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ANNEXURE 1

Invitation to participate in the research project



January 2004

**Invitation to participate in MPhil (Communication Management) degree research:
Communicating affirmative action during transformational change: A South African case study perspective**

Employment equity, diversity management and affirmative action are concepts currently associated with the transformation of South African organisations. Communication about these matters should be well managed.

However, this process is never simplistic. Since many South Africans hold emotionally-charged views about these concepts and policies, those responsible for the management of such organisational transformation and communication, face unique challenges. This study will explore some of the dimensions of communication management and change management in this context. The research results may contribute to solutions and lead to more in-depth research of specific themes in areas related to corporate communication, change management, human resource management and business management.

Your organisation is invited to participate in this study. All the details regarding the intended respondents and time needed from them appear in the synopsis of the project – the following 3 pages. I hope this document will suffice for discussion amongst the decision-makers in your organisation. I am also willing to meet with such individuals at their earliest convenience. (Please don't hesitate to contact me should you need more information.)

Please note that I am working at home until 30 March 2004.

Thank you in advance

Ms Anné Leonard
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RESEARCH QUESTION

How is communication about affirmative action managed during transformational management in South African organisations?

General aim

To explore how South African organisations manage communication about affirmative action (within the context of employment equity) during transformational change.

Objectives

□ **Objective 2**

To describe the purpose of affirmative action in each of the three South African organisations.

□ **Objective 3**

To compare the views of the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioners within each of the three South African organisations about the strategic value of communication in the management of affirmative action.

□ **Objective 4**

To compare the views of the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioners about the strategic value of communication in the management of affirmative action across three South African organisations.

□ **Objective 5**

To identify the key role players (both departments and designated individuals) responsible for managing communication about affirmative action in three South African organisations.

□ **Objective 6**

To identify key responsibilities of the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioner in managing communication about affirmative action in each of the three South African organisations.

□ **Objective 7**

To compare the views of the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioner about the specific contribution of the corporate communication function in managing communication about affirmative action in each of the three South African organisations.

□ **Objective 8**

To identify communication management responsibilities of departmental leaders, other than the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioners, in managing communicating about affirmative action in each of the three South African organisations.

Objective 9

To identify what each of the three South African organisations, represented by the views of the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioners, regard as the most important content about affirmative action that is communicated to internal stakeholders.

□ Objective 10

To identify what each of the three South African organisations, represented by the views of the most senior Communication, Human Resources and Employment Equity practitioners, regard as the most important content about affirmative action that is communicated to external stakeholders.

□ Objective 11

To describe, by means of qualitative content analysis of corporate communication strategy documents, which content components of Thomas and Robertshaw's (1999) framework for an Employment Equity communication strategy, each of the three South African organisations communicate to various stakeholders.

□ Objective 12

To provide a general comparison of how three South African organisations manage communication about affirmative action by means of a comparative case study analysis along the inherent dimensions of Objectives 2-11.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach

Purely qualitative research will be conducted because of the exploratory nature of the study.

Research design

A multiple case study design, i.e. each of the three organisations researched will be viewed as an independent case study. Common themes from all three case studies will also be compared.

Sampling technique

Organisations are chosen randomly and the first three indicating their interest in (granting permission for) the project will be included. Criteria for participating organisations: Affirmative action should be an organisational policy.

Sources of evidence and data-analysis

Structured interviews with the most senior Human Resource, Employment Equity, Communication practitioners. These interviews will last about one hour each and will be recorded on audiotape. Interviews will be transcribed for qualitative analysis.

The communication strategy for affirmative action in each organisation will also be perused in order to compare this with a theoretical framework within the South African context.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Firstly the researcher needs formal permission to conduct the study from the appropriate decision-makers in each organisation. Secondly, the researcher will make appointments with the most senior Human Resources, Employment Equity and Communication practitioners.

Furthermore, the researcher would like to obtain permission to peruse the communication strategy for Employment Equity, should such a document be available. This document will only be used for research purposes and will be returned to organisations.

If such a document is available on the Internet, the researcher would assume that it could be accessed without formal permission from the organisation since the Internet is in the public domain.

ANONYMITY OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

The anonymity of all participating organisations and individuals is guaranteed. Case studies will be numbered and responses will only be linked to specific case studies. The anonymity of interviewees is also guaranteed.

PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of this study will be published in the master's degree dissertation and made available to the participating organisations. Since the project was funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) the completed project will also appear on the database of this organisation.

TIMEFRAME

The **data-collection** phase should be completed by the **end of February 2004**. I would therefore appreciate it if we could set up these interviews at your earliest convenience.

ANNEXURE 2

Pilot interview schedule



**Communicating affirmative action during transformational change:
A South African case study perspective**

September 2003

Dear respondent

I appreciate your willingness to participate in my master's degree research project. The aim of this project is to explore how affirmative action is communicated during transformational change in South African organisations. The results of this study could lead to improvements in the management of communication pertaining to transformational issues.

