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Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and the role of Public Relations (PR) therein: a case study of University X

ABSTRACT

This study determines the role of public relations as a marketing communication function in University X's integrated marketing communication approach. The research topic was selected for numerous reasons. Firstly, dramatic changes have occurred in the tertiary educational domain, which causes universities to adapt their marketing communication approaches. Based on these environmental changes, the Public Relations Division at University X commissioned the study on the research topic, which is the second consideration for the study. The debate on integrated marketing communication shows, in the third place, that this approach is increasingly important. On closer investigation there is a definite need for a thorough literature review with an authentic integrated marketing communication approach, driven by the integrated organizational functioning and processes. From a public relations perspective, on closer investigation, there is a need for the direct empirical examination of the role of public relations as a contributing function of integrated marketing communication in order to narrow the gap between literature and empirical evidence. The study was enhanced by two phases of research conducted within University X to meet the objectives of the study. The first, quantitative phase determined the extent to which University X's communication activities are integrated. The measuring instrument used is the integrated marketing communication mini-audit scale. In the second, qualitative research phase, the role of public relations as a marketing communication function within University X's integrated marketing communication approach was determined. The issue that became apparent throughout this study was that integrated marketing communication in any organizational context is of strategic importance for the "unity of effort" of the greater well-being of the organization. It was found in this research project that there are fundamental concerns for University X regarding integrated marketing communication, and that public relations is practised on a technical, traditional level.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising and promotion have been used by organizations for years to sell goods, services and ideas – however, the marketplace is continually changing, and traditional strategies are becoming archaic at a rapid pace. Competition has increased in both commercial and non-profit spheres. Consumers have become distrustful of business, new communication and information technologies have been developed, and organizations have discovered that it is more profitable to sell to current customers than to new customers (Shimp, 2002:7). All these factors are causing traditional promotional practices to become obsolete, as these are no longer sufficient to achieve organizational objectives. Currently, organizations need more effective and efficient ways of communicating with customers than in the past, largely due to their increasing knowledge as well as their increasing scepticism. Consequently, an increasing number of organizations are starting to accept the philosophy of IMC, not only as a tool for effective communication, but often as the only manner to survive in a marketplace that suffers from information overload. IMC is not merely an attempt to integrate the various and proliferating means of communication to ensure their working together in delivering a single message. Instead, IMC goes beyond consistent and comprehensive communication planning (Belch & Belch, 2001:vi), and is grounded on the postulate that customers will integrate information themselves (Harris, 1998:ix). In other words, customers collaborate their own information, experiences and preconceptions and develop, albeit mostly subconsciously, either favourable or unfavourable perceptions of organizations, products and brands. In this paper, a phenomenological approach is taken where the theory of integrated marketing communication (Duncan, 2000:3) is studied as a theoretical phenomenon. It is further important to note that the phenomenon under exploration is the theory of integrated marketing communication and not integrated communication. Integrated communication is merely used in the context of this paper as an indication of the various terms assigned to such a holistic approach to communication. It must be noted that the evolution of IMC into integrated communication is acknowledged, but for the purpose of this study, the focus is on IMC.

Literature illustrates that there is a rise in the importance of PR as a marketing communication function within IMC. Thus, the concepts of IMC and PR are the main conceptual focus of the paper.

2. PROBLEMSTATEMENT

To be able to contextualize these concepts into an organizational setting, as integration is inherently bound to organizations, and not an isolated concept, it was decided to

examine these concepts within the tertiary education domain. The first consideration for the tertiary educational sector as the domain for this study is the need to change the tertiary education institution's approach to marketing communication, to an approach based on the various environmental changes (locally as well as internationally) that have taken place in this sector.

From a local perspective, there is a need for tertiary institutions to position themselves within the sphere of the new plan on higher education in South Africa, in order for the institution to conform to the government's demands, as the government is ultimately the single greatest provider of funding. This impacts on the study to the extent that the government is recognized as a key stakeholder, from its position as funding authority (Anon., 2000a:5). Furthermore, based on the new plan on higher education in South African, the current recruiting and marketing communication actions will have to change towards a more inclusive and representative approach in terms of objectives. This will be in terms of not just aiming recruiting at schools, but also at adult learning and further in terms of globalization on the level of e-learning (Anon., 2000b:2).

The link between these environmental changes and the marketing communication of tertiary institutions is highlighted by a study conducted in the USA in 1995. This study included 300 educational institution administrators, whose institutions were facing declining student enrolment, increasing cost and rising tuition fees, who were asked the question "What is marketing communication?". The results indicated that 61% viewed marketing communication as a combination of selling, advertising and PR. Another 21% said it was only one of these three activities and only a small percentage knew that marketing communication had something to do with the broader scope of relationships with stakeholders (Kotler & Fox, 1995:6). It can therefore be interpreted that the tertiary educational domain needs to adapt its marketing communication approach because of the environmental factors threatening its functioning. The extent to which the marketing communication activities of universities have been undergoing fundamental changes has been well documented by Smith, Scott and Lynch (1995:40) who identified five phases in the development of marketing communication activity, culminating with the current phase of what they term "The marketing institution". Such institutions have an IMC function, increased interdepartmental coordination and appropriate organizational structures. Therefore, the need for IMC and the application of IMC within the tertiary educational domain is necessary from these environmental changes.

Within the tertiary educational domain, University X as a primarily state-funded university similarly experiences the impact of the above-mentioned environmental factors. Firstly, this impact is evident through the 2.4% decrease in undergraduate student numbers per year from 1998 (Anon., 2000b:3). A possible reason for this decline in student numbers

can be the decline in government funding that forces students to rely on grants that are not always sufficient. Secondly, University X is to a great extent impacted by the new plan on higher education, which requires the possible merger of University X with other tertiary educational institutions. This will significantly impact on the way in which University X would market themselves, as two distinct sectors within the tertiary educational domain must now function and market themselves as an inclusive unit. Also, within the changing tertiary educational domain, University X's marketing communication approach will have to become more inclusive, and therefore not only focus on school leavers as potential students, but also keep adult learning and e-learning in mind when recruiting students. Thus, based on the changed environment within the tertiary educational domain, the Division of PR at University X commissioned this study on the research topic.

3. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CONSTRUCTS

3.1 Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated marketing communication assumes that customers base their decisions on their perceptions of reality, rather than on reality itself. For instance, customers buy a product from Sony if they think it is better than a Panasonic product. They choose the Sony because of a multitude of favourable impressions, experiences and conversations that they have had about different brands. However, these positive or negative perceptions of reality are created and managed with communication, and sustaining these perceptions without communication is impossible. All planned communication must start with an understanding of all the ways in which customers receive and process information. Communication professionals must strive to deliver a consistent picture of the brand position and organizational position through all the channels that reach customers (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:x). Communication professionals can however control only a fraction of the impressions that customers receive about organizations, products and brands. Yet the fraction they control, if handled well, can make a major difference in customer perceptions and organizational success. Handling marketing communication tools well means working them in tandem, creating a consistent and distinctive brand-building message stream, or in essence strategic consistency.

The integrated marketing communication concept and processes presented in this study are those used by organizations that truly put the customer first. Although the term used for this study is integrated marketing communication, in the 1990s, various terms saw the light as a result of the differences between the field of study of advertising, marketing and PR. These terms include integrated marketing communication, convergent communications (Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg, 2000:7), coordinated communication

(Caywood, 1998:90), the new PR (Caywood, 1998:90), integrated communication (Gronstedt, 2000:4), integrated brand communication (Duncan, 2001:vii), customer relationship management (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:iv) or even integrated corporate communication (Wightman, 1999:18). Even so, despite differences in the naming of this idea, the notion of “integrated marketing communication” became the dominant marketing communication idea in the 1990s (Schultz, 1999:11).

In this new business environment, organizations have learned that integrated marketing communication practices and principles will help them build the customer relationships that create profitable brands (Gronstedt, 2000:7). The traditional promotional approach is a suitable means to acquire customers and create a sales transaction. However, such a transaction is a single interaction that ends once the sale is made, and one transaction does not create a customer relationship. A customer relationship, in contrast, consists of a number of interactions, including sales transactions that are repeated over time.

Building customer relationships and integration is an organizational challenge (Duncan, 2001:79). This is because there are so many parties involved in managing brand relationships. An organization cannot build relationships externally until it builds them internally. This building of relationships, internally in the organization, affords PR the opportunity for its utilization in the organizations, as PR is essentially about building relationships with internal and external stakeholders (Skinner & Von Essen, 1999:4). The coordination of brand messages being created and delivered by all the departments in an organization is extremely difficult. This is why practising integrated marketing communication often involves organizational restructuring. It is also why integrated marketing communication is more widely and successfully practised in smaller organizations (Harris, 1998:x). Nevertheless, larger organizations recognize the value of integrated marketing communication and are working to be more focused through better internal integration (Duncan, 2001:4). Similarly, Moriarty (2002:1) accentuates the growth of integrated marketing communication in stating: “Integrated marketing communication is enjoying a growth in awareness, particularly among larger companies. More than half (54 per cent) of the 179 polled say their companies are implementing some form of integrated marketing communication, and 75 per cent of large companies are doing so”. Based on this acknowledgement of the importance and acceptance of integrated marketing communication, an organization must however first know who its customers are to develop a relationship with these customers. Integrated marketing communication uses customer databases to identify customers and thus to create the possibility of establishing a personal, two-way dialogue with them (Spotts & Lambert, 1998:214). Further to this, integrated marketing communication is neutral about marketing communication functions and the media, using a technique that lets each unique brand situation determine the best combination of marketing communication

and media. Integrated marketing communication therefore proposes that all marketing communication functions and media have an equal opportunity to be used for a specific brand situation (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:11). The field of integrated marketing communication is therefore currently in a dynamic, though ever-evolving period.

