cohesion, coherence, register, generic conventions) and extratextual factors (e.g., the purpose, time and place of communication, the expectation of target audience) when deciding on the strategies to be used in the translation process.

For future studies, it will be interesting to see which types of strategies are mostly frequently used in different regional contexts of bilingual CC and why. It is also worth exploring the motivation underlying a bilingual CC practitioner's choice of strategy so as to see whether there are any other factors, such as political, cultural or social pressures that might exert influence on his/her decision-making process. This information will help us to reconstruct certain target-culture norms of expectation or propriety which govern a bilingual CC practitioner's interlingual process.

References

Catford, J.C. 1965. *A linguistic theory of translation: An essay in applied linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.

Chesterman, A. 1997. *Memes of translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Chesterman, A. 2005. Problems with Strategies. In *New trends in translation studies: In honour of Kinga Klaudy*, ed. K. Károly and Á. Fóris, 17–28. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Gutt, E.A. 1991. *Translation and relevance: Cognition and context*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hatim, B., and J. Munday. 2004. *Translation: An advanced resource book*. New York/London: Routledge.

House, J. 1981. *A model for translation quality assessment*, 2nd ed. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

House, J. 1997. *Translation quality assessment: A model revisited*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Jääskeläinen, R. 1993. Investigating translation strategies. In *Recent trends in empirical translation research*, ed. S. Tirkkonen-Condit and J. Laffling, 99–119. Joensuu: University of Joensuu.

Jakobson, R. 1959. On linguistic aspects of translation. In *On Translation*, ed. R. Brower, 232–239. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kearns, J. 2009. Strategies. In *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*, 2nd ed, ed. M. Baker, 282–285. New York: Routledge.

Lee, Y.P., and W.C. So. 2007. Corporate-slogans of corporations operating in Greater China. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 12(1): 58–74.

Lee, Y.P., W.C. So, and Y.F. Wong. 2006. An inter-linguistic and inter-cultural analysis of global corporate web sites. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 11(3): 275–287.
Lörscher, W. 1991. *Translation performance, translation process and translation strategies: A psycholinguistic investigation*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
Malone, J.L. 1988. *The science of linguistics in the art of translation: Some tools from linguistics for the analysis and practice of translation*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Molina, L., and A.H. Albir. 2002. Translation techniques revisited: A dynamic and functionalist approach. *Meta* 47(4): 498–512.
Newmark, P. 1981. *Approaches to translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
Ng, P.K., and Y. P. Lee. 2009. Exploring bilingual corporate communication professionals' views towards communicative efficacy via artefact examination in Hong Kong context. In *Proceedings abstracts: Conference on corporate communication 2009*, ed. C.M. Genest and M.B. Goodman, 192–206. Baruch College/CUNY: Corporate Communication International.
Ngai, S.B., and P.K. Ng. 2012. *New trends in corporate communications: Language, strategies and practices*. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press.
Ngai, S.B., and R.G. Singh. 2014. Communication with stakeholders through corporate web sites: An exploratory study on the CEO messages of major corporations in Greater China. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 28(3): 352–394.
Nida, E.A. 1964. *Towards a science of translating*. Leiden: Brill.
Nord, C. 1991. *Text analysis in translation: Theory, methodology and didactic application of a model for translation oriented text analysis*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
Puzey, G., W. McLeod, and R. Dunbar. 2013. *Approaches to bilingual corporate identity: Final report*. Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
Pym, A. 1992. *Translation and text transfer*. Frankfurt am Main: Pete Lang.
Richards, I.A. 1953. Toward a theory of translating. In *Studies in Chinese thought*, ed. A.F. Wright, 247–262. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Séguinot, C. 1989. The translation process: An experimental study. In *The translation process*, ed. C. Séguinot, 21–53. Toronto: H.G. Publications.
Stetting, K. 1989. Transediting—A new term for coping with a grey area between editing and translating. In *Proceedings from the fourth Nordic conference for English Studies*, ed. G. Caie, 371–382. Copenhagen: Department of English, University of Copenhagen.
Toury, G. 1995. *Descriptive translation studies and beyond*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
van Leuven-Zwart, K. 1989. Translation and original: Similarities and dissimilarities I. *Target* 1(2): 151–181.
Venuti, L. 1995. *The translator's invisibility*. London/New York: Routledge.
Vinay, J.P., and J. Darbelnet. 1958. *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*. Paris: Didier.
Wu, D. 2008. Glocalization and the discourses of cultural China: An introduction. In *Discourses of cultural China in the globalizing age*, ed. D. Wu, 1–10. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
Zhang, P.J. 1980. *Yinghan fanyi jiaocheng*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Part III
Corporate Social Responsibility

Chapter 7
Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility in Singapore: Toward More Effective Media Relations

Augustine Pang, Angela Ka Ying Mak, and Joanne M.H. Lee

Abstract Organizations face several impediments when it comes to communicating their corporate social responsibility (CSR) engagement to the public via the media. This paper examines practitioners' and journalists' perception of CSR communication using the agenda-building model (Qiu Q, Cameron GT, Communicating health disparities: building a supportive media agenda. VDM Verlag, Saarbruecken, 2008) by examining news coverage of how practitioners and journalists understand CSR, what types of CSR stories get covered in the media, and how are CSR stories portrayed in the media. News coverage of Singapore's mainstream publications, *The Straits Times*, *The Business Times*, and *The New Paper*, were analyzed. The constructed week method was used and two constructed weeks (14 days) were randomly picked to enable a representative sample of a year's worth of news articles (Riffe D, Aust CF, Lacy SR, J Q 70(4):133–139, 1993). Media coverage of CSR engagement was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis will allow us to compare the perceptions of CSR held by PR practitioners and journalists and actual media coverage.

Findings suggested differences in perceptions of what makes news between practitioners and journalists. This is a reflection of the fundamental and larger issue of what each set of professionals regard as news: Practitioners view news as advancing their organizational interests, while journalists regard news through newsworthiness lens. How can that schism be bridged? A framework of media relations is proposed based on Pang's (Corp Commun Int J 15(2):192–204, 2010) Mediating the Media model.

A. Pang (✉) • J.M.H. Lee
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
e-mail: Augustine.Pang@ntu.edu.sg

A.K.Y. Mak
School of Communication Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_7

7.1 Introduction

For all the connotations of altruism associated with corporate social responsibility (CSR), one would imagine that organizations would not have problems sharing their efforts publicly via the media. While organizations are free to publicize their work in their own social media platforms, the top management still defines the effectiveness of communication by the positive media coverage generated (Pang and Yeo 2009). From a societal point of view, if the media can increase public understanding of the concept and drive organizations to be more involved, the increased participation can potentially move a society toward greater awareness of sustainable development and be more "future-oriented" (Signitzer and Prexl 2008, p. 7). This could lead to shifts in the publics' attitudes and behaviors such as more informed purchasing decisions and greater empowerment.

The issue, however, is far less straightforward. Organizations face several impediments when it comes to communicating their CSR engagements. First, many organizations shun media spotlight on their CSR activities for fear that the media would view the organization's CSR engagement with cynicism or advert it to corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) (Dickson and Eckman 2008). Second, some organizations, especially smaller ones, do not see the need to publicly announce their contributions to society believing that good deeds should be carried out with humility (Lee et al. 2012). Third, CSR communication requires extra resources depending on the extent of communication the organization chooses. Fourth, the media may not be entirely convinced about the newsworthiness of CSR stories (Lee et al. 2013).

This chapter examines practitioners' and journalists' perception of CSR communication in Singapore using the agenda-building model (Qiu and Cameron 2008) as its theoretical lens. The model examines how information residing within an organization gets translated to actual media content via journalists as intermediaries. It allows us to understand the process by which practitioners attempt to influence the press agenda. As CSR is an organizational activity, information resides within the organization. While some aspects of CSR such as community service and philanthropy may be public events and the media may be able to gather information independent of practitioners, a huge part of CSR revolves around its commitment to internal stakeholders as well as their business processes which are usually not publicly known. It is therefore dependent on communication practitioners from the organizations to actively inform the media, through information subsidy, of organizational decisions, process, events, and engagements. Information subsidy is the attempt to affect others' actions by "controlling their access to and use of information relevant to those actions" (Gandy 1982, p. 61).

In agenda building, information subsidy is one of the primary ways in which news sources can relay their message to news content producers. Agenda building is argued to be a suitable framework as it allows us to trace the flow of communication from the major source (practitioners) of CSR to newsmakers. The objective is to find out whether organizations can communicate about CSR without having it viewed negatively as a promotional strategy, their current success at influencing news content, as well as how the agenda building can be done more effectively.

This chapter is divided into the following sections. The next section examines media as a conduit in CSR communication in Singapore. Here, the section describes the current state of CSR coverage in the media and then examines the root of the problem which is between practitioners and journalists. This is followed by the agenda-building model where journalists and practitioners can collaborate in greater detail. In section three, we present why Singapore is an intriguing case to study and how we qualitatively content analyze Singapore's two national broadsheets and a tabloid-sized paper, *The Straits Times* (*ST*), *The Business Times* (*BT*), and *The New Paper* (*TNP*), to examine media coverage of CSR engagement in Singapore. The analyses allow us to compare the perceptions held by practitioners and journalists and actual media coverage. In section four, we examine what can be done to cultivate effective media relations by positing a media relations model. The results of the initial test of the model are shared. Section five concludes what practitioners can take away from this study and how can relations and understanding between journalists and practitioners be further improved.

This study is significant on several fronts. First, it aims to build on agenda-building literature, which in this case is encapsulated in Qiu and Cameron's (2008) model, to identify factors that affect the agenda-building process. Second, this study will allow researchers and practitioners to identify discrepancies between agenda builders' perception of journalists' views toward CSR engagement and vice versa. The examination of these discrepancies may provide new directions for agenda builders to ensure that what they are advocating is congruent with journalists' needs. In turn, this will increase the productivity of CSR practitioners in generating greater public awareness of their organization's CSR engagement. Third, this study goes beyond agenda building to examine how to build effective media relations. Media relations remains an "important" and "tactical function" (Shaw and White 2004, p. 494) of corporate communications. In media relations, practitioners seek favorable publicity for the organization's products and services (Sallot et al. 1998; Seitel 2004; Sinaga and Wu 2007; Yoon 2005) often through information subsidy (Supa and Zoch 2009) to "enhance the reputation of an organization" (Bland et al. 2005, p. 55). With the proliferation of diverse media platforms, engaging both online and mainstream media remains a prevailing challenge. The question remains: How, then, do practitioners practice effective media relations? This study aims to shed light.

7.2 Media as Conduit

7.2.1 Definition of CSR

CSR has been defined in myriad ways. The most widely used definition is by the Commission of the European Communities (2001), "A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (Dahlsrud 2006, p. 7). Matten and Moon (2004) attempted to offer an overarching definition, one where CSR overlaps with other concepts like business ethics, corporate philanthropy, corporate citizenship, sustainability, and environmental responsibility. Carroll (1991) asserted that CSR comprises economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. Thus, CSR encompasses a wide range of commitment to both internal and external stakeholders. CSR communication research has overlooked an important player in the process of communication – the corporate communication practitioners who provide information subsidies to the media on their organization's behalf and, in the process, shape the media's agenda and possibly public opinion (Turk 1985). The important role of PR practitioners in affecting what is ultimately said to the public can be seen in that information from press releases amount to approximately half of the news content (Wilcox and Cameron 2009). Thus, to complement CSR communication research that has been carried out from the perspectives of organizations, the environment, and the stakeholders, this study examines a rarely explored aspect – the role of PR practitioners and the media.

Pang et al. (2011) argued that political, social, economic, and cultural factors influence CSR communication. CSR communication is posited to be important in moving the society toward greater awareness for the environment and the community as well as creating the impetus for other organizations to take up CSR (Dawkins 2004). CSR reporting has also been argued to be a critical component of CSR as it necessitates reflection, which makes the organization more committed to its CSR program. It also informs the organization's stakeholders of its business decisions and processes, thus quantifying or qualifying the organization's actions (Fassin 2008). The trend is moving toward encouraging CSR communication for all organizations. Yet, it has also been cited as the "missing link." As a result, it has been found that many organizations do not get the "credit" they deserve (Dawkins 2004, p. 108).

7.2.2 CSR Coverage in the Media

Little research has been conducted on CSR coverage in the media, particularly in Asia. This section reviews four studies that had been conducted in the West.

Dickson and Eckman (2008) analyzed media content in response to five of the Fair Labor Association's (FLA) reporting, a nonprofit organization (NPO) concerning companies accredited by them, and the results were encouraging. Contrary to organizations' anxiety of receiving bad press, coverage was mostly positive for all five events. However, the positive coverage may stem from the accreditation by the FLA and results may differ for organizations who are directly communicating their CSR efforts to the media. Another notable point is that most of the coverage followed a certain format: information about FLA, information about the organization that is quoted from the FLA reports, and interviews with extremists who were cynical about CSR. This seems to suggest the media is keen to provide opposing points of views to make the story balanced as seen from how extremists rather than experts were interviewed.

In their analysis of 33 US newspapers and 18 international newspapers, Zhang and Swanson (2006) devised a typology of media use of the term CSR into the following categories: objective use, social achievement of corporations, necessary business function, social expectation for corporations, and spin. They found that

29 % of the stories used the term objectively, 18 % as an endorsement, 27 % as a social expectation, 5 % as a specialty, 6 % as a necessary business function, and 15 % as a spin. Considering that only 15 % of coverage is negative (spin), it shows that the media largely accepts the idea of CSR.

Tench et al. (2007) surveyed the UK media practitioners and found that 66 % of practitioners indicated they would report CSR from a positive angle although 32 % said they most frequently cover negative angles. What was interesting was that while 45 % of the journalists interviewed felt that organizations were engaging in CSR for purely profits, 56 % felt that the media as a whole would hold such a view. This shows that the tendency to blow up cynicism of CSR engagement exists even among journalists. The researchers also broke down the type of CSR angles and journalists were asked to indicate the type of stories they would cover positively, negatively, or not at all. CSR activities such as obeying law and order, adapting to changing stakeholder needs, and fulfilling obligations to the society were not likely to be covered, whereas environmental efforts, community work, and philanthropic projects were likely to be covered. This supports Zerk's (2008) assertion that the media is contributing to the formation of an incorrect conception of CSR as comprising of caring for the environment and the community to a large extent. Issues related to corporate governance, quality of products, and ethical work operations were likely to be covered negatively.

Besides having exaggerated fear of media backlash, organizations' fear of public backlash seem to be unfounded as the Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) survey also found that 60 % of the British public said they would trust CSR communication originating from the organization, thus making organization disseminated information almost as trustworthy as those originating from NPOs (66 %). MORI also surveyed several opinion leaders on the importance they accrued to organizations' CSR communication. Results showed that editors were most concerned, with 80 % of those surveyed indicating that they were looking for proof of organizations' social responsibility.

Besides publicizing its own efforts, the media is the perfect conduit. Pang et al. (2014b) argued that even with the proliferation of social media, engaging the mainstream media remains critical. This is because there is credibility in the news covered by mainstream media. George (2012) argued that the credibility comes from the "discipline of verifying information with multiple sources, institutional memory to sense when things are more complex that they seem, and higher order judgment honed by experience and specialized beat knowledge" (p. 179).

Therein, however, is the problem. How do practitioners build good relations with journalists when there is a historical root of distrust?

7.2.3 Root of the Problem Between Practitioners and Journalists

According to Pang (2010), influencing the media in the news production process through information-subsidy function has long been the modus operandi in media relations (Bland et al. 2005; Lerbinger 2006; Wilcox and Cameron 2009). Corporate communication's influence on news content is dominant (Gandy 1982), which researchers estimate ranges from 25 to 50 % (Cameron et al. 1997). Journalists recognize that practitioners serve as one of the most important sources of news ("Media relations and Europe" 2008; Shin and Cameron 2003). Corporate communications' influence on news is so important that issues that suffer poor news coverage were managed by those who were not skilled or had no skills whatsoever (Cameron et al. 1997). Yet this process is fraught with challenges faced by practitioners: Why do journalists dislike them?

To unearth the roots of deep-seated antagonism that journalists have of practitioners (Tilley and Hollings 2008), scholars found that journalists often treat practitioners "with contempt" (DeLorme and Fedler 2003, p. 99). This is "puzzling" as journalists have "rarely, if ever, expressed a similar contempt for related fields" (p. 114). The long-held and innate dislike journalists have for corporate communications practitioners stems from historical roots, DeLorme and Fedler (2003) argued. Consistently, it appears to revolve around the idea that practitioners do not understand what journalists want.

The argument is that even though journalists recognize that practitioners serve an important information-subsidy function, those who do not know how to perform this function found little favor with journalists. In a survey among European journalists, more than two-thirds of practitioners were found to lack understanding of what journalists needed ("Media relations and Europe" 2008). The deficiencies appear to fall in the area of news sense. Sallot and Johnson (2006) found that 78 % of journalists surveyed said practitioners offered information that were "overtly and overly self-serving" (p. 84) on behalf of their organizations. Kopenhaver (1985) found that 78 % of journalists surveyed said that news releases were "publicity disguised as news" (p. 40). The top six reasons why editors rejected news releases were first, lack of news value; second, lack of local news angle; third, lack of information; fourth, lack of timeliness; fifth, poorly written; and sixth, grammatical errors. Supa and Zoch (2009) replicated a study by Kopenhaver et al. (1984) on how practitioners and editors in Florida viewed each other 23 years later. As far as how practitioners disseminate information to journalists, Supa and Zoch (2009) concluded practitioners still do not know how to present relevant information to journalists.

7.2.4 Agenda Building

Agenda building is one plausible way where journalists and practitioners can find common grounds. Qiu and Cameron (2008) examined the concept in the healthcare context to understand some possible determinants of agenda-building effectiveness and conceptualized a model (Fig. 7.1) to explicate the agenda-building theory.

Figure 7.1 shows the interaction among the three key elements in the agenda-building model: the PR practitioners and the PR materials they disseminate that contain source agenda, the journalists and their gatekeeping function, and the use of PR disseminated information in media content.

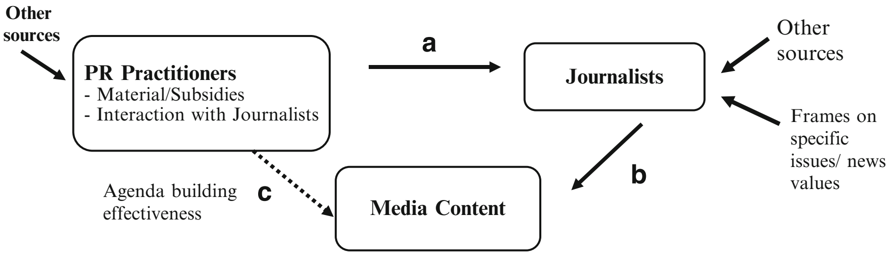


Fig. 7.1 Agenda-building model

In the process of building the media agenda, PR practitioners approach journalists with subsidized materials and, in the course of interaction with journalists, attempt to have their PR stories covered (arrow a). Ultimately, journalists still have the autonomy to decide how much and how the PR material is used (arrow b). Other than interaction with PR practitioners, journalists' editorial decisions are influenced by the news values, comprehension of the issue, newsroom schedules, organization they belong to, and society, among others (Shoemaker 1991). Hence, the influence PR practitioners have on news content is mediated through journalists and the level of agenda building is determined by how much the media uses PR materials (arrow c). This model posits that the effectiveness of agenda building is affected by the degree to which PR practitioners and journalists share news values and understanding of a specific issue (Qiu and Cameron 2008). In their study, the authors also found that the reputation and type of organization can outweigh content knowledge and experience in affecting agenda-building effectiveness. For example, practitioners from major federal agencies were seen to have greater agenda-building effectiveness.

CSR reporting is a suitable context for the agenda-building process to be studied as the current level of CSR knowledge among journalists is suspected to be rather dismal, with most journalists equating it to philanthropy and going green. In addition, most aspects of CSR concern internal stakeholders and business processes which are most likely to remain confidential unless the organization decides otherwise. What this means for journalists is that organizations may be the main source of information, thus putting the latter in a better position to influence media content.

7.2.5 Singapore: A Social Media Hub Where Mainstream Media Remains Dominant

Singapore presents an intriguing case study: It is a social media hub but also a place where mainstream media remains dominant. Pang et al. (2014b) argued that Singapore's highly legislated media industry is anchored by two local media players, Singapore Press Holdings, which owns most of the print media, and MediaCorp, which owns most of the broadcast media. The local media is complemented by international media, including *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *The Economist* (Ministry of Communication and Information 2012).

With the advent of social media technologies, a significant shift in audiences' news consumption habits is to be expected. From 1.2 million Internet users in 2000 to more than 3.6 million in 2011, Singapore has one of the world's highest Internet penetrations at 77.2 %, comparable to the USA which had 78.6 % and Europe's 61.3 % (IWS 2012). Thus, besides traditional media, audiences in Singapore have easy access to online news portals, blogs, and non-mainstream media channels (Oon 2009). However, despite the emergence of new technologies and the use of social media, mainstream media remain dominant. US-based PR firm Edelman found that traditional media remained the most trusted source of information (Lee 2009). Even though all the mainstream media now run parallel digital editions on top of their respective print/broadcast media, only 11.3 % read these versions compared to 68.4 % who read the hard-copy newspaper, according to Nielsen's Media Index Report 2012 (Heng 2012).

What this means for organizations is that the mainstream media remains an important source of disseminating news. It is no wonder that *The Straits Times*, Singapore's newspaper of record, recently saw its circulation hit an all-time high of 410,000, including digital subscriptions (Sim 2014). Thus, cultivating effective media relations with mainstream media remains a paramount task. Bland et al's (2005) words ring true: "Used correctly, media is an invaluable tool for public relations practitioners" (p. 139).

Indeed, media relations in Singapore have remained a staple and critical public relations function among practitioners (Low and Kwa 2005; Tan 2001; Wee et al. 1996; Yeap 1995; Yeo and Sriramesh 2009). Consistently, it is a top source of revenue for most public relations agencies (Chay-Nemeth 2009; Tan 2001). Top management often used successful and positive media coverage as a key indicator to assess effectiveness (Pang and Yeo 2009). Pang et al. (2014b) argued that the challenge for practitioners in the immediate future is to enhance their media relations efforts with mainstream media while monitoring the gradual shift in news consumption patterns among audiences in an evolving media landscape.

For this study, to understand the state of CSR communication in Singapore, news articles were analyzed to examine practitioners' and journalists' views and how CSR is portrayed in the media. Three questions were asked:

RQ1: How did practitioners and journalists converge and differ on their understanding of CSR through the news coverage?

RQ2: Based on the agenda-building model, how do CSR stories get covered in the media?

RQ3: What other ways can practitioners get coverage for CSR stories?

7.3 Method of Analysis: Qualitative Content Analysis

Media coverage of CSR engagement in Singapore was analyzed using qualitative content analysis – "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, p. 1278). The inductive nature of the qualitative content method allows researchers to infer themes that reflect the phenomenon from the data without hypotheses from existing theories or previous empirical research.

7.3.1 Sample and Data Collection Procedure

Texts were obtained from *The Straits Times* (*ST*), *The Business Times* (*BT*), and *The New Paper* (*TNP*). The media outlets were chosen since *ST* is the highest circulating English newspaper in Singapore, recently hitting all-time high of 410,000, including digital subscriptions (Sim 2014). *BT* is an influential source of business information in Singapore (Singapore Press Holdings 2009), and *TNP* is a tabloid known for the distinct angles its articles take.

The constructed week method was used by randomly picking two constructed weeks (14 days) from the period June 1, 2009, to May 31, 2010. The constructed week method is more efficient than random sampling as it avoids oversampling on particular days. Sampling two constructed weeks was found to be a reliable estimate of 1 year's worth of newspaper issues (Riffe et al. 1993).

To ensure an unbiased and systematic selection of CSR articles, 2 days' worth of the three papers was read by two observers who individually identified what they thought were CSR articles. Subsequently, the observers discussed why they did or did not identify the various stories as CSR stories to be included in this study. It was concluded that (1) editorials and review sections, including articles contributed by foreign journalists or taken from foreign papers, would also be analyzed as its inclusion in the local paper probably means the local newsmakers consider the points valid; (2) the forum section, while useful in learning about the public's view of CSR, is beyond the scope of this study; and (3) government decisions about CSR-related items such as labor issues are not treated as CSR articles unless it is mentioned in the article how the decision affects organizations. Based on the conclusions, the remaining editions of the papers were read by one observer.

A total of 201 newspaper articles were reviewed, with 98 from the *ST*, 80 from *BT*, and 23 from *TNP*. While both *ST* and *BT* have CSR-related news every day, an average of 7 and 5.7 articles, respectively, *TNP* has the least CSR-related news at an average of 1.6 articles, usually found in the "News Watch" column, a small column which summarizes some news stories of the day.

7.3.2 Data Analysis

The study followed the approach developed by Moran-Ellis et al. (2004) called "following a thread" where key themes and analytic questions were first identified within the data set. First, the data collected was read to get a holistic view and in the process noted for recurring elements. This process started after half the data was collected and was carried out concurrently with the collection of new data so that by the end of data collection, the data had been read through several times.

Second, categories and codes were created. Categorization classifies elements in the data according to similar properties. In this study, some of the categories were adapted from Qiu and Cameron's (2008) framework in examining communication of healthcare disparities as a reference. As the topic of communicating CSR encompasses several differences from communication of health disparities, new categories were added to take into account the deviation from Qiu and Cameron's study. Codes were then subsumed in a category to give greater meaning to the elements. In the analysis process, data was first coded according to the subject matter, such as "experience" and "newsroom functions," before being added to the category – "factors affecting CSR coverage." Data within the categories were further analyzed and links between the entire data set were inferred to gain a holistic picture of the range of viewpoints reflected in the selected news articles.

7.4 Findings

Research question 1 examined how practitioners and journalists converged and differed on their understandings of CSR through the news coverage. The low usage of the term coupled with the arbitrariness did little to create awareness of CSR among Singaporeans and might in some instances such as the two below give the wrong impression that CSR was mainly about the organization's external contribution to society. Among the 203 articles analyzed, the term "corporate social responsibility" was mentioned only four times and even then, it was not clearly or accurately explained.

7.4.1 Typifying CSR as Philanthropy

The first mention of CSR was in an article about Singapore Press Holdings' contributions to various charity organizations (Zhang 2009). In this mention, CSR was directly alluded to as corporate giving to the community, "Besides giving to charity, SPH's corporate social responsibility program also involves supporting the arts, education, wildlife conservation and sports among other causes" (p. 4).

The second mention of CSR and perhaps the most definitive way the media typified CSR as philanthropy was when labeling it as such. In a series sponsored by CapitaLand, titled "Business Times Special Focus: Corporate Social Responsibility," half the article featured World Vision, a Christian relief agency. The other half focuses on the various donors to World Vision, with special emphasis given to CapitaLand Hope Foundation (CHF) (CapitaLand 2009).

It is thus not hard to imagine that readers will be misled by the use of the term CSR and assume it refers to philanthropy.

7.4.2 *Coverage Does Little to Increase Understanding and Awareness of CSR*

The third mention of CSR was in an article on the readiness of firms to respond to an older workforce (Chuang 2010). In this article, the term CSR was used as a function: “The report – launched yesterday by Community Business, a leading NPO specializing in corporate social responsibility – say most companies continue to show bias against older workers and prefer to hire young ones” (Chuang 2010, p. 12). The article further summarized key points from the report such as ways to make workplaces more inclusive but does not elaborate on the concept of CSR.

As a consequence, if journalists did not understand the concept, they were less likely to pay attention to it even if the concept was relevant to the news they were reporting. The following comparison of three articles on the same news shed light. This related to the fourth and final mention of CSR in the articles sampled. In *BT*, the term was quoted from a speaker at a conference on women being an untapped resource and the consequences for the economy in general (Teh 2009). The quote, “In the long term, more needs to be done to improve access of girls and women to education and training, and increased Corporate Social Responsibility to protect pay equity,” is the first and only time organizations’ role in protecting women’s interest and empowering women is mentioned in the article (Teh 2009, p. 9). The remainder of the article discussed the plight of women in Asia in general, and the sudden inclusion of the term “corporate social responsibility” may confuse readers who were unclear of the meaning.

What We Learned The analysis above shows the stark difference between practitioners’ and most journalists’ view of CSR. While practitioners have a holistic understanding of the concept and recognize it to be integral to their business, journalists mostly see CSR as extraneous to core business functions and comprising mainly of charity and environmental activities. The convergence in understanding occurs only among three journalists who have been designated the role of *CSR journalists* in their newsrooms. This has led to coverage in the news that perpetuates the lack of understanding. After all, if the writer does not understand the concept, it is unlikely their article will allow readers to understand either. The next part of this chapter shows how this lack of understanding interplays with other individual and organizational factors in the agenda-building process.

The second research examined how CSR received coverage in the media based on the agenda-building model.

7.4.3 *At the Journalist’s Level*

As “gatekeepers” (Shoemaker 1991), CSR stories were written according to the characteristics of the news organization and journalists’ experience and working style. An important point to note is that most journalists assigned to write CSR articles had been in the profession less than 3 years. Considered junior journalists, their stories were often assigned by their editors. Hence, editors make for an important gatekeeper in deciding which CSR stories to publish, proposing new angles, giving advice in the writing process, and asking journalists to probe further.

The analysis of news data showed that the more experienced writers and the editors were the ones who feature CSR-related news in a detailed way, including helpful analysis, which allowed readers to gain a clearer picture of the importance of the issue. An article written by two journalists who had less than 3 years' experience was clearly an example of objective third-party reporting. The article, on a brand of nail polish being taken off the shelves due to the use of banned ingredients (Soh and Tan 2009, p. B12), offered two contrasting views from the health authorities and a professor on the safety level of the nail polish but did not attempt to reconcile or explain the differences, thus providing no help to the reader:

> The HSA said the traces of benzene found were 'low' and were not expected to pose 'significant risks', especially when used over a short period of time…However, Professor Ong Choon Nam, a toxicologist from the National University of Singapore, said the amounts were high and could pose health risks (Soh and Tan 2009, p. B12)

Another article featuring the country's first green temple briefly talked about the solar panel technology it utilized, as well as the upgrading costs (Yen 2009). While the article mentioned the energy savings accrued to the temple, the larger significance of this story was lost with no effort made to go beyond this singular case study.

In contrast, in an article by a senior writer on the importance of MNCs being socially responsible, she gave good background information on industry trends such as Wal-Mart's effort to work with suppliers to reduce packaging (Chua 2009, p. A36). Subsequently, she discussed the trend of using the term CSR in Singapore "as a short hand for energy-efficient production and reducing waste" (p. A36) when in fact, it is much more. The examples in the story convey that supply chain, employee relations, and the use of resources are an integral part of CSR. She also talked about upcoming trends such as the implementation of ISO 26000 which further added to the importance of being socially responsible "before the tipping point is reached and going green becomes a mass movement and you are left behind in the race to meet new global standards on social responsibility" (p. A36).

This study also found that the experienced journalists also valued objectivity but tended to practice it in ways that did not affect the audience's understanding of the issue. One way was through the choice of sources. It was obvious that journalists from *ST* and *BT* had a preference for certain types of CSR stories.

Content analysis showed that most CSR articles came in the form of reports on studies and surveys that had been conducted. These articles were usually rich in statistics and offered a bird's-eye view of the society or industry without featuring any organization in particular. An example was a report on Aviva's survey on global consumer attitudes toward savings and investments ("S'poreans show" 2009, p. 8). The report cited major findings of the survey such as the percentage of people who had decreased trust in financial institutions, and the percentage of people who find life more risky than before. The article also gave a one-paragraph summary of the global financial crisis which was used to explain the loss of trust, "In the past year, some structured products have collapsed amid allegations of mis-selling by financial institutions, causing investors to lose most and in some cases, all of their savings" (p. 8). Besides, the article focuses on the survey findings and does not link to the bigger picture of how a lack of corporate governance has led to these issues.

Second, government initiatives and policies were given coverage due to the usually immense impact it would have on society. Corporate governance was featured most extensively in *ST* and *BT*. The bulk of the stories in both papers came from the government regarding new policies and regulations. The strong government influence in the Singapore society together with the strict enforcement of laws affected business operations directly and indirectly through various channels such as union bodies and business chambers. It was therefore not surprising that government announcements which had a huge impact on businesses were given much attention in the major daily newspapers. However, the term CSR or related terms like sustainability were never used in tandem with corporate governance.

An example of government initiative was a government scheme to improve service standards (Wong 2009). The article in *ST* quoted a minister who said that training was the way to help job seekers. He urged employers to take full advantage of government incentives such as the Jobs Credit scheme and the Spur training programs (Wong 2009).

For journalists from *ST*, the third type of preferred CSR story was those from NPOs due to the "feel-good" factor as journalists feel they are doing good by helping to publicize something with no commercial motive. In an article where several business organizations partnered with an NPO to organize a campaign to foster closer bonds between fathers and their children, the participating business organizations were mentioned only once. The remainder of the article focused on two fathers and how they spent time with their children, prizes for winners of this campaign, and what the Health Promotion Board is doing in conjunction with this campaign.

7.4.4 At the Editors' Level

Despite the increasing CSR awareness among newspaper editors, it had not led to more coverage of CSR news but came in the form of more articles in the reviews or editorials. The review section often contained editorials contributed by both local and overseas journalists as well as views from experts on CSR-related issues. These editorials either reflected the state of CSR, its importance, or, sometimes, criticized the status quo. The latter was most often found in *BT*. For example, in response to new SGX rules to do with corporate governance, the editor elaborated on some of the loopholes still present in the new system and opined that stricter SGX regulations are needed (Tay 2009).

Besides editorials, *ST* and *BT* seemed to be taking another approach in bringing about CSR consciousness. There were several weekly series where outstanding individuals, usually leaders of successful companies, were interviewed and shared the story behind their success. In these interviews, the interviewees often brought up CSR-related initiatives found in the European Commission CSR chart. Such series were sometimes sponsored by companies or government-linked organizations, e.g., Spring Singapore, or big companies like OCBC (one of Asia's biggest banks). Another example of *BT*'s initiative to cover CSR could be seen in its weekly column "View from the top" which invited companies to respond to weekly themes. These themes were sometimes related to CSR. For example, one of the topics was whether companies were ready to reverse wage cuts previously put in place to cope with the recession ("View from the top" 2009). Each week's discussion featured 15–20 companies.

BT also partnered with other NPOs or businesses for weekly series. One example was Enterprise 50 which was a collaboration between a local business school and Enterprise 50, an NPO. Enterprise 50 had biweekly features of a local enterprise made good. In these features, the entrepreneurs shared their success stories and CSR inadvertently came into the picture. In the feature on Supersteel, the founder shared several organization values and policies which tied in strongly with the employee relations aspect of CSR (Soh 2009).

