

**STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION ON SOUTH AFRICAN
NONPROFIT ORGANISATION WEBSITES**

by

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Declaration

I declare that the Master's dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree MCom (Communication Management) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Chantalle Schutte

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Jesus, for your love and support.

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Abstract

South Africa's democratic political regime opened up a global operating environment, affecting all sectors of the economy including the nonprofit sector. Models of sustainability have become more important than ever, with an increased emphasis on management models in this sector.

New information and communication technologies such as the Internet and especially website technology have produced a challenging need for communication management paradigms. Operating within a context of increasing uncertainty may lead to nonprofit organisations looking outside the boundaries of their own sector for new management models and ideas.

Strategic integrated communication is a management idea rooted in private sector knowledge. More specifically, Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication has the potential to address the sustainability issue within the website arena. The present study evaluates the application of strategic integrated communication according to Niemann's (2005) conceptual model, among a selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites.

Lack of research regarding strategic integrated communication within the South African nonprofit sector was the main motivating factor for this study. The study also represents an attempt to empirically test Niemann's (2005) normative model within a specific context, thus helping to assess the scientific validity of the model.

An exploratory qualitative research design was employed, with evidence collected by means of a content analysis of nonprofit websites and an e-mail questionnaire intended for the most senior communication/marketing staff member of each organisation. From an external perspective, nonprofit websites display many of the elements of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model. Yet, evidence about the internal communication management aspects of the same organisations indicates that essential elements of the model are absent.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of the nonprofit sector cannot be underestimated within the South African development context (Swilling & Russell, 2002:95). Nonprofit organisations contribute actively to the development of the South African community (Davids, 2005b:73), bringing much-needed socio-economic changes to previously deprived groups of the population (Van Driel & Van Haren, 2003:530).

Apart from social challenges, organisations in the nonprofit sector face various other changes in their operating environments (Cutlip, Center, Broom & Du Plessis, 2002:304). By monitoring a variety of trends and forces in the environment (political, economic, social and technological trends) planners and decision-makers can proactively identify opportunities and threats (Bryson, 2004:39). Nonprofit organisations need to adapt and adjust to these conditions to ensure long-term sustainability (Brønn & Brønn, 2002:249).

The need for nonprofit professionalisation is the result of two issues within the South African development landscape. The first relates to the fact that South Africa's democratic state requires the formation of relationships between different economic role players (Kotzé, 2004:[15]), highlighting the need for nonprofit organisations to focus more on management (SustainAbility, 2003:25). Secondly there is the fact that nonprofit organisations are handling ever greater financial flows, resulting in an increased emphasis on management paradigms in the sector (SustainAbility, 2003:7; Swilling & Russell, 2002:34).

Information and communication technology are important for organisations relying on communication, which include the nonprofit sector (Smith, Bucklin & Associates, 2000:249). The Internet and its main interface, the World-Wide Web, present the nonprofit sector with valuable on-line communication opportunities (Elliott, Katsioloudus & Weldon, 1998:297). The World Wide Web changes the way in which nonprofit organisations communicate with stakeholders and create an organisational image (Barker, Du Plessis & Hanekom, 2006:281).

When nonprofit organisations operate within a constantly evolving environment these organisations tend to search for solutions outside the parameters of their own sector (Myers & Sacks, 2003:299). Today nonprofit managers are more open to the ideas of business than in the past (Phills, 2005:ix). Integrated communication is a management concept rooted in private-sector knowledge and could be useful in addressing nonprofit management challenges, thus contributing to the sustainability of these organisations (SustainAbility, 2003:3).

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem is complex and embedded in various aspects (see sections 1.3 to 1.5). To better understand the context, one has to consider: (i) information and communication technology as a strategic opportunity, (ii) management paradigms in the nonprofit sector, and (iii) strategic integrated communication and sustainability.

1.2.1 Information and communication technology: A strategic opportunity

Hackler and Saxton (2007:480) state the importance of not only adapting to technological developments but also exploiting “technological potential for explicit mission-related aims” (Hackler & Saxton, 2007:480). During the SANGONeT Conference and Exhibition held on 17-18th July, 2007, at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg, South Africa, discussions revealed the need for nonprofit organisations to apply information and communication management technologies strategically.

Technology can support the achievement of the nonprofit organisation’s purpose in all main dimensions integral to achieving the organisation’s mission: (i) strategic communication and relationship-building, (ii) financial sustainability and (iii) partnerships, collaborations and donor assistance. The role and potential of the website in the creation and maintenance of long-term stakeholder relationships presents a highly relevant opportunity in terms of nonprofit online communication (Kang & Norton, 2004; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Ki & Hon, 2006; Naudé, Froneman & Atwood, 2004).

In order for the nonprofit sector to take full advantage of new information and communication technologies such as website technology, attention should be paid to relevant management paradigms that will equip and enable the nonprofit organisation to deal with challenges related to on-line communication.

1.2.2 Management paradigms in the nonprofit sector

From a global perspective, nonprofit management literature represents a body of knowledge dedicated to the unique management tasks facing nonprofit managers (Edwards & Fowler, 2002:1). Currently concern is being expressed about the urgent need for nonprofit business models (SustainAbility, 2003:3), which would ensure nonprofit efficiency and effectiveness within a changing global environment.

To address critical social development needs and other strategic forces it is important for South African nonprofit organisations to consider critical management paradigms, including: relationships, service delivery, transparency, accountability, governance and management (Department of Social Development, 2000:1). Nonprofit leaders do not only require frameworks for dealing with the social development context but also need frameworks for understanding, managing and building effective organisations as suggested by Phills (2005:7).

The transfer of management tools and techniques from the private sector to the nonprofit sector has been identified as a growing trend (Myers & Sacks, 2003:287). According to Edwards and Fowler (2002:9) the development of a nonprofit management framework that is comfortably situated alongside management and organisational development theories from other sectors remains an important task.

Nonprofit management literature produced an important academic observation. Phills (2005:xii) states that nonprofit management challenges are fundamentally similar to those of for-profit management challenges. According to Gomez and Zimmermann (quoted in Anheier, 2005:245-246) and Edwards and Fowler (2002:3) effective nonprofit management comprises the following critical elements which are similar to those of for-profit management:

- i. A holistic view of the organisation emphasising the relationship between the organisation and its environment.
- ii. A normative dimension of nonprofit management, including economic considerations but also the importance of values in the management of the organisation.
- iii. A strategic developmental dimension that views the organisation as a changing phenomenon constantly adapting to challenges in the environment (Grønberg, quoted in Anheier, 2005:246).
- iv. Articulation of a clear and common vision for the organisation and a set of strategies to achieve it.

- v. An operative dimension addressing the day-to-day operations of the organisation, including the mobilisation of all human, financial and intellectual resources as well as the creation of external contact and connections required for effective strategic operability.

One of the approaches affecting nonprofit involvement with management tools and techniques is the “organisation and management theory approach” (Batsleer, quoted in Meyers & Sacks, 2003:290), which states that there are fewer differences between nonprofit and for-profit organisations than originally thought. Therefore management models applied in the for-profit sector can also be applied in the nonprofit sector, since these two sectors face similar management challenges. According to Phills (2005:ix) nonprofit management leaders are now more receptive to the ideas of business to improve organisational performance.

The present study identifies integrated communication as a possible management concept that could be useful within the nonprofit management arena. The need for a study such as this one, which identifies a management idea rooted in private sector knowledge for the attention of nonprofit leaders, is thus apparent.

1.2.3 Strategic integrated communication and sustainability

An organisation’s communication capabilities largely influence the ability of the organisation to reach its objectives (Angelopulo & Schoonraad, 2006:3). With the advent of multiple functions or departments responsible for the organisation’s communication, the possibility of fragmented communication requires an integrated management approach (Duncan, 2002:30-31). The integrated management approach to corporate and marketing communication has become a key theme (Cornelissen & Lock, 2001:425), with the objective of harmonising various facets of the organisation’s communication functions. Communication integration results in the creation of integrity when the organisation is perceived holistically and not as a collection of individual parts (Duncan, 2002:31), producing outcomes such as trust and long-term relationships.

Organisational communication should function on a strategic level, allowing for direct involvement in strategic processes (Steyn & Puth, 2000:20). Argenti, Howell and Beck (2005:83) state the importance of strategically driven communication where communication is aligned with the strategy of the organisation

and directly contributes to the organisation's strategic position. Massie and Anderson (2003:223) define strategic integrated communication as including internal and external communication that is aligned and integrated in such a manner as to support the achievement of the organisation's mission and to avoid the formation of a fragmented image.

The present study further identifies a specific normative model, i.e. Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. It will be argued that this model could hold great value for the nonprofit management context.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Current international nonprofit management literature contains little empirical evidence regarding integrated communication implementation for nonprofit organisations. More specifically, literature on South African nonprofit communication management and accompanying empirical evidence appears to be lacking. A database search confirmed that no previous South African research had been undertaken regarding the implementation of strategic integrated communication within the nonprofit sector. This study is therefore important due to the fact that its findings could contribute to a deeper understanding of the communication management aspects of South African nonprofit organisations.

The Internet, which includes the World Wide Web, represents the largest change in the external environment from a nonprofit communication management perspective (Johnson, 1999:[2]). It is for this reason that the scope of the present study is limited to the on-line communication arena. The core research question of the study can therefore be stated: Does a given selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites apply Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 General aim

To evaluate the application of strategic integrated communication according to Niemann's (2005) conceptual model, among a selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites.

1.4.2 Objectives

Objective 1

To explore the applicability of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication to the South African nonprofit website environment.

Objective 2

To establish to what extent a selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites apply Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.

1.5 METATHEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to address the research question the study is conceptualised within a specific metatheoretical and conceptual framework. A visual representation of this framework appears in Table 1.1 on the next page.

1.5.1 Metatheoretical assumptions

According to Du Plooy (2002:20-21) a researcher's view and understanding of the ontological, epistemological and theoretical assumptions of communication as a subject guide his or her research thought.

First, ontological assumptions resemble beliefs held by the researcher regarding communication as the phenomenon to be investigated (Du Plooy, 2002:20). For the purpose of this study communication is perceived as a two-way process of which dialogue and interactivity are core components. These components are in turn essential predecessors to the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships.

Secondly, epistemological assumptions indicate the appropriate way in which to study communication as a subject and phenomenon (Du Plooy, 2002:20), based on the notion that there are various ways of knowing. For the purpose of this study, Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication is utilised as a theoretical framework in which to study nonprofit websites and assign meaning to nonprofit website communication.