In this evolutionary period of the concept, it would appear as if much literature exists on integrated marketing communication. Many of these texts claim to focus on integrated marketing communication, but they are in truth merely traditional promotional approach texts, which cover promotional elements, but not true integration. In addition, most of these texts exclude various other integrated marketing communication mix elements and some of the literature advocating the idea of integrated marketing communication does not view integrated marketing communication as an organizational process, but merely as the superficial integration of a message for a specific campaign. Additionally, the study of some of the component elements such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and direct marketing (Wilson, 2001:1) is not in itself unique, as there is a multitude of research that has been conducted on these elements of integrated marketing communication. This can be seen in, for example, the research into the usefulness of online Internet-based advertising (McMillan, 1997:1). Furthermore, Krishnan and Chakravarti (1993:213-231) studied the effects of traditional advertising on customer attitudes through branding, and Smith (1994:26) further studied the effects of sales promotion on operant conditioning.

3.2 Public Relations in Integrated Marketing Communication

The various functions within integrated marketing communication contribute to the synergistic functioning of the integrated marketing communication strategy of an organization. These functions can occur individually, but they contribute cumulatively to the synergistic functioning of the integrated marketing communication of an organization. One such function is that of PR. According to Harris (1998:x), the marketing communication function that has received the most interest in integrated marketing communication is PR. "PR can account for its growth by its great versatility, its aptitude for drama, and its capacity to break through the information clutter and capture attention and interest." (Harris, 1998:x.) Although PR appears to be an important concept in integrated marketing communication (Harris, 1998:x), there is not much literature-based evidence that supports the specific role of PR as a marketing communication function within integrated marketing communication in terms of empirically-based research. Thus, the need for the direct empirical examination of the role of PR as a contributing element of integrated marketing communication in order to narrow the gap between literature and empirical evidence.

Literature-based evidence suggests that the following issues should be borne in mind, in order to understand the rise in importance of PR within the field of integrated marketing communication:

- Firstly, the premise of integrated marketing communication that all communication functions play an equally important role ensures that the importance of PR could increase in integrated marketing communication. The reason why there is a need to recognize the importance of PR is that many marketing people in the past did not always recognize or appreciate the value of PR (Duncan, 2001:529).
- Secondly, because of the turf battles between the different functions, PR professionals were typically negated to focus on non-profit organizations and media groups, and were therefore not significantly involved in managerial issues. Some major steps towards bringing the marketing and PR departments closer came in the early 1990s with the development of the concept called relationship marketing, pioneered by Regis McKenna. At the same time, courses devoted to relationship marketing began to develop in business schools around the world through the efforts of scholars such as Jag Sheth at Emory University in Atlanta, Christian Gronroos in Finland and Rod Brodie in New Zealand. McKenna (1991:2) challenged the marketing industry to become more customer-centric and to improve their understanding of customer relationships. “Advertising, promotion, and market-share thinking are dead, and what counts are the relationships a company develops with its customers, suppliers, partners, distributors – even competitors.” (McKenna, 1991:3.) PR professionals have, according to Duncan (2001:529), always understood the concept of relationships – seeing that the word “relations” is part of the job title. Thus, the importance of PR messages in the brand decision process, its usefulness in announcing new products, helping prospects and customers find information and establishing credibility for the brand.

Furthermore, according to Caywood (1998:93), the PR professional is a crucial ingredient for success in the practice of integrated marketing communication, because of its contribution to integrated marketing communication - its ability to lend early awareness and credibility to a product, service or idea in the organization. Thus, the preceding discussion illustrates that there is a rise in the importance of PR as a marketing communication function within integrated marketing communication.

4. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Based on the problem identified in the tertiary education domain, the research problems are as follows:

- To determine where University X, as an organization, stands on the integration scale as determined by the IMC mini-audit.

- To determine the role of PR, as a marketing communication function, in University X's IMC approach.

The research problem of this study is therefore to determine where University X, as an organization, stands on the integration scale of the IMC audit, and to determine the role of PR as a marketing communication function in the IMC approach of University X.

5. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1 Research strategy

For the purpose of this study, qualitative and quantitative research is used. Triangulation is used in the study to improve the profundity of the understanding of the research, by applying the two independent research methodologies. These methodologies, though independent, are supportive of each other, because if both results support the dominant concept, they will greatly enhance the validity of the result of the study.

5.2 Research design

The research design for the purpose of the study is in the form of a case study. The case being studied for the purpose of this study is the tertiary education domain. According to Mouton (2001:150), the strength of the case study research design is its high construct validity and its in-depth insights. The study will further follow an exploratory approach, in that this study is merely a starting point for the PR Division on the exploration of its IMC approach. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the specific case under consideration (the tertiary education domain) to argue towards a logical conclusion and not necessarily to prove it (Stake, 1995:47).

5.3 Research methodology

The research of this study is divided into two phases. The first phase consists of the quantitative research methodology, which attempts to establish the extent to which University X's marketing communication strategy is integrated. It is crucial to note that all organizations are naturally integrated to some extent (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:14). Therefore, in this study, it is not necessary to establish whether University X as an organization is integrated, because of the inherent integrative nature of all organizations. The focus is therefore on the extent to which University X is integrated.

The research methodology used in the first phase of this study is the IMC mini-audit. This is a written, structured questionnaire developed by NorthWestern University, Colorado,

USA to measure the extent to which an organization is integrated as a whole. A main research question is stated, with sub-research questions to ensure an in-depth exploration of the research problem. These sub-research questions form the primary components of each statement in the IMC audit. Based on the commissioning of this research study, it is necessary first to establish where University X is positioned on the integration scale, so that recommendations for the University can be made, based on the in-depth literature review.

In the second phase of the research, the focus was on PR as a marketing communication function within University X's IMC approach. The reason why PR is chosen from all the various marketing communication functions available for contributing to the overall IMC approach is based on two primary grounds. Firstly, PR is chosen because of its historical use and prominence within the PR Division at University X; therefore, attempting to establish what the exact role of PR is because of its prominence. Secondly, the PR role is explored, because of the increasing importance and global realization of its contribution to an IMC approach.

The purpose of the second phase of this study is therefore to determine the role of PR, as a marketing communication function, in University X's IMC approach. The research methodology used for the purpose of this second phase is in-depth face-to-face interviews with the heads of sub-divisions in the PR Division at University X.

In this study, the investigation of phase two (PR within IMC) causes phase one (where University X stands on the IMC mini-audit scale) to be investigated more significantly. The extent to which University X is integrated is the main focus of the study, but adding the second phase offers more insight into the study. The second phase of this study is thus used to enrich the first phase of the study.

5.3.1 Phase one – Integrated marketing communication

The main research question for the study is as follows: Where does University X, as an organization, stand on the integration scale as determined by the IMC mini-audit? Based on the theoretical framework of IMC, the following research questions were developed to address the research question.

Research question 1:

In order to be an integrated organization, does University X score above average? The average integration score for an organization on the IMC mini-audit is 2.8. On the integration scale of the IMC mini-audit?

To be able to address secondary issues that are directly related to the main research question, the following sub-research questions were formulated:

RQ (Research question) a:

Will University X's organizational infrastructure area be integrated, scoring above average in the organizational infrastructure section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ b: Will University X's interaction with all its stakeholders be integrated, scoring above average in the interactivity section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ c: Will University X's mission marketing be integrated, scoring above average in the mission marketing section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ d: Will University X's brand messages be strategically consistent, scoring above average in the strategic consistency section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ e: Will University X's marketing communication planning be integrated, scoring above average in the planning section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ f: Will University X's marketing communication evaluation be effective, scoring above average in the evaluating section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ g: Will University X's various departments be integrated, scoring above average in the organizational infrastructure section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ h: Will University X's area of corporate learning be integrated, scoring above average in the organizational infrastructure section of the IMC mini-audit scale?

RQ i: Will University X's area of stakeholders be integrated, scoring above average in the interactivity section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ j: Will University X's area of brand positioning be integrated, scoring above average in the strategic consistency section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ k: Will University X's area of the "big creative idea" be integrated, scoring above average in the planning section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ l: Will University X's area of the "big creative idea" be integrated, scoring above average in the evaluation section of the IMC mini-audit?