Commentaries were also a good avenue of CSI stories for these two papers. However, even commentaries on CSI were written with caution and only when there was a consensus that the situation was out of control. An example was Shell's petrol promotion which caused huge traffic jams, published in *BT* (Ee 2009):

> What is interesting is that this is not the first time a Shell discount has caused traffic jams. On National Day, a smaller, 44-cent per litre pump discount for one hour had the same effect. However, waiting in a queue of at least 30 cars with the engine and aircon running is by no means being fuel efficient. Do we have to burn more fossil fuels just to experience better fuel economy? Then, there are the other cars and buses that have to expend more time and energy due to the snafu when they could have otherwise cruise smoothly by… But it could have been cleverer if Shell had done it with more efficiency and less wastage. (Ee 2009, p. 11)

While *TNP* regularly featured human interest stories, none of the articles sampled mentioned CSR or related terms. It was probably due to *TNP*'s focus on drama and conflict and their readership demographics that CSR became extraneous. In *TNP*, investigative reporting was more common. These stories may have spun out of a police case but the story encompassed findings that were not from the case and usually took the human interest and conflict angle. For example, after a woman's credit card was stolen and S$17,000 was misused, a *TNP* journalist conducted an experiment where two Chinese women shopped at a store using an Indian man's credit card and the purchase was approved (Sim 2009). The journalist then conducted a survey among retailers, shoppers, and banks to find out what they thought should be done and found that retailers were not willing to take responsibility by making their employees check shoppers' identity when making credit card purchases. While this reflected retailers' lack of CSR, the article did not make that conclusion.

7.4.5 Focus on Beneficiaries

ST had the most stories related to giving back to the community, since it is the national broadsheet and had the most number of pages, which gave it space to cover soft news. Within these sponsorship stories, the focus was usually the recipient or the sponsored event. The sponsor was usually mentioned in one to three sentences and not quoted unless it was a long-term commitment or a large-scale contribution to society. One of the most significant contributions featured in the sampled articles was Hewlett Packard's (HP) education grant initiative which invested about US$17 million in 2009 to educational institutions worldwide. In the *ST* article, details of the scheme were given and the beneficiaries were interviewed, whereas HP was not quoted.

ST also had a section titled "Deeds list," where less than a quarter of the page was dedicated to featuring the various companies that had done something for a cause (Deeds list 2010). Organizations or individuals were invited to email *ST* with their projects or photos so as to be featured, and a two- to four-paragraph summary of each organization's contribution was written. In this particular edition, Standard Chartered was featured for raising US$400,000 for the blind with more than 100 brokers worldwide donating a day's commission and the bank matching the donation dollar for dollar. OCBC was also featured when 20 staff painted a home for children and raised over $87,000 for the home.

What We Learned CSR stories were usually not immediate and often considered soft news. Another exception was articles on listed companies' CSR initiatives. *BT* sometimes featured the innovations of listed companies. For example, in an article on Panasonic's new product (Bloomberg 2009), the focus was clearly the financial aspect for investors. The article talked about the amount Panasonic had spent on developing these products and its ongoing investment to produce batteries for car.

Thus, to answer RQ 2, an interplay of individual, organizational factors, and the nature of the subject matter affected how CSR stories were ultimately covered in the media. CSR, a topic that intrinsically had positive connotations for a company, worked to its own disadvantage when it came to communication by journalists as the latter had to battle their journalistic conviction of objectivity. The organizational factors made it more difficult for journalists to cover CSR news.

Research question 3 examined what other ways could practitioners get CSR coverage for their organizations.

7.4.6 Be the Leader in the Field

Content analysis of newspaper articles showed that awards did not necessarily guarantee organizations' news coverage. While CSR-related award stories were sometimes featured, usually on slow news days, it did not seem to be a priority. Moreover, in these articles, the focus tended to focus on human interest angle if there was one. In the case where the recipient was a business, coverage on the winner was usually scant.

An example is *TNP*'s coverage of the Chevron Case Challenge, organized by Energy Carta, an NPO, where teams competed to develop the best energy plan for a small city. The article focused on the winners and their group dynamics, the competitiveness of the entries, and what the winning group intended to do with their winnings ("Powering a" 2009). The plan itself was given a one-paragraph summary, "They (won) by identifying environmentally friendly ways of generating power, such as using solar energy, and then came up with a mathematical model on how to progressively increase their usage over the years" ("Powering a," 2009, p. 10). In addition, there was a photo caption of the winners together with a Chevron manager. The story was neither featured in *ST* nor *BT*.

When organizations won an award, the organization was not the focus of the article either. In a study of investor relations practices in Singapore and the top performing companies (Wilmot 2009), the article focused on the statistics of investor sentiments as well as the most important qualities of organizations' investor relations practices. The winners were usually featured in one to two paragraphs as shown below:

> According to the study, the winners – SingTel and Olam – share a number of best IR practices. SingTel, for instance, organizes annual board lunch meetings with institutional investors, while Olam encourages investors to visit its operations outside Singapore to boost confidence in the management team.
>
> Mr Chia added: The No. 1 quality that fund managers appreciate is credibility of senior management. It's about communicating good and bad news over a long time to build credibility and relationships with the fund manager. (Wilmot 2009, p. B16)

What We Learned Practitioners could understand what makes news and what journalists look out for in stories so that they can tailor the angles accordingly. From these examples, it shows that awards lead to potential news stories but organization names are usually not the center of the focus as a result of their CSR practices. CSR practitioners will also need to convince their senior management that they should not expect a full-page story for any success of their CSR journeys.

7.5 Toward Effective Media Relations

7.5.1 From Agenda Building to Relating to the Media

Scholars who studied the influencers of news content have realized the importance of communication practitioners (Curtin 1999; Zoch and Molleda 2006) in being proactive in setting organizational agenda in the media. Through their information-subsidy functions to the media, they shape public opinion (Turk 1985). Qiu and Cameron's (2008) framework has identified how practitioners can set the agenda for the media by sharing similar news values with journalists. Kiousis (2005) postulated that similar to the two levels of agenda setting, practitioners build the agenda on two levels: at the first level, they provide information subsidies to the media and in doing so have a say in determining the issues covered by the media; at the second level, practitioners influence the tone of the issue coverage.

Pang (2010) argued that practitioners can do that by understanding the journalist mind-set, for instance, their background and individual characteristics like the journalist's gender, ethnicity, education, experience, and political affiliation can help practitioners enhance their information-subsidy function by knowing how journalists write and what interest them. This will in turn help them frame information suitable for journalists' use.

More critically, differences in perceptions on what constitutes news aside, another long-standing criticism journalists have of practitioners is that practitioners do not understand media relations: While there are practitioners who appreciate the importance of developing relationships with journalists, journalists felt that there are some who do continue to reinforce the climate of distrust.

Inspired by and adapted from Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) theory of influence, Pang (2010) developed the Mediating the Media model to provide a holistic view of how media relations can be conducted by organizational leaders with the primary objective of winning the journalists over by the knowledge of their work and their profession. The model posits both internal and external influences on media relations (see Fig. 7.2).

Besides the journalist mind-set, practitioners need to understand the influences of four other factors.

Journalist Routines Understanding the journalists' routines, such as deadline pressures, would help practitioners disseminate information at times where the organization can get maximum coverage. This is useful especially when the organization needs to tell its story and not let it be crowded out by other news.

Newsroom or Organizational Routines Understanding organizational routines would enable practitioners to understand who holds manifest power in deciding news. Reporters, editors, and owners should arguably be the foci of practitioners' attention and relations because they hold manifest power. Even though copy editors and subeditors do not have direct influence on media relations, they can play instrumental or latent roles in influencing those who hold manifest power.

Extra-Media Forces Understanding organization-press relations would help practitioners appreciate the nature of media practices in the context they operate in and the legal parameters so that they can position the organization in the media appropriately.

Media Ideology Understanding ideological forces would help organizational leaders appreciate the role the media plays in the contexts they operate in. Knowing how each media fits into the societal puzzle would inform practitioners on where and how they can put out messages that target their specific audiences. Messages can be custom-tailored to suit each media.

Like Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) model, this model similarly consists five layers of concentric circles, described as a "hierarchy of influence," each growing in importance and pervasiveness as it expands. At the heart or the bulls' eye of the concentric circle is journalist mind-set, followed by journalist routines, and then newsroom or organizational routines. These are the internal influences on media relations. Extra-media influences form the next circle, and followed by media ideology. At the outermost circle, ideology is argued to have the most pervading influence on media relations (see Fig. 7.2).

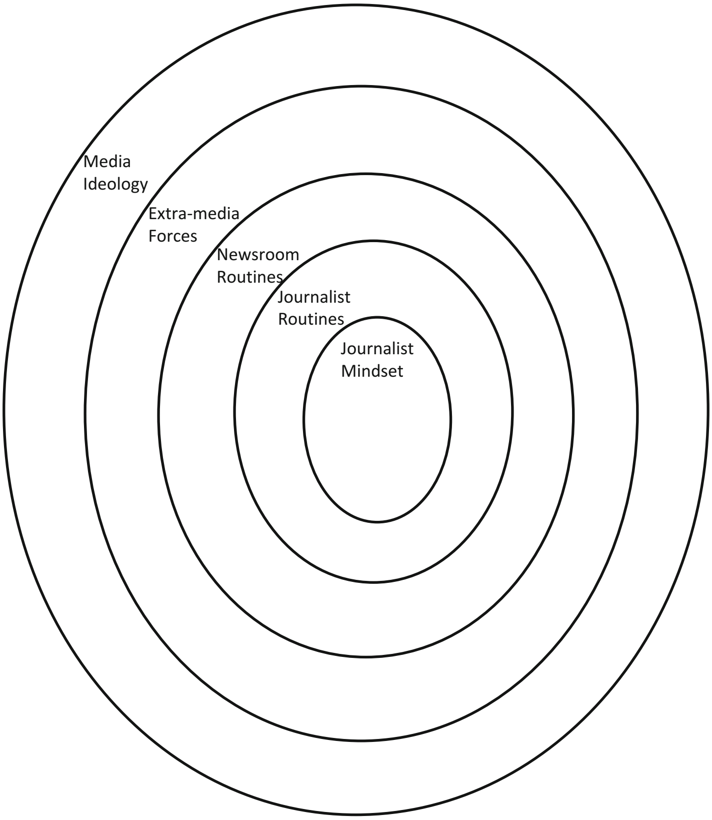


Fig. 7.2 Hierarchy of influence of media relations in mediating the media model

If external forces appear to exert indirect influence on media relations, then internal forces exert more direct influences on media relations. Internal influences localize media relations to the individual organization and the journalist working for that organization. External influences are extensions of the localized relations, or what Cameron, Sallot and Curtin (1997) called societal impacts.

While it is argued that there is a linear flow of influences, in that media ideology influences filter down to extra-media influences, to organizational, to routines, and then to the journalist, the model also accords dynamic interactions among the influences. It is thus conceivable that though ideology dictates media system, the individual ideology of the journalist can ultimately decide the kinds of relations he desires with practitioners.

An initial test of the model in Singapore has found it rigorous (Pang et al. 2014b). Findings, however, showed that internal influences played a more dominant role than external influences. Among the influences, journalist mind-set ranked ahead of newsroom routines and journalist routines, followed by the two external influences, extra-media forces and media ideology.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined media coverage through the lens of corporate social responsibility, how an altruistic topic such as CSR can be construed differently by practitioners and journalists. It boils down to media relations, and how those relations and understanding between practitioners and journalists can be improved. Pang's (2010) Mediating the Media model is posited as one model where practitioners can use to win over journalists by understanding how they work. This model is instructive for new practitioners to view media relations as a holistic process involving a set of interacting influences rather than merely an information-subsidy function. For seasoned practitioners, the model serves to encourage them to reevaluate their current strategies and to engage in strategic thinking on how to transform their current practices. Practitioners have found this model relevant as it offered a systemic framework to approach media relations effectively (Pang et al. 2014b). It has also been applied to build relations with social media influencers (Pang et al. 2014a) whom Freberg et al. (2011) defined as "a new type of independent third party endorser who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media" (p. 90).

At the heart of media relations is establishing relationships (Howard 2004). The longer journalists know the practitioners, the more they "feel more kindly" (Len-Rios et al. 2009, p. 57) toward them and the "more favorably they view the progression of their relationships" (Sallot and Johnson 2006, p. 157). For instance, one reason why practitioners and journalists in South Korea enjoy strong relationships is due to *cheong*. Berkowitz and Lee (2004) defined *cheong* as a "kind of spiritual tie that is unconsciously established through direct or indirect contact and common experience" (p. 431). Though it arises from a historical context, this is reinforced by "continuous contact and common experience" (p. 433).

Some things in life take time to cultivate. Media relations is one. Even with the prevalence of social media, the mainstream media, in their traditional or digital forms, will not go away any time soon. When media relations across all media platforms are sufficiently nurtured, it will last the organization a lifetime.

References

Berkowitz, D., and J. Lee. 2004. Media relations in Korea: *Cheong* between journalist and public relations practitioner. *Public Relations Review* 30: 431–437.

Bland, M., A. Theaker, and D.W. Wragg. 2005. *Effective media relations: How to get results*. Sterling: Kogan Page.

Bloomberg. 2009. Panasonic develops higher-capacity lithium-ion cells. *The Business Times*, 25. December 28.

Cameron, G.T., L.M. Sallot, and P.A. Curtin. 1997. Public relations and the production of news: A critical review and a theoretical framework. In *Communication yearbook 20*, ed. B.R. Burleson, 111–155. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

CapitaLand. 2009. Steadfast in offering aid despite bad times. Business Times Special Focus: Corporate Social Responsibility. *The Business Times,* 7, June 23.

Carroll, A.B. 1991. The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons* 34(4): 39–48.

Chay-Nemeth, C. 2009. Becoming professionals: A portrait of public relations in Singapore. In *The global public relations handbook: Theory, research and practice – Expanded and*, Revisedth ed, ed. K. Sriramesh and D. Vercic, 86–105. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Chua, M.H. 2009. For MNCs, it pays to be good. *The Straits Times,* A36, October 10.

Chuang, P.M. 2010. Firms not dealing with older workers: Study; few companies have formalized strategies that take into account the ageing of the workforce. *The Business Times*, 12, April 10.

Curtin, P.A. 1999. Reevaluating public relations information subsidies: Market driven journalism and agenda-building theory and practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 11(1): 53–90.

Dahlsrud, A. 2006. How corporate social responsibility is defined: An analysis of 37 definitions. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 15(1): 1–13.

Dawkins, J. 2004. Corporate responsibility: The communication challenge. *Journal of Communication Management* 9(2): 108–154.

Deeds list. 2010. *The Straits Times,* B10, April 10.

DeLorme, D.E., and F. Fedler. 2003. Journalists' hostility toward public relations: A historical analysis. *Public Relations Review* 29: 99–124.

Dickson, M., and M. Eckman. 2008. Media portrayal of voluntary public reporting about corporate social responsibility performance: Does coverage encourage or discourage ethical management? *Journal of Business Ethics* 83(4): 725–744.

Ee, S. 2009. Shell discount deal an irony. *The Business Times*, 11, October 26.

European Commission. 2001. *Promoting a European framework for corporate social responsibility – Green paper*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications for the European Communities.

Fassin, Y. 2008. SMEs and the fallacy of formalizing CSR. *Business Ethics: A European Review* 17(4): 364–378.

Freberg, K., K. Graham, K. McGaughey, and L.A. Freberg. 2011. Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review* 37(1): 90–92.

Gandy Jr., O.H. 1982. *Beyond agenda setting: information subsidies and public policy*. Norwood: Albex.

George, C. 2012. *Freedom from the press*. Singapore: NUS Press.

Heng, J. 2012. ST still Singapore's most read. *The Straits Times*, B2, November 3.

Howard, C.M. 2004. Working with reporters: Mastering the fundamentals to build long-term relationships. *Public Relations Quarterly* 49(1): 36–39.

Hsieh, H.-F., and S.E. Shannon. 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research* 15(9): 1277–1288.

IWS. 2012. Internet world stats: Usage and population statistics. Available at: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm. Accessed 11 Nov 2012.

Kiousis, S. 2005. Compelling argument and attitude strength: Exploring the impact of second-level agenda-setting on public opinion of presidential candidate images. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10(2): 3–27.

Kopenhaver, L.L. 1985. Aligning values of practitioners and journalists. *Public Relations Review* 11: 38–42.

Kopenhaver, L.L., D.L. Martinson, and M. Ryan. 1984. How public relations practitioners and editors in Florida view each other. *Journalism Quarterly* 61: 860–884.

Lee, M. 2009. Highest trust in Singapore Government: Poll. *The Straits Times*, D16, February 5.

Lee, M.H., A. Mak, and A. Pang. 2012. Bridging the gap: An exploratory study of corporate social responsibility among SMEs in Singapore. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 24: 299–317.

Lee, M.H., A. Mak, and A. Pang. 2013. *Communicating corporate social responsibility: Agenda building process in news reporting*. Hobart: 27th Annual Australia and New Zealand Association of Management Conference.

Len-Rios, M., A. Hinnant, and S. Park. 2009. Understanding how health journalists judge public relations sources: A rules theory approach. *Public Relations Review* 35: 56–65.

Lerbinger, O. 2006. *Corporate public affairs*. Upper Saddle River: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Low, L.L., and L.P. Kwa. 2005. *The state of public relations in Singapore*. Singapore: IPRS-SP School of Business Joint Survey.

Matten, D., and J. Moon. 2004. Corporate social responsibility education in Europe. *Journal of Business Ethics* 54(4): 323–337.

Media relations and Europe – from the journalist's perspective (2008, May). APCO Worldwide. Retrieved from https://kosmopolit.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/apco-survey.pdf. Accessed 1 Mar 2009.

Ministry of Communication and Information. 2012. *Media in Singapore*. Available at: http://app.mica.gov.sg/Default.aspx?tabid=174. Accessed 11 Nov 2012.

Moran-Ellis, J., V.D. Alexander, A. Cronin, M. Dickinson, J. Fielding, J. Sleney, and H. Thomas. 2004. *Following a thread – An approach to integrating multi-method data sets*. Paper presented at ESRC research methods programme, methods festival conference, Oxford, July.

News Watch. 2009. Tap into female labour force to fight economic crisis. *The Newspaper,* 9, August 6.

Oon, C. 2009. Blogs' reach limited: Study. *The Straits Times*, B4, March 5.

Pang, A. 2010. Mediating the media: A journalist-centric media relations model. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 15(2): 192–204.

Pang, A., and S.L. Yeo. 2009. Winning respect: Transformation to professionalization of public relations in Singapore. *Media Asia* 36(2): 96–103.

Pang, A., A. Mak, and M.H. Lee. 2011. Significance of sector-specific corporate social responsibility initiatives: Status and role of CSR in different sectors. In *The handbook of communication and corporate social responsibility*, ed. O. Ihlen, J. Bartlett, and S. May, 295–315. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Pang, A., E. Tan, T. Kwan, R. Lim, and P. Lakhanpal. 2014a. *Building effective media relations with social media influencers*. Conference on Corporate Communication. Hong Kong: CCI.

Pang, A., V. Chiong, and B. Nasrath. 2014b. Media relations in an evolving media landscape. *Journal of Communication Management* 18(3): 271–294.

Powering a city for less money. 2009. *The New Paper,* 19, October 10.

Qiu, Q., and G.T. Cameron. 2008. *Communicating health disparities: Building a supportive media agenda*. Saarbruecken: VDM Verlag.

Riffe, D., C.F. Aust, and S.R. Lacy. 1993. The effectiveness of random, consecutive day and constructed week samples in newspaper content analysis. *Journalism Quarterly* 70(4): 133–139.

S'poreans show less trust in financial firms. 2009. *The New Paper,* 8, October 10.

Sallot, L.M., and E.A. Johnson. 2006. Investigating relationships between journalists and public relations practitioners: Working together to set, frame and build public agenda, 1991–2004. *Public Relations Review* 32: 151–159.

Sallot, L.M., T.M. Steinfatt, and M.B. Salwen. 1998. Journalists' and public relations practitioners' news values: Perceptions and cross perceptions. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 75(2): 366–377.

Seitel, F.P. 2004. *The practice of public relations*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Shaw, T., and C. White. 2004. Public relations and journalism educators' perceptions of media relations. *Public Relations Review* 30: 493–502.

Shin, J., and G.T. Cameron. 2003. The interplay of professional and cultural factors in the online source-reporter relationship. *Journalism Studies* 4(2): 253–272.

Shoemaker, P.J. 1991. *Gatekeeping*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Shoemaker, P., and S.D. Reese. 1996. *Mediating the message*. New York: Longman.

Signitzer, B., and A. Prexl. 2008. Corporate sustainability communications: Aspects of theory and professionalization. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 20(1): 1–19.

Sim, B. 2009. Who's to blame in the credit card game? *The New Paper*, 2, August 6.

Sim, R. 2014. *Circulation of Straits Times hits all-time high*, March 7. Retrieved March 24, 2014, from http://news.asiaone.com/news/singapore/circulation-straits-times-hits-all-time-high.

Sinaga, S., and H.D. Wu. 2007. Predicting Indonesian journalists' use of public relations-generated news material. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 19(1): 69–90.

Singapore Press Holdings. 2009. *Newspapers*. Retrieved July 17, 2010 from http://www.sph.com.sg/ourproducts_newspaper_st.shtml.

Soh, E., and A. Tan. 2009. Korean nail polish pulled off shelves: HAS tests find banned chemical in 2 Skin Food products. *The Straits Times,* B12, October 29.

Supa, D.W., and L.M. Zoch. 2009. *Maximizing media relations through a better understanding of the public relations-journalist relationship: A quantitative analysis of changes over 23 years*. Paper presented at the International Public Relations Research Conference, Miami, FL.

Tan, R. 2001. *The state of public relations in Singapore: A survey*. Singapore: Singapore Polytechnic.

Tay, E. 2009. International Singapore compact CSR summit. *Green Business Times,* September 9. Retrieved October 10, 2010, from http://www.greenbusinesstimes.com/2009/09/09/international-singapore-compact-csr-summit/.

Teh, S.H. 2009. Women an untapped resource. *The Business Times*, 9, August 6.

Tench, R., R. Bowd, and B. Jones. 2007. Perceptions and perspectives: Corporate social responsibility and the media. *Journal of Communication Management* 11(4): 348.

Tilley, E., and J. Hollings. 2008. Still stuck in a "love-hate relationship": Understanding journalists' enduring and impassioned duality towards public relations. *Proceedings of the ANZCA 2008 conference*. Wellington, NZ.

Turk, J.V. 1985. Information subsidies and influence. *Public Relations Review* 11(3): 1–14.

View from the top. 2009. Time to reverse cut? *The Business Times*, 12, October 26.

Wee, C.H., S.J. Tan, and K.L. Chew. 1996. Organizational response to public relations: An empirical study of firms in Singapore. *Public Relations Review* 22(3): 259–277.

Wilcox, D.L., and G.T. Cameron. 2009. *Public relations strategies and tactics*, 9th ed. New York: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

Wilmot, E. 2009. Good investor relations 'boost a company's image and share price'. *The Straits Times*, B16, June 23.

Wong, E. (ed.). 2009. *CSR for sustainability and success*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions.

Yeap, S.B. 1995. The state of public relations in Singapore. *Public Relations Review* 20(4): 373–394.

Yen F. 2009. Buddhist temple shines as a model of energy efficiency. *The Straits Times,* B6, September 9.

Yeo, S.L., and K. Sriramesh. 2009. Adding value to organizations: An examination of the role of senior public relations practitioners in Singapore. *Public Relations Review* 35(4): 422–425.

Yoon, Y. 2005. Legitimacy, public relations, and media access: Proposing and testing a media access model. *Communication Research* 32(6): 762–793.

Zerk, J.A. 2008. *Multinationals and corporate social responsibility, limitations and opportunities in international law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zhang, J. 2009. SPH gives more than $6m to the needy this year. *The Business Times*, 4, December 11.

Zhang, J., and D. Swanson. 2006. Analysis of news media's representation of corporate social responsibility (CSR). *Public Relations Quarterly* 51(2): 13–17.

Zoch, L.M., and J.C. Molleda. 2006. Building a theoretical model of media relations using framing, information subsidies and agenda building. In *Public relations theory II*, ed. C.H. Botan and V. Hazleton, 279–309. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Chapter 8
The High-Hanging Fruit: CSR in the Context of the Chinese Food and Beverage Industry

Valentina Yee Kwan Cotton-Chan

Abstract Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one of the key trends in both the arenas of business practice and academic research. With the aim of exploring the development of CSR in China during the last decade and shedding light on the current challenges and future opportunities, the food and beverage industry is chosen as context for this study due to its significant impact and potential growth economically and socially in China. In order to obtain a holistic view of the issue, triangulation of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with ten experienced practitioners using quota sampling approach covering a variety of the value chain members, covert observational technique and case study methodology was adopted for primary data collection methods, coupled with secondary data sources including companies and industry internal documents, industry databases and government and published statistics where available and deemed to be reliable. Applying the CSR life-cycle model by Guzman and Becker-Olsen (Strategic corporate social responsibility: a brand-building tool. In: Louche C, Idowu SO, Filho WL (eds) Innovative CSR: from risk management to value creation. Greenleaf Publishing, Sheffield, pp 196–219, 2010) based on stakeholder awareness and expectations, findings of this study confirm the hypothesis that China is currently in the early market expansion and growth phase which is characterised by the increase in companies engaging in CSR and in consumer awareness, with good examples of diversified CSR programmes and potential employee recruitment and retention rewards. Despite the relatively slower pace of development than that of the economic progress, the outlook for the evolution of CSR is positive in China, and the implications for different approaches to resource allocation and needs for adaptation unique to the territory have been discussed.

V.Y.K. Cotton-Chan (✉)
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: valentina.chan@polyu.edu.hk

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_8

8.1 Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability have gained increased attention both from the practitioners and academic perspectives in recent decades, e.g. Harwood (2011). In the twenty-first century, CSR initiatives have been increasingly regarded as a common aspect of business strategy for corporations regardless of industry sectors. A growing number of corporations, both profit and non-profit, are incorporating the three Ps, i.e. planet, people and profit, into their business strategy or adopting the triple bottom line (TBL) accounting framework to measure social, environmental and financial results, e.g. Idowu et al. (2010). More than mere improvement of overall quality of life, corporations also see CSR programmes as a form of competitive advantage by attracting and retaining customers, employees and investors, with the potential to enhance company performance and build more vibrant communities (Lichtenstein et al. 2004; Lafferty and Goldsmith 2005; Luo and Bhattacharya 2006; Porter and Kramer 2006; Pirsch et al. 2007).

To discuss this issue, the first question we need to address is the definition and scope, since CSR and sustainability cover a wide array of aspects that often interconnect with other disciplines. In the academic arena, regarded as one of the earliest and most cited perspectives on CSR, Friedman (1970) proposed that a corporation has its legal and moral responsibilities in furthering some social good, beyond the interest of the shareholders. In the millennium, McWilliams and Siegel (2000, 2001) described CSR as "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interest of the firm and that which is required by law" (as cited in Kong 2012, pp. 323). Although the concept of CSR has been used for decades, defining CSR is not an easy task (Matten and Moon 2008). The reason is partly that CSR is an overarching concept that overlaps with other theories, for example, business-society relations (Matten and Crane 2005), and it is a dynamic phenomenon (Carroll 1999). As an attempt to provide clarity on the subject, the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) has promulgated the ISO 26000 (ISO 26000: 2010, Guidance on social responsibility) from the practitioners' perspective. Unlike other ISO standards, ISO 26000 is considered as a guidance instead of a certified regulation, aiming to provide a recognised clarification of CSR for organisations around the globe. It is suggested that users of ISO 26000 should consider seven core subjects, namely, organisational governance, human rights, labour practices, environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues and community involvement and development, in their operations.

Although the concept of CSR is widely recognised, the approaches and understandings of CSR in different continents vary in many ways owing to the different economic, social, political, geographical and cultural situations in the respective countries. As Knox (2007) illustrated, when asking for the expectations of CSR development, Germans would pay attention to employment, South Africans would look for contributions to social needs, while the Chinese want to ensure that the products they consume are safe and of good quality.

Despite the Western origin of the concept, CSR is considered deep-rooted in the Chinese history and has been increasingly adopted by both corporations and Chinese policy-makers (Zhang 2012). It is a general belief that the ideas of CSR were introduced to the People's Republic of China (China) in 1990s, e.g. Grayson (2013), when foreign multinational companies established themselves in the country. Since then it has undergone rapid changes. According to an annual survey conducted by the International Research Center for Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development of Peking University and the GoldenBee (Beijing) Management Consulting Co., Ltd., in 2012, there were only two companies that released their CSR reports initially, but the number has skyrocketed to 1,337 in 2012 just a decade later. Compared with Western standards, however, the development of CSR in China is still in early stages due to its later start. Gao (2009) provided a seminal analysis of the CSR characteristics in China in which CSR strategies from the top 100 Chinese firms were examined. According to the research findings, Chinese corporations tend to stress certain contributions in relative categories. For instance, 'turnover or profit' and 'profit and tax submitted to government' are emphasised in the economic issues, 'safety of products or services' is considered as a legal issue, 'energy saving' is weighed more importantly in ethical issues, and the attention of 'donation to disaster victims' is placed under philanthropic issues.

During the period of development, some scholars, for example, Henderson (2001), have questioned the effectiveness of CSR in terms of its hypocrisy, financial burden and actual contribution in real terms. Henderson (2001) claimed that CSR is not as beneficial as it aims and even that in some circumstances worse consequences could happen instead. He gave an example that if a corporation is coerced to raise labour standards in developing countries, such as improving working environment or paying higher wages, it might have to reduce its resources in other aspects in order to balance the cost, for example, hiring fewer people or reducing welfare. Eventually fewer people benefit from welfare and economic development would as a result be hampered. Shamir (2011) criticised that CSR is merely a tool to give a fake but favourable impression and precede the role of governments to supervise influential and powerful organisations. In practice, the term "greenwashing" has emerged to criticise corporations who spend more resources on promoting that their corporation or products are environmentally friendly than they spend on contributing to the cause.

Regardless of the debates, the concept of CSR has largely been globally practised today. Customers are now paying more attention to the efforts that corporations make to improve the quality of life of various stakeholders and to pre-empt social and environmental issues.

8.1.1 CSR Development Phases

Tracing the academic development of CSR, De Bakker et al. (2005) conducted a bibliometric analysis of 30 years of theory and research on this topic and suggested that the notion was discussed as early as the 1950s in the United States (USA). Regarding the purpose of research on CSR, Gerde and Wokutch (1998) pointed out four CSR-related phases in their analysis published on social issues in management over 25 years: ‘gestation and innovation’ in the 1960s, ‘development and expansion’ in 1972 to 1979, ‘institutionalisation’ in 1980 to 1987 and ‘maturity’ in 1988 to 1996.

With reference to the widely used life-cycle models in business and management studies, for instance, in product management, project management, economic development and industry and market analysis, Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010) developed a CSR life-cycle model based on stakeholder awareness and expectations with the underlying assumption that these key variables change as the unit of study, like the commonly known product life-cycle model (PLC). PLC is generally referred to as the cycle through which products go from introduction to withdrawal or eventual demise. The key stages pertain introduction, growth, maturity and decline. One of the purposes for Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010) to develop the CSR life-cycle model is to help corporations to understand the strategic decisions that need to be made at different stages in order to sustain a coherent CSR strategy while fulfilling the needs of various stakeholder groups in individual markets. For example, companies operating on a global scale may need to adjust CSR activities between the USA, which is a more developed market, and China, which is in relatively early stage of development. The proposed CSR model follows the traditional PLC and market evolution theories and predicts four phases as illustrated in Fig. 8.1: First is the ‘market crystallisation’ phase in which CSR is being introduced to the market with a few companies trying to inspire interest and develop the market, e.g. Africa; second is the ‘market expansion’ phase in which a pattern of exponential diffusion appears with a higher number of companies participating in CSR riding on the increase in consumer awareness, e.g. China and India; third is the ‘competitive turbulence and fragmentation’ phase where CSR is considered more attractive to more companies given the increase in efficacy of CSR and company profitability, e.g. the USA and many parts of Europe; and fourth is the ‘absorption’ phase.

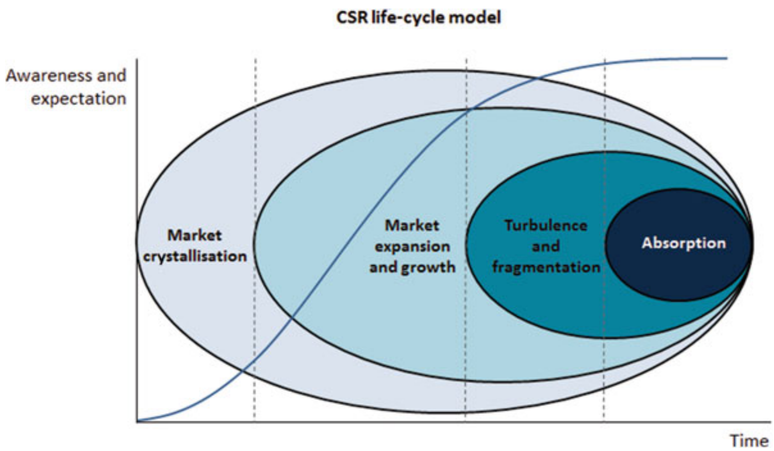


Fig. 8.1 CSR life-cycle model (Guzman and Becker-Olsen 2010)

Contrary to most life-cycle models, Guzman and Beck-Olsen did not suggest a terminal stage but an absorption phase 'in which CSR is absorbed into the strategic planning and fabric of companies and brands, not acting as an add-on activity with a life of its own' (Guzman and Becker-Olsen 2010, pp. 210).

According to Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010), China was described as an example of the early second phase of market expansion and growth, where we see more companies engaging in CSR and there is a rapid growth of consumer and investor awareness. Guzman and Becker-Olsen further explained that during this phase, companies have developed a basic foundation of consumer and investor preferences, and CSR communications and programmes are more specific and start to match those expectations. This CSR life-cycle theoretical framework is adopted as the underlying principle for this study.

8.1.2 Food and Beverage Market in People's Republic of China (China)

China is today the world's most populous country, with an estimated 1.3 billion inhabitants in 2013, accounting for almost 20 % of the world's population (World Population Review 2013). Along with the growth in the world's population, the steady supply of food meeting safety standards at a stable price has been high on the agenda of global challenges. According to the Country Market Insight report by Euromonitor International, the fresh food segment[1] in China enjoyed a substantial market size of 678,610 thousand tonnes in volume in 2013, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2 %, and accounts for almost 35 % of the world's total volume of 1,950,314 thousand tonnes. There is significant importance for the food and beverage industry in China to keep up with international safety standards and code of practice. Apart from the direct output of the industry, the food and beverage sector also employs a vast amount of labour with production processes that have a substantial impact on the environment.

8.1.3 CSR and Food and Beverage (F&B) Industry

Food supply is a necessity to human civilisation. From source to customer, food supply chains can involve multiple companies in the production, service and distribution processes across different parts of the world. This characteristic has added complexity to CSR planning and implementation. Maloni and Brown (2006) suggested a framework of CSR in the food supply chain that consists of eight

[1] The fresh food segment does not include consumer foodservice, package food, soft drinks, hot drinks and alcoholic drinks.

categories: health and safety, animal welfare, biotechnology, community, environment, financial practices, labour and procurement.

In recent years, food safety has become a key issue across the globe with a number of scandals in both developed and emerging markets. As suggested by Sen and Bhattacharya (2001, pp. 238), ‘all consumers react negatively to negative CSR information’. For example, farmers raising chickens have been accused of ignoring animal welfare standards; even a major German chicken producer was blamed and suffered huge loss of public image as a result (see Wises and Toporowski 2013 for discussion). Major crises involving the food industry in developed markets include the 1997 strawberry incident (Calvin et al. 2004) and the spinach incident (Calvin 2007) in the USA. In terms of magnitude of impact, the melamine contamination in China is generally considered the most severe in recent decades (Kong 2012; Qiao et al. 2012). The melamine contamination incident broke out on 11 September 2008, when one of China’s largest dairy manufacturers Sanlu Corporation announced that its products in the market had been contaminated by melamine, a chemical rich in nitrogen that is used by milk producers in milk quality tests but lethal to infants and can also cause bladder and kidney stones, leading to cancer for adults if consumed in large doses. The result has been catastrophic economically, politically and socially. Not only has it led to the bankruptcy of Sanlu Corporation, with its CEO sentenced to life imprisonment with a RMB 2468 million (about USD 3.6 million) personal fine, the whole dairy industry and even the food industry have been damaged: total sales of powdered milk dropped by 20 % and liquid milk by 19 % in the month after the outbreak (ACNielsen 2009).