Table 1.1: Metatheoretical and conceptual framework

CORE RESEARCH QUESTION: DO THE SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN NONPROFIT ORGANISATION WEBSITES APPLY NIEMANN'S (2005) CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION?					
Meta-theoretical assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontological: Communication is a two-way process based on dialogue and interactivity, capable of producing sustainable relationships. • Epistemological: Niemann's (2005) conceptual model serves as a framework for assigning meaning to nonprofit website communication. • Theoretical: Niemann's (2005) model is tested within the nonprofit website environment; there is no intention to produce a new theory. 				
Worldview	Modernism				
Grand theory	Relationship management based on dialogue, within a systems theory framework				
Theoretical disciplines	Business management	INTEGRATE	Marketing management	INTEGRATE	Communication management
Sub-fields within theoretical disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonprofit sector studies • Strategic management • Information and communication technology 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated marketing communication management • Customer relationship marketing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic communication management • Stakeholderism • Relationship management
Individual theories from specific theoretical disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning organisation theory 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence theory of public relations and communication management • Integrated communication
Individual models from specific domains	Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication				

Lastly, theoretical assumptions relate to the different kinds of explanations appropriate to communication (Du Plooy, 2002:20). The study starts with a theoretical perspective, i.e. Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, with the intention to test this model within a specific context, i.e. the South African nonprofit website environment. Therefore, the intention is to test a conceptual model rather than developing any new theory.

1.5.2 Worldview

According to Du Plooy (2002:26) a worldview can be defined as: "attitudes, beliefs, values or views of social reality characteristic of particular social groups". Kearny (quoted in Grunig & White, 1992:33) interprets a worldview by utilising the concept of schemas, i.e. large and abstract knowledge structures that individuals utilise to organise current knowledge and new information.

Modernism is the central worldview governing the present study. Plowman (2003:[1]) explains modernism as the rejection of tradition in pursuit of characteristics such as innovation, originality and dynamism.

Modernism implies the acceptance of metanarratives which are single, dominant ideologies and theories (Holtzhausen, 2000:96). Within the context of the present study, Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication presents the dominant ideology and the framework that is utilised to make sense of communication within the nonprofit website environment.

Furthermore, modernism is associated with the concept of "linearity or progression passing from one stage to the next" (Toth, 2002:245). Duffy (quoted in Toth, 2002:245) explains that a focus on goals and objectives and on the breakdown of public relations processes into smaller measurable parts reflects a modernist nature. Niemann's (2005) model which is the only normative model utilised in the present study, promotes alignment or linearity by implementing strategically driven communication based on what is learned from the organisation's environment and its stakeholders. Further, the model requires three integration areas: the organisational, stakeholder and environmental integration areas. These areas represent the smaller measurable parts of an intended communication process, which is described as the creation of sustainable long-term stakeholder relationships.

1.5.3 Grand theory

A grand theory aims to present a holistic explanation of a certain phenomenon (Skinner, 2009). Relationships, based on two-way symmetrical communication principles, are crucial in the nonprofit context as making the right “connections” (Edwards & Fowler, 2002:9) lies at the centre of their survival. The need for an open systems approach is therefore apparent. These are all necessary conditions for speculation about the applicability of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model within the nonprofit website arena.

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2005:200) the central notion of a relationship is dialogue. Grunig and Grunig (quoted in Foster & Jonker, 2005:52) argue for “symmetrical dialogue” as an advanced form of two-way communication that is designed to achieve involvement in the communication process. According to Baxter and Montgomery (quoted in Littlejohn & Foss, 2005:201) relationships consist of contradictions where one of these contradictions is “integration vs. separation”. By adopting the values of relationship management based on two-way symmetry, integration can be achieved.

Systems theory is not only interested in the nature of a system but also considers how the system maintains itself in an ever changing environment (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005:41), arguing for organisational adjustment and adaptation in order to ensure organisational longevity (Montuori, 2000:64). Systems theory argues for organisational change within a dynamic environment by means of interactive dialogue between the organisation and its environment (Montuori, 2002:64). The present research object, i.e. strategic integrated communication (Niemann, 2005), is also a phenomenon based on organisational learning principles which continuously reposition the organisation in relation to its environment. From this perspective systems theory is proven suitable for the study.

1.5.4 Theoretical disciplines

Three theoretical disciplines, viz. Business Management, Marketing Management and Communication Management, are relevant to the study. These disciplines have been identified by Niemann (2005:60) as the underlying foundations necessary for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.

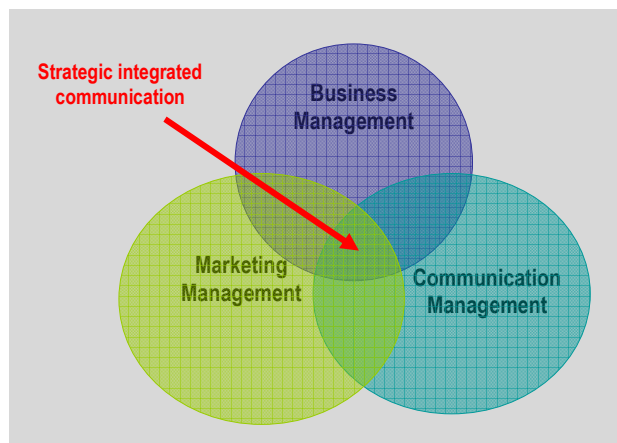
The three theoretical disciplines should be viewed within a changing management landscape. Table 1.2 presents the preferred definitions of the theoretical disciplines selected for the purpose of this study and indicates an open systems perspective that focuses on the relationship between the organisation and its environment.

Table 1.2: Defining theoretical disciplines

THEORETICAL DISCIPLINE	DEFINITION
Business management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greene, Adam and Ebert (1985:536-537) define strategic business management from an open systems perspective and emphasise the strategic nature of the discipline as "...a continuous process of thinking through the current mission of the organisation, thinking through the current environmental conditions, and then combining these elements by setting forth a guide for tomorrow's decisions and results..." Thus the result is an organisational strategy which predicates consequences for all functional areas (David, 2001:6).
Marketing management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Marketing Association (2006) defines marketing as "... an organisational function and set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders."
Communication management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to Grunig (1992:4) public relations can be described as the "...management of communication between an organisation and its publics..." The latter definition equates public relations and communication management. It presents the planning, execution and evaluation of an organisation's internal and external communication with its internal and external publics, which are able to influence the organisation's ability to reach its goals.

Lessing and Jacobs (2002:4) state the importance of integrating the various functional areas within the organisation and emphasise the value of organisational unity in achieving organisational goals and objectives. Strategic integrated communication requires the integration of three specific organisational functions (Niemann, 2005:60), as indicated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Theoretical disciplines



Source: Niemann (2005:60)

First, the integrated relationship between the communication and marketing function is emphasised. Kitchen and Shultz (2001:95) define the relationship between these two as ongoing and interactive, ensuring an integrated approach to the management of the organisation's total communication solution.

Secondly, an integrated relationship between the organisational strategy (relating to the Business Management discipline) and the organisation's communication (related to both the Communication and Marketing Management disciplines) is required. Communication management should function on a strategic level (Steyn & Puth, 2000:20), resulting in communication efforts directly contributing to the achievement of the organisational mission.

Niemann (2005:30) defines strategic integrated communication as:

“...the strategic management process of organizationally controlling and influencing all messages and encouraging purposeful, data-driven dialogue to create and nourish long-term, profitable relationships with stakeholders.”

1.5.5 Subfields within theoretical disciplines

The combination of subfields produces the concept of strategic integrated communication. Subfields relating to the Business Management discipline include: (i) nonprofit sector studies, (ii) strategic business management and (iii) information and communication technology.

The present study focuses on organisations operating within the South African nonprofit sector and is explored in Chapter 2. Strategic business management then emphasises the need for organisational learning assisting the organisation to adapt and adjust to changes within the environment (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2004:10). New information and communication technology (specifically website technology) presents a strategic opportunity for nonprofit organisations to reconfigure relationships with stakeholders (Burt & Taylor, 2000:132; Smith *et al.*, 2000:251).

Subfields relating to the Marketing Management discipline include: (i) integrated marketing communication (IMC) and (ii) customer relationship marketing.

Duncan (2002:8) describes integrated marketing communication as a strategically driven communication process that primarily focuses on the organisation-customer relationship. Barker (2006:156) also states the nature of integrated marketing communication whose task is to strategically build customer brand relationships by means of an integrated approach to communication. Related to this subfield is the focus on long-term relationships with customers as opposed to a transaction-based view (Anderson & Vincze, 2004:6).

Subfields relating to the Communication Management discipline include: (i) strategic communication management, (ii) stakeholderism and (iii) relationship management.

Steyn and Puth (2000:20) argue for the strategic role of communication management by stating the value of the function's participation in the strategic processes of the organisation when it acts as a strategic adviser to top management (Seitel, 1992:14) and ensures alignment of all communication efforts with strategy (Steyn, 2000:12). Further, stakeholderism highlights the need for cultivating the entire set of organisational stakeholders (Post, Preston & Sachs, 2000:8). Finally, relationship management lies at the centre of the discipline of Communication Management and emphasises the importance of nurturing stakeholder relationships (Ledingham, 2003:194-195) in order to achieve organisational objectives (Freeman & McVea, 2005:194; Steyn & Puth, 2000:188).

1.5.6 Individual theories from theoretical disciplines

Three individual theories are utilised for the study: (i) the theory of organisational learning, (ii) the excellence theory of public relations and (iii) the theory of integrated communication.

Organisational learning principles are essential for organisations operating within dynamic, competitive environments. Montuori (2000:62,64) conceptualises organisational learning theory within an open systems framework and emphasises the importance of continuous interaction between the organisation and its environment, thereby ensuring that organisational changes are aligned with environmental changes. This orientation is essential for organisations to successfully adapt and adjust in order to ensure organisational longevity. The importance of organisational learning applies to every sector in the economy including the private, public and nonprofit sectors (Edwards, 2002:331).

The excellence theory of public relations and communication management recommends two-way symmetrical communication practices between the organisation and its stakeholders. Communication which is based on dialogue encourages the mutual exchange of information between the organisation and its stakeholders, resulting in the creation of mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships (Dozier, Grunig, L. & Grunig, J., 1995:39; Grunig, J. & Grunig, L., 1992:289; Grunig & White, 1992:39). This individual theory in turn supports the grand theory of the study: relationship management based on dialogue, within an open systems framework.

Lastly, consider integrated communication as an individual theory: (i) it ensures alignment between the different aspects of an organisation's communication, (ii) it ensures alignment of all communication efforts with the organisational mission and (iii) it prevents the formation of a fragmented organisational image (Massie & Anderson, 2003:223; Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14).