RQ m: Will University X's area of corporate mission be integrated, scoring above average in the mission marketing section of the IMC mini-audit?

Following from the research questions of the first phase of the study, the purpose and research goal of the second phase will be discussed.

5.3.2 Phase two – Public relations in integrated marketing communication

The purpose of the second phase of this study is to determine the role of PR, as a marketing communication function, in University X's IMC approach. The key elements in this research goal are discussed below:

The study attempts to explore the role of PR, where PR is used as a marketing communication function within the integrated approach of the Division of PR at University X. The first reason for focusing specifically on PR as a marketing communication function in University X's IMC approach is that, historically, University X has used PR as the

dominant marketing communication function to reach its stakeholders. The research is therefore approached from this point of view to determine the present role of PR as a marketing communication function, within the IMC approach of this division, as opposed to the historical role of PR as an independent function. Secondly, the focus is specifically on PR as a marketing communication function within the IMC approach. This is due to PR becoming, increasingly, not only part of the IMC approach, but also leading this approach in organizations (Gray, 1998:27). A 1996 survey by The Cantor Concern, an executive recruiting firm in the United States specializing in the communication field, confirms the trend towards integrating the PR function with the overall communication function, and a trend towards PR leading the integration approach (Harris, 1998:6).

6. SAMPLING DESIGN

6.1 Population

The population in this study – for both the first and second phases of the study – is the top five, state-funded universities in South Africa, as published on www.top10sa.com, a website dedicated to publish lists of the top 10 of specified topics, as listed on the website (Anon., 2002:1-2). These listings are compiled via opinion polls that are conducted on the website. The criteria set for this specific poll of South African universities are ratings of the universities' academic excellence and infrastructure.

6.2 Sampling

The sampling method used for the purpose of this first phase of the study is purposive sampling, because the unit of analysis chosen is a specific case with a specific purpose. It can further be reasoned that purposive sampling is used, because of the commissioning of the research by the Division of PR at University X on the topic of the research. This sampling method is selected with the understanding that it is not representative of the broad population, but it attempts to represent a specific portion of the population. Furthermore, it can also be argued that the sampling method used is convenience sampling, for the reason that the sample is readily accessible. The overall sampling unit for this phase of the study was therefore identified as University X. Within this sampling unit, a sub-sample unit was identified as the 23 staff members in the Division of PR at University X.

For the intention of the second phase of the study, the sampling method used is purposive and snowball sampling. The purposive sampling method is chosen, because in this form of sampling, the investigator uses special knowledge about the group to select subjects who represent this population. The subject is also chosen in order to ensure that certain

types of people displaying certain attributes are included in the study (Berg, 1998:229). The types of people selected are the heads of sub-divisions of the Division of PR at University X, for the reason that these are the strategic leaders that should be leading the drive to IMC at University X. Furthermore, the attributes that these leaders should display are a sound grasp and basic theoretical knowledge of the principles of IMC, if they are expected to lead such a drive. It can also be argued that the snowball sampling method was used, where one of the sample units provided the names and contact details of the other heads of sub-divisions within the Division of PR. The sample unit for this phase of the study consists of the three heads of sub-divisions within the Division of PR at University X. The three subjects were selected because of their specific positions.

7. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

7.1 Phase one – Integrated Marketing Communication

The IMC mini-audit was used as a method of data gathering in the first phase of the study. The IMC mini-audit questionnaires were sent out to the 23 staff members (the entire staff component) in the Division of PR at University X. In total, 23 questionnaires were personally delivered to the Head of the Division of PR at that time who distributed them to all the staff members in the division. The questionnaires were collected in person for analysis after a period of nine days. From the 23 questionnaires sent out, 15 were received, therefore producing a response rate of 65,22%.

The IMC mini-audit is based on the IMC in-depth audit, which is “an in-depth research method for evaluating IMC relationship-building efforts” (Duncan, 2001:727). The IMC in-depth audit is very complex, but although greatly simplified, the 20 questions in the IMC mini-audit provide the organization with an idea of where it stands on the integration scale. The IMC mini-audit is divided into five subsections of: (1) Organizational infrastructure; (2) Interactivity; (3) Mission marketing; (4) Strategic consistency; and (5) Planning and evaluating. Each subsection has 3-4 questions to determine the extent to which the organization is integrated. With each question, the respondent is asked to circle the appropriate number in the mini-audit. The numbers range from one to five, where one is “never do” and five is “always do”. There is also a “DK” (do not know), which the respondent can encircle. If a question does not apply to the organization, it is left blank. When the respondents are done, scores are added (minus blank items and “DKs”) and divided by 20.

7.2 Phase two – Public Relations in Integrated Marketing Communication

For the purpose of the second phase of the study, data was collected by using in-depth interviews. The names and contact numbers of the heads of sub-divisions within the Division of PR at University X were obtained from the head: Division of PR at University X at that stage, in an initial contact session. During this second phase of the data gathering, interviews were scheduled with the heads of sub-divisions of the division of PR. It must be noted that the representatives of the sub-divisions were not interviewed in any order of preference and the interview schedule was based on the availability of the respondents. All the respondents were interviewed in their offices at University X. This occupational context added formality to the interviews. It is important to note that 20 questions were prepared to ask during these interviews. During the first interview, the questions had to be adjusted to the level of knowledge of the respondents. The first interview can therefore be regarded as a pilot interview for this study, after which the questions were further adjusted based on the responses given by the respondents on certain questions. The questions asked in the interviews were mainly changed during the interviews, due to the lack of understanding of the meaning of the questions by some of the respondents. It is important to note that seven of the prepared questions were changed. With the knowledge and agreement of the respondents, the interviews were recorded for processing purposes by means of a Dictaphone.

8. DATA PROCESSING

8.1 Phase one – Integrated Marketing Communication

As per Duncan's IMC mini-audit (Duncan, 2001:727), the questionnaire is divided into five sub-sections. This was altered for the purposes of this study, in order to meet the criterion set in the research questions (RQ e and RQ f), in that the evaluation and planning stages should be studied in isolation, and not in unison. However, the questionnaire is set out in such a manner that these two stages are combined into one sub-section. When the results of this sub-section are processed, the results will be divided into those scores for questions pertaining to planning and those pertaining to evaluation, and these will be processed separately. Questions 15, 16 and 17 are deemed to relate to planning, and 18, 19 and 20 deemed to relate to evaluation. It is important to note, at this stage, that the questionnaires are handed to the respondents as originally set out, with questions 15 to 20 under the sub-section heading of "Planning and evaluating", and that the distinction between the nature of the questions is only made later, when the data is processed. The data processing of the data gathered in the IMC mini-audit was done in line with the requirements that Duncan proposes in his IMC mini-audit (Duncan, 2001:727). The analysis of data from phase one was done by using the

Microsoft Excel Programme, since it allows for extensive analysis and manipulation of data in a multitude of ways. The data obtained from the IMC mini-audit was processed in three ways. Firstly, the data gathered was processed to determine a result for each of the statements (questions put to the respondents) used in the IMC mini-audit. This was done by aggregating the scores for every statement individually and calculating the average score per statement. Thereafter, the result for each of the six sub-sections of the IMC mini-audit was established, by aggregating the scores attained for every sub-section, per individual questionnaire. This results in 15 totals per sub-section. Thirdly, the data is processed to determine the overall result of University X, based on the IMC mini-audit. This is done by calculating the average per questionnaire (total for the questionnaire divided by the 20 questions), then calculating the average for the sample by aggregating the average per questionnaire and dividing this total by the 15 questionnaires. These three categories of results are set to improve the depth of the conclusions that will be drawn from the results of the IMC mini-audit.

Literature provides results for the overall averages attained in other studies, and does not detail results for question and sub-section averages. This causes some difficulty in the analysis of these two results, in this study, as no information could be obtained to benchmark the results. The overall average documented in these works is a score of 2.8. Given that no benchmarks are available for question and sub-section averages, it is assumed for this study that 2.8 should be a reasonable score against which to measure the scores attained in this study. This is assumed on the premise that if the overall average score available in literature is 2.8, then the average per question and sub-section should also be 2.8.

8.2 Phase two – Public Relations in Integrated Marketing Communication

For the purpose of processing the data obtained from the in-depth interviews conducted, the Dictaphone recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim (transcriptions available on request). The questions are used as a guideline to determine specified categories, in order to facilitate data processing in this phase of the study. The questions asked in the interviews were developed based on the literature review of the study used as a benchmark. The following categories are identified: (1) Sub-division's specific role within Division of PR; (2) Integrated approach of University X; (3) Same underlying theme; (4) Sub-division's objectives; (5) Sub-division's mission in line with University X's Mission; (6) Marketing communication functions; (7) Most prominent marketing communication function; (8) PR function; (9) Integral vs. Support; (10) PR for other sub-divisions; (11) Stakeholders; (12) Brand; (13) Relationships; (14) Databases; and (15) Barriers.