The silver lining, nonetheless, was the outcome of a new food safety law that went into effect on 1 June 2009 in China (Zhang et al. 2014). The new law intends to address the deficiencies of the previous food safety regulations such as institutional fragmentation with responsibilities spread out across several government departments, upgrade the government control infrastructure and introduce a recall system (Zhang et al. 2013). This has raised the urgency and attention on food safety both from the government and the general public.

Organisations are operating in a more complex environment consisting of more fragmented stakeholder groups with more diversified needs across various industry sectors. In order to examine CSR development in China during last decade, this study therefore focuses on one industry, the food and beverage industry, as an example to demonstrate the challenges and opportunities of CSR in China with the hypothesis that China is at the market expansion and growth phase in the CSR lifecycle model proposed by Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010).

8.2 Methods

In order to explore the issue of CSR in the food and beverage industry in China in a holistic manner, a number of data collection methods, data sources and theories have been adopted for discussion. In this study, qualitative interviews, covert observation and case study methodology have been selected as the data collection methods.

8.2.1 Qualitative Interviews

Despite the qualitative nature, a quota sampling approach has been adopted to ensure the study can capture the point of view from various value chain members involved in the sector. Prospective interviewees are shortlisted and invited for an interview based on desk research on best practice and recommendation from practitioners in the industry. The sample is therefore biased towards practitioners who have more personal interest towards CSR or corporations which are more known in the CSR area. Their perspectives may represent more of the innovators or the early adopter segments in the well-known Roger's bell curve or the adoption life cycle (Roger 1962), rather than a projection of the general population in the market.

Up to 90 min semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted over the telephone during the period of May and June in 2014 with ten experienced practitioners who have 10 to over 20 years of working experience in their sectors or functions. In order to compare and contrast the issue in China relatively with other parts of the world, most of the interviewees selected have worked and lived in more than one country or sovereign regime. Interviews are conducted in English, Putonghua or Cantonese depending on the country of origin of the interviewees which include Mainland China, Hong Kong, France, England, Singapore and Malaysia. The main discussion topics cover historical development of CSR in China in the last two decades, major challenges specially those unique to China, future forecast and other specific areas (e.g. both of CSR and the F&B industry) in relation to the role they play in the value chain. The result of the interviews is transcribed; insights are synthesised to form the basis for the discussion section in this study.

The ten interviewees consist of executives from profit-making and non-profit-making organisations. Table 8.1 listed the names, functions, industries and geographical responsibility of the interviewees. Those interviewees that prefer to be anonymous are given identification alphabets, e.g. 'Subject A', as marked with '*'.

From the profit-making sector, there are two senior executives, Shantel Wong and Jodie Cheung, who have been in charge of the marketing management function in several multinational food and beverage retailers with outlets across major provinces in China, e.g. McDonald's, Starbucks, Nestlé, etc.; an anonymous (i.e. Subject B) general manager of a strategic marketing communication consultancy which focused on Chinese food and beverage industry; another anonymous executive (i.e. Subject C) from the sustainability division of a leading food and beverage franchisee who covers a leading global soft drinks manufacturing, marketing and distribution in the Greater China region; and two media professionals who focus on branding issue in the Asia Pacific and the Greater China region, including Emily Tan, Insights Director of *Campaign* practitioner journal, and Subject A. In terms of NGOs, there are one project manager and one management executive, Floriane Lemoine and Cecile Cavoizy, from a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works within the food and beverage industry in China; one director, Dr. Wang Zhong Ping, from a CSR consulting firm which has consulted to over 200 corporations, including 100 Fortune 500 organisations to conduct CSR and corporate volunteering activities in China, Horizon Corporate Volunteer Consultancy; and

Table 8.1 Interviewees' profile

Name	Function	Industry	Region
Ms. Shantel Wong	Managed the marketing function	Multinational restaurant chains, FMCG, retail	PRC, Hong Kong, Greater China
Ms. Jodie Cheung	Managed the marketing function	Multinational and Greater China-based restaurant chains	PRC, Hong Kong, Greater China
Ms. Floriane Lemoine	Project Manager	NGO in the food and beverage sector	PRC
Ms. Cecile Cavoizy	Finance, Human Resources and Administration	NGO in the food and beverage sector	PRC
Dr. Wong Zhong Ping	Director	CSR and corporate volunteer work consulting for MNCs and local conglomerates in PRC	PRC
Ms. Emily Tan	Insights Editor	Advertising and branding practitioners' journal	Asia Pacific
Subject A*	Greater China Reporter	Advertising and branding practitioners' journal	PRC, Greater China
Subject B*	General Manager	Strategic marketing communication consultancy which focused on Chinese food and beverage industry	PRC
Subject C*	Group Sustainability Division	Leading food and beverage franchisee who covers a leading global soft drinks manufacturing, marketing and distribution	PRC, Hong Kong
Subject D*	Asia Pacific and Greater China expansion	Global NGO	Asia Pacific, Greater China

one anonymous senior executive (i.e. Subject D) from an international NGO, War Child, who is working to enter the Greater China market.

8.2.2 Case Study

From the result of the interviews, a case study has been selected purposefully to illustrate the elements of a good strategic CSR practice in the Chinese food and beverage industry. The case is also a good representation of the key challenges facing practitioners on CSR projects in China, for example, finding the right partner, balance between effectiveness of branding and contribution to the cause, resource allocation in a relationship driven culture, etc.

8.2.3 Other Data Sources and Covert Observational Technique

Since the author has also been a practitioner in the field of business and insights consulting in the Asia Pacific region including China within the investigation time frame, data and views generated from the interviews have also been cross-checked based on personal experience in the practice and interaction with industry practitioners outside the interview setting. For example, the viewpoints from the interviews have to be selected for analysis if they match with the author's personal experience in the field, or the author has verified that viewpoint with other practitioners to ensure those views are representative.

Companies' internal documents, internal industry discussion papers (including insights from a round-table discussion among a dozen of leading chefs, restaurateurs, industry professionals and food journalists in Shanghai in November 2013), professional industry databases and rigorous desk research from public domain have also been included to enrich the analysis.

8.3 Results and Discussion

CSR does not operate in isolation but is intrinsic to macro-environmental factors, such as political, economic, social, technological, as well as the intra-organisational considerations and industry dynamics in which the organisation operates. Before looking into CSR practice, it is therefore important to understand the key trends and issues happening within the industry.

8.3.1 Issue and Trends in the Chinese Food and Beverage Industry

Synthesised from the interviews with seasoned practitioners in the Chinese food and beverage industry conducted for this study and insights generated from a round-table discussion, current challenges and future trends that are relevant to CSR have been identified below to set the scene for further discussion. The round-table discussion is a 2-day workshop among a dozen of leading chefs, restaurateurs, industry professionals and food journalists in Shanghai in November 2013.

8.3.2 Challenges

With the rapid economic growth in recent decades, limited talent pool and staff retention remain major challenges for corporations operating in China, and the food and beverage industry is no exception. 'In China, our hardware is there, but software is still slacking'. Shantel Wong who has more than 20 years of experience managing multinational food and beverage corporations in China echoed the common saying in Chinese business. Insights shared by leading restaurant owners during the round-table series in Shanghai concurred that staff with good service attitude, high motivation and reliable quality are hard to come by. High staff turnover has also been an issue. Growing up in an era where supply is much more abundant in China, the younger generation is considered to put more focus on enjoyment and work-life balance. They appear to prefer to learn quickly and move on to another job in a shorter time frame compared with the previous generation. That does not just affect resources on recruitment, but it means management teams are constantly preoccupied with staff training on top of running the daily operations.

Celebrity chef has been a trend in many developed countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, where chefs and restaurants work with the media closely to create trends in food and lifestyle. People are taking more interest in topics related to food. It is considered trendy for people to talk about food and cooking: for example, where they buy their food and how they prepare it for daily consumption. The status of being a chef or working in the food and beverage industry has been raised in Western markets with numerous reality TV programmes featuring success stories. This trend however has yet to influence the Chinese market. According to the anonymous industry experts who participated in the round-table series, generally speaking, Chinese chefs are humble by nature and do not seek public attention. The reason for this is partly that the profession is not considered as glamorous in the traditional Chinese culture, in other words, not something their parents would be proud of. They also appear to be sceptical about collaborating with media and reluctant to share information with them for fear that their secret techniques will be exposed. There is also a lack of chefs who are restaurant owners to drive this to happen. With a relatively lower status compared with other professions, staff recruitment therefore is one of the key challenges in this sector, aside from other non-industry-specific issues such as distribution in a vast geographical territory and complicated legal and political structure.

8.3.3 The Future of Food and Sustainability

Industry professionals appeared to be content about the availability of food ingredients in China compared with the previous decade. Practitioners are trying to minimise import, with the exception of beef and certain types of vegetables for which local supply is inconsistent. A number of restaurant owners also started to create their own micro farms in order to maintain high quality of supply. Many foreign chefs invest effort in searching local ingredients to substitute those they cannot find in China, while some of them also collaborate with local farms to help them grow the particular ingredients in the exact quality they want. All these are positive signs of moving towards a sustainable practice for the industry as a whole.

8.3.4 CSR Challenges in China

As a concept at the developing phase and given the specific characteristics of China, there are unique challenges for corporations engaging in CSR activities in the territory.

Similar to conducting business activities, the different concept of law, the complexity of regulations and compliance requirements also have an effect on corporations implementing CSR programmes in China. Finding the right NGO partner is repeatedly mentioned as the key challenge by the interviewees who participated in this study, also in line with previous studies on China CSR development, for example, Marquis et al. (2009). Shantel recalled during the interview, 'Finding the right NGO partner is crucial to the success of CSR programmes in China, in order to create more impact, we usually like to affiliate with government official NGOs. Take for instance, if we want to have an impact over 2,000 schools covering a number of cities, instead of just one small village'. Partnering with the right NGOs can increase the impact of the CSR programmes; however, this also requires well-planned resource allocation and managements. She added, 'the question is – with the scale of coverage we would like to have, how do we make sure the bulk of the spending is allocated to the CSR programmes, the cause and the beneficiaries who are in need of help?' In China, the relationship between NGOs and government is close, similar to that between key media and the government. She added with a positive tone that the levels of transparency and maturity of the NGO management system have already improved tremendously as compared to a decade ago.

Multinational corporations which already have a global NGO partner may find it difficult to continue the partnership in China, as many foreign NGOs have a challenging time operating in China. According to the Minister of Civil Affairs, the number of legitimately registered NGOs in China has grown from 354,000 to 460,000 in 2012 in just 5 years.[2] That number has not included those community-based organisations which were not officially registered, and according to the World Bank's estimation, their numbers reach over one million.[3] In order to operate in China, an organisation has to pass restrictive government policies and multilayered administrative requirements. As an example, NGOs are co-administrated by a civil affairs governmental office and another public administration office. Government agencies however tend to show little interest in hosting or supervising an NGO (Yu 2009). There is also a lack of clearly defined procedures for how international NGOs should operate in China. It appears that some high-profile organisations have special agreements with national-level government bodies, whereas smaller NGOs need to navigate their own way through the bureaucratic structure. Although the national government may approve a particular NGO practice, there can still be challenges in the local execution; for example, the municipal governments may lack capacity or particular instructions on implementation. A few interviewees of this study pointed out that from their personal experience, foreign NGOs have less reach at local level; therefore, it is common for multinational corporations to partner with local NGOs. Jodie Cheung who has about 15 years of experience in managing the marketing functions for global food and beverage corporations in the Greater China region shared in the interview, 'in a plan to help building a school in Yunnan, we have to do it through a NGO in Hong Kong who has the right to access to relevant government bodies, then when we reached the provincial and district official representatives, there were multi-layers of bureaucracies we have to learn and to unfold before we can extend our helping hand to those in need'.

8.3.5 CSR Life-Cycle Model: China in the Market Expansion and Growth Phase

As introduced, Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010) proposed a CSR life cycle based on stakeholder awareness. China was cited as an example in the early market expansion and growth phase. Characteristics of this phase pertain to an increase in company engagement in CSR, increase in consumer awareness with stakeholders expectation developed and diversification of CSR programmes, and later in this phase, CSR is expected to have more impact on hiring and employee retention.

[2] Source: The China Daily (2012). Retrieved in May 2014 from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-03/20/content_14875389.htm

[3] Source: The World Bank (2014). Retrieved in May 2014 from http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china

8.3.6 Increase in Companies' Engagements in CSR

All interviewees in this study agreed that the year of 2008 was a turning point for CSR development in China, with a few undesirable incidents in which business ethics were blamed for intensifying the impact, e.g. the melamine contamination in dairy products, the catastrophic Sichuan earthquake and the international financial crisis. Public demands towards product safety and sustainability have increased significantly after those incidents. The Chinese government has also imposed new regulations with enhanced standard across the nation. For example, all state-owned enterprises are required to release CSR reports from that time onwards.

In the interview, Dr. Wang Zhong Ping, Director of Horizon Corporate Volunteer Consultancy, who has been studying Chinese CSR development in the last two decades and has provided CSR services to many Fortune 500 corporations, mentioned 'in the late 1990s [the market crystallisation phase according to Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010)], factory owners did not understand why more [CSR] requirements were imposed on them, they thought their sole responsibility was to produce products at low cost'. Since 2008, he observed the rapid upward trend in CSR reporting in China, and he suggested the fact that foreign companies see China as a strategic location may also facilitate the growth. The increase in companies' CSR engagement in China is also supported by different international statistics. Global consulting firm KPMG has been publishing surveys of corporate responsibility (CR) reporting for 20 years since 1993. In the eighth edition released in 2013, the research covers 4,100 companies across 41 countries. Asia Pacific enjoys a dramatic increase in corporate responsibility reporting between 2011 and 2013, and in that study, almost three quarters of companies based in the region now publish CR reports, which has been a rise of 22 % points since 2011. China is rated as one of the highest growth territories with an increase of 16 % points since 2011. With regard to the quality of reporting, however, among the world's largest 250 global companies, China including Hong Kong has a relatively low score: 39 out of 100 compared with the leading European counterparts such as Italy (85), Spain (79) and the UK (76).

The Chinese government is also seen as putting more effort into promoting food safety and health issues among the food industry. As cited in a China trade report by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, in China's 12th Five-Year Development Plan (year 2011–2015) for the food industry, the nutrition and health food industry has been included in the plan for the first time. In the report, it is forecasted that by the year 2015, the output value of Chinese health food industry will reach around RMB 1 trillion (about USD 157 billion), with an average annual growth of 20 %, according to this plan.

On the other hand, during an interview for this study, another unnamed interviewee Subject B from an NGO targeting the food and beverage industry agreed with the overall trend but stated, 'there is indeed more awareness of CSR programmes from the corporations' perspective, many companies, both local and foreign owned, are doing good things but at the same time many are not doing as much as they said on their website'. The perception of 'greenwashing' also exists in China.

8.3.7 Increase in Consumer Awareness

With reference to a consumer survey on health food conducted by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in six mainland cities in 2008, most of the respondents were health conscious and would take the initiative to make enquiries about health. That is a dramatic increase from only 38 % of the respondents that had taken health food in the same survey taken the year before. Where the standard for purchasing health food was concerned, product safety (57 %) was most important to the respondents.

Tian et al. (2011) supported the previous research findings that although CSR activities in China are still at the beginning stage (Gao 2009), there is a viable and identifiable market segment which considers positively a company's CSR activities in their consumption. Companies operating in China should note the opportunity to meet this need while achieving their strategic objectives and making a contribution to society.

In the interview with Shantel Wong, she confirmed the increase in consumer and public awareness towards CSR in China during the last decade: 'With the rise of income, people demand better quality of life nowadays and become more ready to support public causes and people around them who are in need of help. This has inspired and encouraged corporations to take more leadership in CSR programmes. The growing numbers of employee associations also support the growing spirit of helping one another and social awareness'. The scene was very different decades ago, according to Shantel, when Chinese public perceived CSR as a Western idea for foreigners only. People in general were not inclined to get involved, if asked to join in. They would just mock you, 'why don't you help me instead?', she added.

8.3.8 CSR Has an Impact for Hiring and Employee Retention

Cecile Cavoizy, who manages the operations of an innovative social enterprise Shanghai Young Bakers (SYB), has witnessed the change of perception towards CSR in China during the last decade. She shared in the interview,

> I have been working in Shanghai for more than twelve years. Before I joined SYB, I was working in the human resources department of a French company. There is no doubt that more companies are doing more on CSR now compared with ten years ago. The drive is also coming from employees, especially in Shanghai and other leading cities where basic needs and security have been fulfilled. People are inspired to do their part for a better society. Any companies who want to be in a leading position in China need to put resources into CSR.

In line with the staff retention issue identified from the industry round-table series mentioned in the earlier section of this study, Cecile believes doing CSR in an intelligent way can help keep employees engaged and motivated. She added, 'staff may tell an employer that higher salary is the reason to leave the current job, as that is the easiest thing to say, but from my experience in human resources management in China, I do think the atmosphere that they work in and how happy they are would be more important factors to many people than just a thousand RMB (about 161 USD) more monthly salary'.

8.3.9 CSR Programmes Diversify

The food scandals in 2008 acted as an alarm bell for CSR in China, but is food safety the only concern for the public? As Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010) argued, during the market expansion phase, the types of CSR activities move towards a diversified approach. Since stakeholders have more experience with CSR programmes, preferences and expectations are also likely to develop. When asked about the key CSR topics of concern, interviewees all agreed that food safety is among the highest consideration, while a couple of the interviewees pointed out that the focus has also expanded from basic product safety to wider health-related issues like environment and aids to natural disasters. However, a general manager of a strategic marketing communication consultancy which focuses on the food and beverage industry in China argued that the growth of CSR in China is still too slow compared with other economic development indicators, take mobile phone penetration for example. Apart from food safety, she was under the impression that consumers only consider other aspects of CSR as nice to have: 'food waste reduction? You can basically forget it, I don't think consumers care,' she said.

Based on the majority of the interviews and the author's observation, the majority of the NGOs in China focus on natural disaster relief, tackling poverty and providing education or aids towards underprivileged children. It is no surprise that the key themes in many CSR programmes in China are set out to help causes along the same direction but less so on other sustainability issues. Having said that, during the process of this study, some more diverse and innovative CSR programmes have been identified. One example is from a local Chinese fast food chain called 'Zhēn Kung Fu'.[4] They have a wide range of CSR programmes branded under 'Shàn Kung Fu'[5]; 'Shàn' means 'kindness' or 'goodness'. Apart from the common CSR themes in China such as helping underprivileged children living in remote mountain areas and education, their CSR programmes have included wider sustainability topics: for example, carbon emission reduction, which is considered ahead of the curve compared with other industry players, and care for the nationwide labour mobility issue, which is a unique social challenge in a vast country in which a massive number of workers need to leave their family behind and travel a long distance to live and work in different parts of China; they even allocate resources to help the wider social sup-

[4] The meaning of 'Kung Fu' can be 'effort' or 'skills', which can also be the generic term for Chinese martial arts. 'Zhēn' means 'authentic'; the literal meaning of 'Zhēn Kung Fu' can be 'authentic Chinese martial arts' or 'authentic skills'.

[5] Source: ZKungfu Company website, retrieved in May 2014, from http://www.zkungfu.cn/Public/index-duty.htm

port systems, e.g. to facilitate collaboration between various NGOs and volunteer workers by using the notice boards in their 500 restaurant outlets across the nation as a platform to provide two-way communication channels to link up volunteer workers and various NGOs; they also have training programmes to nurture development of volunteers. Their campaigns also use different creative methods such as leveraging sport trends, e.g. running and various social media platforms. This is an encouraging sign of growth in the development of Chinese CSR.

8.3.10 Strategic CSR

As the concept and practice of CSR continue to develop, the scope of CSR also transcends from traditional philanthropy to a more strategic focus which promotes a long-term vision of business accountability and to a more holistic range of stakeholders, including investors, employees, customers and community members (Snider et al 2003). Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010, pp. 200) proposed that 'the objective of strategic CSR is to identify ways in which companies can align business goals with consumer expectations to increase brand loyalty while simultaneously meeting larger societal demands'. They pointed out that strategic fit is a critical success factor for the implementation of CSR programmes and CSR has now moved beyond simplistic marketing or branding tactics. They believed CSR should be strategically integrated into the operating principles and practices of the company. During the interview with Emily Tan, Insights Editor of *Campaign Magazine* Asia Pacific, an industry journal focused on branding and marketing issues, she concurred, 'I think in Asia [Pacific], people have started to differentiate between brands that are doing [CSR] like "a social stunt" to look good, exploiting those in need for publicity, and brands that are really trying to help'.

Building on the foundation of a series of empirical studies conducted in North America, Mexico and Spain over a number of years duration, four key elements have been identified for effective strategic CSR programmes for developing and emerging markets (see Becker-Olsen et al. 2005; Guzman and Montana 2006; Simmons and Becker-Olsen 2006 for more details): a clear motivation, an appropriate initiative, the right timing and right communication to get the message across to stakeholders. Guzman and Becker-Olsen further explained (2010, pp. 202), 'Having the right perceived motivation allows consumers to view the company more favourably, while selecting an initiative with high strategic fit is critical because strategic fit is a processing heuristic shown to alter stakeholder response to CSR communication'. Programmes that are perceived as reactionary can also lead to dilution of brand equity. Cheung et al. (2010) explored if CSR matters in Asian emerging markets. They discovered a significant positive relationship between CSR and market; and Asian firms were rewarded by the market for improving their CSR practice. Another unnamed interviewee Subject D, an executive who works for the Asian expansion of War Child, an international charity that works with children affected by war, cannot agree more with the above claim: 'many corporations take part in

CSR activities nowadays, say getting their employees to help paint the wall of some random elderly homes, yes they are doing something good as well as team bonding, but how much do they care about those elderly, really? And how relevant is that to the business that they are doing?' He challenged the effectiveness of many CSR campaigns which lack a strategic fit between the CSR programme or cause and the corporation's business strategy, brand image, position or target market.

8.3.11 Case Study

From the research findings, a case study has been selected with key executives interviewed to illustrate the strategic fit of CSR programme in the Chinese food and beverage context during this phase of early market expansion and growth.

8.3.12 Overview

With the motto 'Give an orphan some bread; you feed him for the day. Teach him to bake; you feed him for a lifetime!' Shanghai Young Bakers (SYB) was founded in 2008. SYB is a charity programme providing fully sponsored French bakery training to disadvantaged Chinese youths aged between 17 and 23, to enable them to find qualified jobs and to lead independent lives after graduation. The training programme lasts for one year, with a variety of classes in traditional Western bakery, life development skills and English language training and practical internship at international hotels. The main sponsors of this social innovation programme are Carrefour Foundation, Accor Foundation and a yeast producer Lesaffre, with a number of companies in the food and beverage sector supporting them by providing ingredients, skills and internship or job opportunities to their students. The programme is managed by an international team and is currently operated under the governance of a Hong Kong-registered NGO Chi Heng Foundation with the support of the Shanghai Charity Foundation. Since 2011, a variety of commercial activities have been invented to diversify the sources of funding in order to sustain this programme. For example, bakery classes, social teambuilding events, bread and pastry catering and technical consulting for industry players are available to individuals and companies wishing to contribute to the success and sustainability of the programme. To date, the programme has helped over one hundred students.

SYB's core values are equal opportunity, self-empowerment and independence, as well as solidarity and team spirit. Their vision is quoted below[6]:

1. CHARITY: Enable disadvantaged youth to lead independent lives through a qualified, empowering job

[6] Source: Shanghai Young Bakers Organisation's website: http://www.shanghaiyoungbakers.com/about/vision

We recruit students who formerly had no viable employment options, offer the training for free, and target 100 % successful employment in bakery after graduation. Chi Heng Foundation, our governing body, guarantees the social mission of the SYB training programme.

2. EXPERTISE : Become a leading reference in French / traditional bakery training in China

We work with the Ecole Francaise de boulangerie d'Aurillac (EFBA), with the best bakery professionals in Shanghai, and with local authorities, to make sure we deliver a top-quality training that will eventually be officially and widely recognised throughout China.

3. SUSTAINABILITY: Achieve financial autonomy through a social enterprise model

Thanks to the former students who now work full-time with SYB, we are developing commercial activities so that the generated revenue can complement donations and improve our financial stability. Our long-term ambition is to open a social café, co-run by SYB graduates, that will help fund our training program and provide a space for all social-minded individuals to share and exchange.

8.3.13 Challenges and Development

Tracing back to the original idea, project manager of SYB, Floriane Lemoine, shared in the interview that the inspiration was from a similar programme in Vietnam when the original founder went for a visit. In the beginning, it was driven by a dozen volunteers from the French Junior Chamber of Commerce (JCEF) where many young professionals working in Shanghai would like to start new projects to serve the community. The group of volunteers met regularly during weekends or after working hours during the week. They understood the regulatory environment was more complex in China and that they could not just copy the way the programme worked in Vietnam. For example, it would be more effective for them to go for partnerships with restaurants or schools instead of building their own facilities. Cecile Cavoizy, who first joined as volunteer and now manages the finance and administration of SYB, recalled in the interview, 'it was started as some initiative from a group of French people but it quickly grew to an international group with diversified background, local Chinese, Italians, Malaysians, Americans, Canadians, etc.' There was a photo exhibition in an art gallery for a fund-raising purpose at the beginning of 2009; at the end it may not have raised that much funds but it certainly has raised the awareness of the initiative and attracted more volunteers to join.

The first challenge however was to seek funding to set up. In order to be granted sponsorship from corporations, the cause of an NGO needs to match with the foundations' CSR strategy and vision. According to the two interviewees working for NGO in China, back in those days, there were fewer corporations or foundations providing vocational training but were instead focused on natural disasters, health issues or formal education. Similar to conducting business, having the right relationship plays a key role, especially in China. In those early days, most French corporations operating in China were of medium size, the volunteers did not have a connection to senior management or decision makers in large corporations. SYB went through many discussions and applications for a couple of years before successfully securing sponsorship from Carrefour Foundations in December 2008. In just a few months' time, the first training programme was launched in February 2009 with a group of 16 students recommended through three other NGOs: (1) the Chi Heng Foundation, a charity registered and based in Hong Kong with offices in Henan, Anhui, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou with a mission to create a harmonious, equal and healthy society by funding and operating projects in education and care for children and adults impacted by AIDS; (2) Children of MaDaiFu[7] which is a French-registered NGO set up by a late French doctor with the mission to alleviate hardship for orphans in China's more deprived areas; and (3) a Shanghai orphanage. Two professional French bakers taught the programme, including one French chef who was working for a yeast company based in Nanjing and a Chinese baker who was trained in the USA.

After the initial set-up, SYB needs to continue to find new sources of funds and income to keep the programme running. It is a common practice for foundations to provide start-up funding in the first and second year, but the amount of funding will decrease afterwards and the programmes are expected to move towards financial independence by diversifying their source of funds. In the case of SYB, the funding process normally takes 1–2 years before a corporation or its foundations can make the decision to grant the fund, and then SYB has to commit to a 1-year training for the students. As a result, the fund-raising cycle is a constant effort. The strategic nature of SYB's approach has also posed challenges in the solicitation of funds. As Floriane explained, 'Corporate sponsors want to see measurable impact in a given period of time, say for example, if a corporation provides funding to build a library in a remote mountain, the number of beneficiaries will be much larger and quicker than our programme, moreover there are also much less funding requirement after the set-up is done, unlike our programme which takes us one full year to train one student for them to equip the skills'. From a return on investment (ROI) perspective, strategic causes like SYB may have a competitive disadvantage, if the top priority of a corporation is to seek measurable impact from their CSR programmes or donations.

8.3.14 CSR Collaboration and Future Outlook

At present, SYB has a wide range of partners to support them in providing ingredients, sharing knowledge and skills and offering internships and job opportunities for their students. Corporations in the food and beverage industry and beyond can collaborate with SYB as their CSR programmes, including as sponsors to fund the core of SYB training programme, e.g. students' living expenses, training and facilities; or as internship partners who welcome their students in their bakery departments to work as trainees on a part-time basis; or as in-kind support partners to contribute

[7] 'MaDaiFu' means 'Doctor Ma' in Chinese.

their companies' products or competencies, e.g. from food ingredients to cleaning products to printing and design services; or as institutional partners, e.g. a number of French and Chinese volunteers and entities facilitate SYB to conduct their activities in China; or as educational partners who offer teaching to SYB's students in various aspects from English and French language skills, to sustainable financial habits like how to manage their monthly allowance; or as social partners pertaining to a wide range of NGOs working directly with underprivileged children; or as employment partners to participate in SYB's annual career fair around the graduation ceremony to present their working opportunities and interview or hire potential candidates.

Cecile recalled others' comment to her at the beginning stage of the programme, 'you are crazy!', as the partners that SYB works with are their competitors in the market. Looking from a long-term perspective, however, she believes the development of this programme can benefit the industry as a whole in two ways: firstly, by increasing the number of skilled workers available in the talent pool and, secondly, this also helps advance the industry standards and awareness of quality French cuisine.

The current sources of funding of SYB are:

- 60 % from corporate sponsors and foundations
- 20 % from partners in China and overseas
- 20 % from SYB's commercial activities

There are currently three main corporate sponsors and foundations for SYB: Carrefour Foundation, Solidarity Accor and Lesaffre. Carrefour Foundation, with a mission to combat exclusion, has been the main sponsor of Shanghai Young Bakers ever since the beginning of the programme in 2009. They support SYB by sponsoring all the operational expenses of the programme. The objective of Solidarity Accor is to link cultures by supporting personal development and integration in their environment; they support the expenses in relation to SYB baking centre in the year 2013–2014. Yeast producer, Lesaffre, supports SYB technically and financially by sponsoring the salaries of the SYB bakery trainers. There are over 40 partners[8] supporting SYB in a variety of aspects as mentioned earlier. In order to be more independent financially, SYB organises meaningful activities and services for individuals and companies who want to contribute to the success and sustainability of the programme. Below are some examples of their commercial activities:

- One-day public bakery classes, for groups and companies that want to learn professional bread and pastry recipes from SYB's teachers.
- Team-building events, for company staff wishing to interact and have fun while taking a bakery class from a meaningful social programme.
- Catering, for meetings and events (e.g. bread, croissants, Danish, quiches, etc.)
- Personalised cakes, for birthdays, weddings and company celebrations.

[8] For a detailed list of the partners, please refer to SYB's website: http://www.shanghaiyoungbakers.com/partners

– Weekly delivery of SYB's students baked goods, by subscribing to SYB's 'bread and cake baskets' programme.
– Fresh breads and pastries made by SYB students at Saturday Markets.
– Technical consultation services to food and beverage industry players. For example, SYB has helped a herbs company to design new bread recipes using their herbs and train their staff so that they can demonstrate the usage to their respective clients.

Moving forward, Cecile mentioned that it is SBY's goal to balance the proportion of funding to only half from corporate sponsors and foundations and half from partnerships and their own commercial activities in the next 2–5 years. The increase in financial independence can allow them to focus more effort on the core training instead of fund raising. SYB has developed very fast in a short period of time riding on the CSR development and growth curve in China during the turning point around 2008, from a group of 12 part-time volunteers to a professionally managed innovative social enterprise with set processes and standards operated by their own full-time staff; they have their fully owned baking centre, established communication channels and a sustainable list of corporate sponsors and partners and are progressing towards an increasingly financially independent and sustainable model.

The food and beverage industry players, by partnering with or sponsoring SYB as their CSR programmes, can contribute to the overall sustainability of the industry by nurturing more talent for the industry and facilitating increase of public awareness about quality of food. This addresses directly the key issue and challenge regarding the lack of talent faced by the food and beverage industry as previously discussed. Corporations can also leverage this as employee engagement programmes and advance their corporate profile from the perspective of their investors, consumers and public given the strategic fit between the cause, the industry and the wider well-being of the society as a whole.

8.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

All interviewees in this study are positive about the future development of CSR in China. As Dr Wang Zhong Ping asserted in his interview, 'CSR is not an industry but part of the development process of a society…although in China, available platforms and regulations have yet to reach maturity, we are definitely moving in the right direction'. Applying Guzman and Becker-Olsen's (2010) strategic CSR life-cycle model based on stakeholder awareness and expectations, the findings of this study, including both primary data from qualitative executive interviews and secondary data from third parties' published statistics and reports, provide further evidence that China is in the market expansion and growth phase in terms of CSR life-cycle development. Evidence of increase in companies engagement in CSR and consumer awareness are observed, with examples of more diversified CSR campaigns with potential employee recruitment and retention benefits suggested by experienced practitioners in the field.

Compared with the last decade, CSR is no longer considered as activities for foreigners or only limited to multinational corporations; many state-owned enterprises and private Chinese companies have also joined forces. In the case of SYB, most of their volunteers are local Chinese, and they also observe the increase in local partners. One of their partners who support them by providing complementary products is a local sugar manufacturer that has never participated in any CSR activity before. The home-grown fast food chain Zhen Fung Fu also demonstrated very diversified and innovative CSR programmes. Things are changing. It is an encouraging sign that during the interviews and interaction with practitioners for this study, many of industry players were inspired by the discussion or best practice examples the author pointed out and said they will go back and revamp their current CSR practices further.

China is considered as a strategic location for multinational corporations. Anything that happens in this territory can have significant impact on their global business in various aspects including stock price. Opportunities therefore exist for innovative approaches towards CSR in China to inspire practices in other territories. Dr. Wang has quoted the example of BMW, whose good Chinese CSR campaign practice has inspired their headquarters overseas. Regarding the debate between globalisation versus localisation, interviewees tend to welcome the idea of globalised standard or quality of CSR planning but support the need to adapt to the local situation and stakeholders' expectation in CSR execution. Take the example of supporting the cause of education, the global focus may be on helping the development of students with an aligned goal, but in the context of China, efforts may be needed to help teachers as well. This illustrates a different approach in resource allocation, and the challenge of finding the right NGO partner as discussed in a previous part of the study also reinforces this need.

During this evolution process, the food and beverage industry is believed to play an increasingly important role as the industry is also enjoying rapid commercial growth in the territory. Food is considered an essential part of living in Chinese culture; the rise of digitalisation and online shopping also poses no substitute for dining with friends and family. With the upward trend in disposable income and rent, it is observed that restaurants rather than other retailers now occupy more prime shop spaces in major shopping malls in large cities such as Shanghai. Shantel Wong who has over 20 years' experience managing food and beverage corporations in China trusts this is one of those industries that can take a leading role in the future of CSR development in China, as the industry affects people's lives directly and can allow plenty of room for creativity with its business nature. She said, 'in my personal experience, many global venture capital firms are now looking at investing in the food and beverage industry in China, both from the perspective of importing foreign brands into the China market as well as international expansion of quality local players'.

Consider this a thought-provoking quote from an anonymous interviewee Subject D, 'China is currently under the period of greed, I believe once the basic needs have been fulfilled, more people will look for greater meaning of life and fuel CSR development to the full harvest'. Indeed, Confucianism has been the deep-rooted ideology and guiding philosophy of the Chinese community for centuries. Characterised by the emphasis of virtues known as the five constants – Rén (humaneness), Yì (righteousness or justice), Lǐ (proper rite), Zhì (knowledge) and Xìn (integrity) – with a focus on harmony between human and nature (Liu 2012), the author believes in China's potential to achieve economic advancement balanced with contribution to sustainability in the long run, when CSR is incorporated more into business strategies, although this will probably take a longer time to achieve than the economic development China has experienced in the last decade.