1.5.7 Individual model from specific theoretical disciplines

Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, as developed for the South African marketplace, is the only normative model used in the present study. The model recommends that all organisational communication should be driven by strategic intent, ensuring a unity in effort throughout the organisation, and based on what was learned from the organisation's environment and stakeholders (Niemann, 2005:246). The model considers how consistent, mission-driven organisational communication can create long-term sustainable relationships with stakeholders. The model is explained further in Chapter 4.

1.6 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

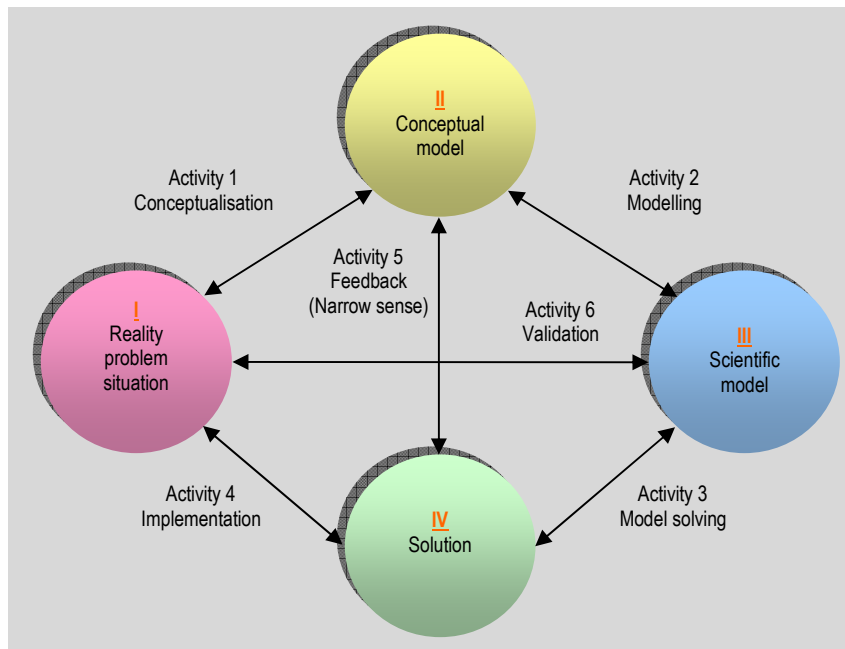
The following section describes: (i) Mitroff, Betz, Pondy and Sagasti's (1974) model for systematic problem-solving activity, and (ii) the overall methodological approach taken by the present study.

1.6.1 A model for systematic problem-solving activity

According to Mitroff *et al.* (1974:46) there are certain aspects of science that can only be studied from a "whole systems" approach. Any perspective utilised which predicates less than a holistic approach is liable

to fail to witness the finer characteristics of the scientific approach. Therefore the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) model as in Figure 1.2 suggests a systems view of the research process by presenting the relationships between a wide variety of diverse research activities and research attitudes. This model is appropriate for the purpose of this study because it is based on a systems perspective which in turn also forms the grand theory of the study.

Figure 1.2: A systems view of the research process



Source: Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

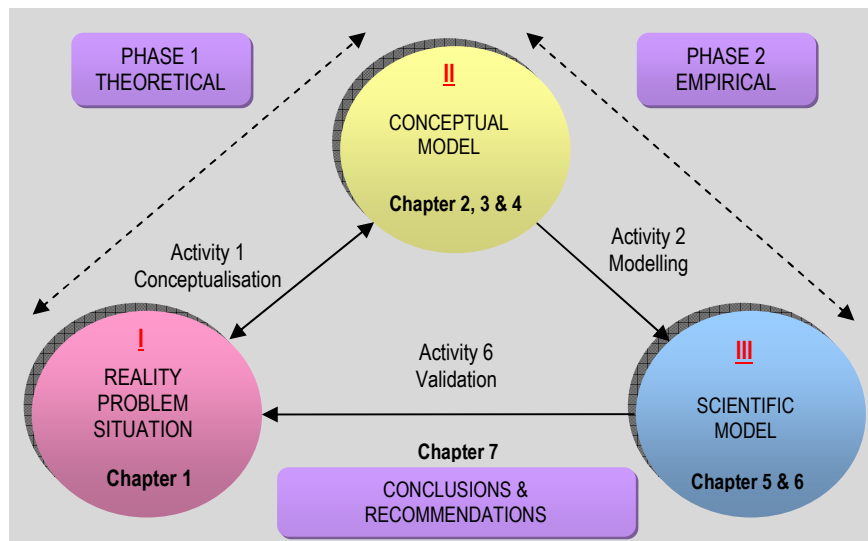
This model consists of four circles: (i) the reality or problem situation circle, (ii) the conceptual model circle, (iii) the scientific model circle and (iv) the solution circle. Closely related to the four circles are six research activities: (i) conceptualisation, (ii) modelling, (iii) model solving, (iv) implementation, (v) feedback in the narrow sense and (vi) lastly validation. The model systematically represents a variety of research attitudes and activities, resulting in its circular nature.

The circular nature of the model implies that there is no specific beginning or ending, i.e. a research enquiry could begin at any of the circles. Mitroff *et al.* (1974:47) begin to explain the model by supposing that a scientific enquiry starts at circle I with the identification of an existing problem situation. The first phase of problem-solving would then involve the activity of conceptualising a model for the existing

problem situation. The model broadly defines the problem and “specifies the field variables that will be used to define the nature of the problem and the level to which the variables will be treated” (Mitroff *et al.*, 1975:47). The next phase involves activity 2, i.e. modelling resulting in the formulation of a scientific model in circle III. The third phase entails the performance of activity 3, i.e. model solving, resulting in a possible solution derived from the scientific model. When the derived solution is “fed back” to the problem it entails activity 4 which is described as the case of implementation. Activity 6 represents validation where the degree of correspondence between the scientific model and the existing problem situation is considered. Lastly, activity 5 involves feedback in the narrow sense, relating to circles II, III, IV being applied in order to derive at better scientific solutions.

Further, Mitroff *et al.* (1975:49) identify a complex way of starting a scientific enquiry which is applicable to this study. Circle I and circle II are simultaneously utilised as starting points and this further predicates the course taken in circle III. This specific application is shown in Figure 1.3 and is further explained.

Figure 1.3: Chapter 1-7 in relation to the systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

Chapter 1 of the study starts at circle I and demonstrates the existence of a problem situation, viz. the urgent need for nonprofit management paradigms. There is specifically a need for communication management paradigms to assist nonprofit organisations to take full advantage of strategic issues such as nonprofit professionalisation and new information and communication technologies.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 develop the conceptual model in circle II which is necessary to fully comprehend the existing problem situation. These chapters attempt to theoretically define the particular problem to be solved by identifying the relevant variables utilised. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 thus represent the theoretical phase of the study and serve to indicate the direction for the second phase of the study, which is the empirical phase.

Chapters 5 and 6 contain the empirical activities of this study and are grouped in circle III, i.e. a scientific model. The study identifies Niemann's (2005) normative conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication and tests the application of this model within a real context which is the nonprofit website arena. The findings can contribute to the validity of the model and increase the scientific value of the model.

Chapter 7 connects circle III and circle I containing the relevant recommendations and conclusions. The purpose of this connection is to determine whether the findings of the study answered the existing problem situation.

1.6.2 Methodological research approach

This study is classified as an exploratory study that follows a qualitative research approach. Babbie and Mouton (2001:272) state that qualitative research can be described as holistic, focusing on the research phenomenon within a broader context. A qualitative research approach is both compatible with an exploratory study such as this one and compatible with the holistic nature of the concept of the study, i.e. strategic integrated communication.

Evidence was collected by means of content analysis of nonprofit websites and e-mail questionnaires (completed by the most senior communication staff member of each organisation). A description of the research methodology, results and recommendations can be found respectively in Chapters 5 to 7.

1.7 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Lack of research regarding strategic integrated communication within the South African nonprofit sector was the main motivating factor for this study. Admittedly, there was one recent South African study focusing on the use of the World Wide Web by ten nonprofit organisations from a public relations perspective (Naudé *et al.*, 2004). The present study, although exploratory in nature, may well result in an improved understanding of communication management aspects within the South Africa nonprofit sector.

Secondly, nonprofit organisations play an indispensable role in the South African development landscape (Davids, 2005a:67). When nonprofit organisations increase their management capacity they can attract a more sustainable funding network and therefore will be able to allocate more funds towards social development needs (Phills, 2005: xii). Thus it can be argued that focusing on the communication management aspects of nonprofit organisations, while considering the applicability of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model to the nonprofit website arena, may lead to greater progress in addressing South Africa's current socio-economic crisis.

Thirdly, the nonprofit management literature articulates the need for utilising new information and communication technologies strategically. Hackler and Saxton (2007:482) emphasise the importance of using technology to support, enhance and assist with the implementation of the organisation's mission. Discussions hosted by the SANGONeT Conference and Exhibition (2007) revealed that this concern is highly prevalent within the South African nonprofit sector. The idea of integrated communication with its focus on mission-driven communication could assist the South African nonprofit sector in addressing this current challenge.

Lastly, in the nonprofit sector relationships directly determine aspects such as organisational survival and sustainability (Edwards & Fowler, 2002:9; Radtke, 1998:17). Among the various values held by the nonprofit organisation the central value of communication is classified as: (i) an organisational strength (Edwards, 2002:333) and (ii) an implicit dimension of the nonprofit mission (Hackler & Saxton, 2007:480). Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication connects directly with the nonprofit sector's central value of communication and could thus contribute to the long-term sustainability of these organisations.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF STUDY

The study focuses on Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication which draws on three distinct theoretical disciplines, namely: Business, Marketing and Communication management. Although drawing on different theoretical disciplines, this study qualifies as a communication management study.

In the case of this particular study, no hypotheses or propositions are formulated since it qualifies as an exploratory study. This fact is important due to possible criticism regarding the small number of cases which have been included.

The study focuses on South African nonprofit organisations. Results cannot be generalised to a wider context, due to South Africa's unique development situation. This study focuses on nonprofit organisation websites that were nominated for the "2007 NGO Website Awards" (SANGONeT, 2007) in South Africa. By limiting itself to the ten finalists of this national competition the study automatically excludes all other nonprofit organisation websites which are possibly not based on best industry practice.