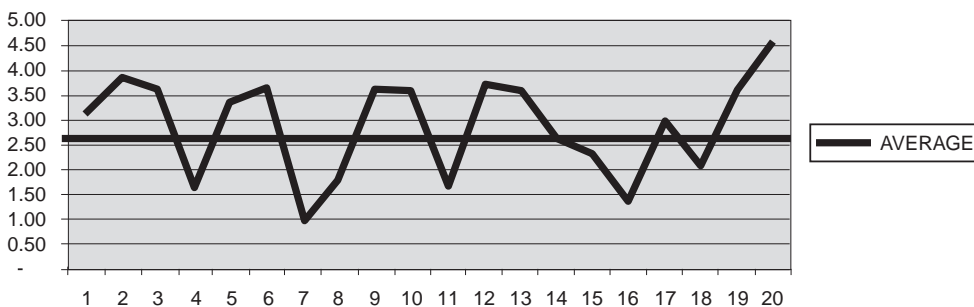
The respondents' answers to the various questions were grouped and this process is referred to as categorizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:63). The different responses were then placed into categories to reflect similarities and differences.

9. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION THEREOF

9.1 Phase one – Integrated Marketing Communication

The data obtained from the IMC mini-audit was processed in three ways, as discussed in section 8.1. The reporting and interpretation of these results are discussed, based on those three ways:

9.1.1 Individual questions of the integrated marketing communication mini-audit
The averages for the individual questions in the IMC mini-audit are graphically summarized as follows:



Graph 9.1 Results of individual questions in the IMC mini-audit

From these results of the individual questions in the IMC mini-audit, it can be stated that the results of 12 of the 20 questions are above the average of 2.8 and that by only looking at these figures, it could be interpreted that the organization should attain an above average score on the overall integration scale. It is however important to note that for the 8 questions that scored below the average of 2.8, based on individual results, the average score is 1.8, significantly lower than the average of 2.8. It can therefore be argued that University X has certain elements of IMC relatively well implemented, but where it lacks integration, it has much on which to improve. The results of the individual questions are presented in descending order, to obtain a clearer understanding of the areas in which the PR Division scored significantly higher or lower.

Question number	Basic element of the statement in the IMC mini-audit	Average
20	Overall objective of marketing communication programme	4.60
2	Core competency	3.87
12	Planned brand messages' strategic consistency	3.73
6	Infrastructure for customer enquiries	3.67
9	Mission in communication planning	3.67
3	Internal marketing	3.60
10	Mission linked to customers	3.60
13	Reviewing brand messages to maintain consistency	3.60
19	Using strengths of marketing communication functions	3.60
5	Balance of media	3.40
1	Cross-functional operations	3.13
17	Existing contact points vs. new contact points	3.00
14	Unplanned messages	2.67
15	SWOT analysis	2.33
18	Evaluate strength of relationships	2.07
8	Accessibility of database	1.80
11	Corporate philanthropic efforts	1.67
4	Contact with communication agency	1.60
16	Zero-based approach	1.33
7	Usage of database	0.93

Figure 9.1 Results of individual questions in descending order

When looking at the results of the individual question values in descending order, question 20 had the highest score of 4.6. Question 20 refers to University X's overall objective of the marketing communication programme and according to the high score in this question the respondents know what is expected of them in achieving the desired end goal of the PR Division. In this regard, very clear tasking occurs with regard to job descriptions. In setting the objectives of IMC, the Division of PR must take into account that in order to make these objectives obtainable and feasible, only two to three objectives at a time should be focused on. The question with the second highest average score on the integration scale is question two (3.87). According to the significantly high score of this question, it can be argued that the respondents feel that the staff members of the Division of PR at University X are knowledgeable and competent in the execution of their work within the IMC framework. A possible subjective opinion is likely in this question as it could reflect on the abilities of the respondents. As per the literature review, it is important to note that when there is a reference to core competency, it involves three

elements, namely, core competency in IMC, competency in the functioning of the division and core competency in how the division functions within the greater organization (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:72). It is thus evident that the attitudes and orientation within the PR Division are not an IMC orientation. The significantly high average score of question 12 (3.73) means that there is control of the consistency of planned brand messages. The above average score of question 12 would indicate that set review mechanisms of planned messages in the PR Division are in place to ensure strategic consistency of brand messages. Such control mechanisms include inter alia firstly a central control point, through which all communication must be checked for and secondly the technical marketing committee. This control by these mechanisms makes for a high score in the mechanisms in place to control strategic consistency of planned brand messages.

Questions 6 and 9 similarly scored an above average score on the integration scale of the IMC mini-audit with a result of 3.67. From an organizational perspective, this implies that University X has methods in place to facilitate customer enquiries and complaints. For example, a method used by University X to assist with customer enquiries and complaints is the call centre of the University. Duncan and Moriarty (1997:46) specify that with regard to infrastructure for customer enquiries, the information obtained serves as a platform for the outside-in orientation (Schultz, 1993b:8). Such a platform would involve feedback loops in terms of organizational learning. It is thus one thing to collect data, and quite another to utilize the data in strategic thinking and planning. Additionally, the above average result of question 9 (also 3.67) refers to the agreement on the importance of the mission when considering the planning of the marketing communication of the University. The strong realization of the mission in University X's planning of the marketing communication indicates a realization of the importance of the mission in the overall functioning of the university in order to create an "integrity platform" and essence as well as humanizing the organization (Bonar, 1996:31). The mission and vision are essential to achieve internal integration.

Questions 3, 10, 13 and 19 equally scored an above average result of 3.6 on the integration scale of the IMC audit. From the results obtained from question 3 (3.5), it can be deduced that the internal marketing is effectively managed in terms of internal integrating mechanisms for alignment. Secondly, through question 10's above average score of 3.6, it is apparent that the application of University X's mission on a practical level, such as the activities in its philanthropic programmes, provides further reason for customers and other key stakeholders to believe University X's messages. Furthermore, this above average score indicates that the mission of University X is reflected in the unplanned, planned, service and maintenance messages of the University. Therefore, according to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:132), through the above average score in question 10 of, in reality, applying the mission of the University practically, University X shows that it has a purpose in addition to making a profit. This therefore shows that University X has

integrity, which is evident through its actions based on its mission (Gaines, 1996:22). This can further postulate that by practising mission marketing (as is evident from the high score in this question), it adds value and trust to the university and, in effect, builds brand relationships. Thirdly, through the similar above average result of Question 13 (3.6), this significantly high score can be interpreted as that in the Division of PR, there is the periodic revision of all its brand messages to determine the extent to which they are strategically consistent. Once again, this result is significantly high because of the control exercised by the technical marketing committee to review University X's brand messages to ensure the strategic consistency of its brand messages. With the fourth score of 3.6, Question 19's above average findings on the integration scale can imply that the strengths of the various marketing communication vehicles as well as their weaknesses are taken into consideration when the Division of PR plans University X's marketing communication strategy. Consequently, Question 5 scored above the average of the integration scale, with a result of 3.4. From this above average score, it is evident that the media plan that the Division of PR uses is a strategic balance between mass media and one-to-one media.

University X scored 3.13 in Question 1, which refers to the respondents' feeling that at University X, integration is a cross-functional responsibility, but not significantly so, because the score for this question is not significantly above average. Furthermore, this score of 3.13 on the integration scale proposes that the process of managing the brand or organizational reputation and building stakeholder relationships is not significantly cross-functional to include various departments in the organization (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994:95). From University X's score of 3.13 on cross-functionality, it can be interpreted that University X's major departments, that touch the customer, do not necessarily work together sufficiently in planning and monitoring brand relationships, in order to assure ultimate consistency in the "say-do-confirm" (consistency triangle) of University X. It should be noted that mechanisms such as the technical marketing committee control message consistency only. Therefore, it is highly probable that any cross-functionality that does occur occurs on a technical level.

Question 17 did not score significantly above the average (2.8) with a result of 3.00. Based on this result, it can be contended that University X tends to be linear in terms of its usage of contact points to establish positive moments of truth in that University X tends to emphasize existing contact points at the cost of establishing new contact points (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:94). This implies that the inherent value of the IMC mix, namely the variety of contact point means is reduced to that which is familiar. The focus in terms of levels of work is on maintaining service quality through technical control, attention to detail and reactive problem solving rather than proactive strategic positioning. The below average score of question 14 (2.67) is an indication that University

X does not significantly manage brand messages that are outside the control of the university. The fact that University X achieved an above average score for planned brand messages and a below average score for unplanned messages indicates that the reaching unity of effort will be impaired. For true strategic IMC to be practised, it is necessary for University X to manage all four elements of the message typology. A weakness in one will have a considerable effect on the impact of the practice of IMC. It would appear as if University X has not recognized that customers integrate the message of their own accord.