8.4.1 Caveats and Limitations

The author has made the best effort to ensure that the findings best represent the views from various industry players in the respective value chain in the food and beverage industry. The majority of the content in this report is based on qualitative insights gathered from interviews with key industry stakeholders, coupled with government statistics and third party publications where available and deemed to be reliable. Since interviewees were selected through word of mouth from the industry and desk research, their views may represent the more progressive segment of the market.

The discussions in this report are based mainly on the analysis of findings and are constrained by the author's understanding of those corporations' future capabilities, vision, budgets and the future plan of the Chinese government. The views presented herewith were not scrutinised through a statistically proven research methodology and have not included direct views from consumers, investors and the public. Further research incorporating views from wider stakeholder groups and members of the industry value chain in order to understand the impact on branding and measuring the economic advantages CSR programmes created in the value chain are recommended.

References

ACNielsen. 2009. What is the future of Chinese dairy industry? *ACNielsen Industrial Report*, Retrieved from: http://cn.nielsen.com/site/documents/China_DairyReport_Chi.pdf.

Becker-Olsen, K.L., B.A. Cudmore, and R.P. Hill. 2005. The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer behaviour. *Journal of Business Research* 59(1): 46–53.

Calvin, L. 2007. Outbreak linked to spinach forces reassessment of food safety practices. *US Department Agriculture*, *Amber Waves* 5(3): 24–31, Washington, DC.

Calvin, L., B. Avendaño, and R. Schwentesius. 2004. *The economics of food safety: The case of green onions and Hepatitis A outbreaks outlook*. Washington, DC: US Department Agriculture.

Carroll, A.B. 1999. Corporate social responsibility: Evolution of a definitional construct. *Business and Society* 38: 268–295.

Cheung, Y.L., W.Q. Tan, H.J. Ahn, and Z. Zhang. 2010. Does corporate social responsibility matter in Asian emerging markets? *Journal of Business Ethics* 92: 401–413.

De Bakker, F.G.A., P. Groenewegen, and F. Den Hond. 2005. A bibliometric analysis of 30 years of research and theory on corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance. *Business & Society* 44: 283–317.

Friedman, M. 1970. The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. *New York Times Magazine* 13: 122–126.

Gao, Y. 2009. Corporate social performance in China: Evidence from large companies. *Journal of Business Ethics* 89(1): 23–35.

Gerde, V.W., and R.E.Wokutch. 1998. Twenty-five years and going strong: a content analysis of the first 25 years of the social issues in management division proceedings. *Business & Society* 37: 414–446.

GoldenBee. 2012. *Managing consulting research on Corporate Social Responsibility reporting in China 2012*, Retrieved from: http://www.csr-china.net/en/third.aspx?nodeid=5619d50a-6708-4d2b-892c-d6799842c42c&page=contentpage&contentid=21e936c1-8d94-4902-bf59-7f359dfdfe15.

Grayson, D. 2013. Corporate responsibility with Chinese characteristics. *Ethical Corporation*, July–August. Retrieved May 15, 2014, from (http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/dinamic-content/research/doughty/crwithchinesecharacteristicscorpjuly13.pdf.

Guzman, F., and K.L. Becker-Olsen. 2010. Strategic corporate social responsibility: A brand-building tool. In *Innovative CSR: From risk management to value creation*, ed. C. Louche, S.O. Idowu, and W.L. Filho, 196–219. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

Guzman, F., and J. Montana. 2006. Construir marcas mediante la associacion a servicios publicos. *Harvard Business Review (America Latina)* 84(4): 46–51.

Harwood, I. 2011. On the resilience of Corporate Social Responsibility. *European Management Journal* 4: 283–290.

Henderson, D. 2001. *Misguided virtue: False notions of corporate social responsibility*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

Idowu, S.O., C. Louche, and W.L. Filho. 2010. Innovative corporate social responsibility: An introduction. In *Innovative CSR: From risk management to value creation*, ed. C. Louche, S.O. Idowu, and W.L. Filho, 1–9. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.

ISO 26000. 2010. *Guidance on social responsibility*. Geneva: International Organization for Standardization. Retrieved from: https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:26000:ed-1:v1:en.

Knox, S.D. 2007. Corporate social responsibility and business decision-making. In *Spiritual motivation: New thinking for business and management*, ed. J. Ramsden, A. Kakabadse and S. Aida, Chapter 13, 147–160. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Kong, D. 2012. Does corporate social responsibility matter in the food industry? Evidence from a nature experiment in China. *Food Policy* 37: 323–334.

KPMG. 2013. *Survey of corporate responsibility reporting 2013*. Retrieved from: http://www.kpmg.com/global/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/corporate-responsibility/pages/default.aspx.

Lafferty, B.A., and R.E. Goldsmith. 2005. Cause-brand alliances: Does the cause help the brand or does the brand help the cause? *Journal of Business Research* 58(4): 423–429.

Lichtenstein, D.R., M.E. Drumwright, and B.M. Braig. 2004. The effect of corporate social responsibility on customer donations to corporate-supported nonprofits. *Journal of Marketing* 68(4): 16–32.

Liu, Liping. 2012. On the Relationship Between Confucianism and China's Soft Power: An Analysis Based on Empirical Study of the Influence of Confucian on Religious Belief and Experience of Contemporary Chinese People. *Management Science and Engineering* 5(1): 93.

Luo, X., and C.B. Bhattacharya. 2006. Corporate social responsibility, customer satisfaction, and market value. *Journal of Marketing* 70(4): 1–18.

Maloni, M., and M. Brown. 2006. Corporate social responsibility in the supply chain: An application in the food industry. *Journal of Business Ethics* 68: 35–52.

Marquis, C., G.A. Donovan, and Y.K Chu. 2009. Swire beverages: Implementing CSR in China. *Harvard Business Review* 9: 410–421, August 31.

Matten, D., and J. Moon. 2008. "Implicit" and "Explicit" CSR: A conceptual framework for a comparative understanding of corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review* 33(2): 404–424.

Matten, D., and A. Crane. 2005. Corporate Citizenship: Toward an Extended Theoretical Conceptualization. *Academy of Management Review* 1: 166–179.

McWilliams, A., and D.S. Siegel. 2000. Corporate social responsibility and financial performance. Correlation or misspecification? *Strategic Management Journal* 21: 603–609.

McWilliams, A., and D.S. Siegel. 2001. Corporate social responsibility: a theory of the firm perspective. *Academy of Management Review* 26: 117–127.

Pirsch, J., S. Gupta, and S. Landreth Grau. 2007. A framework for understanding corporate social responsibility programs as a continuum: An exploratory study. *Journal of Business Ethics* 70(2): 125–140.

Porter, M.E., and M.R. Kramer. 2006. Strategy and society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review* 84(12): 78–92.

Qiao, G., T. Guo, and K.K. Klein. 2012. Melamine and other food safety and health scares in China: comparing households with and without young children. *Food Control* 26: 378–386.

Roger, E.M. 1962. *Diffusion of Innovations*. Glencoe: Free Press.

Sen, S., and C.B. Bhattacharya. 2001. Does doing good always lead to doing better? Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Marketing Research* XXXVIII(2): 225–243.

Shamir, R. 2011. Socially responsible private regulation: World culture or world-capitalism? *Law and Society Review* 45(2): 313–336.

Simmons, C.J., and K.L. Becker-Olsen. 2006. Achieving marketing objectives through social sponsorships. *Journal of Marketing* 70(4): 154–169.

Snider, J., R.P. Hill, and D. Martin. 2003. Corporate social responsibility in the 21st century: A view from the world's most successful firms. *Journal of Business Ethics* 48(2): 175–187.

Tian, Z., R. Wang, and W. Yang. 2011. Consumer responses to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in China. *Journal of Business Ethics* 101(2): 197–212. doi:10.1007/s10551-010-0716-6.

Wises, A., and W. Toporowski. 2013. CSR Failures in food supply chains: An agency perspective. *British Food Journal* 115(1): 92–107.

World Population Review. 2013. Retrieved June 13, 2014, from http://worldpopulationreview.com/continents/world-population/.

Yu, F. 2009. Challenges for NGOs in China. *Asia Catalyst*, June 26. Retrieved from http://asiacatalyst.org/blog/2009/06/challenges-for-ngos-in-china.html#more.

Zhang, D. 2012. Corporate accountability (China). In *The Encyclopedia of Sustainability, China, India, and East and Southeast Asia: Assessing Sustainability*, vol. 7, ed. Sam Geall, Jingjing Liu, and Sony Pellissery, 74–78. Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing.

Zhang, D., Y. Gao, and S. Morse. 2013. Corporate social responsibility and food risk management in China; a management perspective. *Food Control* (in press). http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2013.01.030.

Zhang, D., Q. Jiang, X. Ma, and B. Li. 2014. Drivers for food risk management and corporate social responsibility: A case of Chinese food companies. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 66: 520–527.

Chapter 9
Corporate Social Responsibility in a US Context

Jo-ann Straat and Christina M. Genest

Abstract The authors take a snapshot of contemporary CSR practice in the USA by combining their own real-world experience with findings from the current literature and the results of a survey of current CSR US executives. Six trends emerged: (1) CSR is not PR; (2) CSR drives corporate value; (3) CEOs have a lot to say about CSR; (4) CSR performance is being measured; (5) CSR is evolving incrementally; and (6) CSR is a business imperative and a moral imperative. For major US corporations, CSR is good for business and good for the society. It contributes to harnessing the abilities of both to build the sustainable conditions both require to prosper.

9.1 Introduction

By taking a snapshot of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in current US contexts, we expected to uncover emerging trends and define this now well-established corporate function. There is a great deal of professional literature – including an abundance of blogs and numerous social media groups – devoted to sharing ideas and discussing best practices in CSR.[1] And there are plenty of communication and CSR practitioners focusing on how to champion their organizations' social responsibility efforts.

As corporate communication practitioners with career-long experience in community relations, issues management, philanthropy, and corporate reputation man-

[1] LinkedIn, the social media site for professional business people, offers many discussion groups on the topic of CSR that help practitioners network, share insights, and conduct topical discussions. Examples include Corporate Social Responsibility and CSRwire, the Corporate Social Responsibility Newswire. Also of note are blogs such as Sustainable Business Forum, Corporate Responsibility: CSR Now, the Forbes Leadership Forum, and Cause Integration. These resources are written by social responsibility experts who follow the practice, pose intriguing questions for discussion, and report latest trends.

J. Straat, MA
Daiichi Sankyo (retired), Parsippany, NJ, USA

C.M. Genest, MA (✉)
Corporate Communication International (CCI),
Baruch College, City University of New York, New York, NY, USA
e-mail: christina.genest@gmail.com

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_9

agement, we chose the time-honored strategy of reviewing the literature and calling upon practicing CSR experts to share their knowledge and perspectives. But we discovered that defining CSR and identifying its most common and most current trends were not a simple task. Philip L. Cochran aptly described the complexity of CSR in his insightful Kelley School of Business article, "The Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility" (2007, p. 449):

> Over the past several decades, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has grown from a narrow and often marginalized notion into a complex and multi-faceted concept, one which is increasingly central to much of today's corporate decision making.

Although there are common threads throughout most CSR programs (i.e., corporate giving, volunteerism, environmental preservation, and ethics and transparency), corporations naturally tend to customize their CSR activities based on business relevance, specific business goals, workforce skill sets, and management perspective. The multifaceted nature of CSR revealed varying opinions about the concept, from how to define the function to what characterizes an effective CSR program. As far as identifying the current CSR climate, it seemed that authors and experts had differing opinions and definitions. Consistent, predictable trends were not easy to uncover.

So we continued our research, reviewing the findings of current literature, but also designing a survey for US CSR executives to capture their perspectives on the principles and practices of social responsibility within their organizations. We wanted to collect their views on what is important in the CSR world. We also wanted to uncover the best practices and expose themes not seen in the literature. Combining these two sources of data with our own real-world experience in CSR provided a contemporary, viable way to ascertain the current status of CSR.

Key questions driving the research were:

1. What activities are managed, monitored, and measured as part of the social responsibility/sustainability efforts of corporations?
2. Are CSR/sustainability goals integrated into the long-term business goals of corporations?
3. What were the top CSR goals of corporations?
4. Is it necessary to practice CSR to be competitive in today's marketplace?
5. Are CSR and sustainability practices important to a company's success in terms of profitability and reputation, and do businesses benefit from these activities?
6. Is good corporate citizenship a moral imperative?
7. Does the marketplace reward companies that engage in CSR and sustainability activities?

The authors invited 12 CSR leaders from the pharmaceutical industry, insurance, financial services, healthcare services, and technology, to participate in an anonymous online survey. All have considerable experience with designing or managing CSR departments and developing or executing sustainability programs. Eight completed the survey by the deadline given. Because respondents were guaranteed anonymity, survey questions did not solicit identifying information.

Arriving at a working definition for corporate social responsibility was the first step in our research.

9.2 What Is CSR?

Although definitions of corporate social responsibility abound, a straightforward and simple description is presented by Mallen Baker (2012) when he describes the practice as "… how businesses respond to society's expectations" (para. 1). Connection and interdependence between businesses and society are a common theme among the varying CSR definitions that currently exist.

Also, Whitman (2011) noted that:

> No organization operates in isolation. There is interaction with employees, customers, suppliers and stakeholders. CSR is about managing these relationships to produce an overall positive impact on society, while making money. (section: Examples of corporate social responsibility, para. 1).

Whitman's definition suggests a necessary relationship – an obligation perhaps – between corporations and their publics. A European Commission publication gives a simple description of the connection as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society" (2011, p. 6). It also suggests that in order to meet their CSR, enterprises should:

> … have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of maximizing the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholders and for their stakeholders and society at large, and identifying, preventing and mitigating their adverse impacts. (2011, p. 6)

CSR has also been defined as the triple bottom line (3BL): social, environmental, and economic or, more colloquially, as people, planet, and profits. 3BL is a "… key component to good corporate citizenship through sustainability," according to Scott (2012), and is "… now a widely heeded business prerogative by global brands … and small mom-and pop shops…" (para. 2). So, the triple bottom line is the recognition among global corporations as well as main street businesses that sustainability for their organizations also requires a sustainable community, environment, and economy.

No matter which definition is used, the concept is the same: CSR is about the corporation taking responsibility for the consequences of its communication and behavior with all its stakeholders. Neither society nor companies work in isolation, as Whitman (2013) noted. So establishing a symbiotic relationship is not only necessary but also a means to create value for both entities.

9.3 Key Trends in CSR

Several themes which help describe the current focus of CSR emerged from our research.

9.3.1 Trend #1: CSR Is Not PR

A revealing article ran in *The New York Times* on October 27, 2013, entitled "Goldman, Buying Redemption: The firm's big splash of philanthropy prompts critics to ask: How much is too much?" (Craig, Sunday Business 2013, p. 1). Essentially, the story reported that since 2008, Goldman Sachs had spent $1.6 million on social investing. In other words, "Engaging wasn't just the right thing, it was necessary, especially in the wake of the financial crisis when people said we weren't doing enough" explained John F.W. Rogers, the chief of staff at Goldman Sachs.

The article reports that Goldman, a firm known for its discretion, is not giving away its money quietly. In discussing two of its initiatives, one that supports women in developing countries and the other that assists small business, an unidentified Goldman employee remarked, "It's run like a Broadway show." That term brings to mind a big "production" with PR promotions and lots of activities designed to create interest in the said "show." That seems an apt description when one sees the manner in which corporations currently tout or even advertise their own sustainability and philanthropy efforts. But the description also creates skepticism about the real goal of these programs: is it to help the designated beneficiary of their efforts or to generate revenue and raise the corporate profile of the company?

Mr. Rogers claims the programs have "generated returns" on a few levels: (1) they have created a difference in people's lives, (2) employees appreciate the opportunity to become involved, and (3) potential employees want to work for a company that engages in such programs. All good outcomes, surely, and all three are an integral part of a vibrant CSR plan. But he further boasted, "Our shareholders recognize the value of all this." That remark may reveal the underlying goal of the massive philanthropy spend – keeping the shareholders satisfied.

Further, Peter Frankental claims, in his 2001 article entitled "Corporate social responsibility – a PR invention?" that CSR can only have sustainable value if:

- It embraces all the stakeholders of a company.
- It is reinforced by changes in company law relating to governance.
- It is rewarded by financial markets.
- Its definition relates to the goals of social and ecological sustainability.
- Its implementation is benchmarked and audited.
- It is open to public scrutiny.
- The compliance mechanisms are in place.
- It is embedded across the organization horizontally and vertically (section: So, is corporate social responsibility an invention of PR? para. 1).

No public relations concepts made his list, only strategies that contribute to real, sustainable corporate value. And when these elements are incorporated throughout the entire organization – at all levels and in all functions – they signal to stakeholders the breadth and depth of a company's commitment to social responsibility.

Although some observers may proclaim that CSR is an invention of PR, Whitman (2013) disagrees: "It's also clear that CSR isn't a cynical marketing ploy for big business; there are tangible benefits to be had by all. The key is not to treat CSR as an 'initiative,' but to simply view it as the way you do business" (section: Community, para. 4).

9.3.2 Trend #2: CSR Drives Corporate Value

The key findings of a report from The Center for Corporate Citizenship, "Commitment to Value: The State of Corporate Citizenship 2012 – Executive Summary," clearly demonstrate the value of CSR programs:

- 80 % or more of all executives, across all business types and industries, confirm that environmental, social, and governance investments create financial value for their companies.
- Companies that align corporate citizenship strategy with overall corporate strategy are more likely to achieve important business objectives. With reputation and corporate culture-related objectives, success was as much as nine times more likely for those who integrated than for those who do not.
- Environmental sustainability programs received the greatest increases in funding over the past three years and are expected to continue to be a funding priority over the next three.
- Duration of investment in corporate citizenship appears to have an impact on success with related business objectives. The percentages of those reporting success in achieving business objectives increased as the duration of an average corporate citizenship effort increased. Increases ranged 30–50 % when comparing durations on one year or less versus four years or more.
- Companies serving business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) markets place more emphasis on corporate citizenship than those companies operating only in B2C markets. Executives from solely B2C companies express the least confidence that corporate citizenship generates shareholder returns. This may be attributable to consumer's reluctance to fully embrace higher prices related to the cost of socially or environmentally conscious products (p. 1).

Our own survey findings showed that 57 % of respondents believe that the marketplace rewards companies that engage in CSR activities. A participant suggested that rewards come "over the long term, yes. Over the short term, probably not." Another remarked "I would like to think so, but I think it's hard to measure. I think bad acts (e.g., Exxon Valdez spill) have a greater effect than good deeds – probably in large part due to which get media attention."

9.3.3 Trend #3: CEOs Have a Lot to Say About CSR

In the world's largest CEO study on sustainability to date, 67 % of CEOs said they believed that business isn't doing enough. But in looking to the future, 63 % anticipate that sustainability will transform their industry within five years, and 76 % believe that embedding sustainability into their core business strategy will be a driver for profitability and new opportunities (The UN Global Compact-Accenture 2013b, p. 11).

However, these CEOs are frustrated. They are finding it difficult to measure the business value of sustainability and to successfully deliver the business case for action. Additionally, they see market failure as curtailing business efforts to meet global sustainability challenges (p. 11).

These CEOs are also calling for active participation of governments and policy-makers to work with business to align public policy with sustainability challenges on global, national, and local levels. At the same time, they are expressing the desire to learn from company leaders who have successfully embedded sustainability in their business strategy as a driver for innovation and growth, thus creating business value while achieving sustainable solutions (p. 12).

The UN Global Compact has been instrumental in raising the visibility of the need for worldwide sustainability efforts on behalf of all global citizens. In fact, some of our survey respondents note that their companies have signed the compact. We asked our respondents whether they agreed with the CEO call to action reported in the UN Global Compact – Accenture CEO Study on Sustainability described above. Two-thirds of survey respondents (67 %) concurred with the statement.

Additionally, one respondent surmised, “Some people believe that we are at the point of no return in terms of the damage done to the Earth.” But, she continued hopefully, “I would like to think that it’s still worth trying.”

That determination – to keep trying – seems to be what drives corporations and CEOs who develop strong social responsibility programs. Cheered on by their employees – and especially the youngest of them, the Millennials – they continue to create CSR programs, sell them up within their organization, motivate other employees to join in, and do their own part to be valuable corporate citizens. The programs they sponsor – whether philanthropic giving, environmental sustainability and beautification efforts, or training programs to support nonprofits – indicate that social responsibility is growing deep and wide within US businesses. It is encouraging to see. And, for employees and other key stakeholders, it is motivating to join in.

These statistics on the views of CEOs show the depth of their understanding and concern for the challenges that global sustainability issues present:

32 % say the global economy is on track to meet the demands of a growing population.
33 % think business is making sufficient efforts to address global sustainability challenges.
83 % believe that government policymaking and regulation will be critical to progress.
38 % believe they can accurately quantify the value of their sustainability initiatives.
37 % see the lack of a link to business value as a barrier to accelerating progress (The UN Global Compact-Accenture, p. 15).

So, in forward-thinking corporations, CSR and sustainable business practices have broadened from well-meaning community relations initiatives to the core of the organization’s value creation process.

9.3.4 Trend #4: CSR Performance Is Being Measured

According to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), 75 % of the top 100 companies in the USA are reporting on their corporate responsibility performance. GRI claims they are doing so for ethical and economic reasons. A European-based organization, GRI recently established Focal Point USA and Canada. Their mission is to make sustainability reporting standard corporate practice (GRI Website, Focal Point USA and Canada, Reporting in the US and Canada section, para. 3).

They are not alone in encouraging corporations to adopt sustainability reporting. The European Commission proposed an EU directive, dated April 16, 2013, that "All large companies in the EU will have to disclose information on (a) policies, (b) risks and (c) results as regards environmental matters, social and employee-related aspects, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery issues, and diversity on the boards of directors" (Katus, Nov. 1, 2013).

According to GRI, a sustainability report covers the economic, environmental, and social impacts of its activities and describes the organization's values, governance model, strategies, and commitments to a sustainable global economy (GRI Website, What is GRI?, An Overview of GRI section, para. 2). Additionally, there is now a call to report "material" sustainability topics which GRI defines as:

> Material topics for a reporting organization should include those topics that have a direct or indirect impact on an organization's ability to create, preserve or erode economic, environmental and social value for itself, its stakeholders and society at large. (Katus, Nov. 1 2013)

In fact, the "CSR Sustainability Monitor: 2012 Report on the Scope and Quality of CSR Reports from the World's Largest Corporations" found an emerging corporate practice of engaging outside assurance providers, such as public accounting and auditing firms and other specialized professionals, to further substantiate corporate reported outcomes. Of the 560 sustainability reports analyzed in their study, 252 were reviewed by an outside provider (Weissman Center for International Business, Baruch College/CUNY, p. 35).

Reporting from organizations themselves is augmented by lists and rankings from external sources as well. In addition to organizations such as the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy and the Center for Corporate Citizenship, annual accountings such as the Forbes.com list of "The World's Most Sustainable Companies of 2014" provide rankings of companies' sustainability efforts (Smith 2014). Such reports serve to validate the work of the ranked companies and also to motivate organizations not yet listed to improve and expand their sustainability efforts.

9.3.5 Trend #5: CSR Is Evolving Incrementally

9.3.5.1 Corporate Giving Is Now Strategic Philanthropy

Cochran (2007) reports that the era of modern philanthropy began about 1953, "… when corporations began giving for purposes not directly related to immediate corporate benefit." A major tenet of this era of corporate philanthropy, he offers, "…

was that it be 'from the heart,' rather than focused on any clear business or 'bottom line' gain" (p. 450). Indeed, philanthropy has been at the heart of CSR in the USA for more than 60 years. Since that mid-twentieth-century beginning, then, philanthropy has evolved from a way to help the corporation to a way to help others, and more recently, to become part of broader sustainability efforts for the corporation as well as for the society. Whether it is a major global corporation adopting a signature program, such as the Goldman Sachs's initiatives described earlier or a neighborhood pharmacy sponsoring a local little league baseball team, giving is part of the American corporate character.

But the evolution of CSR in the USA has many leaders broadening their scope. Accenture and the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP) in their report, "Business at its Best: Driving Sustainable Value Creation," identify CEOs "who are helping their companies identify business opportunities at the convergence of core strategy and societal issues" (2011, p. 1). These leaders are moving from the historic US emphasis on corporate philanthropy alone to seeking more strategic opportunities for competitive advantage, profits, and sustainable environments.

So when organizations plan their philanthropy, it is often more about helping create sustainability than simply giving away money. We know of one affinity group of CSR leaders from a variety of industries who designed an innovative way to aid nonprofits in a year when corporate funding budgets were cut. The group planned a day of training, offering courses to the nonprofits in computer technology, fundamentals of healthcare, human resources, and other key business functions. The CSR practitioners reached out to their personal networks and used their own business expertise to provide training that would ensure robust operations for those nonprofits. Ideas like this one are examples of how corporations are making contributions in ways that create sustainable organizations and not just their own.

9.3.5.2 CSR Reporting Is Now Engagement

Engagement – getting not only buy-in but *participation* from stakeholders – is currently the operative word in CSR. Employees especially are tapped to implement CSR principles and contribute their "sweat equity" to corporate CSR programs. Tim Mohin (2012) stresses the growing connection between CSR and employee engagement. He refers to a Society for Human Resources Management study that compares companies that have a strong sustainability program with those that have poor ones. In the companies with strong programs, he reports, "… morale was 55 % better, business processes were 43 % more efficient, public image was 43 % stronger, and employee loyalty was 38 % better" (section: 3. Employee engagement emerges, para 1).

Baker (2012) confirms this shift from reporting to engagement:

> The current model of corporate responsibility reporting has hit a ceiling …. So companies are now starting to focus their aim on the engagement side. Since customers, employees and suppliers generally don't read reports, companies are beginning to experiment with ways to

interest, entice and even seduce those stakeholders into wanting to engage with the company about what it's doing. (section: 1. Moving from reporting to engagement, para. 1 & 4)

In her report on a panel discussion about emerging trends in CSR, Alison Monahan (2012) noted that one panelist, Mitch Baranowski, cofounder of the brand innovation studio BBMG, suggested that "Your CSR reporting needs to be dynamic. A static report generated once a year isn't sufficient to respond to constantly changing conditions…. Pay more attention to engagement and empowerment, and less to information and education" (section: 4. CSR pressure increasingly bottom up, not top down, para. 3). More and more, CSR leaders are seeing the value of changing from reporting CSR news to their employees and other stakeholders to *involving* those stakeholders in the strategy for, the implementation of, and the storytelling about their CSR activities. Reporting on those initiatives therefore becomes more robust and ultimately more meaningful to the organization's stakeholders.

According to Crane and Matten (2013), the coming of age of social media and its use by CSR practitioners mean that "The main channels of engagement and communication for business are changing … it is here where we see the most significant changes in the way companies communicate" (section: Trend 5: Watch social media! para. 20). The interactive nature of social media "… amplifies the communication of real life impacts, of how people are affected, the need for discussion rather than one-way information, and the absolute imperative of time" (para. 20). They suggest that CSR communication "… is not just putting out a report once a year, but it is about informing on a regular basis, close to events" (para. 20).

Sharon Beattie's insightful article, "CSR Reporting 2.0, From Stats to Stories" (2012), also examines the engagement value of social media. She summarizes the shift to engagement quite succinctly: "Today, it's not enough to communicate what organizations are doing or have done when it comes to CSR. It's more important to engage your stakeholders in sharing your CSR story" (para. 4).

9.3.5.3 CSR Is Now Aligned with Business Goals and Expertise

Integrating business goals and social responsibility goals is a popular strategy for companies with CSR functions and moves the practice forward from the days when only the Public Affairs or Human Resources functions were working in that arena, with little input from their C-suite leaders. Our survey findings also confirmed this practice, with 75 % of respondents reporting that their organizations integrated their CSR goals with long-term business plans.

We had also asked respondents in our survey whether the concept of "doing good to do well" was becoming increasingly important in the last five years. Seventy-one percent of our survey respondents agreed that it was more important. One respondent offered that "It used to be that a company did good 'just because' or because it was the right thing to do. Now it's about lining up with business goals."

The elevation of CSR goal setting from the functional level to the corporate level was confirmed in our survey findings, with 75 % of respondent indicating that their CSR and sustainability goals are integrated into the company's long-term business goals. This response mirrors the report from the UN Global Compact-Accenture (2013a, b) indicating that 76 % of that study's respondents believe that embedding sustainability into their core business strategy will be a driver for profitability and new opportunities (p.11).

Integration makes goal setting easier for managers and for employees and makes measurement more accurate for corporations. The more transparent and monitored corporations keep their goals, the easier it will be to build sustainable organizations.

Cochran (2007) suggests that "Organizations should find social needs that align with their particular expertise" (p. 450). Aligning sustainability efforts with a company's core skills makes sense for a variety of reasons, including the fact of the expertise itself. Cochran points out that "Companies that focus on causes in their area of expertise will almost certainly be more efficient at addressing social needs" (p. 451). There is no learning curve, for example, when healthcare company scientists volunteer at a laboratory run by retired scientists offering real-life science experiments for high school students to encourage entry into one of the STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Math) professions. It's a good idea to "… exploit this synergy between the social and the economic, rather than try to minimize it," Cochran explains (p. 451).

The United Nations Global Compact, established in July 2000 and now the world's leading voluntary corporate sustainability initiative, proposes a model for corporate sustainability in "Architects of a Better World: Building the Post-2015 Business Engagement Architecture." Their model establishes sustainable development goals alongside long-term business goals and then follows through by building trust through transparency and accountability (making public commitments to principles and goals and adopting metrics and reporting and certification standards), scaling up platforms for action and partnership (utilizing issue platforms, local and business initiatives, and technology hubs), and taking advantage of market and society-based drivers and incentives (2013a, b, p. 3).

Alignment of business and social goals has piqued the interest of executives because they realize that it affects their financial bottom line. They are beginning to see that it has an impact on their reputational bottom line as well and that the two go hand in hand. A strong corporate image, built on multiple successes from quality products, strong business partnerships, integrity, and a visible focus on involvement in one's community, leads to a strong corporate reputation. That positive reputation brings customers to the door. It is becoming clearer to leaders that CSR activities provide visibility and reputation-building opportunities. Baker (2012) sees organizations taking on "the role of global citizen" and notes that "… suddenly engagement with societal problems is becoming more accepted as an aspect of business leadership" (section: 4. Taking the role of global citizens, para. 5).

9.3.5.4 Leaders Are Reporting on CSR, and Reporting Is Integrated

Crane and Matten (2013), in their "Top 5 CSR Trends for 2013," note that the GRI reporting guidelines for sustainability reporting will "… move CSR related reporting away from being a separate 'side show' to becoming an integrated part of the financial reporting of companies" (section: Trend 3: Beware of CSR Fatigue!, para. 2).

Given the integration of sustainability measures in business strategy and results, organizations such as the GRI, the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) (Gould, Nov.1 2013), and the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) are advocating the need for corporate integrated reporting. The IIRC, created for this purpose, defines Integrated Reporting (IR) as:

> … a process that results in communication by an organization, most visibly a periodic integrated report, about value creation over time. An integrated report is a concise communication about how an organization's strategy, governance, performance and prospects, in the context of its external environment, lead to the creation of value over the short, medium and long term. An integrated report should be prepared in accordance with the International <IR> Framework. (IIRC, homepage)

And, as confirmation that integrated goal setting and reporting are a successful strategy of many organizations, the Center for Corporate Citizenship report concluded that "Executives reporting integration of corporate citizenship and business goals are up to nine times more likely to report success with reputational and cultural goals" (2012, p. 1).

We asked survey respondents to rank their company's most important goals, offering as a template goals identified in the Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College's Carroll School of Management 2012 report (p. 5). Their top five ranked selections were:

1. Manage consumer expectations.
2. Enhance corporate reputation.
3. Create sustainable supply chain processes.
4. Manage risk.
5. Foster greater public trust.

All of the above are clearly key components of an effective and impactful CSR plan.

Ranking in the middle range were:

6. Increase market share.
7. Reinforce firm traditions and values.
8. Help solve social problems.

And the last five goals ranked at the bottom of the list by our respondents in terms of importance to their corporations were:

9. Motivate employees.
10. Manage community expectations.
11. Reduce waste.
12. Recruit employees.
13. Retain employees.

Seeing all three employee-related goals listed in the bottom five in terms of importance was unexpected. We anticipated that most employers would consider their employees to be their most important stakeholders, both in terms of driving success and as brand ambassadors for the company's CSR strategy and business goals.

We were also surprised to find that Goal #11, reduce waste, ranked at the bottom, especially since in a separate question in our survey, we had asked respondents to list which goals were managed and monitored in their organizations. A full 62 % of respondents reported that environmental and sustainability goals were the second most important CSR activity managed or monitored by their companies.

9.3.5.5 CSR Benefits the Corporation as Well as Society

In his article on the "Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility," Whitman (2013) remarks that "No longer is the term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' a novel idea amongst businesses." He refers to a 2011 sustainability study by MIT which shows that "… sustainability, in the U.S. at least, now plays a permanent part in 70 % of corporate agendas" (para. 1).

Whitman (2011) cites Unilever as an organization which has benefitted from its CSR activities:

> Organizations such as Unilever haven't simply been championing sustainable business as a form of corporate philanthropy. Since implementing their Sustainable Living Plan, they have increased growth and profits. Quite simply, doing good is good for business. (para. 2)

We asked our respondents about the importance of CSR in their competitive markets, and the results were not surprising. A full 100 % of respondents agreed that corporations need to be authentically involved in sustainability and CSR activities if they want to maintain a competitive edge.

Employees want to be associated with organizations that care about their community (people), the environment (planet), as well as making money (profit), the so-called triple bottom line of social responsibility. So companies with active and visible social responsibility programs that offer employees opportunities to participate will be more successful than those who do not have such programs. One respondent stated, "This [CSR] is less about a PR opportunity and more about attracting and keeping talent. Employees care whether or not an employer is a good corporate citizen." Emphasizing the importance of building a strong reputation, our study found that "Consumers and customers expect organizations to be responsible. It's part of their loyalty determination." CSR "needs to be part of the fabric of the organization in everything that you do," one respondent noted. Other responses posited that "Companies trusted by customers do better than companies that are not trusted. CSR is seen as integral to greater trust." And Cochran (2007) signals his agreement with the concept of building trust through corporate responsibility activities when he cautions that "In today's business environment, executives must either embrace corporate social responsibility or risk serious consequences" (p. 449).

We noted in the 2012 report of The Center for Corporate Citizenship that 80 % or more of executives confirm that environmental and social and governance investments create financial value for companies. Our survey findings concurred. Most respondents believe that involvement in CSR does help build a strong reputation for the company and does contribute to its profitability and success. But they indicated that reputation enhancement is a stronger result of such activities than contributions toward profitability. Seventy-two percent of respondents said that CSR was very important or extremely important to a company's reputation, but only 37 % said the same for profitability.

When it comes to benefiting from social responsibility activities, all respondents (100 %) indicated that their organizations do indeed benefit. One respondent noted that building a strong reputation affects the global organization just as quickly as it does the US affiliate. Another agreed, saying that "it allows for local visibility, but more importantly, CSR activities give another opportunity for employees to connect with the company and with each other." The benefits are there, one respondent offered, but "More than profits, it is integral to our license to operate."