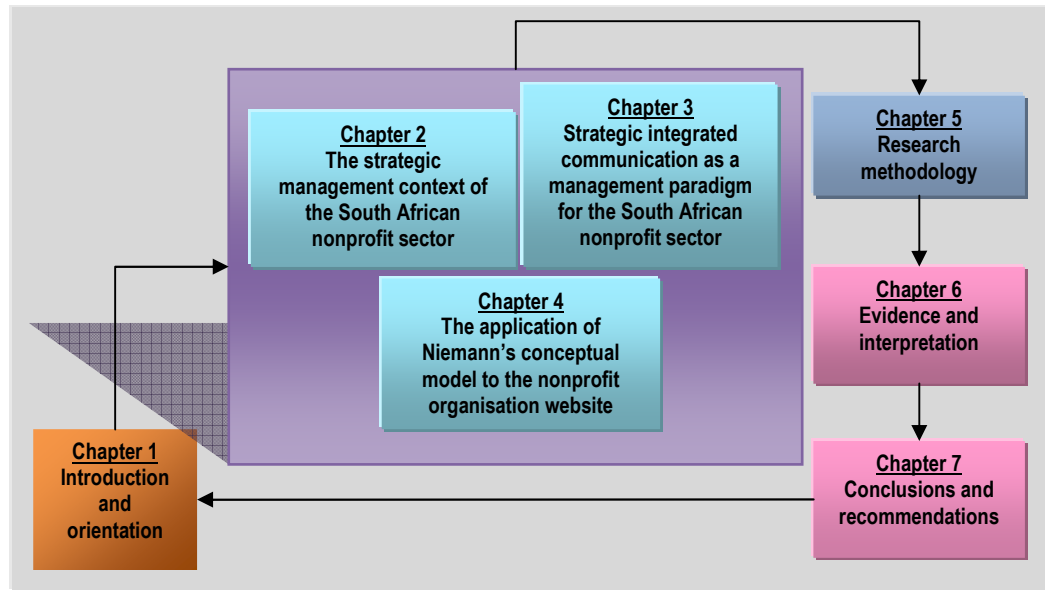
1.9 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The study consists of seven chapters; Figure 1.4 on the next page illustrates the relationships between them. **Chapters 2 to 4** form **Phase 1** of the research process, i.e. they theoretically frame the research phenomenon.

- **Chapter 2: The strategic management context of the South African nonprofit sector**

The chapter provides a general overview of the South African nonprofit sector. Attention is paid to both the presentation of a description of the sector and the strategic issues affecting these organisations. Among the various strategic issues two carry special significance for the purpose of this study: (i) the need for nonprofit professionalisation and (ii) information and communication technology. Further the chapter explores a recent trend which is described as the transfer of business knowledge to the nonprofit management arena.

Figure 1.4: The relationship between Chapters 1-7



- **Chapter 3: Strategic integrated communication as a management paradigm for the South African nonprofit sector**

The chapter commences with a discussion of integrated communication which represents the specific business knowledge nonprofit leaders should take note of. Also illustrated is how integrated communication could address strategic, marketing and communication challenges within the nonprofit management arena. Furthermore the chapter considers: (i) the way in which new information and communication technology, specifically website technology influences the nonprofit management arena and (ii) how the idea of strategic integrated communication could address nonprofit website challenges.

- **Chapter 4: The application of Niemann's conceptual model to the nonprofit organisation website**

The chapter begins with an illustration and explanation of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. Thereafter the application possibilities of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model to the nonprofit website environment are explored and presented within the dimensions of the model.

Chapters 5 to 7 form **Phase 2** of the research process, i.e. they focus on empirically gathering evidence regarding the current application of Niemann's (2005) strategic integrated communication implementation model to a selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites.

- **Chapter 5: Research methodology**

The chapter outlines all decisions pertaining to the second phase of the study, i.e. the empirical phase. The research problem is considered from a purely qualitative perspective. Two sources of evidence were utilised. First, a content analysis was conducted of selected nonprofit websites, based on a coding agenda developed within the framework of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model. Secondly, e-mail questionnaires were completed by the most senior communication staff member of each organisation. The two sources of evidence contributed towards creating a holistic view of the research problem.

- **Chapter 6: Evidence and interpretation**

The chapter presents evidence and interpretations related to the study's empirical activities, on two levels: first per case study along the dimensions of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model and secondly in a cross-case analysis report also along the dimensions of the same model. The results from the cross-case analysis form the basis for the conclusions and recommendations presented in Chapter 7.

- **Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations**

In this chapter the overall conclusions and recommendations are presented in relation to the overall aim and objectives outlined in Section 1.4. Recommendations and conclusions are linked back to the theoretical framework, i.e. Chapters 2 to 4. This chapter concludes with possible directions for future research.

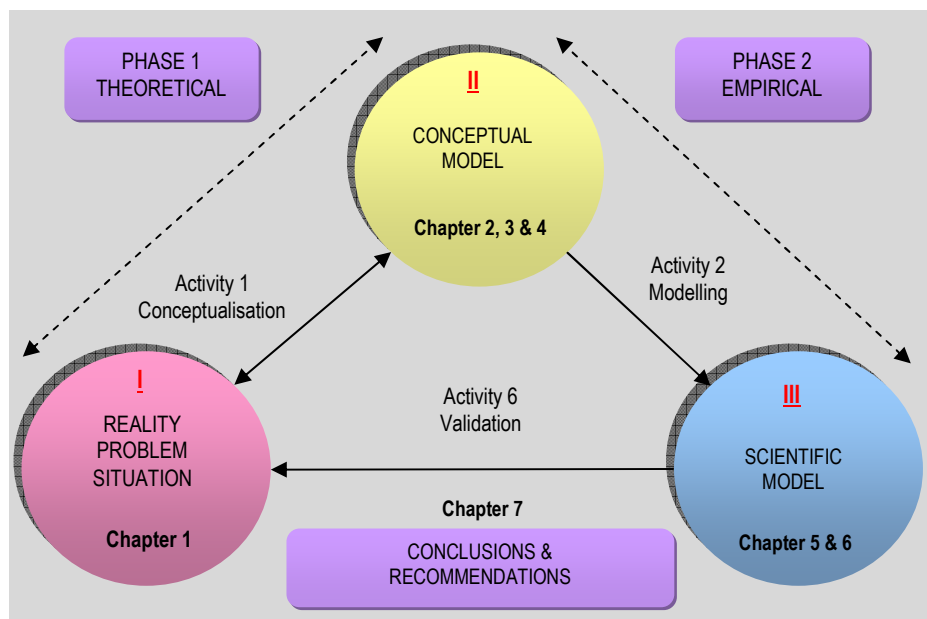
CHAPTER 2

THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONTEXT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NONPROFIT SECTOR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is the conceptualisation of the exact parameters of the research problem that is to be solved and was identified in Chapter 1. Figure 2.1 illustrates the chapter in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974:47,53) systems view of problem-solving activity.

Figure 2.1: Chapter 2 in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

The purpose of this chapter is to: (i) define the South African nonprofit sector, (ii) identify the strategic issues affecting nonprofit organisations and (iii) explore the application of business knowledge within the sector.

2.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN NONPROFIT CONTEXT

The prevailing development context explains the growing number of development-promoting organisations found in Africa today (Manji & O’Coill, 2002:567-568). Developing countries like South Africa are increasingly giving recognition and allocating more responsibility to this sector (Anheier, 2005:10).

According to Swilling and Russell (2002:16) the growing importance of nonprofit organisations in South Africa is already reflected in the size of the sector as presented in Table 2.1. Total employment in the nonprofit sector exceeded the number of employees in other major sectors of the South African economy during 1999, with an equivalent of 654 316 full-time employees.

Table 2.1: The nonprofit sector as an employer in relation to other economic sectors

SECTOR	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PER SECTOR
Nonprofit sector	654 316
Mining Industry	534 000
Public servants in national departments	436 187
Electricity, gas and water	309 203
Construction	301 371
Transport, storage and communication	276 779
Financial intermediation, insurance and real estate	218 378

Source: Swilling & Russell (2002:16)

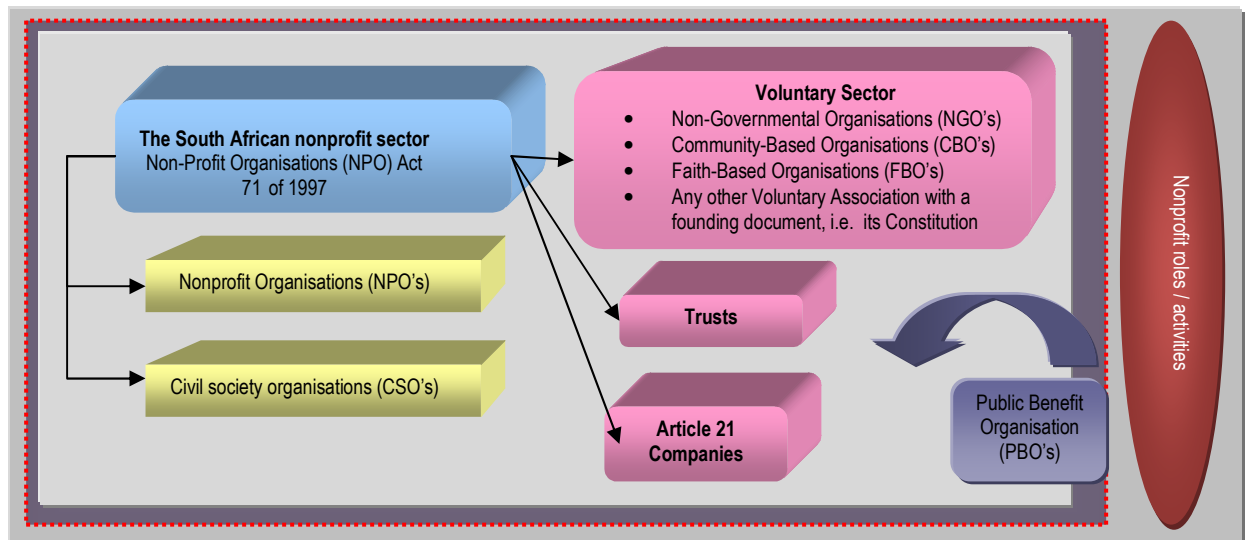
The role of nonprofit organisations is directly linked with the notions of democratisation and development in achieving sustainable human improvement (Van Driel & Van Haren, 2003:529). The role of nonprofit organisations in a democratic South African society will only increase in importance where this fact is identified (Swilling & Russell, 2002:95) as a notable future trend.

2.2.1 Defining the South African nonprofit sector

In the South African nonprofit literature a variety of different terminology is utilised to refer to organisations operating within the nonprofit sector of the economy. This can easily lead to confusion and emphasises the need for a clear and holistic perspective on the various terminologies found in the literature.