Question 15's result of 2.33 is below the average of 2.8 of the IMC mini-audit integration scale. This finding can be interpreted as that when the Division of PR is doing its marketing communication planning, the lack of the use of a SWOT analysis to determine the strengths and opportunities that the division could leverage as well as the lack of determining the weaknesses and threats of the division need to be addressed. This finding reflects the lack of a strategic orientation towards IMC. In IMC, the SWOT analysis logically leads to zero-based planning (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:149), because in zero-based planning, the tools that are used are based on the assessment of the SWOT analysis of what needs to be done (Schultz, et al., 1993:12) and not based on the previous year's budget allocations. Therefore, by not having a significant degree of the utilization of a SWOT analysis, zero-based planning cannot take place effectively. The emphasis is therefore on maintaining quality of service rather than on improving service quality. The significantly below average score of Question 18 (2.07) can be interpreted as follows: It would appear that the Division of PR does not use tracking devices to evaluate the strength of its relationships with customers and other key stakeholder groups. Consequently, University X cannot be involved in a learning relationship with the stakeholders if it does not have mechanisms in place to measure those relationships (Duncan, 1997). Furthermore, University X's ability to practise relationship marketing is inhibited, as it cannot treat different customers differently (a fundamental principle of relationship marketing) as it is not able to establish and value (as in the second step of the eight-step IMC process) these customers. Subsequently, University X cannot establish which stakeholders are the most profitable for the University, or nurture those relationships or prioritize them.

University X scored 1.80 on Question 8, which is significantly below the average of 2.8. This below average score is an indication that the customer databases at University X are not sufficiently accessible (internally) and user-friendly. In line with the findings of question 18, question 8 reaffirms that it will not be possible to implement adequate relationship marketing strategies. A most significant outcome in this regard is that it is in direct opposition to the essence of IMC in that without the customer databases, University X cannot create dialogue and it will thus be far more difficult to utilize this

two-way communication. Furthermore, it therefore implies that University X cannot effectively personalize its messages, because of a significant lack of access and understanding of the information in the database (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:229). It is interesting to note that the infrastructure already exists to develop databases i.e. the gathering of the data can occur, yet accessibility to that data is limited. Once again, this impacts on the organization's ability to learn. Feedback loops, as stated earlier, are inadequate to facilitate organizational learning.

The score of question 11 is below average (1.67) and it is therefore evident that University X's corporate philanthropic efforts are not concentrated in one specific area of the University. The significantly low score of this question can be ascribed to the nature of University X as an educational institution. In this educational domain, the philanthropic efforts are not only focused on one area of the University, but incorporate various projects within the broader community development area. Inherently, a greater affinity could be expected in the average scores of questions 9 and 11. However, in terms of the statement specifying one area of philanthropic efforts, it is possible that the respondents did not make the link with the mission of University X, because University X has philanthropic efforts in a diversity of areas. However, it should be related to the core business of the university. Projects may reflect fragmentation with regard to the core focus; thus, there could be many different projects concentrated around this. The result of question 4 (1.60) is significantly below the average of 2.8. The reason for this below average score on this question could be that University X's Division of PR does not make use of an outside communication agency so, in effect, it does not have contact with such an agency. However, in University X's context, the function of an outside communication agency is fulfilled by an internal committee that determines the strategic orientation of the brand. From this finding, it is obvious that the lack of contact with the group is significant. One of the barriers to IMC is that communication is seen as low in priority. This is evident and the consequence is that those executing the IMC strategy are not informed enough to guarantee a buy-in into the process. The low visibility of this function is more than likely due to an insufficient allocation of resources. This function is viewed as technical execution rather than of strategic importance because of the division's own positioning within University X.

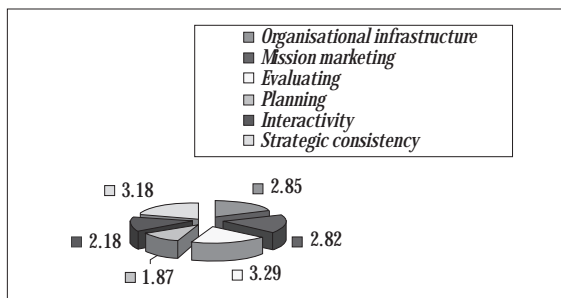
The PR Division at University X scored significantly below the average on question 16 (1.33) inferring that University X does not significantly make use of a zero-based approach in its marketing communication planning. This score is also in line with the below average score of Question 15, in that not having a significant degree of the utilization of a SWOT analysis (question 15) means that zero-based planning cannot take place to a certain extent (question 16). Zero-based planning is one of the integral and fundamental aspects of the philosophy of IMC, and yet it obtained the second lowest

score in the IMC mini-audit. The emphasis is therefore on maintenance vs. adaptive strategic functions. Question 7, the question with the lowest score on the integration scale (0.93), reflected a poor usage of databases. Duncan (2001:276) states that databases should be used to capture customer enquiries, complaints, compliments and sales behaviour. The implication of this result is the indication that, although University X scored significantly high in obtaining information about customers (question 6), the below average score of question 7 (0.93) is an indication that University X does not have mechanisms in place to utilize the information it obtained from the customers effectively. From this result, linear thinking by University X is evident, as although it obtains the information from customers, it does not effectively use the information to maintain and build relationships. This then results in an impairment for an organization in becoming a learning organization, because by not using the captured responses and the customer feedback, the organization cannot learn from its past experiences, and can in effect not create a learning organization (Kahan, 1997:1). By not having sufficient usage of databases, University X cannot have a successful relationship between the University and the stakeholders, because there needs to be a relationship memory on the part of University X, so that the University can act on the needs and wants of its stakeholders. These findings are directly in alignment with the findings relating to question 8 (accessibility of database). It is clear that a primary obstacle is University X's philosophy surrounding the value and contribution that databases can play in effective IMC. This underplaying in the importance of a database is in direct opposition with Duncan's expressed statement (2001:8) that IMC can be IMC only if data-driven communication is a priority.

The results of the individual questions can be grouped into six sub-sections. The interpretations of these results of the IMC mini-audit are discussed below.

9.1.2 Sub-sections of the Integrated Marketing Communication mini-audit

The results of the various sub-sections of the IMC mini-audit are shown in the figure below.



Graph 7.2 Results of the sub-sections of the IMC mini-audit

The averages of the various sub-sections are presented in descending order, to obtain a clearer understanding of the areas in which the PR Division scored significantly higher or lower. The scores of University X's various sub-sections on the integration scale of the IMC mini-audit are as follows:

Sub-section number	Sub-section	Average
6.	Evaluating	3.29
4.	Strategic consistency	3.18
1.	Organizational infrastructure	2.85
3.	Mission marketing	2.82
2.	Interactivity	2.18
5.	Planning	1.87

Figure 7.2 Sub-section results of the IMC mini-audit

The evaluation sub-section had the highest score for a sub-section (3.22). This high score can be interpreted as a very structured way of evaluating the marketing communication strategies and programmes at University X. The significantly high score in this sub-section is possible because of the mechanisms in place to obtain the feedback received from customers through the continual research that the Division of PR undertakes, for example customer service audits and customer satisfaction surveys among first-year students. These various mechanisms in place, however, measure very specific aspects within the PR Division, and do not measure the holistic marketing communication function of the division and therefore not the greater efficiency of the Division of PR. Therefore, a holistic and synergistic approach based on research findings will be more complicated. The sub-section of strategic consistency scored the second highest of the sub-sections (3.18) on the integration scale. The high score of 3.18 is however not reflective of the other sub-sections in the IMC mini-audit as a whole, as those scores are inherently not in line with true strategic consistency because of the lack of a database, the lack of core competency, the lack of the use of a SWOT analysis and the lack of the use of zero-based planning. These characteristics of the other sub-sections are fundamental for the philosophy of true IMC.

The result for sub-section one, which focuses on organizational infrastructure, was just above average with the third highest score of 2.85. Based on this score, it can be deduced that University X's organizational structure does not significantly allow for cross-functional operations. Sub-section three (mission marketing) scored 2.82 on the integration scale – the fourth highest score for sub-sections. From this score, it is evident that University X's marketing communication efforts are to a certain extent tied

to the university's mission. It could however be argued that this just above average score is an indication that University X's mission is to a greater extent part of the setting of objectives to include the mission of the University, and possibly to a lesser extent part of the reaching of those objectives. The mission should be used as a guiding principle in selecting objectives – not in terms of achieving objectives.