9.3.6 Trend #6: CSR Is a Business Imperative and a Moral Imperative

Do organizations need CSR programs to be successful? Our survey findings showed that they do, even suggesting that "It is 'the ante' for doing business." That clever poker analogy indicates how far the practice of social responsibility has come in the last decade. If CSR is indeed "the ante" for getting into business, organizations that are already engaged in this type of work will have a competitive advantage, and those that have not yet adopted CSR practices will need to catch up. But the 29 % of survey respondents who did not agree that CSR is a corporate imperative share a concern about the financial burden of such programs: "I hear about budgets for CSR being cut all the time. And I see nonprofits that previously had good support now struggling." Alison Monahan (2012), in her article on "Four Emerging Trends in CSR," outlines key proof points that CSR is indeed a business imperative:

1. Potential partners want to work with a sustainable company for wholly practical reasons: to save money via decreased resource consumption and to avoid the potential for damaging bad publicity.
2. Employees want to work for a company that's making a difference, and, when the company is under attack, they need relevant information so they can advocate on the company's behalf.
3. Potential employees look to CSR reports and other information to get a sense of the corporate culture. They are reading the reports and asking hard questions even before they come on board.
4. Dialoging with internal and external stakeholders can generate good solutions from the crowd (section: 3. CSR is a business imperative, para. 1).

As to whether participation in CSR activities has become a moral imperative, 71 % of respondents said yes, agreeing with a response that noted "If a corporation is making a profit, then giving back is absolutely essential. It's important for the reputation of the company in the community and with employees."

9.4 The Bottom Line on the Triple Bottom Line, for Now

CSR is gaining momentum as a corporate practice in the USA. Ryan Scott (2014), a regular contributor to Forbes.com on CSR topics and developer of the Community Impact Platform which allows organizations to launch unique social change initiatives that highly engage their members and deeply impact their communities, believes that "CSR is a business approach that is here to stay. All the world's largest companies have corporate social responsibility programs; indeed, according to a 2013 study by Boston College's Center for Corporate Citizenship, 97 % of surveyed companies reported being allocated a discreet operating budget for corporate citizenship" (para. 1). So companies are putting their financial resources behind CSR activities.

Our snapshot of CSR as it appears today in a US context confirms that the practice of social responsibility is indeed a complex, evolving discipline. We were able to gain insights into several trends, which show that CSR is growing in popularity and scope:

1. CSR is not PR. They may be related, but they are certainly not the same.
2. CSR drives corporate value. It is one of the many important ways that corporations connect with their stakeholders.
3. CEOs have a lot to say about CSR. Once relegated to a Public Affairs function, the practice of CSR is moving up to the C-suite.
4. CSR performance is being measured. Outcomes of CSR initiatives are an important addition to a company's story.
5. CSR is evolving incrementally. It is becoming a more strategic function through stakeholder engagement, alignment with business goals, and integrated reporting.
6. CSR is a business and a moral imperative. Employees and other key partners expect organizations to focus on sustainability for the company and for the society.

Businesses and their employees are embracing the concept of social responsibility because it is good for business, it helps them feel part of something other than themselves, and it helps build reputations and drive profitability. We cannot predict what will come next, but we can report that CSR continues to have a significant impact on how US businesses operate.

The world of CSR in the USA has evolved and changed considerably in the last decade. Clearly, the rise of social media as a preferred tool for communication has had a strong influence on the speed of this change. The public is continually bombarded with signs of these changes – in the newspaper advertisements touting a company's charitable giving, in the cause marketing programs that invite us to participate in a corporation's philanthropy through purchasing their products, and in the growing voices of employees who are encouraging volunteerism and participating in community social programs. Being visibly active in the CSR space – or treating it like a Broadway show, as one Goldman employee put it – is becoming an art form in itself. Leah Eichler (2013), in her article, "Is Doing Good a Sustainable Business Model?" remarks that there is a "… distinctive 'feel good' vibe in the air." She believes that:

> … being good – as a corporate citizen and an employer – has become more ingrained in the corporate culture. It is no longer just public relations firms that are extolling the virtues of their clients; companies and employers seem to be presenting themselves as both virtuous and profitable. (para. 1)

So, talking about good works and how we champion causes that benefit our communities and our environment appears to be as important as actually doing it. Touting good works is a delicate balance between the pure philanthropic nature of social responsibility efforts and the public relations spin that many companies put on their sustainability efforts. This potential dilution of the "good" in good works often brings the company back to the 1950s when, as Cochran (2007) points out, philanthropy was designed to relate more directly to corporate profit.

But, as we see from our research of the current literature, the right balance can be achieved. Cochran nicely sums up the synergy that should exist between corporations and society as they merge their efforts to create sustainable businesses and environments:

> Perhaps the most important intellectual breakthrough regarding modern conceptions of CSR is that socially responsible activities can, and *should*, be used to enhance the bottom line. The corollary is that most, if not all, economic decisions should also be screened for their social impact. Economic returns and social returns should not remain quarantined in insolated units. (2007, p. 453)

It appears from our survey of current CSR practitioners, as well as our study of CSR research organizations and social media blogs, that US CSR is moving in this direction, as organizations work to make connections with society in ways that make the most sense for their business and make the most of their expertise. Harnessing the collective power of society and business will surely help build the sustainability that both require.

References

Baker, M. 2012. *Four emerging trends in corporate social responsibility*. Retrieved from www.mallenbaker.net/csr/page.php?Story_ID=2747.

Beattie, S. 2012. *CSR reporting 2.0: From stats to stories*. SustainableBrands.com Retrieved from http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/mar2012/csr-reporting-20-stats-stories.

Center for Corporate Citizenship, Boston College, Carroll School of Management. 2012. *Commitment to value: The state of corporate citizenship 2012 – Executive summary.* Chestnut Hill. Retrieved from http://www.bcccc.net/pdf/SOCC2012ExecSummaryPresentation.pdf.

Cochran, P.L. 2007. The evolution of corporate social responsibility. *Business Horizons* 50(6): 449–454. Retrieved from http://uploadkon.ir/uploads/1-s2.0-S0007681307000808-main.pdf.

Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. 2011. *A renewed EU strategy 2011–14 for Corporate Social Responsibility* (COM (2011) 681 final). Brussels: The European Commission, October 25.

Craig, S. 2013. Goldman, buying redemption: The firm's big splash of philanthropy prompts critics to ask: How much is too much? *The New York Times*, *Sunday Business*, 1, October 27.

Crane, A., and D. Matten. 2013. The top CSR trends for 2013. *Sustainable Business Forum.* Retrieved from http://craneandmatten.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-top-5-csr-trends-for-2013.html.

Eichler, L. 2013. Is doing good a sustainable business model? *The Globe and Mail.* Retrieved from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/career-advice/life-at-work/good-vibes-for-social-responsibility/article14575293.

Frankental, P. 2001. Corporate social responsibility – A PR invention? *Corporate Communication: An International Journal* 6(1) in abridged version retrieved October 10, 2013 from http://first.emeraldinsight.com/articles/csr.htm.

Global Reporting Initiative. 2014. Retrieved January 17, 2014, from https://www.globalreporting.org/network/regional-networks/gri-focal-points/focal-point-usa/Pages/default.aspx.

Gould, S. 2013. *Integrated reporting.* PowerPoint presented at symposium conducted by Corporate Communication International and The Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity at Baruch College, City University of New York, New York, NY, November 1.

International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC). 2013. Retrieved November 24, 2013, from http://www.theiirc.org.

Katus, S. 2013. *GRI & G4: Update.* PowerPoint presented at symposium conducted by Corporate Communication International and The Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity at Baruch College, City University of New York, New York, NY, November 1.

Mohin, T. 2012. The top 10 trends in CSR for 2012. *Forbes.com*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2012/01/18/the-top-10-trends-in-csr-for-2012/.

Monahan, A. 2012. *Four emerging trends in corporate social responsibility*. Retrieved from http://www.triplepundit.com/2012/03/technology-be-driver-social-good/?doing_wp_.

Scott, R. 2012. The bottom line of corporate good. *Forbes.com.* Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/causeintegration/2012/09/14/the-bottom-line-of-corporate-good/.

Scott, R. 2014. The key ingredient of CSR. *Forbes.com*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/causeintegration/2014/02/26/the-key-ingredient-of-csr/.

Smith, J. 2014. The world's most sustainable companies of 2014. *Forbes.com*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2013/01/23/the-worlds-most-sustainable-companies/.

UN Global Compact. 2013a. *Architects of a better world: Building the post–2015 business engagement architecture*. Retrieved from http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/about_the_gc/Architecture.pdf.

UN Global Compact. 2013b. *The UN Global Compact-Accenture CEO Study on sustainability 2013: Architects of a better world.* Retrieved from http://www.accenture.com/Microsites/ungc-ceo-study/Documents/pdf/13-1739_UNGC%20report_Final_FSC3.pdf.

Weissman Center for International Business, Zicklin School of Business. 2013. *CSR sustainability monitor. 2012 report on the scope and quality of CSR reports from the world's largest corporations,* New York: Ferns, W. and Sethi. S. P.

Whitman, M. 2011. Benefits of corporate social responsibility. *Sustainable Business Forum.* Retrieved from http://sustainablebusinessforum.com/sbtoolkit/179556/benefits-corporate-social-responsibility.

Whitman, M. 2013. Benefits of corporate social responsibility. Sustainable Business Forum. Retrieved from http://sustainablebusinessforum.com/sbtoolkit/179556/benefits-corporate-social-responsibility

Part IV
Employee Communications

Chapter 10
Distributions of Conflict Potentials Among Western and Chinese Employees in Multinational Corporations in China

Shiyong Peng

Abstract This study is a secondary analysis based on the study of Peng (Culture and conflict management in foreign-invested enterprises in China: an intercultural communication perspective. Peter Lang, Bern, 2003). The distribution of five categories of work-related conflicts was tabulated and analyzed among American, French, and Chinese employees in foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) as well as Chinese employees in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in mainland China. These are conflicts on salary, promotion, and fringe benefits, conflict on job assignment, conflict on worldview, conflict on personal taste and character, and conflict on management styles. The results of the data analysis generated an emerging pattern of conflict distribution that basically corresponds to the conflict management patterns of Western and Chinese employees in foreign-invested enterprises. The results of this study indicate that for conflict on salary, the Chinese have a higher conflict potential than Americans and French, whereas Americans have a higher conflict potential on management styles than French and Chinese. The influence of cultural values on conflict management styles is clearly reflected by the differences among American, Chinese, and French across their respective management styles over all five categories of conflicts. Between the FIE Chinese and SOE Chinese, significant differences are also found over the management styles of the five conflicts. The overall results of this study provide us with an insightful understanding that the collectivistic and individualistic orientations of high-contextual and low-contextual cultural members are not always aligned with the nonconfrontational and confrontational conflict management styles as we customarily believe. Conflict management styles should be expected, explained, and interpreted through a combination of cultural orientation, conflict stake, and personality.

S. Peng (✉)
Department of Communication Studies and Languages, Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE
e-mail: sherwin_peng@yahoo.com

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_10

10.1 Introduction

Based on the secondary data analysis, this study attempted to find how work-related conflicts were most frequently encountered by American, French, and Chinese employees in foreign-invested enterprises in mainland China. The analysis was focused on the distributions of five types of work-related conflicts: (1) salary, promotion, and fringe benefits, (2) job assignment, (3) worldviews, (4) personal taste and characters, and (5) management styles. The objective of this study was to determine whether there were differences in conflict encounter between Western and Chinese employees and how their respective cultural values may possibly affect the way they perceived conflict potentials and the stake of conflicts at the workplace.

The distribution tendencies of these conflicts were examined from the perspectives of cultural and social differences members of the four cultural groups brought with them into the organizations. The results of the analysis indicate that employees from different cultural groups have different chances of encountering different types of conflicts in foreign-invested enterprises in China, depending on their perceptions of the stakes of the conflicts and their cultural values. In addition to differences in cultural values, salary scales, education backgrounds, and career perspectives may also affect how employees perceived one conflict with higher stake than the other.

The knowledge of conflict potential distributions among Western and Chinese employees can help corporate management design and implement more effective human resources management policies for better organizational efficiency and enhancement of team spirit, group harmony, job satisfaction, crisis management, and interpersonal relationship among the employees of different cultural backgrounds. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide possible clues for future research in conflict studies in various intercultural settings.

10.2 Literature Review

Differences in conflict management between members of different cultures have well been documented by scholars (e.g., Friedman et al. 2000; Gross and Guerrero 2000; Kozan 1989; Rahim 1989). For example, Leung (1988) found that the Chinese are more likely to engage in conflict with out-group members (strangers) than with in-group members (friends). He confirmed that members of individualistic cultures are more accustomed to meeting with people and can get along with new people more easily, whereas members of collectivistic cultures put more value on cooperation with their in-group members (Triandis et al. 1988). Leung and Lind (1986) discovered that Americans prefer an adversary procedure to resolve dispute, whereas the Chinese are indifferent to both adversary and inadversary procedures.

In another study, Trubisky et al. (1991) found that collectivistic Taiwanese Chinese are more likely to adopt obliging and avoiding strategies than individualistic Americans in conflict situations. Trubisky et al. (1991) also found that in conflict situations, Americans are more dominating than the Japanese and Koreans and that the Chinese are more obliging and avoiding than Americans.

These findings confirmed Hofstede's (1980) assumptions on the differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultural members in managing conflict and provided empirical support to the proposition of Ting-Toomey (1985) that members of low-context cultures are more likely to adopt confrontational styles than members of high-context cultures. Such findings have been further supported by Tse et al. (1994) who found that the Chinese are more likely to avoid conflicts than Canadians and Americans and Peng (2003) who found out that French are more concerned with maintaining interpersonal relationships than Americans in most of the conflict scenarios. Their findings are consistent with Hofstede's argument that in collectivistic cultures, "relationships prevail over task" (Hofstede 1991, p. 67) as well as Ting-Toomey's (1985) assumption that in high-context cultures, relationship maintenance is an important concern in conflict situations. Peng (2003) also found that Americans and French, while working in foreign-invested enterprises in China, tend to compromise in managing conflict in order to adapt to the Chinese conflict management styles.

In their study of the management styles of Chinese and American managers, Jehn and Weldon (1997, p. 315) found that Chinese managers prefer passive conflict management styles such as avoiding, whereas American managers prefer a more proactive problem approach "focused on immediate and direct attention to task-related conflicts."

Communication scholars of Chinese ethnic background (e.g., Cai and Gonzalez 1997–1998; Chen and Hao 1997–1998; Hwang 1987, 1997–1998; Jia 1997–1998; Wang and Wu 1997–1998) studied conflict management from a native Chinese cultural perspective. Their studies rendered results across a wide range of conflict scenarios. For example, Hwang (1987, 1997–1998, p. 25) proposed a model of conflict management that incorporated some core values of the Chinese culture such as connections (*guanxi*), face, interpersonal harmony, and favor to predict how conflict is managed in the Chinese society. This model is built on two dimensions: dimension of "pursuing vs. discarding personal goal" and the dimension of "maintaining vs. ignoring interpersonal harmony." Hwang argued that when a person chooses to discard interpersonal harmony, she/he may choose to confront the conflicting party. However, if this person chooses to maintain interpersonal harmony, she/he may choose to endure the conflicting party. His arguments and assumptions imply that Chinese people are not always as nonconfrontational or avoiding in interpersonal conflicts as what they are understood to be in most cases. They may choose different conflict management styles depending on the stake of the conflict they perceive.

In many situations, the Chinese may adopt confrontational approaches when their personal interests or benefits are jeopardized. For example, inside organizations, face-to-face argument, or head-on confrontation is not uncommon when it comes to salary increment, office space allocation, annual performance evaluation, or other monetary benefits.

Hwang's assumptions opened up some clues for us to look into how the Chinese perceive the stakes of conflicts in various scenarios. But unfortunately, up to now, studies that relate cultural values, conflict management, and the stakes of conflicts as perceived by members of cultural groups are not yet seen much. In addition, Hwang's model needs to be tested empirically, and the cultural concepts such as face, connections, and favor need culture-specific operationalizations before significant relationships can be found. This job, if done substantially, can help facilitate our conflict research.

Although Yu (1997–1998, p. 68) agreed with Hwang's perception of how Chinese people manage conflicts and concluded that the Chinese consider conflict as bad, destructive, and negative, both of them agreed that the Chinese tend to adopt similar conflict management styles as those from low-context cultures, for example, Americans, depending on various conflict situations.

From a Chinese cultural perspective, Wang and Wu (1997–1998) investigated an indigenous conflict management approach of the Chinese, the ideological work, a dominant communication approach to manage conflicts between individual and collective interests during Mao's period in China. During that period, this was more of a one-way, top-down mind persuasion using Mao's philosophy than a two-way symmetrical interpersonal communication.

Literature on conflict management studies shows that conflict management styles are in most cases dichotomous: confrontational and nonconfrontational. For example, the Chinese tend to be more nonconfrontational and Westerners tend to be more confrontational. However, this does not negate the fact that the Chinese can be confrontational when they perceive conflict with high stake threatening their personal interests. But when and how the Chinese will use confrontational style is still a question that needs to be answered by empirical examination and comparison in both monocultural and intercultural environments.

From the literature, we found that most of the cross-cultural studies of conflict management share some limitations. First, samples of Chinese ethnicity were usually selected from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States (e.g., Trubisky et al. 1991). Although the Chinese from all over the world share the same traditional Chinese culture, they are different in many ways because of the acculturation process of those living outside mainland China (Fuller and Peterson 1992). Thus, it is inappropriate to generalize findings derived from overseas Chinese communities to the Chinese people considered as an identical cultural group. Another limitation is the employment of either self-selected or convenience samples. Accordingly, although these studies shed new light on the relationships between culture and conflict management, their overall generalizability is dubious because cultural values, although resistant to change, may not remain as they are assumed in the past studies (e.g., Trubisky et al. 1991; Tse et al. 1994).

Most of the studies (e.g., Jehn and Weldon 1997; Trubisky et al. 1991; Peng 2003) discovered the general tendency that the collectivistic Chinese are passive, whereas individualistic Americans are confrontational in conflict management, although differences do exist between mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese. But these findings were obtained in monocultural environments. Would conflict management styles of cultural members be affected when they are in an intercultural setting? If yes, how would such an environment influence their styles of conflict management? And how would the nature of conflict affect the management styles of cultural members?

This current study attempts to analyze the distributions of work-related conflicts among Americans, French, and Chinese. Together with the findings of Peng et al. (2000) and Peng (2003), it intends to discover how the distributions of conflict potentials are related to the nature and the perceived stake of conflicts among different cultural members. The objective of this study is to find out how conflict potentials are distributed among employees of different cultural backgrounds in foreign-invested enterprises in mainland China and what the cultural implications of the conflict distributions are.

10.3 Method

The data for this study was initially collected by Peng (2003). The data analyzed for this study contains the answers from 524 participants to question 61 of the questionnaire of Peng (see Peng 2003), and these answers were not analyzed in the original study. This question solicited answers to seven mutually exclusive types of conflicts which FIE employees most frequently encountered. They are conflicts in salary and promotion, fringe benefits, job assignment, differing worldview, different personal taste and character, management, and others. Respondents were requested to choose only one out of these seven conflicts as the most frequently encountered conflict in their workplace.

The original data were collected through a census in Guangdong province in mainland China in 1999 (see Peng 2003). Four groups of respondents involved in the original study included Americans, French, Chinese working in foreign-invested enterprises (FIE Chinese) and Chinese working in state-owned enterprises (SOE Chinese). The SOEs in this study include ten factories, ten trading companies, one subway company, and five government offices, whereas the FIEs include 11 trading companies and one nuclear power station.

The questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents and collected when completed by the respondents.

In order to apply cross-tabulation, the dataset was recorded with conflict on salary, promotion, and conflict on fringe benefits (fewer than 5 cases) combined and conflict on management styles and other conflicts (fewer than 5 cases) combined. Thus, the final dataset only included five types of conflicts.

10.4 Results

The results of cross-tabulation analysis produced a pattern of conflict encounter in that the American and the French tend to form one group, whereas the FIE Chinese and SOE Chinese another. The results of cross-tabulation are presented in the following table.

10.4.1 Summary of Conflicts Encountered by Respondents in FIE in China

	American		French		FIE Chinese		SOE Chinese	
	$n = 150$		$n = 74$		$n = 150$		$n = 150$	
Salary/promotion/ fringe benefits	14	9.33 %	7	9.46 %	26	17.33 %	29	19.33 %
Job assignment	22	14.67 %	12	16.22 %	51	34 %	39	26 %
Worldviews	16	10.7 %	15	20.27 %	13	8.67 %	22	14.67 %
Personal taste/character	30	20 %	13	17.57 %	18	12 %	34	22.67 %
Management styles	67	44.67 %	26	35.14 %	42	28 %	26	17.33 %

$\chi^2 = 51.735$. df $= 12$; $p < 0.001$

10.4.2 Conflict on Salary, Promotion, and Fringe Benefits

Of the four groups, both the FIE Chinese (17.33 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, and SOE Chinese (19.33 %),$\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, had higher conflict potentials than American (9.33 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, and French (9.46) $\chi^2(12, N = 74) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, employees. Obviously, the Chinese tended to conflict more than Americans and French on salary, promotion, and fringe benefit issues.

10.4.3 Conflict on Job Assignment

The results of this conflict are similar to those of the first conflict in that the FIE Chinese (34 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, and SOE Chinese (26 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, have higher conflict potentials than Americans (14.67 %) and French (16.22 %).

10.4.4 Conflict on Worldviews

Across the four groups of respondents, French employees (20.27 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 74) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, have the highest conflict potential followed by the SOE Chinese (14.67 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, p < 0.001. The conflict potential of Americans (10.7 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, and FIE Chinese (8.67 %), $\chi^2(12, N = 150) = 51.735$, $p < 0.001$, is lower than the SOE Chinese and French.

10.4.5 Conflict on Personal Tastes and Characters

The SOE Chinese (22.67 %), $\chi^2(12, N=150)=51.735$, $p<0.001$, have the highest potential of getting into conflict with personal taste and character followed by Americans (20 %), $\chi^2(12, N=150)=51.735$, $p<0.001$, French (17.57 %), $\chi^2(12, N=74)=51.735$, $p<0.001$, and FIE Chinese (12 %), $\chi^2(12, N=150)=51.735$, $p<0.001$.

10.4.6 Conflict on Management Styles

For the potential of this conflict, American (44.67 %), $\chi^2(12, N=150)=51.735$, $p<0.001$, and French (35.14 %), $\chi^2(12, N=74)=51.735$, $p<0.001$, are higher than the FIE Chinese (28 %), $\chi^2(12, N=150)=51.735$, $p<0.001$, and SOE Chinese (17.33 %), $\chi^2(12, N=150)=51.735$, $p<0.001$.

10.5 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of data analysis provide a new angle for us to understand how Western and Chinese FIE employees encounter conflicts at the workplace. The four groups of respondents can be basically divided into two distinctive groups, American and French as the Western group and FIE Chinese and SOE Chinese as the Chinese group. The Chinese group tends to be more frequent in encountering conflicts on salary/promotion/fringe benefits and job assignment than the Western group, and Western group tends to be more frequent in encountering conflicts on worldview and management styles. For conflict on personal taste, the four groups are independent.

The FIE and SOE Chinese had the highest percentage of encountering conflict in salary, promotion, and fringe benefits. This is probably due to substantial salary difference between Western and Chinese employees. For FIE Chinese, only 2 % have a monthly salary of more than 611 US dollars. The majority of them only have a monthly salary below 121 dollars. Such a large difference can quite possibly become conflict potential, particularly when American colleagues make as much as more than several thousand dollars a month. Of the FIE Chinese and SOE Chinese, the FIE Chinese have a higher salary than the SOE Chinese. This supports the findings that the SOE Chinese (19.33 %) have a slightly higher percentage than the FIE Chinese (17.33 %) in encountering conflict on salary, promotion, and fringe benefits. According to the study of Peng (2003), most of the FIE Chinese hold lower positions in the organization, and almost all of them have a common worry of job security. These factors added up can influence how they find their job remuneration. On this conflict potential, Americans and French are low, only 9.33 % and 9.46 %, respectively. Their lower level of conflict potential can be clearly explained by their higher level of salary as compared to the FIE Chinese.

For conflict on job assignment, the FIE Chinese (34 %) had the highest conflict potential followed by the SOE Chinese (26 %). This finding confirms the possible pattern of division of labor between Western and local Chinese employees in that Western employees take more managerial and supervising positions, whereas the local Chinese take more subordinate positions (Peng 2003). Because most of the FIE Chinese are in subordinate positions and are assigned to various tasks rather than making decisions, it is natural that they have a higher percentage in encountering conflict on job assignment because of differences in culture, leadership, and management styles. Even though 15 % of FIE Chinese employees are department managers (Peng 2003, p. 123), they usually have to report to Western supervisors, whereas Western employees might not have a direct supervisor to report to within their domain of their leadership. Usually Western employees do not have to report to Chinese supervisors in FIEs in China. This is because most of the FIE executives or higher-level supervisors are non-Chinese citizens. The SOE Chinese have a lower percentage of conflict on job assignment as compared with the FIE Chinese. In this study, the surveyed SOE Chinese are either technicians or managerial personnel, most of whom are decision makers in the workplace. The difference between FIE Chinese and SOE Chinese can be well explained by their job positions with SOE Chinese holding positions higher than FIE Chinese.

The results of conflict potential on worldview are consistent with our understanding. French and American employees have higher conflict potentials than Chinese. To them, China is a foreign country. Because most of them did not get pre-assignment intercultural training (Peng 2003), it is no surprise that they have a higher percentage of finding conflicting worldview in the workplace. FIE Chinese are a bit different. First, they are more homogeneous than American and French, and most of them got higher education and had opportunities to learn English. An interesting phenomenon in FIEs in China is that few Western employees can speak Chinese, whereas almost all FIE Chinese can speak English (Peng 2003). Learning English can get the FIE Chinese exposed to the American cultural and values systems; thus, they should have a higher level of cultural sensitivity than American employees. Additionally, the FIE Chinese are much younger than Western employees. All these can help to explain why Western employees tend to find more conflicting worldviews than the FIE Chinese.

From another perspective, in day-to-day communication between Chinese and Western expatriates, language differences or language application can also cause conflicts or at least misunderstandings (Fischer 2013) that can be otherwise avoided. For example, in Chinese culture, asking someone's age or marital status is not necessarily considered as privacy intrusion. Particularly in some rural areas of China, a senior may ask a junior about his or her age or marital status to show his or her interest in the junior. The juniors may also ask about the ages of the seniors in a polite way to show their respect of the seniors for their time-honored experience. "May I know your good age?" (**请问您今年贵庚?**) is a typical question a junior may ask a senior.

A lot of times, Western expatriates need to understand that the use of English by the Chinese is coated with Chinese cultural implications. In such a situation, conflicts should be accepted or tolerated if the intention of the speaker is understood.

Management style is another area of conflict where the force of cultural value is reflected. It is more possible for Americans (44.67 %) and French (35.14 %) than the FIE (28 %) and SOE Chinese (17.33 %) to encounter conflicting management styles. The higher percentage of conflict potential on management styles among American and French employees is consistent with their tendency toward getting involved with worldview conflict with Chinese employees because these two factors are conceptually and culturally related. While living and working in a different cultural environment, the next higher percentage of conflict of Americans on personal taste and character is easily explained. The French have a quite low chance of getting into conflict on personal taste and characters as compared with Americans. This is because all the investigated French employees in this study work and live in a huge compound somewhat isolated from the local Chinese community. According to the French administrator, they seldom have opportunities to communicate with the Chinese. In their workplace, there are a very small number of Chinese employees, all of whom are at lower administrative positions.

The overall results of this study provide us with an insightful understanding of the perceived conflict potentials and cultural value. For example, the collectivistic and individualistic orientations of high-contextual and low-contextual cultural members are not always aligned with the nonconfrontational and confrontational conflict management styles. Conflict management styles should be expected and interpreted through a combination of cultural orientation, conflict stake, and personality.

Over the past decades, scholars have produced a rich literature on conflict management, but most of the studies are focused on the aspects of how conflict was managed or resolved. Scholars of conflict management tended to analyze conflict management along the high-context and low-context culture orientation (Ting-Toomey 1985; Trubisky et al. 1991; Yu 1997–1998) or individualism and collectivism dimension (Hofstede 1991; Jehn and Weldon 1997; Ma et al. 2010; Peng 2003; Tse et al. 1994).

However, this study attempted to go beyond the conflict management strategies and intended to find out how conflicts are perceived and categorized by the members of different cultural groups. Since this study is based on secondary data, its limitations are obvious. For example, I am not able to find out any possible attitude change of the respondents.

The best approach for a study of this nature may be based on a wide range of possible workplace conflict scenarios using field observation method, thus generating conflict categories more representative of specific organization and cultural settings.

References

Cai, B., and A. Gonzalez. 1997–1998. The Three Gorges project: Technological discourse and the resolution of competing interests [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 7(1): 101–111.

Chen, Y.R., and X.M. Hao. 1997–1998. Conflict resolution in love triangles: Perspectives offered by Chinese TV dramas [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 7(1): 133–148.

Fischer, M. 2013. Language choice as a potential source of intercultural discord in English-Mandarin business encounters. *China Media Research* 9(4): 45–52.

Friedman, R.A., S.T. Tidd, S.C. Currall, and J.C. Tsai. 2000. What goes around comes around: The impact of personal conflict style on work conflict and stress. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 11(1): 32–55.

Fuller, E., and R.B. Peterson. 1992. China and Taiwan: Common culture but divergent economic success. In *Advances in International Comparative Management, 7*, ed. B.B. Prasaol, 185–201. Greenwich: JAI Press.

Gross, M.A., and L.K. Guerrero. 2000. Managing conflict appropriately and effectively: An application of the competence model to Rahim's organizational conflict styles. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 11(3): 200–226.

Hofstede, G. 1980. *Culture's consequences*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Hofstede, G. 1991. *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Hwang, K.K. 1987. Face and favor: The Chinese power game. *American Journal of Sociology* 92(4): 944–974.

Hwang, K.K. 1997–1998. Guanxi and Mientze: Conflict resolution in Chinese society [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 7(1): 17–42.

Jehn, K., and E. Weldon. 1997. Managerial attitudes toward conflict: Cross-cultural differences in resolution styles. *Journal of International Management* 3(4): 291–321.

Jia, W.S. 1997–1998. Facework as a Chinese conflict-preventative mechanism: A cultural discourse analysis [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 7(1): 43–61.

Kozan, M.K. 1989. Cultural influences on styles of handling interpersonal conflicts: Comparisons among Jordanian, Turkish, and U.S. managers. *Human Relations* 42(9): 787–799.

Leung, K. 1988. Some determinants of conflict avoidance. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 19(1): 125–136.

Leung, K., and E.A. Lind. 1986. Procedural Justice and culture: Effects of culture, gender, and investigator status on procedural preferences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50(6): 1134–1140.

Ma, Z., A. Erkus, and A. Tabak. 2010. Explore the impact of collectivism on conflict management styles: A Turkish study. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* 21(2): 169–185.

Peng, S.Y., Z. He, and J.H. Zhu. 2000. Conflict management styles among employees of Sino-American, Sino-French, and state-owned enterprises in China [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 9(2): 33–46.

Peng, S.Y. 2003. *Culture and conflict management in foreign-invested enterprises in China: An intercultural communication perspective*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Rahim, M.A. (ed.). 1989. *Managing conflict: An interdisciplinary approach*. New York: Praeger.

Ting-Toomey, S. 1985. Toward a theory of conflict and culture. In *Communication culture, and organizational processes*, ed. W.B. Gudykunst, L.P. Stewart, and S. Ting-Toomey, 71–86. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Triandis, H.C., R. Brislin, and C.H. Hui. 1988. Cross-cultural training across the individualism-collectivism. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 12(3): 269–289.

Trubisky, P., S. Ting-Toomey, and S.L. Lin. 1991. The influence of individualism collectivism and self-monitoring on conflict styles. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 15(1): 65–84.

Tse, D.K., J. Francis, and J. Walls. 1994. Cultural differences in conducting intra- and inter-Cultural negotiations: A Sino-Canadian comparison. *Journal of International Business Studies* 25(3): 537–555.

Wang, J.L., and W. Wu. 1997–1998. Ideological work as conflict management: A dialectical approach in Chinese communication campaigns [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies 7*(1): 83–99.

Yu, X.J. 1997–1998. The Chinese native perspective on mao-dun (conflict) and mao-dun resolution strategies: A qualitative investigation [Special issue]. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 7(1): 63–82.

Chapter 11
Can Internal Communication Drive Business? An Overview of Its Strategic Values and Practice Tips

Stella Nga-chi Chiu

Abstract In Asia Pacific, people often overlook the strategic value internal communication can bring to a corporation. Most companies have a belief that external communication, like marketing and public relations, generates more value than internal communication, and they tend to pay more attention and resources to those external functions.

In this article, the author talks about the strategic roles of internal communication and how internal communication can impact on business. The article covers leadership communication, strategic communication, change communication employee engagement, employer branding, and manager communication. It also introduces a variety of communication platforms used by internal communication.

I have to admit, there was a time when I did not think that internal communication (IC) was as important as external communication. Not until I started working at my current company, which is a Fortune 500 company headquartered in the USA specializing in industrial automation, did I know the power and strategic value IC can bring to a company.

11.1 Situation in Asia

In Asia Pacific, IC has taken off much slower than external communication. Most companies have a belief that external communication, like marketing and public relations, generates more value than IC, and they tend to pay more attention and resources to those external functions. I believe this is part of the reason why the development of external communication is far ahead of that of IC.

S.N.-c. Chiu (✉)
Hong Kong, China
e-mail: stellachiu88@gmail.com

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_11

However, as time goes by, companies started to realize the importance of engagement and leadership and how IC can play a critical role in these aspects. Gradually, IC has started to take the stage in the corporate communication field.

11.2 What Roles Does Internal Communication Play?

Bovée and Thill (2000, p. 7) define internal communication as “the exchange of information and ideas within an organization” and which performs a “logistical” service managing content from several communication channels. In these companies, its functions are limited to newsletter production, publishing stories on intranet, and organizing town hall meetings.

In some companies, IC performs the role of internal promotion of the company’s mission, strategy, and the management team’s vision. In others, which are fewer, it acts principally as strategic adviser, offering high-level consultation, and is responsible for leadership communication.

11.3 How Do I View Internal Communication?

How do I view IC? I truly believe IC’s purpose is to foster a culture of open, authentic communication that inspires, mobilizes, and gives voice to employees at all levels of the organization to achieve business results. It does create significant business impact on a company.

11.4 Why Internal Communication Is Important?

I see a lot of similarities between a president leading a country and a chief executive officer running a company. A lot of effort must be dedicated to engaging and earning people’s trust, especially when the population is huge. Of all the efforts dedicated to people engagement, communication is arguably one of the most important.

First, imagine how US President Obama engaged his voters and, later, citizens with his spectacular communication skills. Then, imagine how a CEO of a multinational company, with a team of several thousand employees across the globe, engages the staff through leadership communication, which is a critical part of his/her role.

Within a company, IC helps engage employees and motivate them to give their best efforts. It also helps retain employees. A survey conducted by the workforce productivity group, Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp 2009), found that internal communications have an effect on staff retention. 81 % of US respondents named IC as their favorite method of minimizing turnover. Among the higher performers, 91 % named communication as their top method, while only 71 % of the lower performers gave it their highest priority.

11.5 Strategic Roles of Internal Communication

Now, I will go deeper to explain the strategic roles of internal communication.