On 15 January 2007 an interview was conducted with Mr. H. Bosman, the Assistant NPO Director at the Department of Social Development in Pretoria. The aim of this interview was to determine the parameters of the South African nonprofit sector and clarify the relative placements of a diverse collection of terminology. According to Mr. H. Bosman, the South African nonprofit sector can best be understood from a legal perspective as illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: The South African nonprofit sector: A legal perspective



Source: Bosman (2007)

Because of the importance of this sector the South African government enacted the Non-Profit Organisations (NPO) Act 71 of 1997, aimed at creating an enabling environment for the nonprofit sector. The act was perceived as being part of the government's effort to achieve societal transformation. The NPO act mandated the Department of Social Development to create an administrative and regulatory framework where nonprofit organisations can function by means of a voluntary registration facility. Statistics reveal that during the year 2005 over 38 000 nonprofit organisations were registered by the department (Department of Social Development, 2005a:7).

The Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 provides for a broad and encompassing view of the scope of nonprofit organisations in South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2005a:23-24), stating that any organisation that is not-for-profit and is not part of government can apply for NPO status. Table 2.2 presents the organisations able to apply for NPO status.

Table 2.2: Organisations able to apply for NPO status

TYPE OF ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION
Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-governmental organisations are more formalised, professionalised, larger, service-oriented development organisations. These organisations have an in-depth knowledge of how the system works, enabling them to interact more effectively with donor interfaces (Bosman, 2007).
Community-Based Organisation (CBO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large portion of civil society emerged out of the need for communities to provide for their basic material needs and spiritual survival in order to maintain community cohesion in a period when industrialisation took place in South Africa. This resulted in community-based self-help initiatives (Core & Idasa, 2001:4). Community-based organisations are the less formalised and smaller development entities and lack basic knowledge of how the nonprofit environment works (Bosman, 2007).
Faith-Based Organisation (FBO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith-based organisations are entities which focus specifically on religious activity within the South African development context (Bosman, 2007).
Section 21 Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 21 of the Companies Act 61 of 1973 makes provision for a “not-for-profit company” or “association incorporated not for gain” with the Registrar of Companies. These companies do not have share capital and therefore cannot distribute shares or pay dividends to their members (Mbatha, 2003:6).
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A trust must be registered with the Master of the High Court. A trust can be defined as a written agreement, i.e. the trust deed, in terms of which an owner (founder) hands over property (funds) to a group of people called trustees who administer the assets for the benefit of other people (beneficiaries) for a stated objective (Mbatha, 2003:5).
Voluntary Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A voluntary association is not required to register with any public office in order for it to obtain legal status. A voluntary association is created by an agreement between three or more people to form an organisation to work together or achieve a common nonprofit objective. This agreement or founding document is referred to as the constitution (Mbatha, 2003:5).

Source: Bosman (2007)

An additional aspect shown in Figure 2.2 is Public Benefit Organisation (PBO). According to Mbatha (2003:8) it is compulsory for all nonprofit organisations to register as a taxpayer for the purposes of paying income tax via the South African Revenue Service (SARS). After the registration as a taxpayer a nonprofit organisation can further voluntarily apply for two nonprofit tax benefits, viz. income tax exemption and donor deductible status (Mbatha, 2003:9). Nonprofit organisations can only be exempted from income tax and other related taxes if they comply with the requirements of the Tax Legislation (SARS, 2004:1).

South Africa’s Constitution of 1996, referring specifically to the progressive and inclusive Bill of Rights, provides nonprofit organisations with as much legal space as in any other country in the world. According to the Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 a nonprofit organisation can be defined as (Department of Social Development, 2005b; Swilling & Russell, 2002:8): “A trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and the income and property of which are not distributable to its members or office-bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.”

The structural-operational definition provides an additional perspective in defining the nonprofit organisation. According to Salamon and Anheier (quoted in Anheier, 2005:47-49) an organisation can be defined as a nonprofit entity if the following characteristics are exhibited:

- i. It is organised, i.e. institutionalised to some extent with signs of permanence.
- ii. It is private, i.e. structurally separate from government; it may receive financial support from the government but is not controlled by the latter.
- iii. It is self-governing, i.e. controls its own activities to a great extent with unique internal governance procedures.
- iv. It is nonprofit distributing, i.e. accumulated profits are invested back into the mission of the entity and not distributed to owners, members, founders or the governing board.
- v. It is voluntary, i.e. it engages volunteers in operational management and is characterised by occurrence of noncompulsory contributions or membership.

Within the South African context, the term Civil Society Organisation (CSO) is also utilised, to refer to that sector of the economy primarily responsible for the improvement of people's well-being (Core & Idasa, 2001:6). Research by Core and Idasa (2001:5), focusing on the measurement of South African civil society perceptions regarding a variety of issues, revealed that these organisations confer the following characteristics on civil society in South Africa today: nonprofit, use of voluntary workers, altruism, may be membership-based or service-oriented, formed voluntary by citizens in society, formed on the basis of like-mindedness and common interest, delivery oriented and needs-driven, value and ethics driven, diverse, independent from government and with their own constitution, rules and governing structures which determine organisational policy.

According to Core and Idasa (2001:3) civil society can be defined as follows: "Civil society is the sphere of organisations and/or associations of organisations located between the family, the state, the government of the day, and the prevailing economic system, in which people with common interests associate voluntarily. Amongst these organisations, they may have common, competing, or conflicting values and interests."

For the purpose of this study the term "nonprofit organisation" is utilised throughout to refer to the encompassing and wide scope of the South African nonprofit sector including all nonprofit organisations able to register with the Department of Social Development under the Nonprofit Organisations Act 71 of 1997, i.e. all organisations that are (i) not-for-profit and (ii) separate from government.

The last aspect to be considered is the multitude of nonprofit activities or focus areas found in the South African development environment (Refer to Figure 2.2 on page 23). During 2001 SANGOCO (The South African National Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition) commissioned a study of South African civil society. The survey was undertaken by Core, The Co-operative for Research and Education and Idasa, The Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

The results of the study indicate that South Africa has a diverse base of nonprofit organisations playing diverse roles related to (Core & Idasa, 2001:6): relief, welfare, service provision, training and technical assistance, technical innovation, traditional community-based burial societies, co-operatives, religion, economic interest associations, human rights promotion, civic or democracy education, community development, advocacy and networking.

2.2.2 Before and after apartheid

Nonprofit organisations cannot be fully understood without considering South Africa's past and present political regimes (Davids, 2005a:71). During the apartheid regime, relations between the state and racially exclusive nonprofit organisations could be described as stable (Swilling & Russell, 2002:4) where these organisations were considered from a socio-political perspective rather than from a development capacity perspective (Davids, 2005a:73). Civil society mainly consisted of organisations and structures positioned separately from the state due to the state's inherently undemocratic character (Department of Social Development, 2005a:24).

Further, nonprofit organisations were the only channel for international donor funds entering a racially exclusive and isolated South Africa (Farouk, 2003:7). Overall the nonprofit sector suffered from global isolation, restrictions and a lack of effective relationship networks (Department of Social Development, 2000:1). The relations between the state and civil society created the demand for a political system allowing for population access to power and the voting system, resulting in the post-apartheid and democratic South Africa of today (Department of Social Development, 2005a:26). After the first all-inclusive democratic elections in 1994, the socio-economic consequences of apartheid led the new state towards a reformulation of all national policies and legislation in order to formally include all previously excluded parts of the South African population (Van Driel & Van Haren, 2003:530). Democratisation now provides nonprofit organisations with an opportunity to make new contributions towards the development of South African society (Davids, 2005a:73).

Democracy however, also means that current international donor funding is being re-routed towards a democratic South African state that currently fails to form partnerships with the nonprofit sector. The state frequently appeals for the formation of partnerships with civil society and then utilises this opportunity to reinforce its role under ANC (African National Congress) leadership, rather than perceiving partnerships as an opportunity for state reflection and a rethinking of current state policies and practices (Department of Social Development, 2005a:26). Failing to form partnerships with civil society leads to a decrease in available funding for nonprofit organisations and their work (Davids, 2005a:73; Farouk, 2003:8). The nonprofit sector benefits from a democratic political environment but should additionally direct attention to sustainability models.

2.2.3 Change and nonprofit sustainability

Nonprofit organisations operating within the South African development landscape are faced with a complex and changing operating environment. Kotzé (2004:[15]) states that nonprofit organisations have been operating in constant cycles of crises. During the last decade South African nonprofits were unable to respond effectively to a changing environment involving changes relating to (Kotzé, 2004:[15]):

- i. A reconfiguration and redirection of international donor funding.
- ii. The need to establish new relationships due to the formation of a democratic state.
- iii. The departure of leaders and managers from civil society to government in order to fill new government positions, thereby leading to the depletion of the South African nonprofit sector's leadership capacity (Govender, 2001; SustainAbility, 2003:9).

The ability to respond effectively to a variable environment is crucial for the long-term sustainability of an organisation (Brønn & Brønn, 2002:249). The relationship between the nonprofit organisation and its environment calls for an “outer-directedness” where the nonprofit organisation adapts and adjusts to environmental changes (Anheier, 2005:251) and behaves like a learning organisation.

2.3 STRATEGIC ISSUES WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NONPROFIT SECTOR

Organisations should identify and understand the changes that are present in the environment in order to facilitate strategic thinking, assisting the organisation to adjust and adapt to these complex challenges

(Brønn & Brønn, 2002:248). The following issues were identified: (i) professionalisation, (ii) globalisation, (iii) political-economic realities, (iv) legal realities, (v) social realities, (vi) corporate social responsibility and (vii) information and communication technology. Adding to the environmental complexity and uncertainty is the fact that these issues are interrelated (Brønn & Brønn, 2002:248).

2.3.1 Professionalisation

South Africa's democratic development landscape has led to the formation of new types of relationships between different role players (Kotzé, 2004:[15]), pressurising nonprofit organisations toward higher degrees of professionalisation which implies an increased focus on concerns of management and measurement in the nonprofit sector. This is largely related to the fact that the nonprofit sector handles large financial flows (SustainAbility, 2003:7,25). The South African nonprofit sector boasted an estimated income of R14 billion during 1998 (Swilling & Russell, 2002:34), which emphasises the need for nonprofit organisations to focus on new management agendas.

Within the South African nonprofit sector there are positive signals of nonprofit professionalisation. According to a recent South African study conducted by Core and Idasa (2001:15) it was established that three quarters of respondents indicated membership of SANGOCO, the South African National Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition. Also the number of organisations registered with the Department of Social Development increased to a total of 38 000 during 2005 (Department of Social Development, 2005a:27). Registration requires the submission of various accounts on an annual basis. Arguably South African nonprofit organisations are recognising the need for adjusted management practices.