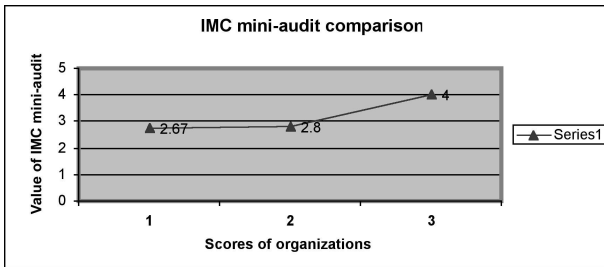
For the interactivity sub-section, University X scored 2.18 on the integration scale of the IMC mini-audit – the second lowest score for sub-sections. This below average score on interactivity implies that University X does not have significant purposeful, two-way communication with its stakeholders. This below average score in interactivity can be based on University X still using the traditional promotional approach (focused on transactions), which is primarily focused on sending messages, not an IMC approach (focused on interaction) with purposeful dialogue. Furthermore, because it has a significantly low score on interactivity, it can be argued that there is no or limited provision for a mechanism to obtain continual, real-time feedback that could be used strategically to monitor and modify services as they are being developed and delivered (Fizdale, 1992:58). In essence, the below average score in this sub-section can also refer to University X not taking advantage of new computer technologies and not having a corporate commitment to listen to its customers and therefore University X does not gather information that could enable the University to customize messages. Based on these findings, it is evident that University X does not have the desired infrastructure in place to utilize IMC and can therefore not be a customer-centric organization. Service is seen as a product rather than a process. Then additionally, because University X does not optimally make use of interactivity (and essentially of relationship marketing), it cannot truly move towards a learning organization (Duncan, 2001:297) because of the lack of purposeful interaction between University X and its stakeholders.

The planning sub-section had the lowest score (1.87) of all the sub-sections. From this score, it can be deduced that in general the planning in University X's marketing communication function does not take place in a structured way to establish two-way communication between the organization and its stakeholders. The reason for this significantly low score is that staff members in the PR Division are aware of the tasks that they have to perform, but they are to a lesser extent aware of the role of their tasks within the plan of the greater organizational well-being. Furthermore, based on the lack of the use of a SWOT analysis and zero-based planning, it is evident that the focus of University X's marketing communication is more short-term based, which is once again a barrier to IMC in that this approach weakens University X's ability to build a loyal customer base. For University X, a long-term view is thus required, involving all parts of the organization to encourage purposeful dialogue and to build relationships with its valued customers. This is not viewed as a strategic function, and is in reality practised

as a technical execution. Organizational alignment is insufficient because of structural barriers. Brand teams are not integrated at strategic level, only at technical level. When referring to the scores of the sub-sections of the IMC mini-audit, it is important to note the major difference between the results of the planning and evaluating sub-sections. In practice, these two sub-sections should correlate, seeing that the goals of any programme of activity are set in the planning stages of such programme, and that the evaluation of these can take place only if it was stated clearly in the planning stages. This reinforces the notion that IMC is applied at technical level and not at strategic level. The latter is an imperative for IMC to work.

9.1.3 Overall results of the Integrated Marketing Communication mini-audit

From the various sub-sections of the IMC mini-audit, University X obtained an overall score of 2.67 on the integration scale. This is just below the average of 2.8, but significantly below a well-integrated organization score of 4.0 suggested by Duncan (2001:727). University X's integration position compared to an average and an "above average" on the integration scale presented in Graph 9.3.



Graph 9.3 Comparison of IMC mini-audit results

From the results of the IMC mini-audit, University X therefore needs to focus specifically on the area of strategic marketing communication planning and the area of interactivity, to become more integrated. Although the score of the organizational infrastructure sub-section is just above average, attention should also be given to this to ensure more efficient cross-functional operations in University X. More emphasis should also be placed on the mission of University X by relating all the activities and messages of the university back to its mission. Based on the overall results and interpretation thereof, the research question stated in section 5.3.1 needs to be answered.

RQ1: - The score of University X on the integration scale according to the IMC mini-audit is 2.67. The average score for an organization on the IMC mini-audit scale is 2.8. Therefore, because University X scored below average on the integration scale of the IMC mini-audit, University X as an organization is not sufficiently integrated.

To be able to test the secondary issues that are directly related to the main research question, the answers of the sub-research questions are as follows:

- RQa: - University X scored 2.85 in the organizational infrastructure area of the IMC mini-audit. University X's organizational infrastructure area is integrated, because it scored above average in this section.
- RQb: - University X scored 2.18 in the interactivity section of the IMC mini-audit. University X's interactivity score is not above average.
- RQc: - University X scored 2.82 in the mission marketing section of the IMC mini-audit, and is thus just above average in this section.
- RQd: - University X scored 3.18 in the strategic consistency section of the IMC mini-audit. This score is above average.
- RQe: - University X scored 1.87 in the planning section of the IMC mini-audit and is thus below average in this section.
- RQf: - University X scored 3.29 in the evaluation section of the IMC mini-audit. University X therefore scored above average in this section.
- RQg: - University X scored above average in the organizational infrastructure section, and therefore University X's various divisions are integrated.
- RQh: - University X scored above average in the organizational infrastructure section, with a score of 2.85. Therefore, University X's corporate learning is integrated.
- RQi: - University X scored below average in the section of interactivity. Therefore, University X's area of stakeholders is not integrated.
- RQj: - University X's strategic consistency is above average. Therefore, University X's area of brand positioning is integrated.
- RQk: - University X scored below average on the IMC mini-audit scale. Therefore, University X's area of the "big creative idea" is not integrated.
- RQl: - University X scored above average on the evaluation section of the IMC mini-audit. Therefore, University X's area of the "big creative idea" is not integrated based on this research question.
- RQm: - University X scored above average on the mission marketing section of the IMC mini-audit. Therefore, University X's area of corporate mission is integrated.

9.2 Phase two – Public relations in Integrated Marketing Communication

In the category of the specific roles within the Division of PR (Category 1), it was apparent that all three respondents had a very clear idea of their sub-division's specific function. Each respondent gave a thorough description of the function of the specific sub-division, but not necessarily their specific roles as part of the overall Division of PR. The results of this category can be interpreted as that staff members in the Division of PR have clarity about the tasks that they have to perform, but they do not understand the role of their tasks within the plan of the greater organizational functioning. It is thus likely

that they do not understand alignment, and internal marketing and organizational structuring are therefore problems. It is therefore evident that there is a lack of cross-functional operations in the Division of PR, where all the divisions and departments in an organization know what their specific role is within a certain section of the organization, as well as their specific role within the greater organization (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:74). This is one of the barriers of IMC and causes a problem from an IMC perspective in the sense that there cannot be synergy in the organization if there is no clear understanding of a role in relation to the overall functioning of firstly the division in which it functions and secondly, in the overall organizational functioning (Prensky, McCarty & Lucas, 1996:176). A further result is that this appears to establish the functioning of the sub-divisions in functional silos and not as supporting functions of each other. This is clear from a statement made by one of the respondents that the three sub-divisions should function on their own. This is in direct contrast to the IMC approach, which proposes that all functions should work together in a cross-functional manner, because functional and departmental silos will get in the way of creating and retaining customers (Duncan, 2001:8).

The results of Category 2 on University X's integrated approach showed that the respondents were not unanimous in their responses. Respondent B felt that there had been a certain degree of integration within the organization, and that there had been much improvement over the last three to four years in this regard. In relation to this view, respondents A and C were uncertain to the degree of integration in the organization by stating, "not to my knowledge and my understanding of integration" and that "I think they really try to market integrated, but I don't know how effective they are...". When looking at the results of category 2, it is clear that all three respondents were certain about the fact that there were procedures in place towards an IMC approach for the organization. A significant response in this category was the response to the legitimacy of the marketing communication function of the organization: "...I don't know how legitimate the marketing function is on campus..." This is a serious concern from an IMC point of view, in that this shows that there are turf wars in the organization, and this causes difficulty in the planning and monitoring of comprehensive communication programmes. These turf battles also seem to be fuelled by what is referred to as "backstabbing", negative attitudes and threats because of a lack of core competency by most staff members. The problem with these turf battles (Schultz, 1993d:16) is that they motivate each side to become more cohesive in the biases and stereotypes of their abilities and their "opponent's" lack of abilities. It is recommended that based on the results of the two categories mentioned above, a cross-functional team should be assigned at University X. This cross-functional team could help diffuse the organizational conflicts that result from misperceptions or ignorance about what other divisions and groups in the organization are doing. This cross-functional team will not only enlighten

each sub-division about what other sub-divisions and departments are doing to build stakeholder relationships, but also help each sub-division to have a more realistic perception of its own role within the organization.

In Category 3, there was agreement that the policies and guidelines that are in place ensure consistency in the underlying theme of all the messages of the organization. One of the respondents however saw this as an obstacle in their functioning as the respondents sometimes want to go beyond standards to suit their message for a specific situation. From the results of Category 3, it is evident that all three respondents are aware of policies in place to ensure the same underlying theme for all the messages sent out by the Division of PR and by University X, in effect. It is however evident that the respondents are to a greater extent only aware of these policies, but do not implement them in a significant way, because of the lack of control mechanisms of these policies. Therefore, although these policies and procedures are in place, it seems that they are not seen in a very serious light, as one respondent pointed out that at times there is no time to follow the correct procedures and policies. From the results of this category it is evident that the marketing communication function at University X is to a lesser extent enforced by management, which is cause for concern from an IMC perspective, because management should drive the idea of “unity of effort” within the organization (Duncan, 2001:94). It is recommended that these policies be implemented and controlled by a communication czar in the organization endorsed by the managerial level, because not only is it vital in IMC that all messages have synergy, but they should also conform to a central positioning strategy and the core values of the organization. This refers to one of the very basic levels of integration (Caywood, 1998:xi), level two of integration of image integration where the organization should begin its pursuit towards integration with the “one-look, one-feel” approach to move towards strategic consistency.