11.5.1 Communicate Corporate Strategy to Help Employees Create a Line of Sight

I would like to begin with corporate strategy communication because I have personally witnessed how powerful communication of company's direction can impact employee engagement.

Though one may think that every company should have a clear corporate strategy, in reality, many companies fail to achieve this. In a large corporation, an employee may hear a number of initiatives, several priorities, and tens of slogans floating around the company, and they may become confused about what the most important company-wide priorities are.

Take my current company as an example. A few years ago, employees were confused about our company's direction and top priorities. The main reason was that all departments and teams had their own strategy. Employees felt that the company was not very engaging; they did not know where their company was heading (Diagram 11.1).

Diagram 11.1 A line of sights in the company

When our global IC director came onboard to work with our Senior Vice President of HR, a significant change started to take place in the company. Together, they worked closely to develop a framework, what we called "Strategic Framework" for strategy communication, which started to gain popularity among senior leaders and, later, business unit and functional unit heads.

11.5.1.1 Create a Framework for Company-Wide Use

Our company's Strategic Framework has four key pillars summarizing the key themes of the company's strategy. After the launch of the Framework, leaders and employees began to have a common language to describe the company's priorities. Through continuous promotion of the use of the Framework, including endorsement by the CEO, the Strategic Framework will soon become an integral part of the company's systems and practices. As the Framework is increasingly used to develop team goals, the alignment of individual, team, and company goals becomes much clearer and easier (Diagram 11.2).

Let me explain how the Framework is structured. For each level in the Framework, there are two columns. The column on the left is the higher-level strategy, while the one on the right is the strategy of the next level down. For example, the left-hand side is the CEO's strategy, and then on the right, it could be the strategy of a global business unit (BU) or functional unit (FU). If the right-hand side is the goals for "global" HR, then the right-hand side should be the "regional" HR's goals. Each level should develop its own strategy from the level above, and this process continues down the line. This cascading process should go right down to the individual employees, who develop their respective individual goals.

If all BUs and FUs can disciplinarily follow the cascade process, we will achieve our ultimate goal of our company to "a line of sights." In other words, all individual

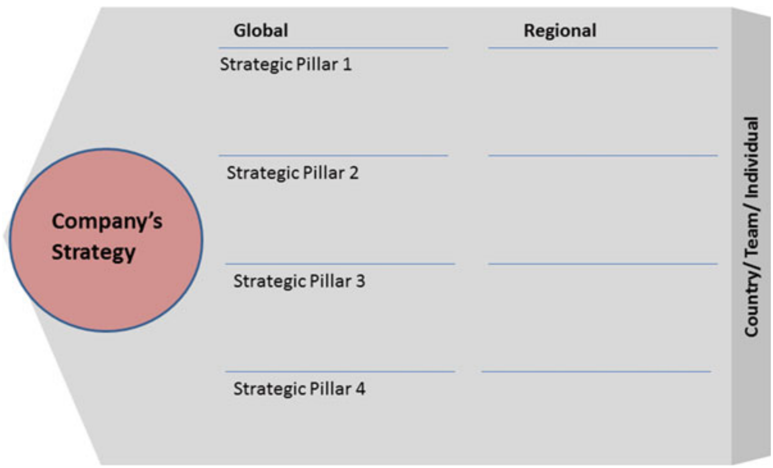


Diagram 11.2 An illustration how a framework helps create a line of sight

goals should have a connection to the company's overall goals. With such a backdrop, every employee should know what role their individual efforts play in the company's overall direction. When employees know how their roles contribute to the company's main objective, they start to see the value of their work. As a result, they will feel more engaged and are more willing to go an extra mile to give their best to the company.

This phenomenon was proved through our company's employee engagement survey, which was conducted three years after the launch of the Strategic Framework. The scores from the questions relating to "understanding the company's direction" had risen compared with the previous employee engagement survey done three years ago along with the overall engagement score.

11.5.1.2 Convince Senior Leaders to Take Ownership

It is very important to have the CEO and senior leaders take ownership of communicating the company's strategy. Words coming from higher positions usually add a lot of weight to a message. Employees will be more convinced and engaged when senior leaders paint a bigger picture of how they want to lead the company and the ultimate goals they want to achieve.

11.5.1.3 Use Captivating Visuals to Communicate Complex Ideas, Like Infographics

It is important to make employees interested in the company strategy. Instead of writing a long passage to explain what the strategy is, I chose to use an infographical approach, which is to conceptualize the information using graphics.

From my experience, readers pay twice as much attention to graphics as they do to words alone. The fact that my company's strategy was presented in an infographical way helped to create a "hype" in the company. Many employees put the infographic posters up on their cubicle walls. A number of leaders came to me to get the graphic images to use in their team strategy.

Below is a beautiful example which demonstrates how infographics can help illustrate a set of coherent concepts in a simple but vivid way (Diagram 11.3):

11.5.1.4 Make Good Use of Videos

Videos have become an important part of IC strategy. The thoughts you put behind the production can make a difference. In my case, since the president of Asia Pacific, whom I worked with, is an expressive and engaging executive, I chose to have a casual video interview with him where he could articulate the strategy in a vivid way.

Making a video is one thing, and how to promote the video is another. No matter how good the video is, if you cannot attract employees to view it, all your production efforts will be in vain.

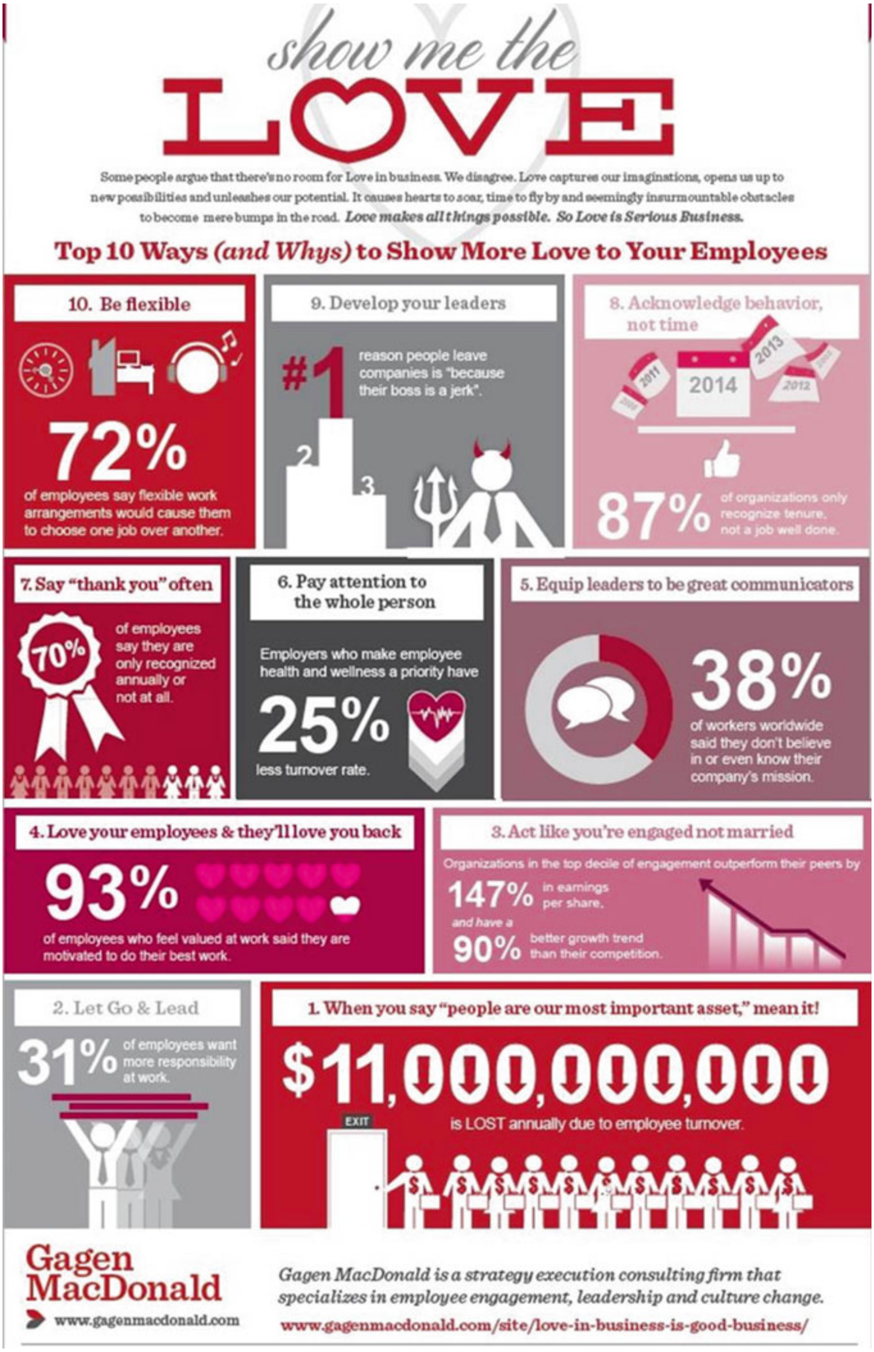


Diagram 11.3 An example of using infographics to illustrate multiple concepts (Gagen MacDonald 1998–2014)

Diagram 11.4 Pencil sketch of the senior leader I video-interviewed

To promote the video, I hired an illustrator to pencil-sketch the president's portrait. I inserted the sketch into the email to attract employees' attention. I also created a short quiz asking about some key points of the strategy, i.e., the top three priorities, the three business initiatives and our key strengths, etc. Employees' response was overwhelming! I received a lot of positive feedback about the video. Employees told me how they could connect with the president, though they have never met him in person. Some employees told me they were attracted by the sketch of the president, while others were intrigued by the quiz (Diagram 11.4).

11.5.1.5 Evaluate Results with a Survey

What gets measured, gets done. A lot of times, we put all our efforts into communicating, but we may overlook the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of our work.

Three months after we launched the communication campaign for our company strategy, our global IC team launched a company-wide online survey with the purpose of finding out the employees' understanding of the corporate strategy.

I truly believe that evaluation is important. It is like a "school report." It shows whether a good job has been done in communicating the corporate strategy. On the other hand, it can be a strong proof to the CEO and other leaders of how well employees understand the strategy. Since senior leaders are normally the "sponsors" of strategy communication, a positive survey result can boost their confidence and encourage them to do even better in communicating with their employees in the future. So, do not forget to include this important step in your communication plan.

In our survey, we had questions asking about one of the three attributes (Davis & Company 2005, p. 19).

Attribute	Example of question
Experiential:	Are you aware of our company's strategy?
Attitudinal:	Do you think you have a good understanding of our strategy?
Knowledge testing:	Can you name the four key pillars of our strategy?

11.5.2 Help Leaders to Build a Strong Leadership Brand

Leadership communication usually refers to the communications you prepare for your senior leaders which can demonstrate their leadership roles. According to Barrett (2006), leadership communication is a controlled and purposeful transfer of meaning, influencing a single party to a community. Through communication abilities and resources, it creates and delivers messages that guide, direct, motivate, and inspire others to take action. Good communication does not guarantee a good leader, but a good leader must have a high competence in communication.

Helping leaders to build a clear and influential image of what they expect becomes a strong support for people management. You can also help leaders to become more effective communicators and enhance their understanding of why communication is one of the key business drivers.

As a communicator, what can we do to support our leaders in communication?

What impressions do the following three photos give you?

Photo A (White House 2014)

Photo B (White House 2014)

Photo C (White House 2014)

Your answers for Photos A, B, and C in order would probably be: “authoritative,” “approachable,” and “concerned.” Now, you may see how an image can affect your impression on a person, especially if it is the first time you meet or have met that person.

As an internal communicator, you are the one who is responsible for shaping the leader’s image among employees. We can influence our leader’s image by carefully choosing his/her photos and words to be used in his employee communications.

If your leader has a serious character and you want to present his light-hearted side to make him seem more approachable, you can capture his relaxed moments in photos, such as during the annual dinner, festive parties, and company's outing, and share them with your employees.

Photo D: Mr. Ruff was one of the senior executives I used to work with

Photo E: I captured Mr. Ruff's cheerful face during Chinese New Year to show his approachable side

Internal communicators are the writers who craft the CEO's messages, including their speeches. We should carefully choose the words that reflect their character – their "voice."

For example, if a leader has an authoritative character, we tend to use short sentences and affirmative words like "should" and "act now" to reflect the leader's firm tone. The rhythm of the speech should also be taken into consideration as it also reflects the leader's character. All in all, a good leader communication piece should make the audience feel that the leader is "talking" directly to the individual.

11.5.3 Drive Change in an Organization

In a corporation, the IC team plays a key role in leading major change among employees to cope with the ever-changing business environment. The objectives of the change could be to influence employees' opinion, behavior, and values including ethics, morale, and culture. The change topics could be reorganization, acquisition, launch of company's strategy, change of computer system or office relocation, and so on.

Let's take my company as an example. Our India sales team decided to go through a reorganization to better meet with customers' needs. The sales members were reassigned to new roles to match the company's target industries. One of the benefits was that the sales people became specialized in dealing with individual customer segments and establish closer relationships with their customers.

11.5.3.1 Change Communication Process

The process of change communication starts with "creating awareness," alters to "creating acceptance," and eventually evolves to "creating visibility." I have summarized the sequence of stages and key elements involved in each stage of the change process in the following diagram (Diagram 11.5):

There are common best practices when communicating a major change initiative (Davis & Company, 2005, p. 26):

- Leverage dialogue to drive information.
- Communicate in a variety of ways.

Diagram 11.5 Different stages of a change process

- Involve leaders and managers.
- Don't communicate too much too soon.
- Make change relevant to the audience.

11.5.3.2 Communication Materials

A full set of communication materials is prepared for managers and employees. Managers always play a critical role in communication, especially for communicating change. According to Communicating Change (1994, p. 15), a research done by GE and Hewlett-Packard revealed that the better the manager's communication, the more satisfied employees are with all aspects of work life. It also says that it is not an employee's communication relationship with the CEO or head office that matters; rather, it is his or her communication with his or her supervisor that is paramount (p. 17). Often times, employees find their managers the most trustworthy communicators. The IC team should prepare a kit of communication materials to assist managers in communicating the change. Below, I listed the content of the communication kit for the India sales team change project, for your reference (Diagram 11.6).

11.5.3.3 Changing Values and Behavior in Stages

Other changes that the IC team will drive include shaping employees' values, which, in turn, leads to a subsequent change of behavior. Again, using my company as an example, we highly emphasized ethics and required all employees to maintain a high level of ethical standard in all daily business operations.

Manager Kit	Key Messages
	Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
	Manager Talk Tips
	Meeting scheduling template and guidelines
Employee Kit	Role Change Letter
	Relocation /Retention-Bonus /Compensation Change Communication
	New Organization Chart for the Region
	New Job Description
	Write-up on the Segment with "Who's Who" and contact list

Diagram 11.6 Content of communication kits

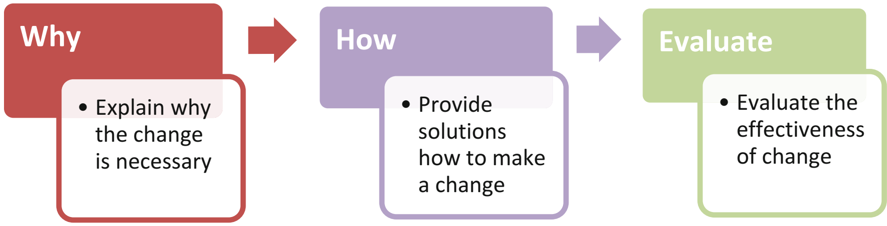


Diagram 11.7 Change communication process

The reinforcement of high standard of ethics in my company involved three phases, as shown below. This is also a typical process of change communication (Diagram 11.7).

*Why***:** Senior leaders communicate the important reasons why we all need to maintain a high level of ethical standards in all business operations.

*How***:** Provide tools and solutions for overcoming barriers which may hinder employees from practicing ethical behaviors. Our company developed an ethical online training program requiring all employees to complete the training annually. It is an interactive online training and is scenario based. It provides recommendations on how to handle difficult situations.

*Evaluate***:** There is a test at the end of the training module. Employees are evaluated on whether they have a good understanding of our company's requirements of ethics standards. Employees need to pass the test; otherwise, they must revisit the whole training module to ensure they understand what the company requires. To improve the effectiveness of the training, the company takes feedback from employees and modifies the training format and content in a continual process to improve the training. Because what the company cares about is their understanding, rather than the score of the test, employees are allowed to go through the training and discuss the scenario-based questions with other team members. This is something that is worth mentioning if the mission of the change exercise is shaping employees' values.

11.5.4 Inspire, Engage, and Motivate Employees

IC plays an active role in engaging and motivating employees to go the extra mile.

11.5.4.1 Set Up Employee Meetings

One of IC's roles is to create opportunities and organize activities for leaders to communicate with employees. An all-employee town hall meeting is one common channel for leaders to communicate key corporate topics to employees. The topics could be corporate strategy, result announcement, welcoming newly acquired employees, etc.

It is just as important for the employees to feel that they are encouraged to express their views and know that their input will be acknowledged respectfully. Apart from formal events, the IC team can also set up casual activities, allowing employees to get involved and share their thoughts more openly. Some examples could be breakfast with leaders, straight talk, and lunch and learn.

As an IC professional, our job is to evaluate and recommend the most suitable communication channel and vehicle for our leaders. I would say not all leaders are suitable to do a casual event such as breakfast with leaders. We need that to propose a communication format that our leaders are most comfortable with and from which we anticipate the best response from the employees.

It is understandable that employees feel more engaged if they can communicate with their leaders and voice out their own thoughts. However, if their leaders fail to take action to make change after they heard from their employees, it can create a serious "backfire."

11.5.4.2 Create Inspiring People Stories

It is human nature to associate oneself with someone who has a similar background or has encountered similar situations. That is why people's success stories are well received by employees; they can relate themselves to the stories.

One way to engage employees is to create personal feature stories that inspire the audience. There are multiple story angles. For example, we can interview an employee who has obtained an important award from the company. We can interview an employee who has worked at the company for a long length of time and ask him/her to share his views and experience and why he/she likes to work at the company. We can also create a story to introduce an employee who just got promoted and ask him what he believes were the main factors behind his success.

However, we do not need to limit ourselves to story writing. We can do video interviews, podcasts, photo stories, and comics to make the employee stories more interactive and convincing. People react better to a range of medium, rather than repeating the same methods. So, be creative!

11.5.5 Strengthen the Employer Brand by Identifying and Articulating EVPs

IC can support a company to strengthen its brand as an employer. An employer brand is different from the corporate brand of the company, though they do share a few attributes.

Employer brand denotes an organization's reputation as an employer. According to Minchington (as cited in Lubecka 2013), employer brand is "the image of the organization as a great place to work." Having a strong employer brand helps to attract target employees and retain current staff.

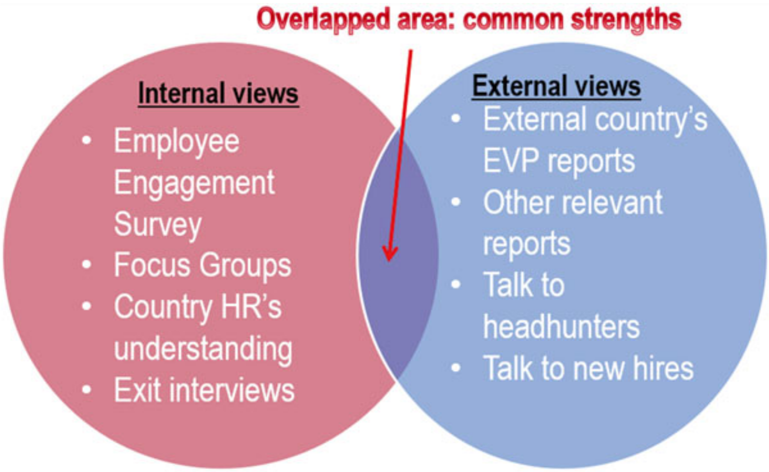


Diagram 11.8 Illustration of my definition of EVPs

IC team can work with a consultancy to find out the key value propositions offered by the company to its employees. These value propositions are called "employee value proposition" (EVP). Some call it "employment value proposition" and some "employer value proposition." EVP can be defined as a set of associations and offerings provided by an organization in return for the skills, capabilities, and experiences an employee brings to the organization (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_value_proposition). EVP, in my own definition, is a combination of internal and external perceptions of the strengths of a company as illustrated in the diagram below (Diagram 11.8):

IC should identify what a company can offer to employees, as an employer. In other words, why a potential employee should join the company, and why an existing employee should stay.

McDonald's (GRI 2012) uses the following themes for its EVPs. An employee quote accompanies each theme:

- **Family & Friends** – "I work in an enjoyable, energizing atmosphere where everyone feels part of the team."
- **Flexibility** – "I have a challenging, varied job that has the flexibility to fit into my lifestyle."
- **Future** – "I have an opportunity to grow and progress by learning personal and work skills that will last me a lifetime, whatever I choose to do."

Research also shows that a strong employer brand substantiated by a set of appealing EVPs helps the company save a significant amount of cost in talent acquisition. Below are the findings of Corporate Executive Board (CEB 2014):

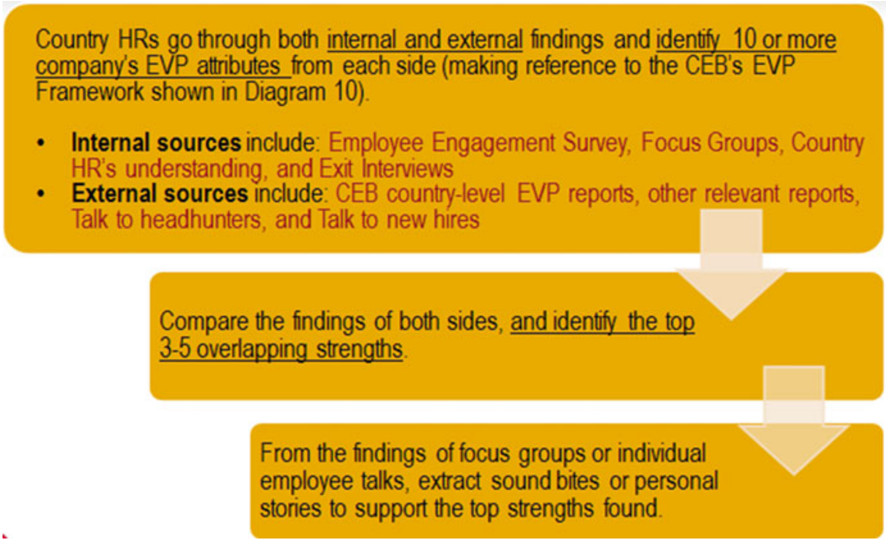


Diagram 11.9 An example of an in-house EVP-defining process

(a) *Attraction benefits*
When candidates in the labor market view an organization's EVP as attractive, the organization can:

- Reduce the compensation premium needed to hire these employees by 50 %
- Reach 50 % deeper into the labor market to attract passive candidates

(b) *Retention benefits*
Organizations that effectively deliver on their EVP can:

- Decrease annual employee turnover by 69 %
- Increase new hire commitment by 29 %

11.5.5.1 Define Your Company's EVPs

If the situation does not allow you to hire a consultancy to lead you through the EVP identification process, you can consider leading the process with your own team. I would propose the following process (Diagram 11.9):

The above illustration is a simple method for a company to understand what it offers as an employer to prospective employees and existing staff. One point which is worth noting is that it is important to use a framework of EVP categories and attributes, which provides common terminology to summarize and categorize the findings of each source. CEB provides good reference on Framework of EVP categories and attributes (Diagram 11.10).

The 5 EVP Categories

The Employment Value Proposition (EVP) is made up of the following five categories of attributes:

- **The Rewards:** Includes compensation health benefits, retirement benefits, and vacation
- **The Work:** Includes job-interest alignment, location, work-life balance, and others
- **The Organization:** Includes market position, product/service quality, social responsibility, and others
- **The Opportunity:** Includes future career opportunities, development opportunities, organization growth rate , organization
- **The People:** Includes manager quality, coworker quality, senior leadership reputation, camaraderie, and others

Diagram 11.10 CEB's illustration on EVP categories

In the process, I mentioned "focus groups" – what I mean is free riding on existing focus groups and simply adding in a few critical EVP questions. For example, what do you like most about our company? What do you like least about the company? What change you would like to see in the company?

It is also important to collect employees' stories and sound bites in a written format from "focus groups." These can powerfully substantiate the EVPs and will become useful materials for the subsequent employer branding campaign. To make the participants feel comfortable, you should ensure what they shared will remain anonymous.

11.5.6 Craft EVPs

Often times, members from a company's Human Resources department find it difficult to introduce its company to a prospect or a new hire. This is because they are not sure what words they should choose to describe those concepts and values, i.e., EVPs, even though they know the company's strengths by understanding and intuition.

To help them, and every employee in the company, to articulate the company's EVPs, IC can create a statement to describe each EVP. The choice of words is critical, and I believe this is exactly the area which IC is best at offering its strategic value.

Before launching the statement of EVPs, they should be tested with existing employees. Employees are the best people to verify if the statement accurately and precisely describes their experience in the company. Equally important, the statement should be endorsed by senior leaders as they are the ones who steer the company and have a fair overview of the company. In fact, the senior leadership team should be engaged throughout the entire process starting from identification of EVPs to crafting the EVP statement.

Once the EVP statement is ready, IC should collaborate with its external communication teams, such as public relations or marketing, to formulate a branding campaign. The campaign should cover both the external and internal audience. The objective is to educate, sharpen, and renew the audiences' understanding of your company's employer brand.

11.5.7 Help Managers Become Effective Communicators

It is understandable that employees often turn to their immediate managers first if they have questions about the company or their issues at the workplace. However, very often, companies overlook managers' great potential to be an effective communicator.

To help managers develop themselves into good communicators, there are a few things we need to implement:

1. *Help managers understand communication is one of the competences a leader should possess.*

   A lot of managers got promoted to their current positions possibly due to their technical capabilities rather than their people management skills. They may not be aware that they are lacking managerial skills, including communication competence, which are essential for their roles. Human Resources members can help them understand what is required from them as a manager.
2. *Provide a communication kit to support managers throughout the communication process of a corporate topic (e.g., key messages, presentation slides, Q&A, and communication tips).*

   IC can prepare good-quality communication materials for managers. The materials can help managers build their confidence in communication.
3. *Establish a communication platform which consolidates all communication materials, communication tips, and reference materials to be prepared and constantly updated by IC.*

   In my company, we set up a manager resources site on SharedPoint dedicated to people managers. The objective is to get managers into the habit of visiting the platform to collect information to convey the company's important topics down to their team members.
4. *Provide communication training to equip managers with theories and techniques.*

   IC can conduct communication training for people managers. Personally, I believe face-to-face classroom training is the most effective; however, if budget and trainers' bandwidth do not allow, designing an interactive online training module for people managers is another good option as they can take the training at their own pace.

5. *Assess managers' communication effectiveness through annual employees' evaluation or a 360-degree review and link it to their performance review.*
   A manager's team members will be the best people to have a say in how their manager performed as a leader. To make the evaluation more meaningful and motivational, the rating should be included in the managers' annual performance evaluation. In other words, how a manager performed in communication will be linked to their bonus payout.

11.6 Most Common Internal Communication Platforms or Vehicles

As I have introduced the important roles IC plays, below I share the commonly used platforms or vehicles:

1. *Town hall employee meeting*: All employees are invited to attend the meeting, and usually the topics presented at the meeting are important, influential, and enterprise wide.
2. *Global conference call/Web conference*: When a physical meeting is not possible, especially when participants are across the globe, companies can make use of technology to conduct virtual meetings.
3. *Casual chat with leaders*: Another way for leaders to communicate with employees is through a more casual setting to get more direct and authentic feedback. In my company, we have "breakfast with our leaders" and "straight talk."
4. *Email*: Though email seems ordinary, it is still one of the most common communication vehicles.
5. *Intranet*: Same as email, it is one common platform most companies use.
6. *Social media platform*: Employees usually are more open when they are in an informal environment. One of the social media platforms for corporate use is Yammer. Its layout and functions are similar to those of Facebook. Employees and leaders can share their voices through this casual and interactive platform. Users can form groups to gather for like-minded discussion. I believe this platform is more useful when a company needs to lobby for: a value which the company wants to foster, a change it wants to lead, or a topic on which it wants to collect feedback from employees.
7. *Road show*: Conduct exhibitions or workshops across countries. I once worked for a company which invested in a big road show around the world to educate employees on the company's innovation strength. At the road show, the company displayed to us the key innovative inventions, products it put into the market, and its key clients. This was definitely one of the best activities which made me take pride in the company.

11.7 Internal Communication Deserves More Awareness in Asia Pacific

IC used to be seen as a tactical and low-value function. Its value and strategic roles seem to be underestimated and not fully understood especially in Asia Pacific. As the function continues to evolve, IC starts to gain more weight and respect in corporate functions. More and more companies have started to see the impact that IC can make on the company's performance and its value in reducing costs on recruiting and retaining talented employees. I hope this paper can give readers a better overview of how a company can leverage IC to drive business performance and recognize the values IC brings to an organization.

References

Barrett, D. 2006. *Leadership communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Bovée, C.L., and J.V. Thill. 2000. *Business communication today*, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Corporate Executive Board (CEB). 2014. *Employment value proposition*. Retrieved 25 March, 2014, from http://www.executiveboard.com/exbd/human-resources/evp/index.page

Employee value proposition. n.d. In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved 9 July, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_value_proposition

Gagen MacDonald. 1998–2014. *Love in business is good business* [photo]. Retrieved from http://www.gagenmacdonald.com/site/love-in-business-is-good-business/

I4cp. 2009. *New study reveals how firms are preparing to retain workers as economy improves*. Press release (by email) from Institute for Corporate Productivity, October 12, 2009. Retrieved from http://www.pr.com/press-release/184625

Larkin, T.J., and Sandar Larkin. 1994. *Communicating change: Winning employee support for new business goals*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lubecka, A. 2013. Employer branding – A dialogistic communication tool of a competitive employer. *Journal of Intercultural Management* 5(2): 5–16.

McDonald's Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). 2012. *Sustainability highlights: Employee value proposition*. Retrieved from: http://www.aboutmcdonalds.com/mcd/sustainability/library/best_practices/employee_experience/employee_value_proposition.html

Staff of Davis & Company. 2005. *21 strategies for improving employee communication*. Glen Rock: Global: Davis & Company.

White House. 2014. April 2014: Photo of the day [Photograph]. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/april-2014-photo-day

Part V
Media Discourse & Persuasive Communication

Chapter 12
Pragmatist, Evangelist, or Sensualist? Emotional Branding on Sina Weibo

Doreen D. Wu and Wei Feng

Abstract Gobe (Emotional branding: The new paradigm for connecting brands to people. Allworth Press, New York, 2009) emphasizes the significance of emotional branding and identifies stages of emotional branding as including the "evangelist" age and the "sensualist" age. According to Gobe, the "evangelist" age of branding emphasizes ideals of building businesses for the people and the planet, representing philosophies of justice, equality, and sensitivity to the environment, whereas the "sensualist" age orients toward hedonism, glamour, fame, and individual expressions.

This paper attempts to apply the notions by Gobe to examine the process of emotional branding by top Chinese corporations in China in the changing Internet landscape. Various types of corporate presentations and promotions by the top Chinese corporations on the different Internets of China such as Weibo and Facebook will be collected and examined. A combination of linguistic and multimodal analysis will be attempted to manifest the representational structures of "evangelist" and "sensualist." Finally, this paper will conclude with a discussion of the particular Chinese characteristics as well as the universal psychological principles that govern emotional branding in China.

12.1 Introduction

Emotional branding has emerged as a new and vibrant research focus in recent branding and marketing research (e.g., Gobe 2001; Yoo and MacInnis 2005). Emotional branding can involve the engagement of consumers or stakeholders in a deep, long-term, intimate emotional connection with the brand, which is beyond the benefit-based satisfaction and which creates a special trust-based relationship with the development of a holistic emotional experience (Morrison and Crane 2007). Brands with emotional impacts trigger consumers' emotional responses that can

D.D. Wu (✉) • W. Feng
Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: doreen.wu@polyu.edu.hk

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_12

hardly be rationalized, thus arousing their excessively high emotional attachments. Despite cultural, regional, and individual differences, there are always brands that charm, enchant, never die, and hook us tight. As such, there is massive evidence for nostalgic attachments to the Kodak film, constant brand loyalty for Coca-Cola, and ubiquitous brand love for McDonald's (Rossiter and Bellman 2012).

Emotional branding has been explored from various perspectives including emotions in brand attitude formation (Yoo and MacInnis 2005), emotions in building brand loyalty and attachment (Akgun et al. 2013, emotions in service brands (Morrison and Crane 2007), and emotional content in advertising (Heath et al. 2006; Wu and Chung 2006). Nonetheless, its latest performance on social media lacks updated and sufficient research attention, despite the fact that social media has posed sufficient uncertainties and challenges to public relations managers in external corporate communication (see Briones et al. 2011; DiStaso et al. 2011). Therefore, situated in the context of a transitioning China, the second largest economy in the world, the present study seeks to examine emotional branding discourse and communication by the Chinese top brands on Sina Weibo, the super social media giant in PR China.

The NASDAQ-listed corporation Sina Weibo (Sina is the brand name and Weibo is the Chinese phonetic system pinyin of "microblogging") is a hybrid of Twitter and Facebook and takes the leading position among the most popular social media sites in China. With reportedly similar market penetration of Twitter in the USA, Sina Weibo was launched by Beijing-based Sina Corporation on 14 August 2009 and has 602 million registered active users as of November 2013. Accompanied by numerous celebrity users and blended features of Twitter and Facebook, Sina Weibo is home to at least 100 million posts daily. According to Sina Weibo datacenter statistics, by December 2013, the younger generation of China or the future mainstream customers are its major users. The post-1990 generation (born after 1990) takes half of the total user pool at 43 %, and the post-1980s covers a little more than 1/3 with 37 %, whereas there are only 8 % users that belong to the post-1970s. In contrast to usage with individual accounts, Sina Weibo's corporate edition is also home to almost 30 % of global Fortune 400 companies, a mix of corporations of as many as 34 nations. Even though other brands of social media in China did spring up, such as Renren.com and WeChat, the recognized power of Sina Weibo, the earliest microblogging icon, particularly in shaping non-interpersonal communication and public sentiment, is unparalleled.

12.2 Literature Review

12.2.1 Emotional Branding in Corporate Communication

Corporate communication is defined as "an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent" (van Riel 1994,

p. 26). As a melting pot of all messages which corporations attempt to convey to their stakeholders, corporate communication incorporates at least a few major components: corporate branding, corporate identity construction, and risk and crisis communication and management. Emotional branding is a new approach in corporate branding being extensively promoted since the late 1990s, which emphasizes building customers' emotional attachments to brands, and has been confirmed to lead to "higher levels of firm performance and competitive advantage" (Akgun et al. 2013, p. 404). Being regarded as key to marketing success, emotional branding and its strategic value to brand image have been widely acknowledged (see Thompson et al. 2006).

According to Gobe (2009), the developmental divide of emotional branding in America can be categorized into tripartite phases: pragmatist age (1940–1967), evangelist age (1968–1989), and sensualist age (1990–2009). Emotional branding in pragmatist age emphasizes products' or service's reliability and pragmatic functions, as manifested by omnipresent advertising which has dominated corporate communication. But emotional branding in the evangelist age represents philosophies of social justice, equality, and sensitivity to the environment and emphasizes that corporations should appeal to the empowerment of the common man and woman in the street. Benetton, for instance, launched advertising campaigns that touched on issues of violence, racism, and the AIDS epidemic into the forefront of social thinking. Nonetheless, emotional branding in the sensualist age is geared toward hedonism, glamour, fame, and individual expressions. It seeks toward the individual and toward seeking immediate, often sensual rewards and creating its own language, culture, and symbols.