An additional aspect relates to nonprofit funding. A large number of nonprofit organisations are operating with deficits within a resource-constrained environment (Jackson & Donovan, 1999:viii; Grimshaw & Egerman, 2006:27). Goerke (2003:317) contends that nonprofits are competing for smaller funding budgets and sensing the pressure to implement business practices. The competition for "mind-share" among target audiences has placed importance on the brand management and specifically the brand communication aspects of these organisations. In order to address these competitive forces nonprofit organisations will have to consider the adoption of business practices or business models (Jegers & Lapsley, 2001:1, SustainAbility, 2003:3,16).

2.3.2 Globalisation

Nonprofit organisations, just like for-profit organisations, are operating within a global context. The process of globalisation produces structural changes in the environment in which these organisations operate (SustainAbility, 2003:4). Nonprofit entities are embedded within national and supranational layers (Van Driel & Van Haren, 2003:538). Consider for instance international development assistance, e.g. the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, consequently affecting the development policies of individual governments and thereby indirectly influencing the role of local nonprofit organisations (Sargeant, 2005:15). Supra-entities now have the capability to influence local development perspectives.

Sargeant (2005:15) points out that the fund-raising activities of nonprofit organisations should also be viewed from a global perspective where the Internet provides these organisations with a global funding market enabling individuals from across the globe to identify and fund relevant development projects. Nonprofit organisations are actively working at understanding the processes of globalisation and searching for opportunities to utilise these processes to the sector's advantage (SustainAbility, 2003:7).

2.3.3 Political-economic realities

Nonprofit organisations do not function within a “political vacuum” (Davids, 2005a:71). With South Africa's democratisation the country was accepted into the global community which led to the South African government adopting a neoliberal growth, employment and redistribution strategy: GEAR, representing the overall macrodevelopment strategy of the country (Farouk, 2003:1).

Kotzé (2004:[5]) describes GEAR as an anti-poor policy which focuses on certain priorities such as economic growth, exports, privatisation, trade and currency deregulation. Govender (2001) states that the adoption of the GEAR policy has led to negative effects in the South African context, such as constriction of the economy, an increase in unemployment and the widening of wealth gaps. South Africa's government operating under the notion of globalisation and capitalism produces critical effects for the country's development landscape which in turn directly influences the capability of the nonprofit sector to address South Africa's growing socio-economic crisis (Farouk, 2003:2; Kotzé, 2004:[4]).

An additional effect due to the government's adoption of a neoliberal economic strategy is produced by the structural changes that are forming in the nonprofit sector. A growing divide between informal, oppressive community-based organisations and more formalised, professional non-governmental organisations can be recognised (Kotzé, 2004:[3]). This divide is encouraged due to the funding practices of government and donors, who prefer to fund more formal and professionalised nongovernmental organisations to the detriment of smaller community-based organisations (Farouk, 2003:6-8; Kotzé, 2004:[18]).

The South African government has recently announced a new Accelerated and Shared Growth strategy, ASGISA. That strategy aims at reducing poverty and unemployment in South Africa by 50 %, by the year 2014. It is stated that this economic initiative is based on effective partnerships between government and other key stakeholders (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:1).

2.3.4 Legal realities

The nonprofit sector is required to operate within a legislative framework (Mbatha, 2003:4). According to Siyakha Today (2005:1), a publication of the Non-Profit Consortium, nonprofit organisations are battling to understand the laws governing the sector, and they perceive the legislative environment as too complex and time-consuming to comprehend. Section 2.2.1 focused on defining the South African nonprofit sector from a legal perspective and illustrated the complexity of this environment. Research by Core and Idasa (2001:25) confirms the current situation, with 41 % of respondents stating that the nonprofit regulatory and legislative environment is not sufficiently empowering the sector.

The most important piece of legislation governing the nonprofit sector is the Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of 1997. Five key objectives or themes can be extracted from the Act; it aims to: (i) create an enabling environment, (ii) establish an administrative and regulatory framework in which nonprofit organisations can conduct their affairs, (iii) encourage nonprofit organisations to maintain standards of governance, accountability and transparency and to improve these, (iv) create an environment within which the public may have access to information regarding registered organisations and (v) promote a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility among government, donors and other interested persons (Department of Social Development, 2005a:7).

According to a study commissioned by the Department of Social Development during 2005, with the aim of assessing the impact of the Non-Profit Organisations Act on the sector, various problems were identified (Department of Social Development, 2005a:8-10). One of these relates to a fractured and inconsistent regulatory framework. To illustrate the fragmented nature of the regulatory environment POPUP, The People Upliftment Programme which is a South African nonprofit organisation based in Pretoria, is utilised as an example. POPUP is registered firstly as a nonprofit organisation under the Non-Profit Organisations Act, secondly as a Section 21 Company with the Registrar of Companies and thirdly as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) with the South African Revenue Service (Freislich, 2006a:2). According to the interview with Bosman (2007) it was confirmed that the described situation creates multiple reporting standards and places unnecessary administrative pressure on limited nonprofit resources.

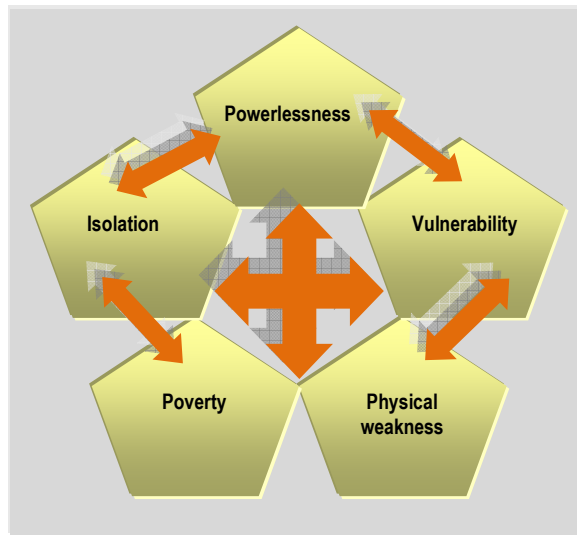
The Non-Profit Organisations Act is based on the philosophy of “one size fits all” (Department of Social Development, 2005a:9) and represents a further problem. Research findings indicate that the lack of recognition of different categories of nonprofit organisations under the Act affects the sector in different ways, e.g. smaller community-based organisations are often unable to meet the minimum standards set out by the Act and as a result struggle to maintain compliance. It was also found that the larger, more professionalised nonprofits experience registration under the Act as an administrative burden.

In the South African context there is discussion about a possible future, independent, regulatory authority that will undertake the tasks of registering all nonprofit organisations and monitor reporting requirements. Further, such an independent regulatory authority could gather and distribute relevant information on the nonprofit sector (Morgan, 2005:[2-3]).

2.3.5 Social realities

South Africa’s history left a large portion of the population in a “shocking state of underdevelopment” (Davids, 2005c:46). Mass poverty is the order of the day, with some areas experiencing an unemployment rate of up to 50 % and even higher (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:3). An estimated 45 % to 55 % of the South African population are experiencing “dehumanising deprivation” (Kotzé, 2004:[4]). Poverty is a multi-faceted reality characterised by a variety of contributing and interrelated factors including a lack of power, income and resources (Davids, 2005c:37), which results in the formation of the “deprivation trap” as illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: The deprivation trap



Source: Swanepoel & De Beer (2006:5)

Kotzé (2004:[4]) describes the situation as a “growing socio-economic crisis” composed of various interrelated factors. It is the task of all South Africans and especially of development-promoting institutions to jointly break the cycle of social deprivation (Davids, 2005b:46; Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006:9). Increasingly more players from the nonprofit sector are stepping in to address the social development gaps left by the South African government (Farouk, 2003:7).

Additionally the state of “social giving” (Everatt & Solanki, 2005:9) in South Africa is an important social dimension for nonprofit organisations to monitor. According to Everatt and Solanki (2005:9-10), South Africans can be described as a nation of givers mobilising nearly R930 million per month specifically for development and poverty alleviation work. The most deserving social causes supported by South Africans can be grouped into three major categories: (i) children and youth, (ii) HIV/AIDS and (iii) “the poor” (Everatt & Solanki, 2005:10). Research by Core and Idasa (2001:14) confirms the latter by indicating that 80 % of the work of civil society organisations focuses on HIV/AIDS, 78 % on education and 75 % on welfare.

2.3.6 Corporate social responsibility

According to Davids (2005b:82) the need for social services in the South African development context emphasises the increased importance of the contributing developmental role played by the private sector.

In South Africa there is a widely held belief that businesses share responsibility for the upliftment and social development of South African society at large (Davids, 2005b:75). Pretorius (2005:7) confirms that South African businesses have a vital role to play in the fabric of society by being socially responsible and further states that businesses should take responsibility for what “lies outside the walls of our [their] organisations” (Pretorius, 2005:75).

Naidoo (2002:125) agrees that companies do not operate in a vacuum but are influential citizens and bodies of the broader societies in which they exist. The King II Report call on companies to report not only on their financial performance, but also on their environmental and social performance; this is known as the triple bottom line. The importance of social responsibility is explained by the King Committee on Corporate Governance (2002:6):

“A well managed company will be aware of, and respond to, social issues placing a high priority on ethical standards ... a company is likely to experience indirect economic benefits such as improved productivity, and corporate reputation ...”

Social responsibility and social investment are areas in which South African organisations are interested. Corporate social responsibility can be described as organisational decision-making which is connected to ethical values, to compliance with legal requirements and to respect for communities and the environment (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2004:44). Corporate social investment represents the physical allocation of business capital to improve society’s social and economic well-being (Mersham, Rensburg & Skinner, 1995:86).

The social responsibility agenda represents a relationship-building opportunity for nonprofit organisations which is already recognised by this sector. According to research findings (Core & Idasa, 2001:16-17), 78 % of civil society organisations recognise the importance of cooperating and interacting with the private sector.

2.3.7 Information and communication technology

The increase of new technology creates new opportunities for all forms of organisations (Anheier, 2005:362-363). One of the major drivers of nonprofit organisations is the communications revolution

including elements such as the Internet and information technologies which both enable the formation of linkages and empower nonprofit organisations worldwide (SustainAbility, 2003:8). Desktop computers, interlinked networks and the Internet according to Smith *et al.* (2000:249) are especially important for nonprofit organisations due to the strategic role of communication in the sector. Next, attention is directed at two specific new technologies: (i) the Internet and (ii) the World Wide Web from a South African nonprofit perspective.