Three interviews will be conducted with key change leaders at your organisation, i.e. the Corporate Communication Manager, Human Resource Manager and Diversity / Employment Equity Manager. The interview should last about **one** hour.

The questions of this interview schedule will be used during our discussion scheduled for next week. This is forwarded in advance in order to provide you with the scope of this discussion.

Please note that our discussion will be recorded electronically (audio tape) for verbatim transcription. Transcriptions will be numbered and analysed. The anonymity of all respondents is guaranteed. The results of each case study will be made available to participating organisations upon request.

Thank you in advance

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Section A: Administrative details

Date:	
Name of organisation:	
Name of interviewer:	
Duration of interview:	
Number of audio tapes used during this interview:	

Section B: Demographic details

Name of interviewee:	
Fictional identity of interviewee:	
Designation of interviewee:	
Number of years employed by this organisation:	
Number of years / months in current designated post:	
Highest academic qualification of interviewee:	
Age of interviewee:	
Gender of interviewee:	
Mother tongue of interviewee:	
Nationality of interviewee:	

Section C: Interview questions

1. Which role players (both departmental and designations) are responsible for managing communication about affirmative action during transformational change in your organisation?
2. Describe the process through which the most important role players assume their responsibilities for managing communication about affirmative action during transformational change in your organisation.
3. Would you describe your organisation as flexible in terms of individuals and or individuals that need to lead this transformational effort? Please motivate your answer.
4. How do people in your organisation react to the process whereby transformational leaders assume their responsibilities?
5. Your designation is traditionally viewed as central to the management of an employment equity strategy. Describe your key responsibilities in managing communication about affirmative action during transformational change in your organisation.

If not mentioned, probe about the following:

- (a) Integrating people, processes and content needs within this transformational effort
 - (b) Modelling and promoting the new mindset and values, i.e. mutual respect and tolerance and appreciating the diversity of people
 - (c) Creating opportunities through which people can exhibit their commitment and contributions to this transformational effort
 - (d) Building relationships between people
6. Describe the communication management responsibilities of other departmental / divisional leaders in communicating about affirmative action during transformational change in your organisation.
 7. Describe the most critical content components about affirmative action which are / have been communicated to internal stakeholders in your organisation's transformational efforts.
 8. Describe the most critical content components about affirmative action which are / have been communicated to external stakeholders in your organisation's transformational efforts.
 9. How would you describe the value of communication in the management of affirmative action during transformational change in your organisation?

If not mentioned, probe about the following:

- (a) Stakeholder identification
- (b) Environmental scanning
- (c) Continuous feedback about the transformational effort

10. Describe the specific contribution of the corporate communication department / division in managing communication about affirmative action during transformational change in your organisation.

11. Is there anything else you would like to add about the management of communication about affirmative action in your organisation?

Thank you again for your participation in this project.

ANNEXURE 3

Final interview schedule



**Communicating affirmative action during transformational change:
A South African case study perspective**

Dear respondent

I appreciate your willingness to participate in my master's degree research project. The aim of this project is to explore how affirmative action is communicated during transformational change in South African organisations. The results of this study could lead to improvements in the management of communication pertaining to transformational issues.

Three interviews will be conducted with key change leaders at your organisation, i.e. the Corporate Communication Manager, Human Resource Manager and Diversity / Employment Equity Manager. The interview should last about **one** hour.

The questions of this interview schedule will be used during our discussion scheduled for next week. This is forwarded in advance in order to provide you with the scope of this discussion.

Please note that our discussion will be recorded electronically (audio tape) for verbatim transcription. Transcriptions will be numbered and analysed. The anonymity of all respondents is guaranteed. The results of each case study will be made available to participating organisations upon request.

Thank you in advance

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Section A: Administrative details

Date:	
Name of organisation:	
Name of interviewer:	
Duration of interview:	
Number of audio tapes used during this interview:	

Section B: Demographic details

Name of interviewee:	
Fictional identity of interviewee:	
Designation of interviewee:	
Number of years employed by this organisation:	
Number of years / months in current designated post:	
Highest academic qualification of interviewee:	
Age of interviewee:	
Gender of interviewee:	
Mother tongue of interviewee:	
Nationality of interviewee:	

Section C: Interview questions

Question 1:

What do you view as the purpose of affirmative action at your organisation?

Question 2:

What strategic value does communication have in the management of affirmative action in your organisation?

Question 3:

Which key individuals or departments are responsible for managing communication about affirmative action in your organisation?

Question 4:

What are your key responsibilities in managing communication about affirmative action in your organisation?

Question 5:

What do you view as the specific contribution of the corporate communication department in managing communication about affirmative action in your organisation?

Question 6:

What are the communication responsibilities of other departmental leaders in your organisation in managing communication about affirmative action?

Question 7:

What is the most important content about affirmative action that your organisation communicates to internal stakeholders?

Question 8:

What is the most important content about affirmative action that your organisation communicates to external stakeholders?

Question 9:

In conclusion, is there anything else regarding the management of communication about affirmative action in your organisation that you would like to add to our conversation?