Since the new millennium, a recurrent theme in the extensive emotional branding literature lies in the discussion of its overwhelming merits, as opposed to the traditional benefit-driven brand communication (see Gobe 2001, 2007, 2009; Rossiter and Bellman 2012; Thompson et al. 2006). In a similar vein, research in advertising and branding has revealed a more or less evolutionary process. For example, it was found that the advertising trend evolved from a pragmatist to a sensualist stage in Hong Kong from the 1940s to 1980s, during which the selling points of the products or services correspondently shifted from values such as durability to self-indulgence (see Wu and Chung 2006). Furthermore, value appeals in the Chinese print advertisements under investigation between the early 1980s, initial stage of China's open door policy, and early twenty-first century indicated a similar movement from pragmatist orientation to hedonistic orientation (Feng and Wu 2009). Apart from longitudinal studies as such, industry adaptabilities and characteristics pertaining to emotional branding have also attracted scholarly attention in recent years, e.g., fashion industry (So et al. 2013) and pharmaceutical industry (Biradar et al. 2006).

12.2.2 Emotional Branding and Online Corporate Communication

Online corporate communication has experienced two consecutive phases: the phase of corporate website presentation when a one-way corporate communication dominates and the phase of social media, a real-time, two-way communication between the corporation and its followers/stakeholders. Although being recognized as an effective presentation of the corporate icon to the general public, corporate websites have long been criticized of being static, less updated, much less interactive, and far from satisfactory in engaging users in external corporation communication (see Topalian 2003; Pollach 2004). Topalian (2003: 1121) raised his realistic criticism as follows:

> Many are little more than static on-screen corporate notice-boards, brochures or magazines. Dynamic elements incorporated tend to be "clever" add-ons without serious value for visitors: they miss the opportunity to captivate audiences, raise profiles and build mutually beneficial interactive relationships.

Likewise, Pollach (2004) scrutinized the corporate websites of top 20 Fortune 400 corporations and found that the websites' contents were characterized as impressing with numbers, providing third-party evidence, presenting claims as facts, and removing agents of humanizing the organization. He argued that in conveying evaluation, these world best-selling brands focused on their size and scope, agents of change, leadership, and corporate citizenship, whereas in terms of relationship building, sample brands were good at using personal pronouns, but the other aspects of interactivity of the websites are simply poor, insufficient, and "in one-way communication only" (p. 296). In other words, the affection and attachment of the audience for the corporate websites can hardly be stimulated in this mode of corporate communication, posing considerable challenges to public relations professionals in implementing emotional branding strategies.

The second stage of online corporate communication, the social media era, has revolutionized both the content and the manner corporations converse with their stakeholders or the general public (Wright and Hinson 2010). It is found that the new form of electronic word of mouth in social media is approximately 2 times more effective than the regular marketing events and 30 times more effective than the traditional media appearances (Trusov et al. 2009). As the advent of the social media represents the most significant paradigm shift since the Industrial Revolution, i.e., the Social Media Revolution (Pacea 2011), the technological advances brought about by social media since the early twenty-first century have made real-time interactive company-customer dialogues possible, which is becoming an increasingly common and taken-for-granted mode of marketing communication to stimulate customers' emotional attachments.

In recent years, corporate social media networking, like microblogging, has increasingly replaced corporate websites in drawing research attention with the attempt to better understand interactive communication practices on new media platform by corporations and the means of fortifying stakeholder relationships (e.g., Fischer and Reuber 2011; Rybalko and Seltzer 2010; Lillqvist and Louhiala-Salminen 2014). Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) explored how dialogic communication on Fortune 400 companies' corporate Twitter has helped to engage their stakeholders. Lillqvist and Louhiala-Salminen (2014), by means of discourse analysis, examined and identified a number of companies' impression management strategies throughout the company-customer dialogues on the Facebook fan page of two

Finnish companies. Nonetheless, as pointed out by a number of researchers (e.g., Rybalko and Seltzer 2010; Waters and Jamal 2011), many corporations have failed to tap fully the potential for dialogue and community building on the social media sites. “Rather than capitalizing on the interactive nature and dialogic capabilities of the social media service, nonprofit organizations are primarily using Twitter as a means of sharing information instead of relationship building” (Waters and Jamal 2011, p. 323).

In an attempt to better understand the means of relationship building, some scholars have pointed out the importance of constructing a conversational human voice on the social media (see Searls and Weinberger 2001; Kelleher and Miller 2006; Kelleher 2009). Kelleher and Miller (2006, p. 413) have proposed 11 defining items of conversational human voice which includes inviting people to conversation, being open to dialogue, using conversation-style communication, trying to be interesting in communication, creating a sense of humor in communication, providing links to competitors, making communication enjoyable, providing prompt feedback, admitting a mistake, addressing criticism in an uncritical manner, and treating everybody as human.

Despite that emotional branding and the relevant means of relationship building have been recognized as critically important for online corporate communication, preceding studies (Abdullah et al. 2013; Lillqvist and Louhiala-Salminen 2014) have not yet extended their attention to the China’s corporations in the social media context. What are the prevalent and effective means of emotional branding practiced by the Chinese corporations on the Sina Weibo, the super giant of social media in China? How do the Chinese corporations construct a conversational human voice for relationship building with the stakeholders and the general public on Sina Weibo? The present study attempts to answer these questions with an examination of the performance by the top Chinese corporations.

12.3 Methodology

In terms of data source, seven out of the first ten Chinese brand corporations (from Interbrand list of the Top 40 Most Valuable Chinese Brands 2012) have been found to set up Sina Weibo accounts. Details of these seven corporations and their rank order in terms of their number of followers on Sina Weibo by May 2014 are Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (6.63 million followers), China Construction Bank (with 7.17 million followers), Bank of China (3.81 million followers), Baidu.com (2.09 million followers), China Mobile (6.42 million followers), China Life Insurance (0.21 million followers), and Agricultural Bank of China (0.31 million followers). The microblogging and communication messages by these corporations on Sina Weibo between February and May 2014 have been collected. The text data bank covers 37 days of randomly selected microblogging updates, with data size of 230,436 Chinese characters in total.

The methods of thematic analysis and of interactional analysis have been adopted for examining the means of emotional branding by the Chinese corporations on Sina Weibo. As a widely used method in qualitative research and focusing on examining themes within data (Daly et al. 1997), the thematic analysis is utilized in this study to investigate whether top Chinese corporations use "pragmatist," "evangelist," or "sensualist" orientations in their emotional branding on *Sina Weibo*. Furthermore, the method of interactional analysis from sociolinguistics is utilized to investigate what strategies of interaction are used by the Chinese corporations to construct a "conversational human voice" on Sina Weibo so as to build stronger attachment of the stakeholders to these brand corporations.

12.4 Thematic Analysis

Examining the major themes in the messages presented by the Chinese brand corporations, we can find that all the characteristics related to the three phases of emotional branding by the Americans as depicted by Gobe (2009), i.e., the pragmatist, the evangelist, and the sensualist values, are all prevalent in the Chinese microblogging updates:

An illustration of a pragmatist theme can be seen in Extract 1:

Extract 1: #中银精品速递#【"中银稳富"理财计划】如您手中有闲置资金, 又不满足于储蓄, 不妨将它交给 "中银稳富"理财计划——投资期限灵活、预期收益率高, 可通过中行网银、手机银行等多渠道购买, 动动手指赚取高收益! (投资需谨慎) 详见http://t.cn/zl64mkg

(3)| 轉發(2)| 收藏| 評論(4) 4月15日 16:00 中国银行 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報

Translation for Extract 1: #Special Offer from Bank of China#【"BC Stable Wealth" Financial Plan】If you have extra cash in hands, but are not satisfied with savings revenue, why not invest in our "BOC steady earnings" investment package----flexible investment period, handsome expected revenue, widely accessible via BOC online banking and mobile banking. High revenue on investment is a finger-tip away! (Be careful of investment risks) for details http://t.cn/zl64mkg

Like (3)/ Repost (2)/ Comment (4) 20140415 from Bank of China microblogging account Sina Weibo. com.

It can be observed that this message from Bank of China primarily informs its microblogging followers regarding its investment package named "BOC steady earnings" and highlights the three pragmatic benefits of this financial product: "flexible investment period, handsome expected revenue, widely accessible via BOC online banking and mobile banking." Such means of explicating products' functions and benefits correspond with the characteristics of the pragmatist age of emotional branding in America illustrated by Gobe (2009). Another illustration for a pragmatist theme in emotional branding among these Chinese corporations can also be seen in Extract 2, a microblogging update from China Mobile:

Extract 2: #2014 GTI国际产业峰会#李跃总裁表示: 在网络方面,中国移动将用高品质、广覆盖的网络保障用户随时随地的极速体验, 将构建更加快速、高效和更为融合的网络, 大力推动网络性能的进一步提升, 向LTE-A演进, 把速率从100M提升到200M、400M甚至1G。

(18)| 轉發(140)| 收藏| 評論(49) 2月25日 20:49 中国移动 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報
Translation for Extract 2: #2014 GTI International Industry Summit # China Mobile's President Li Yue said that China Mobile will employ high speed and wide coverage network to ensure users' super speedy experience anytime anywhere. China mobile will also build swifter, more efficient and integrative network to promote LTE-A targeted network performance. We aim at an evolution of speed from 100 M to 200 M and even 1G.
Like (18)/Repost (140)/ Collect/Comment (49) 20140225 20:49 China Mobile www.weibo.com

It can be observed that what is highlighted in the brand communication by China Mobile here is pragmatist oriented: emphasizing the practical aspects of the development of Internet's surfing speed and centering on the core service qualities of China Mobile.

In addition to the pragmatist orientation, we can also observe an evangelist orientation in the emotional branding by these top Chinese corporations. An example of this can be seen in Extract 3, a microblogging message from China Life Insurance:

Extract 3: 中国人寿有约V#Green Life# 【中国风环保包装】"废掉" 花花绿绿的塑料纸, 用中国风的红头绳来包装你的礼品吧, 环保低碳更漂亮!
| 轉發| 收藏| 評論 2月17日 17:00 中国人寿 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報
Translation for Extract 3: China Life V #Green Life# [Chinese-style environmental–friendly package] "Demolish" fancy colorful plastic-made fastening materials, and use the Chinese style of red ropes to package your presents, low-carbon products, environmental-friendly, and more charming!
Repost/Collect/Comment 20140217 17:00 China Life Insurance from www. weibo.com

Here, China Life Insurance Corporation brands itself as presenting an innovative, environment-friendly method of gift packaging. Such an artistic and smart presentation corresponds with the tenets of evangelist emotional branding as posited by Gobe (2009). Other examples of an evangelist approach of emotional branding can be seen in Extracts 4 and 5:

Extract 4 #最美移动人#当跳入冰冷江水的那一刹那, 他没想那么多, 只想去拯救一个鲜活的生命。好样的虞思伟! 为你的英雄壮举点赞! |最美移动人: 中国移动义乌分公司员工勇救落水女
(191)| 轉發(136)| 收藏| 評論(61) 4月27日 22:42 中国移动 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報
Translation for Extract 4: #Most Beautiful China Mobile Employees# The very moment he made the jump to the ice-cold river, Mr Yu Siwei did not think of anything else but of saving the life of a drowning by-passer. Such a good man Mr Yu Siwei is! All Our Likes to your heroic deeds! Most beautiful employee of China Mobile—the employee from China Mobile Yiwu Branch who has saved a drowning stranger girl.
Like (191)/Repost (136)/Repost/Comment (61) 20140427 22:42 from China Mobile Sina Weibo.com

This microblogging message from China Mobile tells the followers a moving story of how a brave employee from China Mobile has saved the life of a stranger who was drowning in the river. By highlighting and praising the heroic deeds of its employee, China Mobile has appealed to its followers' emotion of recognition and admiration toward China Mobile as a socially responsible company:

Extract 5: #你在学校图书馆撕过书吗? # 调查显示, 越勤奋的学生越可能是图书馆杀手!全国 4000 家图书馆每年受损图书超过百万册,造成金额损失多达4000万元。

其中80%书籍损坏的原因竟然是: 学生因为不便复印导致偷偷撕书! 4·23世界读书日, 百度希望通过@涂书笔记等创新技术, 改变受损图书的痛苦命运!支持, 请转!

(169)| 轉發(3888) | 評論(2306) 4月23日 08:09百度 來自微博 weibo.com

Translation for Extract 5: #Have you ever torn books in your school's library?# Survey has indicated that hardworking students are likely to be killers of library books! A total of over one million books in China's 4000 libraries have become such victims annually, amounting to a loss of 40 million RMB. 80 % students tear books due to their inaccessibility to copy machines! As today 4–23 is World Reading Day, Baidu hopes to end the tragic fate of the books by developing an innovative technology such as @ Marking Notes! Please support and repost this message!

Like (169)/Repost (3888)/Comment (2306) 20140423 08:09 Baidu from www. weibo.com

This extract from Baidu.com started with criticizing the problem of irresponsible and unbearable behavior of tearing books in the public library and, subsequently, smartly presented its solution to this problem with its @Marking Notes product. We can observe an evangelist approach of emotional branding being attempted here with presenting Baidu.com as a socially responsible corporation. Note that this post from Baidu has generated unusual popularity and resonance among the Baidu's followers, as shown by the number of likes (169), reposts (3888), and comments (2306) related to this post.

Besides the pragmatist and evangelist orientations, we can also observe a sensualist approach of emotional branding by the Chinese corporations, as seen in Extracts 6 and 7:

Extract 6: 世界上最幸福的事莫过于,闹钟响了却发现今天不用上班, 果断按下闹钟, 继续呼呼大睡!周末快乐~

(26)| 轉發(35)| 收藏| 評論(15) 4月19日 08:39 中国建设银行 來自搜狗高速浏览器 | 舉報

Translation for Extract 6: The happiest thing in the world is to realize you do not need to go to work today when the alarm clock rings. Turn off the alarm clock with no hesitation and continue your sound sleep! Happy weekend~

Like (26)/Repost (35)/Collect/Comment (15) 20140419 08:39 From China Construction Bank Sina Weibo

Extract 7站长必读!网民最爱的小说大数据新鲜出炉! 数据显示,女生最喜欢言情小说和穿越小说, 大部分男生则热衷于玄幻小说。基于对用户需求的深刻挖掘和理解, 百度推荐已经帮助伙伴网站提升了1.4亿(相当于4.1 %)的流量(其中小说类4100万)。百度大数据将为网站运营提供个性化助力,成为驱动站点成长的新动力!

(20)| 轉發(2135) | 評論(508) 4月8日 16:57百度 來自微博 weibo.com

Translation for Extract 7: A must-read note for website administrators! A large database of most favored novels by Internet surfers is born! Statistics have indicated that girls prefer romantic and time-travel novels whereas boys are fascinated with science fictions. Based on our deep mining and understanding of netizens' needs, Baidu Recommendation has helped our partner's novel websites to increase speed by 14 million flow (equivalent to 4.1 %) (including 4.1 million flow of novels). The big database of Baidu will provide personalized assistance for partner websites' operation and become their new drive of growth!

Like (20)/Repost (2135)/Comment (508) 20140408 16:57 Baidu.com www.weibo.com

From Extract 6, we can observe the sensualist emotional branding approach by China Construction Bank which presents itself as a friend to the followers and suggests an easy life attitude of self-indulgence and enjoyment. From Extract 7, we can see that Baidu.com adopts a similar orientation by emphasizing its individual and personalized attention to the need of its stakeholders.

In short, instead of having a developmental divide as indicated by Gobe regarding the emotional branding by the Americans, the Chinese corporations today manifest characteristics of emotional branding related to any stage, i.e., they can utilize a pragmatist, evangelist, or sensualist orientations whenever they deem it appropriate for the context. This applies to the microblogging practices by a single corporation as well as among the practices by the different corporations. Furthermore, it should be noted that one microblogging update is not confined to using one single theme or orientation, but may hybridize two or even three orientations within one message. An example of this can be seen in Extract 8:

Extract 8: 地铁九种妖,妖妖都要命!珍爱生命,请您使用降妖利器
◆◆@百度网页搜索
#今日热点#【地铁九种妖】地铁九种妖，小编遭遇过马尾妖，偷看妖和龟壳妖，最讨厌的就是偷看妖。大家也来八一八那些年,遇到的妖吧降妖利器 : http://t.cn/8syZjWf(换个路线,让风景更美)
(16)| 轉發(141) | 評論(42) 3月17日 14:33百度 來自微博 weibo.com
Translation for Extract 8: Nine kinds of stinkpot passengers in the subway, any kind is killing! Treasure your life and use our stinkpot-killing weapon.
@ Baidu webpage search
#what's hottest today# [Nine kinds of stinkpot passengers in the subway] In my subway experiences, the junior editor me have personally encountered pigtail stinkpots, peeper stinkpots, backpacker stinkpots among which peeper stinkpots sucks the most. Let us gossip about this and check out this stinkpot-killing weapon: http://t.cn/8syZjWf (a switch to a different transportation means betters your scenery as a commuter)
Like (16)/ Repost (141)/Comment (42) 20140317 14:33 from Baidu.com Sina Weibo

In this microblogging update of Baidu.com, the three appeals of emotional branding, i.e., the pragmatist, the evangelist, and the sensualist appeals, are utilized. First, it presents an evangelist orientation with the criticism against nine kinds of selfish subway passengers, e.g., "pigtail stinkpots, peeper stinkpots, backpacker stinkpots, etc.," and with the call for a respectful and more civilized manner of taking subways. Then, it introduces the practical benefits of the service Baidu webpage search can offer, i.e., the benefits of Baidu's rout searching and mapping function with the link http://t.cn/8syZjWf and the statement "a switch to a different transportation means betters your scenery as a commuter." And most of the presentation has been phrased in a sensualist manner, with individualized expressions and marked language use by the post-1980 and post-1990 generations of Chinese. The self-address of "the junior editor me" represents a cute, playful, and individualized address created by the microblogging writer. Pronounced the same as "扒一扒"(Ba yi ba),"八一八" (Ba yi ba) is a deliberate misspelled form, which is a neologism, colloquial, youth-only, and mostly joking term to mean "gossip about someone or something." The clausal conclusion "treasure your life and use our stinkpot-killing weapon" sounds especially fresh and funny with a weapon called "stinkpot-killing weapon." A further discussion of the uses of neologism and colloquialism in the microblogging messages and updates will be presented in the next section.

12.5 Interactional Analysis

Besides employing the themes of pragmatist, evangelist, and/or sensualist to appeal to the followers, we can observe the deliberate construction of a conversational human voice by the Chinese corporations on Sina Weibo to further strengthen the relationship and emotional attachment between the corporations and their followers/stakeholders. In this section, we will discuss five major strategies of solidarity building by the corporations in their construction of a conversational human voice on Sina Weibo: presenting chicken soup for the soul, using exaggerated positive politeness strategies, using colloquialism, and employing Netspeak language and Generation X and Y humor. Table 12.1 presents the working definitions of these strategies, respectively.

We have observed that a prevalent strategy for constructing a conversational human voice and building solidarity with its followers or stakeholders by these brand corporations is providing chicken soup for the soul. In the following Extracts, i.e., Extracts 9, 10, and 11 of the microblogging messages, the corporations present no information or advertisements related to their products or services but simply share some inspirational and philosophical remarks on life, love, and career with their followers or stakeholders, attempting further emotional attachment to them:

Extract 9: #农行晚安#从现在开始, 不沉溺幻想, 不庸人自扰, 踏实工作, 好好生活, 做一个接近幸福的人。晚安!

(15)| 轉發(25)| 收藏| 評論(6) 4月6日 22:00 中国农业银行 來自VDong社交管理 | 舉報

Translation for Extract 9: # Good Night from Agricultural Bank# From now on, stop day dreaming, stop worrying about troubles created by your own imagination. Start working hard, cherish life, and try to be a neighbor of happiness. Good night!

Like (15)/Repost (25)/Collect/Comment (6) 20140406 22:00 from Agricultural Bank of China VDong

Extract 10: 你知道什么时候最难熬吗? 从学校过渡到社会的时候,看到暗恋的人和异性甜蜜的时候, 身边没人相信你的时候, 一个人漂泊亲人不在身边的时候, 看到朋友有困难 自己无能为力的时候。大概当你把这些事都熬过去的时候, 你就会变成另一个人吧。安!

(33)| 轉發(87)| 收藏| 評論(17) 4月17日 23:14 中国建设银行 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報

Translation for Extract 10: Do you know what could be the worst time you have to go through in life? It is when making the transition from school to society, when seeing your loved one dating with another person, when no one around believing in you, when you are

Table 12.1 Construction of a conversational human voice on Sina Weibo

Solidarity-building strategies	Working definitions
Chicken soup for the soul	Inspirational, emotion-stirring, or philosophical remarks on life, love, and career
Exaggerated positive politeness strategies	Demonstration of overt and excessive preference for and close association with message followers
Colloquialism	Linguistic features used in conversation
Netspeak	Slangy expressions used by younger generation on the Internet
Generation X and Y humor	Unconventional humor or humor by the younger generation

wandering alone without family support closeby, and when you are helpless when seeing your friends in trouble and in need of your help. Perhaps once you have gone through all these worst times, you will become another person and be reborn. (Good) night!

Like (33)/Repost (87)/Collect/Comment (17) 20140417 China Construction Bank 23:14 www.weibo.com

Extract 11: 学着主宰自己的生活; 即使孑然一身, 也不算一个太坏的局面。不自怜、不自卑、不怨叹, 一日一日来, 一步一步走, 那份柳暗花明的喜乐和必然的抵达, 在于我们自己的修持。——三毛 (图片来自新浪博客)

(11)| 轉發(38)| 收藏| 評論(7) 4月27日 22:00 中国银行 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報

Translation for Extract 11: Learn to be in control of your own life. Even if you have to be on your own, it is not a damaging situation. Stop self-pitying, self-abased and stop complaining. Day by day and step by step, the inevitable arrival of happiness and the last laugh will come with our soul-nurturing and persistence. ---Sanmao (photo from Sina Blogger)

Like (11)/Repost (38)/Collect/Comment (7) 20140427 22:00 Bank of China from Sina Weibo

Another strategy of building solidarity with the followers or stakeholders can be seen in the use of exaggerated positive politeness in the microblogging messages. An incidence of the exaggerated positive politeness strategies is the prevalent use of intimate address forms such as “my little buddies” (小伙伴们), “schoolmates/classmates” (童鞋), and “my dears” (各位亲) to evoke close interpersonal relationship and emotional attachments with the followers. Address forms have been an eternal topic both by scholars of sociolinguistics and the practitioners of communication (e.g., Tracy and Robles 2013; Gu 1990), who have long pointed out that address forms function as the key opening session of human communications and, more importantly, the choice of address forms defines and denotes differentiated relationships between and among communicating parties.

An indispensable way of constructing a conversational human voice on Sina Weibo is a prevalent use of colloquialism in the texts of the microblogging. Linguistic features of colloquialism can include the use of greeting expressions such as in Extracts 4, 6, 9, and 10; the use of interpersonal pronouns such as “you” (你/您) in Extracts 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10 and “our” (我们) in Extract 11; the use of questions and question marks such as in Extracts 5 and 10; and the use of imperative verbs and/or imperative marks such as in Extracts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

In addition, a massive use of “Netspeak” or “web slang” (as termed by Crystal 2001, p.24) can be seen in the microblogging messages by the Chinese corporations. The present paper maintains that the use of Netspeak is another attempt by the corporations to build solidarity with its followers or stakeholders by accommodating to the language style of the younger generation of China who makes up the largest population in the microblogging community and to present a friendly and humanized stance of the corporations in the microblogging interactions. An example of Netspeak usage is “涨姿势,” which is a slang and a near-homophony variant of “长知识” (translated as “acquire knowledge”). Other examples include “戳,” which literarily means “poke” and is a linguistic privilege of the younger generation, as opposed to its unmarked alternative phrase “点击” (click), and “汪星人” which literarily means “barking planet person” and is used by the netizens to call dogs on the Internet.

Furthermore, unconventional humor, humor of Generation X or Y, is also used by the Chinese corporations to strengthen solidarity and emotional attachments with its followers or stakeholders. Such a strategy is most evidently used by the media corporations. For example, in Extract 12, China Mobile presents a funny story with a humor characteristic of Generation X and Y and incorporates the address of "darling daughter" which is frequently used by parents for the generation of spoiled children after the one-child policy since the late 1970s:

Extract 12: #轻松"移"刻#我大一的时候,那时候还没有人手一部手机, 所以老爸打电话只能打寝室电话找我, 有天老爸打电话过来, 一室友接了。室友: "喂, 你好, 请问找哪位?" 我爸:"你好你好, 我找我的宝贝女儿。" 室友:"……,叔叔, 这里全是宝贝女儿。"

(53)| 轉發(144)| 收藏| 評論(66) 3月29日 09:54 中国移动 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報

Translation for Extract 12: #Relaxing Mobile Moment# When I was a first-year university freshman, it is not as common as today that everyone has his/her own cellphone. So my father could only reach me via the only one phone by the dormitory. One day my father called, and one of my roommates picked up the phone and asked, "Hi there, who do you wish to speak to?" My father: "Hello hello, I am looking for my darling daughter". My roommate: "......, Uncle, all of us here are darling daughters".

Like (53)/Repost (144)/Collect/Comment (66) 20140329 09:54 China Mobile. www.weibo.com

In Extract 13, Baidu.com initiates a night chat on the topic of gays and gay culture which was forbidden and likely to be avoided in the old times but not anymore for the Generation X and Y today. In response to the night chat from Baidu "How did you get to know the significant other of you?" one follower named Desaikemumu related it to the context of the dormitory culture, while another follower named Xu Tuntun related it to the context of the dormitory toilet and teased "Hey Buddy, the toilet paper is running out!…." We can observe that the dialogues constructed here are antitraditional, sensitive, and exclusive to the new generation:

Extract 13: 回复@赛德克木木: 寝室文化很丰富 //@赛德克木木: 大学室友 //@百度: 回复@徐屯屯: 右边信息量略大 //@徐屯屯:"兄弟, 纸不够用了!" "…给!"

◆◆@百度

#百度夜聊#你和你的TA是如何认识的?

(10)| 轉發(62) | 評論(92) 4月13日 21:12來自微博 weibo.com

(27)| 轉發(16)| 收藏| 評論(12) 4月13日 22:34 百度 來自微博 weibo.com | 舉報

Extract 14: Reply @ Desaikemumu: Roommate culture is rich //@ Desaikemumu: Roommate at University //@ Baidu: Reply@ Xu Tuntun: Information below is a little bit overloaded. //@Xu Tuntun: "Hey Buddy, the toilet paper is running out!" "…Here you are!"

◆◆@ Baidu

#Baidu Night Chat# How do you get to know the significant other of you?

Like (10)/Repost (62)/Comment (92) 20140413 21:12 Baidu.com www.weibo.com

Like (27)/Repost (16)/Collect/Comment (12) 20140413 22:34 Baidu.com www.weibo.com

12.6 Discussion and Conclusion

The present paper has attempted to contribute to the existing literature on emotional branding by investigating how Chinese top corporations have managed emotional branding on Sina Weibo which is the super giant of microblogging in China. Both thematic analysis and interactional analysis have been applied to examine what themes and what linguistic features have been used in the microblogging messages by the corporations to engage their followers or stakeholders and to build solidarity and emotional attachments of the stakeholders to the corporations or their brand products and services.

It is found that unlike a clear-cut chronological and categorical classification of emotional branding stages in America as posited by Gobe (2009), the characteristics of the pragmatist age, of the evangelist age, or of the sensualist age are all present in the emotional branding practice by the Chinese corporations on Sina Weibo. In other words, the values and themes of the pragmatist, the evangelist, and the sensualist have all been found present and actively applied by the different Chinese corporations. The Chinese corporation may select a different theme or value to appeal to the stakeholders according to the characteristics of the context. Furthermore, it is found that hybridizing more than one value in one single microblogging message by the Chinese corporation is also common, e.g., pragmatist value combined with evangelist value or pragmatist combined with evangelist and sensualist values. This lends further support to the multifacetedness of corporate branding, as the multiemotional branding can create multiple means to stimulate and sustain the stakeholders' emotional involvement.

A further significant contribution of this study is locating the interactional strategies by the Chinese corporations for building solidarity and emotional connections with the stakeholders. Further to the defining items provided by Kelleher and Miller (2006) regarding constructing a conversational human voice on social media, this study has identified five important strategies of solidarity building by the Chinese corporations, namely, presenting chicken soup for the soul, using exaggerated positive politeness strategies, using colloquialism, and employing Netspeak language and humors exclusive to China's Generation X and Y, the post-1980 and post-1990 generation.

It is interesting to note that the communication practice by the Chinese corporations on social media which is conversational and informal, and in many cases playful and joking, is in stark contrast with their counterpart communication practice on their corporate websites, which has been known as formal, serious, high power, and highly distance oriented (see Tian 2004). The implications from the present study are (1) corporate communication professionals should be highly aware of the nature of social media which is interactional and informal. Even for countries with a high power and high distance index in national culture such as China, the general public is looking for fun, interpersonal, and solidarity-oriented communication on the social media, as they are usually deprived of such freedom of speech in the traditional media or any other currently available mass media channels. (2) Based on the most responded microblogging items, we can observe that evangelist and sensualist branding on microblogging updates resonate most with the followers, the general public of China. This means that the Chinese younger generations are concerned with social responsibility and at the same time have become more hedonistic than their parents' generation. Such tendency of Westernization in the younger generation of China also merits special attention of corporate communication professionals. (3) Interactional strategies are indispensable components of emotional branding on social media, and further research studies into the processes as well as the products of interaction between the corporations and the stakeholders on social media are urgently called for.

Acknowledgment This study is supported by RGC Directly Allocated Research Grant, Hong Kong (#G-UA93).

References

Abdullah, Z., S.M. Nordin, and A.A. Yuhanis. 2013. Building a unique online corporate identity. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 31(5): 451–471.

Akgun, A.E., I. Kocoglu, and S.Z. Imamoglu. 2013. An emerging consumer experience: Emotional branding. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 99: 403–408.

Biradar, S., S. Bhagavati, B. Shegunshi, and R.D. Hunshyal. 2006. Emotional branding in the pharmaceutical industry. *The Internet Journal of Pharmacology* 4(August 26): 3.

Briones, R.L., B. Kuch, B.F. Liu, and J. Yan. 2011. Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships. *Public Relations Review* 37(1): 37–43.

Crystal, D. 2001. *Language and the internet*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daly, J., A. Kellehear, and M. Gliksman. 1997. *The public health researcher: A methodological approach*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

DiStaso, M.W., T. McCorkindale, and D.K. Wright. 2011. How public relations executives perceive and measure the impact of social media in their organizations. *Public Relations Review* 37(3): 324–328.

Feng, J., and D. Wu. 2009. Changing ideologies and advertising discourses in China: A case study of Nanfang Daily. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* 19(2): 218–238.

Fischer, E., and A.R. Reuber. 2011. Social interaction via new social media: (How) can interactions on Twitter affect effectual thinking and behavior? *Journal of Business Venturing* 26(1): 1–18.

Gobe, M. 2001. *Emotional branding: The new paradigm for connecting brands to people*. New York: Allworth Press.

Gobe, M. 2007. Let's brandjam to humanize our brands. *Design Management Review* 18(Winter): 68–75.

Gobe, M. 2009. *Emotional branding: The new paradigm for connecting brands to people*. Rev. ed. New York: Allworth Press.

Gu, Y. 1990. Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14: 237–247.

Heath, R., D. Brandt, and A. Nairn. 2006. Brand relationships: Strengthened by emotions, weakened by attention. *Journal of Advertising Research* 46: 410–419.

Kelleher, T. 2009. Conversational voice, communicated commitment and public relations outcomes in interactive online communication. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 49: 172–188.

Kelleher, T., and B.M. Miller. 2006. Organizational blogs and the human voice: Relational strategies and relational outcomes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 11: 394–414.

Lillqvist, E., and L. Louhiala-Salminen. 2014. Facing Facebook: Impression management strategies in company-consumer interactions. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 28(1): 3–30.

Morrison, S., and F.G. Crane. 2007. Building the service brand by creating and managing an emotional brand experience. *Brand Management* 14(4): 410–421.

Pacea, O. 2011. CorpTweet: Brands, language and identity in web. 2.0. *Annals of Ovidius University Constanta- Philology* 22(2): 147–168. London/New York: Routledge.

Pollach, I. 2004. Corporate self-presentation on the WWW: Strategies for enhancing usability, credibility and utility. *Corporate Communication International* 10(4): 284–301.

Rossiter, J., and S. Bellman. 2012. Emotional branding pays off: How brands meet share of requirements through bonding, companionship and love. *Journal of Advertising Research* 42(3): 291–296.

Rybalko, S., and T. Seltzer. 2010. Dialogic communication in 140 characters or less: How Fortune 500 companies engage stakeholders using Twitter. *Public Relations Review* 36: 336–341.
Searls, D., and D. Weinberger. 2001. *The clue train Manifesto: The end of business as usual*. New York: Perseus Publishing.
So, J.T., A.G. Parsons, and S. Yap. 2013. Corporate branding, emotional attachment and brand loyalty: The case of luxury fashion branding. *Corporate Communication International* 17(4): 403–423.
Thompson, C.J., A. Rindfleisch, and A. Zeynep. 2006. Emotional branding and the strategic value of the Doppelganger brand image. *Journal of Marketing* 70(1): 40–64.
Tian, Y. 2004. Cultural variance in corporate presentation: Content analysis of U.S. and Chinese corporate web sites. *Human Communication* 11(4): 477–488.
Topalian, A. 2003. Experienced reality: The development of corporate identity in the digital era. *European Journal of Marketing* 37(7/8): 1119–1132.
Tracy, K., and J.S. Robles. 2013. *Everyday talk: Building and reflecting identities*. New York: The Guilford Press.
Trusov, M., R.E. Bucklin, and K. Pauwels. 2009. Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: Findings from an Internet social networking site. *Journal of Marketing* 73(4): 90–102.
van Riel, C.M.B. 1994. *Principles of corporate communications*. London: Prentice-Hall.
Waters, R.D., and J.Y. Jamal. 2011. Tweet, tweet, tweet: A content analysis of nonprofit organizations' twitter updates. *Public Relations Review* 37: 321–324.
Wright, D.K., and M.D. Hinson. 2010. How new communications media are being used in public relations: A longitudinal analysis. *Public Relations Journal* 4(3): 1–27.
Wu, D., and E.M.K. Chung. 2006. Involvement strategies in Hong Kong print advertisements, 1950s and 1980s. *China Media Research* 2(2): 24–37.
Yoo, C., and D. MacInnis. 2005. The brand attitude formation process of emotional and informational ads. *Journal of Business Research* 58(10): 1397–1406.

Chapter 13
Persuasive Communication Skill Development for Corporate Communication Practitioners in Sino-American Contexts

Patricia B. Scott

Abstract Getting our message across is harder today than it has ever been. Our audiences are more distracted than ever before due to the overwhelming barrage of information. Not only is there more information, but we also have drastically shortened attention spans. Our audiences have evolved to try to become more successful in the information age and have had to adapt how they listen. As a society, we have created many tools to help us find what we need and filter out what is not relevant. We live in an always-on world that provides instant gratification in a couple of mouse clicks.