2.3.7.1 The Internet

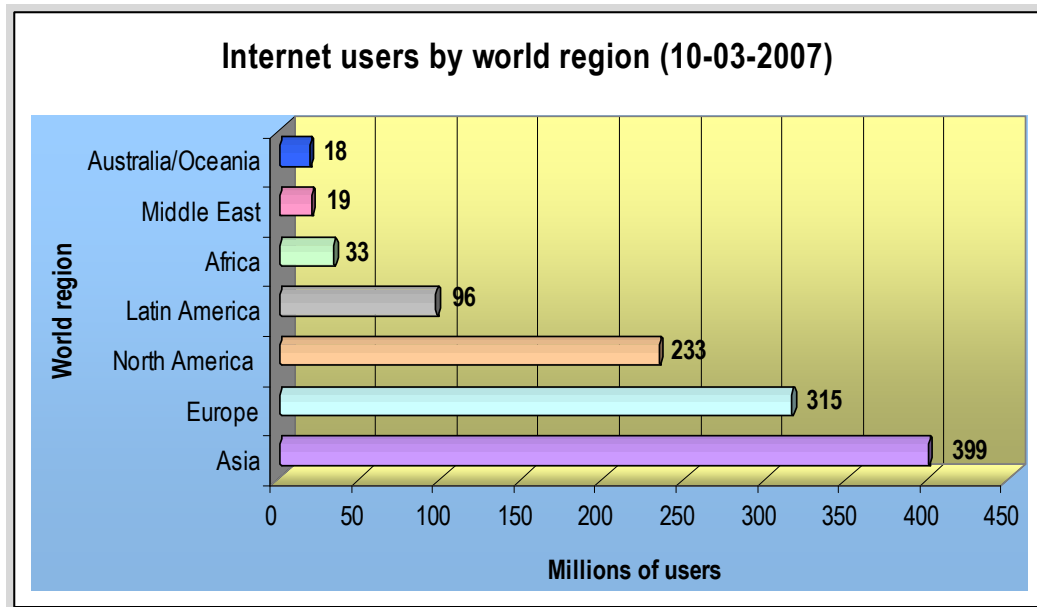
According to Elliott *et al.* (1998:30) new technology has already gained a foothold in the economy and impacts all organisations, i.e. for-profit as well as nonprofit organisations. Johnston (1999:1-2) defines the Internet from two perspectives. First, the Internet is described in concrete physical terms: a “network of millions of computers around the world” that communicate with each other via the same telecommunication links utilised for telephone conversations and television. Secondly, the Internet is described intangibly as a “loosely structured global community that meets in cyberspace”. This term describes the artificial environment existing within the boundaries of the Internet where nonprofit organisations, companies, government bodies and people meet to exchange information and opinions.

It is the second definition which confirms the suitability of the Internet as a nonprofit communication medium. Saxton and Game (2001:6) state that the work of nonprofit organisations includes changing people's attitudes, raising money and awareness of certain issues, promoting ideas and providing information that builds the organisation's image and brand. Cravens (2006:[2]) confirms this by stating the two primary resources of every mission-based nonprofit organisation, i.e. people and ideas. The Internet is well suited to the needs of nonprofit organisations.

To nonprofit organisation communication practitioners the largest change in the external environment is the growth of the Internet (Johnson, 1999:[2]). According to the Miniwatts Marketing Group (2000-2007) there are currently 1 114 274 426 Internet users globally representing a usage growth rate of 208,7 % from the year 2000 to 2007. Internet usage statistics for Africa indicate a 638,4 % usage growth rate from the year 2000 to 2007 and totals on 33 334 800 Internet users as measured on 10 March 2007.

Figure 2.4 shows Internet users by world region. Also according to the Miniwatts Marketing Group (2000-2007) South African Internet usage figures rose from 2 400 000 users in the year 2000 to 5 100 000 users in the year 2007, representing an Internet usage growth rate of 112,5 %. The Internet is the world's fastest growing communication medium (Johnson, 1999:[1]); this fact emphasises new nonprofit communication opportunities.

Figure 2.4: World Internet usage statistics



Source: Miniwatts Marketing Group (2000-2007)

The Internet represents a new communication medium that enables nonprofit organisations to retain donors, volunteers and corporate supporters (Johnson, 1999:[2]) by means of the two main applications of the Internet: (i) e-mail communication and (ii) the World Wide Web (Johnston, 1999:4-8).

E-mail communication can assist nonprofit organisations in building stakeholder relationships by means of personalising the message, sending the message at regular intervals and providing valuable organisational information (Olsen, Keevers, Paul & Covington, 2001:369). E-mail communication represents a cost-effective and immediate way for nonprofit organisations to relate in a dynamic way with organisational constituents (Cravens, 2006:[3]; Olsen *et al.*, 2001:365).

2.3.7.2 The World Wide Web

According to Ritchie (2006:2) the term “World Wide Web” has become confused with the concept of the Internet. The World Wide Web is the primary feature of the Internet and offers a vast amount of information in a highly accessible text and graphics format. The World Wide Web is viewed through a browser which is specific software allowing user access. Information is organised in collections of pages with each page having its own unique address or URL, Uniform Resource Locator (Johnston, 1999:6; Ritchie 2006:2). Today this technology allows organisations to construct web pages accessible via the Internet (Ritchie, 2006:2). According to De Kunder (2007) the indexed World Wide Web contained at least 14,48 billion web pages as measured on 7 May 2007.

With the increasing recognition of the potential value of a website it is argued that every nonprofit organisation should have one. According to Smith *et al.* (2000:266) any nonprofit organisation involved in the tasks of communication, education and advocacy should utilise the World Wide Web to increase perceptions of organisational flexibility.

According to SANGONeT, A South African development portal for nonprofit organisations, the South African nonprofit sector has invested in information and communication technology infrastructure and skills (including an organisational website). SANGONeT recognises the importance of a Web presence for South African nonprofit organisations and presented the second nonprofit Web awards in 2007. Issues such as: (i) usability, (ii) accessibility, (iii) innovation and content and (iv) demonstrating the connection between website communication and the core development focus and activities of the organisation, were the judging criteria (SANGONeT, 2007).

The nonprofit website offers a myriad of opportunities, such as the opportunity to: (i) reinforce brand identity by means of visual communication and consistent messages, (ii) attract and retain donors through targeted messages based on individual motivations for giving and (iii) to collect constituent e-mail addresses for further relationship-building purposes (Hershey, 2005:58). Most importantly, this new technology enables the nonprofit organisation, with its currently available resources, to reach out, to communicate its vision and mission and to connect with people who have a giving spirit (Olsen *et al.*, 2001:371).

To conclude, new technology provides various strategic opportunities for nonprofit organisations (Hart, Greenfield & Johnston, 2005:xiii; Smith *et al.*, 2000:251) including: (i) the facilitation of research, (ii) the facilitation of highly interactive communication between the nonprofit organisation and its various stakeholder groups, (iii) the creation and maintenance of a website in order to create an on-line presence and (iv) the integration of technology with the organisation's fund-raising and relationship-building strategies. As a marketing tool and as a valuable source of information, the Internet and its interface, the World Wide Web, seem to have no close competitors (Elliott *et al.*, 1998:297).

The discussion of the various issues affecting the South African nonprofit sector illustrated the challenges and complexities these organisations are faced with. Myers and Sacks (2003:299) note that operating within a context of such increasing uncertainty may lead to nonprofit organisations looking outside the boundaries of their own sector for new management models and ideas.

Today the nonprofit sector is more receptive to the ideas of business than before (Phills, 2005:ix) and perceives the role of management and entrepreneurial skill in creating economic growth and prosperity in the private sector, positively. Nonprofit leaders have come to believe that private sector knowledge can be adapted to address the challenges faced by organisations focusing on “education, the environment, health care, affordable housing, community development, social services and the arts” (Phills, 2005:x). Anheier (2000:2) confirms this belief by mentioning that many nonprofit organisations are already implementing the language, management practices and culture of the business world.

2.4 BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE IN NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Nonprofit leaders have been forced to find better ways of designing and managing their organisations (Phills, 2005:ix). Myers and Sacks (2003:287) point out the growing emphasis on the transfer and application of tools and techniques from the business sector to the nonprofit sector.

Tools are defined as the devices, templates and “off-the-shelf products” (Myers & Sacks, 2003:287) available for managers, e.g. tools dealing with (i) the analysis of productivity and (ii) the management of performance, effectiveness and efficiency. Techniques can be defined as the way in which managers use these tools, including the processes involved in performing management roles and tasks.

Due to the fact that the research question of the present study considers a business idea within a nonprofit context, it is now important to motivate the “cross-sector” nature of the research question. The following section aims to confirm why a research question, like the one found in this study, could possibly be raised.

2.4.1 Factors contributing to the dissolution of sector barriers

The following factors contributing to the dissolution of sector barriers are discussed: (i) sector similarities, (ii) the increased social value logic and (iii) shifting recruitment practices found in the nonprofit sector. Factors one and two are closely related and based on similar principles but present different perspectives. Therefore each factor will be discussed individually.

Nonprofit organisations want to be respected as equal members of the economy and at the same time play a unique role. Myers and Sacks (2001:456) point out a current tension in the nonprofit sector: Whether to be similar to or different from other sector organisations. Findings from Euske (2003:5) demonstrate the similarities between the various sectors of the economy. By focusing on similarities rather than differences, organisations can facilitate the exchange of ideas, and cross-sector learning can take place. There are management activities applicable in all types of organisations, irrespective of the specific sector in which the organisation operates. Examples include management activities such as: (i) general functions, (ii) information technology and (iii) finance and human resources.

The “increased social value” logic represents the second factor contributing to the dissolution of sector barriers. Phills (2005:xii) explains the primary role of social-sector institutions as that of addressing societal needs. These organisations’ ability to perform this role depends on their effectiveness, which is determined by factors such as leadership, management and organisational capacity influencing performance. These nonprofit challenges are fundamentally similar to the performance challenges found in the business sector. Nonprofit leaders could therefore profitably transfer and utilise valuable business knowledge in order to create more effective, efficient and innovative organisations (Bradley, Jansen & Silverman, 2003:96). As a result, nonprofits would be able to attract additional funding and resources leading to greater progress in addressing societal needs.

According to Phills (2005:xi), nonprofit organisations willing to learn from best business practice increase their organisation’s potential for greater social value. A study conducted by Bradley *et al.* (2003:102)

confirms this statement by reporting that the US nonprofit sector could gain an additional \$100 billion by just improving upon management practices such as: (i) reducing funding costs, (ii) reducing program service costs and (iii) improving sector effectiveness.