The results from Category 4 focused on the various sub-divisions’ objectives. From the interviews, it was evident that all the sub-divisions had a very thorough understanding of the objectives of their specific sub-divisions and that each sub-division was focused on those objectives. The results of Category 4 can be interpreted as that each sub-division has a clear understanding of what the sub-division’s role is within the greater Division of PR. This category’s results confirm the result of Question 20 in the IMC mini-audit, in that the extent to which staff members are aware of the objectives for their specific division is the question with the highest score obtained in the mini-audit. This does not however imply that these objectives are strategically selected. They may be very clear on inappropriate objectives, which can be detrimental to overall organizational functioning. Category 5’s results showed that there was no clear understanding on how the sub-divisions’ mission relates to the overall mission of University X, and the respondents’ answers varied greatly in this regard. The answers varied from that the

sub-division is a support function for the organization to a repetition of the mission of University X and not stating that the sub-division's mission related to that mission. Respondent C focused on the functioning of the sub-division, and how the sub-division's functioning fitted into the organization, therefore not focusing on the question asked. In comparison to these results, according to the results of Category 5, it is noticeable that the various sub-divisions do not have an idea of how their sub-division's objectives are related to the mission of University X. From this, it can be accepted that each of the sub-divisions in the Division of PR is to a great extent functioning on its own, and not in relation to the overall mission of the university. In effect, this again refers to the concept of cross-functional planning in the organization and that the sub-divisions should have an understanding of the greater organizational functioning. It further relates to the aspect of mission marketing where the organization should promote its mission (externally and internally) and concentrate on the philanthropic activities that are supposed to reinforce the mission of University X. This is especially true in the Division of PR where one of the sub-divisions focuses strictly on community relations. Once again, this points to the division lacking internal alignment through internal branding efforts.

It was clear from the results of Category 6 that the respondents were not familiar with the term of "marketing communication functions" and the term had to be explained before the respondents were able to respond to the questions in this category. The respondents were however still confused by the types of marketing communication functions that exist and only one of the respondents could give an indication of the marketing communication functions used within this division. The marketing communication functions mentioned were advertising and direct marketing. Publicity and in-house publications were also mentioned, which were categorized under the function of PR. It is important to note that the function of PR *per se* was not mentioned by any of the respondents. It was evident from the obtained data that only one of the interviewees is familiar with the marketing communication functions. This is however a problem, coming from the assumption that the heads of sub-divisions within the Division of PR should have a thorough understanding of the basic concepts in the field. From the results of Category 6, it was therefore evident that there is a major shortcoming in subject-related knowledge in the division. Even after the explanation of the terms, two of the respondents still did not understand the concept of marketing communication functions and answered very broadly. In IMC terms, this occurrence is referred to as a lack of core competencies. This could point to a level of unconscious incompetence. In referring back to core competency, from an IMC perspective, a marketing communication manager needs three levels of core competencies. The first level is knowing what the organization's core competencies are and then making sure they are supported by the functionaries. The organization's core competencies are what give it its competitive

edge. Another important element of the organization's core competency should be an organization's mission. This should help determine how the core competencies are packaged and presented (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:192). Therefore, a correlation can be drawn between this first shortcoming in the organizational core competency in the Division of PR and the lack of understanding of the sub-divisions' roles related to the mission of University X (Category 5). The second level of core competency is an understanding of how the organization "works" – which is generally a problem in larger organizations such as University X for the reason that there is a lack of involvement with, and interest in, the skills and techniques in other departments in the organization (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:193). Once again, it refers to a failure in internal branding rather than external insufficiency. From University X's perspective, this implies that the sub-divisions in the Division of PR at University X do not have an interest or involvement in other sub-divisions. This lack of involvement makes it more difficult to network internally and position staff and programmes in the organization. The third level is having a core competency in the subject of marketing communication and managing stakeholder relationships. All the people in the marketing communication department of an organization need an understanding of, and genuine respect for, each of the major marketing communication functions. They need to know how these tools complement each other and which can be used with the most impact and greatest cost efficiency (Duncan & Moriarty, 1993:193). In applying this third level of core competency to the Division of PR the creation of core competencies will mean that staff members in the Division of PR should acquire the fundamental competency and understanding of the field of IMC. Furthermore, it will also ensure greater realization of synergy – where messages reinforce each other and their strategic timing results in greater impact.

In Category 7, the respondents focused on the marketing communication-related functions (because of the lack of knowledge explained in category 6) used by their sub-division and not on the most prominent marketing communication function of the division. These functions varied again from "community outreach" to all the marketing communication functions being used equally. This can however not be a valid answer, because of the lack of knowledge of the marketing communication function available. Respondent B focused on the idea that the function used varies according to the specific target market and that there are different campaigns for each target market. The respondent referred to advertising and "publications or newsletters" as frequently used functions in the Division of PR. The results from Category 7 indicate that most marketing communication functions play an equal role in the overall functioning of the division, although there is a tendency to focus significantly on advertising. This notion that every marketing communication function has the same chance of being used in the strategy is in line with the integration approach (Duncan, 2001:291). It is possible that they do not have an integrating vision – i.e. that they are all managing strategic relationships

and therefore quite often define their function in technical rather than strategic terms. This category was specifically included in the study to determine whether the name of the division (Division of PR) would impact on the use of marketing communication functions, as the name of the division implies the use of PR as a main function in the division. It can however be said that based on the results of the interviews, this idea is proven wrong and that PR plays an equally important role in University X's marketing communication strategy, compared to other marketing communication functions. However, the PR practised in the Division of PR is focused on the tactics and tools of traditional PR, and further significantly focused on the traditional role of communication technician; therefore, not focusing on strategic or marketing PR, and how it can add value in terms of the overall IMC approach, but still focusing on the tools and tactics of traditional PR.

From Category 8, it is clear that all three respondents acknowledge the use of PR in the various sub-divisions, but the respondents are uncertain about their role by saying in the one sentence that PR is a "great part of the functioning of our sub-division" and in another that the respondent is "hesitant to call the major function a PR function...". Respondent B stated that PR is practised on a broad level of relationship building in the organization. Respondent C was incidental in this category by stating that "we talk on a regular basis". From the results of Category 8, it is clear that there is an acknowledgement of the use of PR in the Division of PR. The use of PR is not seen as a significant marketing communication function in this division, although using the name of "Sub-division of Public Liaison" in the "Division of PR" implies the prominent use of PR as a marketing communication function. In Category 9, the respondents' answers varied in that they viewed PR in different ways. Respondent A views PR as a support function for his sub-division, Respondent B views PR as "an overall support structure....not only technically but also strategically.." and Respondent C views PR as an integral part of that sub-division's functioning. Based on the results of Category 9, the following conclusions can be drawn. In this category, there is a difference in opinion on the importance of PR in the sub-divisions. Respondent C referred to PR as an "integral part" of the functioning of the one sub-division and stated further "...it is the whole time a PR exercise...". This "integral" role of PR can however not be classified as PR practised on a managerial or strategic level, as the respondent referred to the task of PR as event management and the production of publications. This in fact refers to the technical function of PR, which focuses on writing skills and organizing skills. Respondent A described the role of PR in that the sub-division – in contrast to Respondent C – is a support function delivered by the sub-division of public liaison. From this response, it is evident that PR is seen and practised on a technical level, again focusing on event management or as referred by the respondent: "planning a function..." and the production of publications. It is therefore evident that PR is still seen as being practised on the

communication technician role level of traditional PR, and not as an active marketing PR approach (on a strategic level) of the new marketing-oriented approach to PR.

In Category 10, the respondents were asked to discuss how the sub-division of public liaison is used by other sub-divisions. When referring to the results of Category 10, it is important to note that Respondent A feels very strongly about the fact that the three sub-divisions as they stand “should function on their own...”. It is evident that internal conflict is ever-present between the various sub-divisions, which impacts negatively on the Division of PR as it is a barrier to integration. Respondent C shared this notion and stated: “I have to do a job and cannot always wait for the PR department...”. This can be interpreted as that the sub-division would prefer working on its own with rigid borders between the sub-divisions. This would, however, mean that it would be impossible for people who need to work together to do so. A basic premise of IMC, as explained in the literature study, is that critical processes such as managing customer relationships should not be restricted by functional walls and barriers (Duncan, 2001:92). IMC as emphasized by the interpretation of the results of this category calls for more than new lines on an organizational chart. Again, it refers back to the understanding of other functions within the organization besides the area of specialization – this again refers back to core competency. Therefore, the working together of sub-divisions is essential from an IMC perspective. From the PR sub-division perspective, they see themselves as “ever-present in the other two...”. Thus, seeing themselves as a necessity for the other two sub-divisions’ functioning, it is recommended that the Division of PR should consider restructuring towards more centralized control, strategy and planning to be able to deal with the stakeholders more effectively. Based on the idea of centralized control, it is suggested that the main functions at University X that actively deal with the most important stakeholders of the University should be centralized. Therefore, it is suggested that the Student Services Bureau (purely the recruiting side), which deals with the development and maintenance of stakeholder relationships (student relationships), should be incorporated in such a new structure for the division, as this is one of the major contact points with potentially profitable customers that should be managed and controlled. This refers to a lack of coherence in terms of organizational mission. The focus is therefore on individual interest rather than organizational goals.