Our audiences have now come to expect to get just what they want when they want it. This is the new audience. As communicators, it is essential that we also evolve how we transmit our messages to this new audience. This chapter will provide tools that can be used to help any presentation or conversation. Those corporate communication practitioners who will be most successful in this new environment will be those who can be concise, make the complex simple, and be the most relevant.

There has been a fundamental shift in our audience's ability to listen and pay attention to our messages. Getting our message across is harder than it has ever been. There is more information, more distractions, and more competition for every message we create. We have shorter attention spans due to this overwhelming amount of information and distraction. To be able to cut through it all, we have become very good at creating tools to find what we want and get what information we need immediately. We now live in an always-on world that provides instant gratification in a couple of mouse clicks.

It wasn't always this way.

In fact, as of 2013, a full 90 % of all the data in the world had been generated over the last 2 years (SINTEF 2013).

P.B. Scott (✉)
Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA
e-mail: patscott@uhmms.com

P.P.K. Ng, C.S.B. Ngai (eds.), *Role of Language and Corporate Communication in Greater China*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-46881-4_13

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, the average attention span of an adult is now 8 s. That is one second less than the estimated attention span of a goldfish (National Center for Biotechnology Information 2014).

Because of these facts, it is hard to get your audience to listen, and they can jump from one thought to the next very quickly. This jumpy and sporadic listening behavior reminds me of the squirrels I see in my yard. They are constantly moving and are very unfocused. As I watch the squirrels, I do see that there is one thing that does get them to stop and focus. There is one thing that gets their attention and keeps it. An acorn!

On normal things, squirrels have a one-second attention span, but can focus for about four minutes on an acorn (What is the Attention Span of a Squirrel 2008). That is a 23,900 % increase in attention span! How can you get your message to be as special as an acorn is to a squirrel? Is there a way to not only be heard but to make a difference to the listener, by being memorable and persuasive?

Through the experience of teaching hundreds of corporate managers, sales representatives, and MBA students, it has become clear that there are five essential ingredients to make your message an acorn for your listeners. These five elements together have become the ACORN Communication Strategy™.

The ingredients are:

*A*udience
*C*redibility
*O*rder of message
*R*emember me
*N*eed to connect

Now is the time to reconsider your message strategy. Your audiences have evolved. Has your communication strategy evolved too or will you become extinct?

13.1 Audience

The squirrel is able to focus on an acorn for such a long time because it is essential to the squirrel's survival. Survival is fundamentally the most relevant thing, so the acorn will have the squirrel's undivided attention. It is similar to what happens with our listeners. We have so much information and stimuli to choose from; we only focus on what is the most relevant for us at the time. When I am listening, the only thing that will get my attention and keep it is something I need or care about. It is the same for the squirrel and the acorn.

Scientists understand how this process works. There is a part of the hindbrain called the reticular activating system (RAS). This is the part of the brain that serves as a filter for our incoming messages. It decides what information is relevant. The relevant stuff becomes part of our stream of consciousness.

How does the RAS work and how does it decide what is relevant for us? Quite simply, there is a hierarchy to determine relevance. When information comes into the RAS, the thing it looks for first is need. Does this information fulfill a need? Is it relevant to me? If it is not, it gets filtered out.

As audiences listen, they are listening to see what is important, needed, and relevant to them. Even if it is the speaker's passion and the delivery is great, if I do not care about it, if it is not important or relevant to me specifically, I will not continue to listen. The words will just become background noise.

Imagine yourself in a crowded train station: lots of noise, lots of commotion, and lots of announcement being made over the loudspeaker. You are aware of all of the noise, but not necessarily paying close attention to it. Then, the next announcement includes your train number and name, and suddenly you try to block out all the noise and listen to this relevant piece of information. The RAS tells the rest of the body to get ready to respond more specifically to input. It then tells the rest of the central nervous system to search for more information and coordinate the data to know what to do next. What is not needed or relevant becomes "noise." It would be impossible to take in information from all five senses with equal weight all the time. So our brain has to filter and judge so that only the most relevant information gets scrutinized and becomes the focus. Relevant messages gain focus; irrelevant ones become noise.

As we craft our ACORN, how can we get the audience's RAS to focus and take in the information? WIIFM. WIIFM is the key to the entire acorn. WIIFM stands for "what's in it for me." Always keep in mind that the "me" here is the audience as a whole. As an audience member, we need to hear and understand the WIIFM right away. Unless we can get that RAS to see this information as something that is needed, it does not really matter what the rest of the message is because it will just be noise.

With the WIIFM, the goal is just to get your audience to start listening. That is it. Just having the squirrel recognize and get excited about spotting an ACORN has to be the first step. No matter how good the ACORN tastes and how nutritious it is for him, none of it matters if he never saw the ACORN to begin with.

13.2 Credibility

It is true that if you don't get someone's attention and the topic is not relevant, the rest of what you say may not count for much. It is also true that once you have their attention, the next thing you say can make or break the rest of your argument. How do you get a few more minutes of their attention? How can you start with relevance and end in persuasion? What is the next step?

Credibility. Now that you have my attention, what makes you the right person to listen to on this topic? How can you convince me that it is worth listening to you instead of seeking other sources of information on this topic? Are you worth my time?

It is generally believed that there are three keys to credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and expertise (Shell and Moussa 2007). Through my experience with corporate clients and Wharton MBA students, I think it might be divided a bit differently. Now that the world is changing and our communication time is shortened, it seems that quite simply, you can have either personal credibility or credentialed credibility.

13.2.1 Personal Credibility

Personal credibility can be present when a relationship already exists with your listener. This type of credibility is often made up of ingredients like competence and trustworthiness that must be continually demonstrated over time or come from a known and accepted reputation.

In work settings, competence is often seen as a credibility builder. Your ability to do a task or handle a situation consistently with proven results will develop your reputation and personal credibility. Again, the key here is that competence is built over time, but then can be leveraged once you are within a network of believers.

Trustworthiness is perceived when someone is consistently honest or truthful, and these characteristics are again demonstrated over time. As difficult as personal credibility (competence and trustworthiness) is to gain due to its need to be continually proven and improved, it is very easy to lose. Credibility is gained in drips and lost in gallons. So, there is a need for consistent authenticity. There needs to be a proven and continual consistency not just in your actions, but also between what you say and what you do.

For the United States, the year 2009 was marked by one of the worst financial crises in recent history. Many businesses, banks, and insurance companies were failing due to the losses in the stock market and the failing economy. The government wanted to help stabilize institutions whose failure could damage many other businesses as well as harm individual investors. They also wanted to take action in order to help retain consumer confidence. To do this, they "bailed out" some large institutions.

In one example, in September of 2009, the United States Federal Reserve extended an $85 billion emergency loan to American International Group (AIG). Less than one week after receiving the government bailout (comprised of taxpayer's money), AIG spent nearly half a million dollars on a corporate retreat at the St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, California. Taxpayers were outraged that this eight-day lavish retreat racked up nearly $24,000 on spa treatments, nearly $7,000 on golf, and almost $150,000 on banquets ("AIG Executive Blows $440,000 After Getting Bailout" 2010).

In AIG's defense, they booked the meeting months before the initial loan from the federal government. This type of trip was also the standard of practice in the industry. The value of face-to-face meetings and these incentive trips to reward top producing self-employed agents have shown to have a positive ROI for the company.

But as an article in Bloomberg quoted, "whether the company's behavior is wrong on an absolute basis doesn't really matter…it's become a question of perception and it seems that they're being viewed as behaving unethically" (Holm and Son 2008). The credibility for this company was seriously damaged from one act. The company worked for 90 years to build its reputation, trustworthiness, and competence. Their performance made them the world's largest insurance company with employees in 130 different countries. With just one act that showed us an inconsistency between what they said and what they did, the public and media could scarcely get their fill of news and criticism.

Although all forms of personal credibility must be guarded very carefully, what form personal credibility takes can vary between cultures. In 1959, Erving Goffman introduced the concept of "face" which he described generally as our need to have others view us with respect and dignity and generate a generally positive social impression on others (Goffman 1959). The concept of "facework" was how we achieve that end. It consists of what strategies we use and what behaviors we engage in. The goal of what "face" we want to achieve and the "facework" to get to that goal can be very different in different cultures even though there is a general need to create and maintain this method of credibility building in all cultures.

There are three main goals present when we think about face. A person could focus on self-face to make sure they look good in front of others. There is the other face where the goal is to protect and elevate the images of others around them, and there is also the other mutual face where the concern is for both self and others (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi 1998). The importance of face is often defined by the culture of the country or region.

The difference here is that this type of communication is dictated by cultural norms and rules for appropriateness. Culture and communication are intertwined. In work done by Ting-Toomey 2005, communication aspects were compared between individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures. As defined by Triandis (1995), individualism is a social pattern in which the individuals see themselves as independent and give priority to their goals over the goals of others. Collectivism is a social pattern of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of a collective and where the goals of the collective receive priority.

On this individualism-collectivism dimension, the United States is classified as individualistic, and China is classified as collectivistic, while Japan is classified as moderately collectivistic (Hofstede 2001). So these cultures build personal credibility differently. Individualistic cultures (United States) tend to express more self-maintenance concerns, use more direct and dominating facework, and tend to be more emotionally expressive and aggressive. Collectivistic cultures (China) tend to express more other-face and mutual-face concerns, use more avoidance and more integrative framework strategies, and are more obliging and more compromising (Ting-Toomey 2005).

Individualism-collectivism shapes the preference for self vs. other facework. Even though these differences must be taken into account when communicating globally, we know that "people in all cultures try to maintain and negotiate face in all communication situations" (Ting-Toomey 2005 p. 164). Personal credibility is an important cornerstone to persuasion.

13.2.2 Credentialed Credibility

Credentialed credibility is most important when personal credibility has not yet been established or is on shaky ground. Credentialed credibility is quite simply an expertise. To have credentialed credibility, you must either have a specialized area of knowledge or have done enough research or investigation to use other's credentialed credibility to your advantage.

As a practical note, although credibility should always be present, it does not always need to be explicitly expressed. If your credibility is already well known for this particular audience and for this particular topic, you do not need to spend much (or any) time verbalizing it.

13.3 Order of Message

We have seen the importance of relevance to your Audience to fulfill their needs as well as the importance of Credibility to show us that you are the one to fulfill it. But of course, you have much more to say. You have facts, evidence, anecdotes, experiences, sources, proof, and details that you need to get across. Now we will focus on the Order that the body of the message should be in.

Information is not all weighted the same for the listener. An individual's judgment and decision-making is greatly influenced by the way the information is positioned. Message framing and presentation order affect the listener's cognitive processes (Buda and Zhang 2000).

13.3.1 Framing

A frame of a message is a way to help your listeners determine the meaning of a subject and help them choose one particular meaning over another (Fairhurst 1996). How do we want the audience to see this message? What should their perspective be? Through what lens should they examine the material?

Let us make it clear that framing is a necessary step in communication. When we choose a frame for our audience to help them interpret our message, it is not to confuse or manipulate. There is always a frame present. When we communicate, the speaker always has a frame and the listener always has a frame. The frame is based on past experience, relevance, prior knowledge, etc. To that end, framing involves selection and salience. "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993, p. 52).

When we share our frame with our audience, we are attempting to share a common vision of the message. When we introduce a topic, we do say, "interestingly these facts are true" or "sadly, these facts are true" or "surprisingly, these facts are true." How we frame the facts will help the listener interpret them correctly and will help the audience clearly understand the key message or main point that you are trying to communicate. The frame must be clearly defined early in the message.

As an example of just how powerful a frame can be, consider the study done by two researchers at Stanford University. In the study, the researchers gave the participants a report with statistics about crime in a city. For half of the participants, the crime was framed using the metaphor of a beast preying on the city. For the other half, the crime was described as a virus infecting the city. The rest of the report was identical for each group.

The results revealed that the frame had systematically influenced how people felt about and proposed solving the city's crime problem. "When the crime was framed as a virus, the participants, proposed investigating the root causes and treating the problem by enacting social reform to inoculate the community with emphasis on eradicating poverty and improving education. When crime was framed metaphorically as a beast, participants proposed catching and jailing criminals and enacting harsher enforcement laws" (Thibodeau and Borodischy 2011, p. 2).

The study revealed the following conclusions about frames:

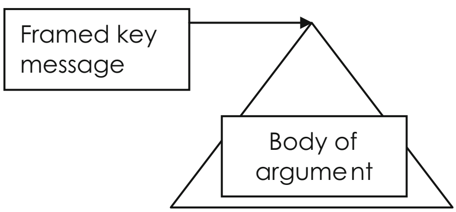
1. Elaborate wording is not needed for impact.
2. The frame does not need to be rigorously reinforced throughout the evidence.
3. The frame must be placed early in the message.
4. The frame works when a context association is made. Frame words act as more than just isolated words.
5. The frame influenced both how the participants felt and reasoned about the data.

With strategic use, a frame can help us better align our perspectives with our listeners so that shared meaning becomes more likely.

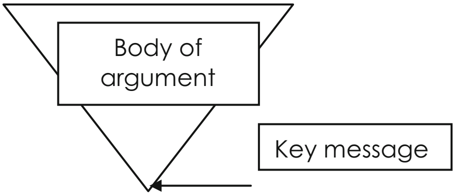
13.3.2 Presentation Order

As mentioned earlier, in addition to the frame, the order of your message also has an effect on the listener. There are two main ways that you can create your message. You can either have your key message first or have your key message last. These are sometimes referred to as persuasive or narrative structures, respectively.

In the persuasive structure, your key message along with its frame comes first. The key message is then followed by the evidence, logic, argument, or data. This structure can be represented by a simple triangle.



In the narrative structure, the triangle is inverted. In this approach, you provide the argument and detail and then conclude with the frame and the key message. This structure is how we have been sharing information for centuries. It is the structure of stories and jokes. In this structure, the punch line is at the end. The audience is teased along and then there is the big reveal. Diagrammatically, it looks like this.



When the message has a high degree of relevance, putting the most important or key message first has the greatest impact on the listener. Conversely, for messages of low personal or casual relevance (like a joke or story about your friend's weekend), the effect on the listener was better when the key message or main point was at the end of the message. Once again, it is all about relevance (Buda and Zhang 2000).

The persuasive structure not only makes some intuitive sense, but it has been proven to be true. In 1994, a study was conducted involving 137 students. The goal of the study was to determine what factors determine the effectiveness of presentation order.

The students were seated in private cubicles and asked questions about their attitude toward building nuclear power plants. Prior to each message, the students were given information on the topic. For the low-relevance students, they were informed that the recently released Federal Energy Program suggested that nuclear power plants were going to be built in distant states. They were then given a message and evidence about the program in both the persuasive structure (key point first) and the narrative structure (key point last).

The second group of high-relevance students were informed that the recently released Federal Energy Program suggested that nuclear power plants were going to be built in their own and several nearby states. They were then given the exact same messages and evidence about the program as before in both the narrative and persuasive structures. Those with high relevance responded to the message that was given using the persuasive structure. Those with low relevance responded to the message that was given using the narrative structure (Haugtvedt and Wegener 1994).

The persuasive structure is the most effective way to communicate if we want to persuade. To have this structure work best for us, we first need to establish the WIIFM to have the reticular activating system see the message as relevant. This WIIFM must fulfill the need and provide the framed key message right in the beginning.

Learning is a process of creating associations between pieces of information. The temporal order of the message plays a critical role in the facilitation of the linkage of reactions from one piece of information to the next.

A study was conducted where the same advertisement was shown to 270 participants. The only difference between the ads was the placement of the brand name or logo either at the beginning, middle, or end of the message. The researchers found that there was a significant effect of brand-name placement on brand attitude. Putting the brand name at the beginning of the ad rather than waiting until the end enhanced the persuasive impact of the ad (Baker et al. 2004).

Now that we know that the audience's WIIFM has to come first and be part of the framed key message so that relevance can be established, where does the credibility come in? When listeners are presented with a message, they try to determine whether the message is accurate and whether the source lacks credibility.

The ability for the message to have a persuasive impact is diminished when listeners attribute bias to a source. When credibility is low, the listener will discount the claims made in the message. Therefore, when a key message is framed, the listener is judging the credibility of the source. Positively framed messages that are presented by those with perceived expertise will have the greatest influence on attitudes to the message.

Like the frame, the WIIFM, and key message, evidence of credibility must also come at the very start of your message. Therefore, we now know that evidence exists suggesting that the message order, frame, and credibility of the message source all influence the final judgment of the listener (Buda and Zhang 2000).

Keep in mind that there are, of course, some cultural differences, not just between Asia and America, but also across many cultures that dictate the order of the message. In Asia, it is expected that there is much discussion prior to "getting down to business." This "preamble" is necessary for building credibility and saving face. In America, the need for polite conversation before turning to business is more contextually sensitive than culturally dictated. For example, many of my clients do their work in context of relationships. They have or would like to have an ongoing trade or business relationship, friendship, partnership, or mentorship with the person they are trying to persuade. So in this context, one would not skip the discussion before business, but, rather, use this time to build the relationship and personal credibility. In some instances when the audience is very busy or very distracted, it is best just to get to the point with your message, conduct the business at hand, and proceed to the next task.

But in almost all cases, when you are ready to shift from the polite conversation and relationship building aspect of the encounter and are ready to do business, the WIIFM statement of audience relevance is what will make the change in the mind of the listener. Once we hear the WIIFM and its frame, we are ready to hear the next message and share meaning.

13.4 Remember Me

Now we are at the point in our message construction where we actually get to tell our listener the body of our message and the facts of the argument that are sure to win him or her over and make the listener remember our message.

Often, even though my student's data and argument are sound, when it is their turn to start talking, they want to tell their listeners *Everything* they know. They want to flood them with ideas and facts and evidence. They do what is commonly referred to as a "data dump." In a way, for your listener, it is like asking them to take a sip from a fire hose.

The general surge of data in our lives is well documented. Now that economies of industrialized nations have shifted from an industrial society to a knowledge society, it has been noted that we live in an information economy (Trilling and Hood (1999).

Economics, however, is the study of how society uses scarce resources. One could argue that in our current society, information is not scarce. It is overflowing and we are drowning in it. We are shifting to a new economy. A new fight is brewing over what might be the currently scarcest resource, our attention. We are now in an "attention economy" (Goldhaber 1997). Many cognitive scientists are drawing a distinction between raw information and information we can use in thinking. They firmly believe that our listening problem is not information overload. They believe that the real problem is organization underload.

How can we help our listeners take a sip without drowning? How can we make sure to give our squirrel enough acorn without choking? How can we make our message memorable?

Consider these three elements that will influence how our messages are constructed: understanding adult learning, understanding how to make information more memorable by using short sentences and chunking the information, and finding a way for the listener to want to take action.

13.4.1 Adult Learning

There are many principles of adult learning that are now being recognized and implemented in training and education classes. For persuasion, the most important element to understand is that adults simply learn some things differently than children (Kuhn and Pease 2006).

Physiologically, when kids learn, they form cell assemblies and phase sequences. When kids learn, they are actually building these sequences. They are making new connections as they learn and form them so that they can make sense of the world around them.

As adults, we are not making new connections as we learn. We spend our time making new arrangements, connecting information to what we already know rather than learning "new" things. We constantly reinterpret our experiences and search to make meaning from them. That is how adults learn.

In 1926, Piaget first introduced the term schema. Schema theory was developed in the 1970s. Schema theory views organized knowledge as a network of abstract structures. It is a mental framework that represents how we view the world. This schema changes as we encounter and learn new information. The interesting thing, however, is the realization that as adults, schemas are not built, but are only changed. There must be prior knowledge and experience forming the framework so that the newly formed information can attach. Why is this important? We are trying to provide new information to someone or want him or her to see something in a new way. Because of the way adults learn, it is difficult for adults to understand the new information without a lot of cognitive processing to figure out where this new information should fit into their existing schema ("Schema Theory of Learning" n.d.).

As adults, we would have to listen to the message, manage to maintain our attention (which is not possible without relevance), then process the information, interpret the meaning, and then try to figure out where to attach it to the framework that already exists in our mind.

In a short conversation with short attention span squirrels, how can we make this easier for the listener? Simple. Find a way to express your message in a way that is easy to understand and completely accessible to the listener. If we can describe our message in terms that the listener already understands and can easily locate in their schema, our message will be more readily internalized. How do we do that? In a word – metaphor.

The use of metaphors, analogies, and mnemonic devices can greatly assist the listener's initial understanding and more importantly their inclusion of this new information into their schema. This is especially true if you convey technical material for those listeners who do not have a general knowledge background in that subject.

Metaphors and analogies are wonderful and powerful tools. They tell us what new information that can be understood by our past experiences.

13.4.2 Memory

If you want your messages and your presentations (and you) to be more memorable, use simple language. In his book, *Words That Work*, Frank Luntz (2007) listed his ten rules of successful communication. Rule number one and rule number two both deal with concise simple language. Rule number one is to use small words, and rule number two is to use short sentences.

Whenever we talk about this in my MBA communication classes at Wharton, the students push back and worry that they are "dumbing down" the message. They may think they sound smarter by using really big words and long complex sentences, but if the listener doesn't easily and readily understand the message and cannot remember it, it will have no value to them.

A paper called "Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: Problems with Using Long Words Needlessly" was published in 2006. In this study, 71 Stanford undergrad students were asked to read passages of personal essays for admissions to graduate studies. These passages were changed by the researches to make them moderately complex or highly complex. For the highly complex passages, the researchers replaced every noun, verb, and adjective with the longest possible thesaurus equivalent. For the moderately complex passages, the researchers made the same changes as above, but only to every third applicable word. The students were then asked to rate the passages.

They found that “contrary to prevailing wisdom, increasing the complexity of a text does not cause an essay’s author to seem more intelligent. In fact, the opposite appears to be true… Complexity neither disguised the shortcomings of poor essays, nor enhanced the appeal of high-quality essays.” In the same article, the authors performed more experiments across disparate domains, different judgment types, and different paradigms. The effects they found were the same. Basically, “needless complexity leads to negative evaluations” (Oppenheimer 2006).

Short, clear messages work best. Remember, it is not just about what you want to say, it is also about how best to get the audience to hear you. Although the concise 140-character limit of Twitter is so popular and we love mnemonics, slogans, sound bites, and headlines, your message can’t be delivered in catchy phrases. Your key message, the one idea you really want to get across, should be the focus of your effort. That is what you want to make memorable and easy to understand.

Key messages need to be silver bullets, not buck from a shotgun. Don’t throw everything you have at the listener. Instead, hone a shiny, pointed single message that will be short, easy to understand, and memorable. The message points that can move into long-term memory will be the ones that differentiate your message from its competition.

13.4.3 Chunking

After the key message, what can you do with the rest of your data? One of the biggest obstacles that my clients face is the ability to chunk information and keep their evidence and data organized for the listener. If we are reading your message, you would probably put in headers, paragraph indentations, bullet points, bold or italic words, or even underlines to show your key points and message and to help the reader follow along through your logic.

Just because the message is spoken, it doesn’t mean that those needs of your audience have gone away. After giving a solid key message, you need to carefully and deliberately lead your listeners through your logic. A good way to do it is through thoughtful chunks of information.

As listeners, we just can’t listen to many disparate pieces of information, quickly put them in order, and then fit them into our schema. We need bite-size chunks of information so that we don’t get overwhelmed. As you create the body of your message, how can you organize the evidence and information to make it easier for us to get? Can you put the information together in chunks for us so that as listeners, we can skip the need to organize the facts?

If a speaker got up in the front of the room and said, “Good morning, today I am going to go through the 27 ways you can save money by clipping coupons,” you would probably immediately stop listening even if saving money fit your WIIFM (what’s in it for me). We just don’t want to process that amount of data. That is why on the evening news, to keep our attention through that next commercial, they tease us with just bite-size nuggets of information that we think we can easily understand. For example, the anchor might say, "When we come back, 3 ways you can save your family money by clipping coupons." Even if the content is the same and there really are 27 discrete ways to save that money, if they can put them into 3 chunks or categories, we will be more likely to want to listen.

Giving us too much to listen to at one time without a chunked structure is a classic case of information entropy. Entropy is actually a thermodynamic quantity representing the amount of disorder or randomness in a system. Claude E. Shannon introduced the concept of information entropy or the randomness in content in his 1948 paper, "A Mathematical Theory of Communication" (Shannon 1948). As listeners, we want low information entropy. We want patterns. We want order. We cannot quickly and easily understand chaos.

How do you normally chunk your logic and data? Do you often just keep going down your list of facts without a preview for the audience to know what is coming? Is it just slide after slide and graph after graph without fitting into themes or categories? Do you just blurt out all the benefits of the product from the marketing literature without caring about the listener?

13.5 Taking Action

Now that you have your beginning and middle of your message, how do you end? What should the conclusion be like? We know it should no longer be the punch line or key message – we have shown that those items need to move to the beginning.

The final part of the message must be a clear and concise call to action. In the 1930s, a scholar from Purdue University named Alan H. Monroe created a sequence of steps based on the psychology of persuasion that he hoped would inspire people to take action (Mind Tools n.d.). In the persuasive structure we are talking about, as well as Monroe's structure, the action step serves as the concluding step. Now that they have heard your message and perhaps a summary of your message, if it was long or complex, the audience needs to know what to do.

When you tell your listener your call to action, there are really three things to remember:

1. When you tell your listener what to do, be as specific as possible. Should they vote, try the product, and write to their congressman? Exactly, what should they do?
2. Make sure what you ask them to do is doable. Don't ask for too much money or even an all-out commitment. Is there an easy way for them to do what you want or at least start to do it?
3. Make sure the call to action is something they can do very soon after you ask. If there is too much time between asking and doing, your listeners will lose their passion for the idea and forget (Persuasion: Monroe's Motivated Sequence n.d.).

13.6 Need to Connect

So far, we have seen the need to think first and foremost about how our message will be relevant to our audience and have seen the need to show our credibility early in the message. We then learned the proven impact the order of your message will have in persuasion and some tools to make the body of your message easier to listen to, stay engaged with, and remember. Now we are ready for the final tool to get your audience (squirrel) to listen (focus), the need for emotional connection to the message.

We see in the very definition of persuasion that we must be *Moved* toward our new belief or action. We cannot be moved if we don't feel anything for the subject. Why is this true? Why are emotions so important? Are they really part of everything, even for people who are not generally emotionally demonstrative?

The answer is yes. There is a part of the brain called the amygdala. This is the emotional part of the brain. The amygdala allows for empathy and feelings of emotion. Interestingly, it also controls the fight or flight reflex.

Even though we do not consciously know it, when the amygdala perceives something, it can bias us and cause us to think or act in a certain way (Adolphs 2009). When the amygdala is triggered, a rush of hormones is activated and floods the body before the prefrontal lobes (the thinking part of the brain that regulates executive function) can mediate the reaction (Nadler 2009).

Although we may not still need the "eat or be eaten" survival instinct while listening (hopefully), we just react. When the amygdala acts and overrides our rational thought, it is known as the amygdala hijack. Basically, evolution has made humans emotional animals.

Our fight or flight reflex is always there ready to take center stage. Those who are persuasive use that knowledge to make sure they use rhetorical tools to move their audience. They are not necessarily looking to drive their audience toward emotional outbursts, but they need to get them to feel something about their message.

In addition to always being present, researchers have also suggested that emotion and feeling are related to perceiving and processing information, reasoning, memory retrieval, memory storage, and learning (Dirkx 2001). The fact is that emotional material is processed more deeply than non-emotional material (Carstensen and Turk-Charles 1994).

That is why we often remember events and times that cause us to have strong feelings (grief, frustration, anger, embarrassment) more specifically than events that did not trigger such an emotional response.

For us to be effective communicators, emotion must be part of every message. We must find a way to connect to the audience if we want to move them toward a new belief or toward action. If we fail to engage them emotionally, we will fail to persuade.

The question then becomes, how can we work emotion into our messages without getting too fluffy or dramatic? Simple, it is just a matter of word choice.

As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words, and if we can see it and visualize it, then we can feel it. Here are three good ways to get emotion into your message to help us visualize the outcome:

1. Word choice to promote connotation
2. Word choice used as vivid language to help tell a detailed story and visualize the outcome
3. Word choice to make the abstract something we can understand within the intended context

13.6.1 Connotation

Word choice is a fairly easy way to marry the logic to the emotion. Many words have strong connotations. Words that have heavy connotation can not only communicate meaning but convey emotion as well. For example, do you respond more to the word *soar* instead of *fly*, *panic* instead of *worry*, *cheap* instead of *inexpensive*, *crammed* instead of *tight*, or *savor* instead of *taste*? Just a simple change to a more heavily connotated word can make a big difference.

13.6.2 Visualization

What word choice can also do is help us visualize. To persuade your listeners, you need to use vivid language and details to help them either see the positive relief that your solution would bring or, perhaps sometimes more powerfully, show the horrible outcome if your solution is not adopted. This is called the visualization.

These images will cause us to have an emotional response. These images carry not only fact but implicit meaning as well. We will see the fact in the context of the meaning provided by the connotation.

For example, think about something as short, but as powerful, as the most well-known part of the inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty: Cries she with silent lips, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door" (The Statue of Liberty n.d.).

This was a sonnet written in 1883 by poet Emma Lazarus entitled "The New Colossus." She could have said, "all are welcome," but she chose more vivid language to help us better understand, connect to, and feel the plight of the immigrants who are making the journey across the ocean.

Now, most of us are probably not as poetic as Emma Lazarus or as talented with word choice, but even picking one or two vivid words that help us visualize your message or make a story from your facts will help us fulfill the need that we have to emotionally connect to the message.

Of course, your whole message should not be a giant story, just the words around your key messages. If you make your whole message a story, it will gain emotion, but will lose the benefits of the message order described earlier.

13.6.3 Making Abstract Concrete

The same benefit of good word choice is not only true of words to help us fully understand and feel your key points but also help us make better sense of and connect better with numbers and statistics.

For example in 1988, famous US talk show host Oprah Winfrey lost a total of 67 lb. Sure that sounds impressive, but we really can't visualize what 67 lb of fat is. If she had just announced on the air that she had lost 67 lb, we probably would have soon forgotten her message. But instead of saying she lost 67 lb, she actually wheeled a wagon full of 67 lb of fat onto the stage. Because of that stark visualization, no one could forget that image.

We understood her weight loss and connected to her message. Regrettably for Oprah, she regained that weight, and because we could never forget that image, it was news again, years later.

Our goal is to make the abstractness of numbers and statistics more concrete. We need to make the numbers meaningful and understandable so that we can connect and feel something about them. For example, which statement do you feel is most powerful? The disease spreads throughout the United States and affected 56,886 people or the disease became an epidemic that swept throughout the United States infecting enough people to fill New York Yankee Stadium to capacity. Letting us see and understand what the contexts of the numbers are helps us connect.

13.7 Conclusion

The ACORN is what gets a squirrel to focus so that it can survive. Without this focus, it could not take in what it needs. You need your listeners to focus on your message so that they can hear, understand, and remember you so that you can give them what they need.

If you just take a few minutes before your next high-stake conversation to review the ACORN strategy and apply its easy principles, your next message will be more persuasive and yield you better results. The recipe is easy to understand and apply:

*A*udience – have you found their relevance and WIIFM?
*C*redibility – have you told them through your personal or credentialed credibility why you are the right person to help solve the problem?
*O*rder of message – are you using the persuasive structure with your framed key message first?

*R*emember – have you made your data and evidence easy for adults to hear by chunking and easy to remember by using simple language, metaphors, and mnemonics? Have you given them a strong call to order?

*N*eed to connect – have you used word choice to move your audience toward engagement with your message?

References

Adolphs, R. 2009. The social brain: Neural basis of social knowledge. *The Annual Review of Psychology* 60: 693–716.

Baker, W.E., H. Honea, and C.A. Russell. 2004. Do not wait to reveal the brand name. *Journal of Advertising* 33(3): 77–85.

Buda, R., and Y. Zhang. 2000. Consumer product evaluation: The interactive effect of message framing, presentation order, and source credibility. *Journal of Product and Brand Management* 9(4): 229–242.

Carstensen, L.L., and S. Turk-Charles. 1994. The salience of emotion across the adult life span. *Psychology and Aging* 9(2): 259–264.

Dirkx, J.M. 2001. The power of feelings: Emotion, imagination, and the construction of meaning in adult learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 89: 63–72.

Entman, R.M. 1993. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication* 43(4): 51–58.

Fairhurst, G.T. 1996. *Art of framing managing the language of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

FOXBusiness.com. n.d. *AIG executives blow $440,000 after getting bailout*. Retrieved from http://www.foxbusiness.com/story/markets/industries/finance/aig-executives-blow--getting-bailout/.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City: Doubleday.

Goldhaber, M. 1997. Attention shoppers! *Wired* 5(12). Retrieved from http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/5.12/es_attention.html.

Haugtvedt, C.P., and D.T. Wegener. 1994. Message order effects in persuasion: An attitude strength perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research* 21: 205–218.

Hofstede, G. 2001. *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Holm, Erik, and Hugh Son. 2008. AIG cancels another resort meeting after criticism (Update1). Bloomberg News, October 9. Retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?sid=ajC0ofGADFu0&pid=20601103.

Kuhn, D., and M. Pease. 2006. Do children and adults learn differently? *Journal of Cognition and Development* 7(3): 279–293.

Luntz, F. 2007. *Words that work it's not what you say, it's what people hear*. New York: Hyperion.

Mind Tools. n.d. *Monroe's motivated sequence*. Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/MonroeMotivatedSequence.htm.

Nadler, R. 2009. What was I thinking? Handling the hijack. *Business Management.* Retrieved from http://www.busmanagement.com/article/What-Was-I-Thinking-Handling-the-Hijack/.

National Center for Biotechnology Information. 2014. *Attention span statistics*. Retrieved from http://www.statisticbrain.com/attention-span-statistics/

Oppenheimer, D.M. 2006. Consequences of erudite vernacular utilized irrespective of necessity: Problems with using long words needlessly. *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 20: 139–156.

Persuasion: Monroe's Motivated Sequence. n.d. Retrieved from http://www.articlesbase.com/public-speaking-articles/persuasion-monroes-motivated-sequence-989543.html.

Schema Theory of Learning. n.d. Retrieved from http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/ImplementALiteracyProgram/SchemaTheoryOfLearning.htm

Shannon, C.E. 1948. A mathematical theory of communication. *Bell System Technical Journal* 27: 379–423, 623–656.

Shell, G.R., and M. Moussa. 2007. *The art of woo: Using strategic persuasion to sell your ideas*. New York: Portfolio.

SINTEF. 2013. Big data, for better or worse: 90 % of world's data generated over last two years. *Science Daily*, May 22. Retrieved from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/05/130522085217.htm

The Statue of Liberty – History and Key Facts. n.d. Retrieved from http://manhattan.about.com/od/historyandlandmarks/a/statueofliberty.htm.

Thibodeau, P.H., and L. Borodischy. 2011. Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning. *PLoS* 6(2): 1–11.

Ting-Toomey, S. 2005. The matrix of face: An updated face-negotiation theory. In *Theorizing about intercultural communication*, ed. W.B. Gudykunst. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S., and A. Kurogi. 1998. Facework, competence in intercultural conflict: An updated face-negotiation theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 22(2): 187–225.

Triandis, H. 1995. *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder: Westview.

Trilling, B., and P. Hood. 1999. Learning, technology, and education reform in the knowledge age or "We're wired, webbed, and windowed, now what? *Educational Technology* 39(May–June): 5–18.

What is the attention span of a squirrel? 2008. In *WikiAnswers*. Retrieved from http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_attention_span_of_a_squirrel.