From Category 11, it was clear that all the sub-divisions had a clear understanding of their sub-division’s various stakeholders, and had various programmes in place to communicate specifically with a targeted stakeholder group. The aim of this category was however to establish (1) if respondents had a clear understanding of the stakeholders targeted by each sub-division and (2) to establish the techniques in which University X uses PR specifically to reach stakeholders. From the results of this category, it can be said that although the respondents had a clear understanding of the various stakeholders,

and although all three respondents agreed on the fact that different programmes are addressed at different stakeholder groups, not one of the respondents could clearly indicate the specific PR techniques used for those stakeholders. Therefore, it can be argued that the sub-divisions know what their specific tasks are in order to reach the stakeholders, but that they do not know how to implement the tasks to be able to reach those stakeholders. Furthermore, the result of this category refers to the interpretation of the results of Category 6, where the problem is a lack of core competency in the specific field. The respondents did not have the knowledge to answer the question specifically and therefore gave general answers such as “visits to regions..”, “extending international linkages, establishing networks, providing client services to visiting scholars and students...”, focusing on the general roles of the sub-divisions.

In Category 12 there was disagreement on whether University X is a brand. Two of the three respondents felt that University X should be marketed as a brand and that the marketing communication programmes are directly in line with this brand of University X. From Category 12 when focusing on University X as a brand, it can be interpreted that there is insufficient “buy-in” from all sub-divisions that University X must be seen as a brand in order to position University X strategically in the marketplace. This can cause differences in the “say-do-confirm” of messages sent out by the university (Duncan, 2001:327). Furthermore, differences in the consistency triangle can result in University X not being able to identify gaps in its brand communication, resulting in an insufficiency in alerting University X to potential stakeholder relationship problems (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:91). From an IMC perspective, it is crucial for top management to support and advocate this approach in the organization, which would further lead to the internal support of this approach. It is therefore recommended that University X launch an intensive internal marketing communication programme, not only to inform staff, but also to empower staff with the core competencies to be able to deal effectively and efficiently with the stakeholders; furthermore, to explain specific functions for specific sub-divisions in building a stronger brand for University X. In Category 13, two of the three respondents felt that relationships are the core of the division. One respondent worded it as “...that is what it is all about...”. The other respondent was not sure that relationships could be called the core of what that sub-division is doing. From the results of Category 13, the following interpretations can be made: all three respondents felt that relationships were a very important part of their functioning. It is however alarming that Respondent A is in a sub-division where the core of the sub-division is to build, maintain and strengthen relationships, and makes the statement that “..not sure I would call them [relationships] the core of what I am doing..”. Therefore, it is recommended that all staff members should (1) have a clear understanding of the specific requirements and expectations within a sub-division and (2) this again refers back to the need to have core competencies within the division. It is however clear that there is a cognisance

of stakeholder overlap and from an integrated marketing perspective, the Division of PR is on track in developing and managing relationships with these stakeholders by treating each stakeholder group as a target market with its own objectives and message strategy. The reason for this is that not all customers are equally important to the organization, and University X should therefore identify its most profitable customers in the value field of stakeholders and retain and nourish relationships with those.

From Category 14, it was clear that all three respondents felt very strongly about the use of databases in the functioning of their divisions, and each division relied heavily on such databases. It was however clear that the respondents were enthusiastic to expand the usage of such technologies, but there is a need for qualified staff to maintain these databases. From Category 14, it can be argued that databases seem to play a major role in the functioning of all three sub-divisions. This is also in line with the IMC perspective, where building and managing databases to retain customers rather than just acquiring new customers are essential (Schultz, *et al.*, 1994:64). It is however recommended that databases become a more integral part of the functioning of University X from a stakeholder relationship point of view. This means that databases should be the centre of the functioning of the Division of PR, because without a full-time well-managed programme of building and using databases, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for University X to create personalized communication with stakeholders. The barriers that emerged from Category 15 ranged from an IIS system that is not functioning sufficiently, time constraints, conflict and as one respondent put it “perhaps a bit of know-how”. The barrier that all the respondents agreed upon was the lack of staff capacity. These results of Category 15 are useful for the study in that there is agreement on the lack of human capacity in the Division of PR. This can be overcome either by using an integrated external communication agency not only to relieve the workload of the division but also to contribute to the division from an objective perspective, or it can be overcome by appointing more staff with the relevant core competencies. The internal marketing communication campaign suggested for Category 12 could also reduce the internal conflict in the division as well as the need for “a bit more know-how”.

10. CONCLUSION

When comparing the findings of the two phases of the research, the following conclusions can be drawn from the study: Firstly, when comparing the score of the IMC mini-audit on organizational infrastructure and the results from phase two, it is evident that there is a possible discrepancy between the results of the two phases. The organizational infrastructure sub-section of phase one indicates a fairly high score in this sub-section, implying effective cross-functional operations in University X. In contrast to these

results, the results from phase two indicate a major lack of cross-functional operations in University X. The respondents perceiving their functioning in this division as an integrated approach could cause this discrepancy, where in *reality* they do not have the knowledge to see that their division is not functioning in an integrated manner. Secondly, in comparing the sub-section of interactivity and the categories of phase two related to interaction with the stakeholders, it is apparent that although University X scored below average in this section of the IMC mini-audit, there is agreement from the results of phase two that University X should focus on this area of IMC. There is a definite need according to the results of this section for interactivity that would ensure the integration of customers and stakeholders into the planning and development of processes at University X. Furthermore, the interactivity needed also implies that University X must place emphasis on receiving messages as it does on sending messages. In relation to this finding is the result of phase two focusing on databases. From these results, it is evident that there is a need for more effective and ongoing management and the use of databases in the Division of PR. If the databases were then in place, it would make interactivity with the stakeholders easier and more targeted, because of the nature of the information obtained through interaction. By using this information, University X could communicate more effectively with the stakeholders based on the needs identified by means of the databases. Thirdly, the results of the mission marketing sub-section of the IMC mini-audit are in direct line with the results of the second phase of the study. It is evident that there is an awareness of the mission of University X, but this mission does not play a conscious part in the general functioning of the university. The conscious inclusion of the mission in activities – not only internally but also externally – will strengthen University X as a brand and motivate staff. This refers therefore to a lack of organizational alignment and a need for integration. In addition, it will also streamline the IMC processes because it fosters associations and thus synergy between departments and outside stakeholder groups.

When comparing the results of the two phases related to strategic consistency, the following conclusions can be drawn. Although there is a high score in strategic consistency according to the IMC mini-audit, it is recommended that University X reinforce the message of the policies and procedures to ensure consistency and to have stricter control mechanisms (for example a communication czar) in place, to ensure that the sub-divisions do not use their “own” messages, even if there are time constraints and even if the messages sent out are informal. All University X’s brand messages should have the same underlying theme, and there should be consistency in the brand messages sent to all the stakeholders. University X should realize that consistency must begin with brand positioning, which is based on core values, selling promises and distinctive features. Here, it is important for all the parties involved in University X to see University X as a brand. All University X’s messages – planned, product, service and unplanned – must

complement and reinforce the brand position. To ensure strategic consistency even further, it is recommended that a consistency strategy be developed to address the problem of overlapping stakeholders and the tendency of stakeholders to integrate the wide range of brand messages that they continually receive automatically. From the findings of the study, it is evident that there is definitely a lack of strategic planning in the marketing communication efforts at University X. Based on the results of the IMC mini-audit, this is the lowest score of the mini-audit, and therefore extra attention should be given to this aspect of integration. Scientific methods of planning such as using a zero-based planning strategy are suggested. Based on the above, it might be possible that sufficient planning took place with regard to the marketing communication efforts of University X, but that this planning was not well documented or communicated to the rest of the Division of PR. Thorough documentation and communication of the planning of the marketing communication efforts are therefore suggested in this regard.

From the findings, it is however necessary to point out that because of a lack of core competencies with regard to the respondents, it was difficult to determine the exact role of PR within University X's IMC approach. It can however be concluded that PR is still practised at University X on a technical, supportive level and is not part of the strategic and managerial planning of University X, based on the idea that the focus is very much short-term based and focused on the functions within public relations. It is also evident that traditional PR still plays an important role within the Division of PR, but there is no realization of the functions of "the new image of PR" as explained in the literature study. The name of the Division of PR is also confusing, as it implies that the majority of the functions in the division are PR based. It is therefore suggested that this division change its name to a more descriptive term that reflects the range of functions performed in the division.

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