Finally, the shifting nature of recruitment practices in the nonprofit sector deserves attention. Myers and Sacks (2003:294) state that nonprofit organisations recruit from outside the sector to fill higher-level positions. In this way the nonprofit sector facilitates its learning from the successes achieved in the business sector. This fact is confirmed in an interview with Mrs. M. Freislich, CEO of the People Upliftment Programme (POPUP) based in Pretoria, on 7 December 2006. There it was confirmed that the majority of employees had previously worked in the private sector, and it is a well known fact that these employees apply their knowledge obtained from the business sector to their daily tasks.

2.4.2 Application of management tools and techniques

In the past the concept of management provoked negative attitudes on the part of the nonprofit sector (Phills, 2005: viii). Anheier (2000:2) reports that the concept of management was often perceived as contradicting the essential and distinguishing values of the nonprofit sector, i.e. “voluntarism, philanthropy, compassion and a concern for the public good” (Anheier, 2000:2). Today, however, nonprofit organisations are embracing the best practices the business sector has to offer. Research by Myers and Sacks (2003) regarding the various approaches toward the adoption and application of management tools and techniques in the nonprofit sector will now be explored.

2.4.2.1 Application approaches

Research by Myers and Sacks (2003:297) suggests that nonprofit organisations are likely to occupy one of the four attitudinal positions. Each position represents a unique approach to the adoption and application of management tools and techniques. Each position does not only represent an attitude but is also a reflection of the organisation’s history, culture, values and image.

The first nonprofit position is adopted by organisations that perceive normative management principles as having little or no place within the organisation, advocating that the work of the nonprofit is inherently good

and therefore should not be held accountable. However, this approach may well develop into an “anachronistic and paternalistic approach to service provision” (Myers & Sacks, 2003:297-299). Thus creating insensitivity to the needs of the organisation’s stakeholder environment and primarily focusing on the needs of the organisation which can be described as a closed systems approach.

The second position refers to the way in which nonprofit organisations have “discovered” (Anheier, 2000:4) management. Copying management tools and techniques from the business sector provides nonprofit management with a degree of comfort because those business tools have already been tested and are backed up by various sources of reference (Myers & Sacks, 2003:301). The copycat position further postulates that nonprofit management practices are primarily externally driven, i.e. driven by the management practices and accountability requirements of donors. As the number of donor relationships increases so does the variety of management practices which best suit the requirements of the donors rather than the needs or context of the nonprofit organisation (Myers & Sacks, 2003:299-301).

At this stage, nonprofit organisations are faced with a tightrope balancing act. Myers and Sacks (2003:301) explain that nonprofit organisations are confronted with two opposing choices: (i) the choice of using the same management tools and techniques as the organisation’s funders are using; (ii) the choice of acknowledging differences, thereby reflecting the nonprofit organisation’s unique vision and purpose. The above tightrope leads to a third position which is described as contextualised tools and techniques: the nonprofit organisation adapts certain management principles to reach its unique values and mission.

Grayson (2000:[9]) illustrates the practice of contextualised tools and techniques by referring to the “social franchise model” (Grayson, 2000:[9]). Nonprofit organisations can indeed borrow concepts such as franchising from the business sector. Just as franchising provides entrepreneurs with a proven secure business model there are models for improving social cohesion which could also be franchised. In an interview conducted with Mrs. M. Freislich, CEO of the People Upliftment Programme (POPUP) based in Pretoria, on 7 December 2006, it was stated that the organisation envisioned the duplication of its business model to other geographical areas in South Africa; this thinking is also reflected in the long-range planning documents of the organisation (Freislich, 2006b:21).

The last position is adopted by organisations wanting to become more proactive in the understanding of the environment in which they are operating; this results in finding working methods that will reflect the organisation's aims, values and goals. New tools and techniques may involve entrepreneurial partnerships, networking, sharing and creating knowledge (Myers & Sacks, 2003:301-302) and are a reflection of the creative ways in which nonprofits are meeting the challenges of their unique operating environment.

2.4.2.2 Nonprofit sector concerns

Nonprofit organisations often ignore the value of “home-grown” (Myers & Sacks, 2003:302) resources and instead favour externalised examples of good management practices. Table 2.3 groups and explains three specific nonprofit sector concerns about the transfer and application of management tools and techniques from the business sector to the nonprofit sector.

Table 2.3: Applying business knowledge to nonprofit organisations: Nonprofit sector's concerns

CONCERN	DESCRIPTION
Outdated tools and techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonprofit organisations often apply management tools and techniques long after business management experts have raised concerns regarding their effectiveness and widespread use as current best management practice (Myers & Sacks, 2003:295; Mulhare, 1999:323). • Mulhare (1999:323) equates this scenario to the increased need for a professional nonprofit culture. She argues that nonprofit organisations often change organisational culture to fit the management technique, rather than adjusting the management technique to fit the organisational culture (Mulhare, 1999:327). • Further, this scenario limits the innovation and creativity of the “... emerging values-led management and leadership culture within the sector” (Myers & Sacks, 2003:295).
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myers and Sacks (2003:289) state that although the nonprofit sector can learn and interpret systems for improved organisational development from the business sector, concerns are raised regarding the “wholesale” (Myers & Sacks, 2003:289) importation of ideas. In this way the nonprofit context, culture and internal organisational relationships are disregarded.
Paradox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonprofit management literature reveals various questions regarding the fundamental applicability of business models in the nonprofit context. The perspectives of two authors are provided to illustrate the concern; • Anheier (2000:5-6) argues that the transfer of business models into the nonprofit sector primarily made inroads via financial management. By assuming that the “raison d'être” (Anheier, 2000:5) of nonprofit organisations is not money, the author questions the applicability of the monetary bottom line in the nonprofit sector. • Findings from Guo (2006:123) further illustrate the paradox concern. The author found that commercialisation activities, i.e. where nonprofit organisations focus on sales revenue rather than other income streams, are negatively related to the organisation's mission, service delivery and ability to attract donors and volunteers.

Myers and Sacks (2003:288,295) recommend that nonprofit organisations should attempt to understand their own context, environment and identity first before adopting market-based solutions. Once nonprofit organisations are able to position themselves effectively in the economy based on self-understanding, only then can appropriate learning and cross-fertilisation opportunities be identified. The present study follows the recommendations of Myers and Sacks (2003:288,295) whose Chapter 2 aims at describing the South African nonprofit sector and the various strategic issues affecting these organisations. Based on this understanding and the recommendations of Myers and Sacks (2003:288,295), a cross-sector learning opportunity can now be identified.

South African nonprofit organisations operate within a constantly changing environment while having to provide for long-term sustainability. The present study identifies strategic integrated communication, a management idea rooted in private practice knowledge, as a possible idea for nonprofit management attention. Further, the study proposes the idea for use within the website environment of nonprofit organisations since information and communication technology (as previously discussed in Section 2.3.7) represents a major strategic opportunity for these organisations.

2.5 SUMMARY

It has become evident that South African nonprofit organisations are functioning within an increasingly complex and uncertain world in which various issues affect their operations. Information and communication technology specifically presents the South African nonprofit organisation with new exciting on-line communication opportunities, one of which is the construction of an organisational website. To allow the nonprofit sector to fully capitalise on this opportunity a possible management idea from the private sector is proposed, viz. strategic integrated communication management, which is explained in the next chapter.

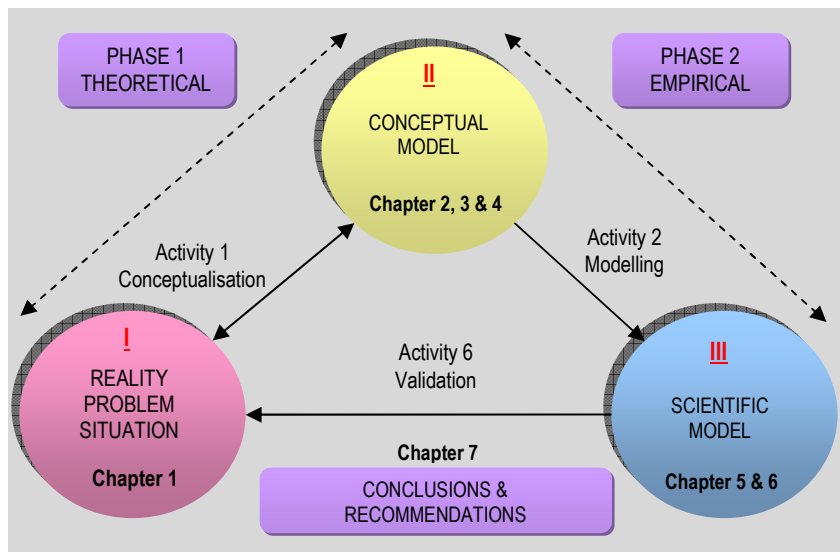
CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AS A MANAGEMENT PARADIGM FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN NONPROFIT SECTOR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses strategic integrated communication as the proposed management idea for nonprofit leadership attention. Attention is paid to how this idea links with: (i) current nonprofit management challenges and (ii) the nonprofit web-based communication platform. Figure 3.1 illustrates the chapter in relation to the systems view of problem-solving activity (Mitroff *et al.*, 1974:47-53).

Figure 3.1: Chapter 3 in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

Using a systems view of problem-solving activity, this chapter further defines the exact parameters of the core research problem of the study as identified in Chapter 1.

3.2 STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION DEFINED

The purpose of this section is to analyse and explain strategic integrated communication by presenting the main theoretical disciplines it comprises: (i) Business management, (ii) Marketing management and (iii) Communication management. The discussion demonstrates how these disciplines integrate to form the proposed management idea: strategic integrated communication.

Pearce and Robinson (2007:3) note that the modern business organisation is faced with the management of not only internal activities, but also the changing external environment and the inconsistent requirements of multiple stakeholders. Business organisations employ management processes that optimally position the organisation in its competitive environment. Angelopulo and Schoonraad (2006:3) indicate that an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives depends on its communication management capabilities. Communication is a key feature in the organisation-environment relationship and contributes to organisational survival. Specifically, this holds true for: (i) stakeholder dialogue, (ii) the purposeful management of all messages and (iii) the alignment with corporate strategy, vision and mission all represents the ideal (Angelopulo, 2006:55).

3.2.1 Business management

Business management encompasses all activities related to the management of an organisation (Lessing & Jacobs, 2002:4). The business environment in a developing region such as South Africa is characterised by constant change. According to Ehlers and Lazenby (2004:1-2) changes in various environments (such as technological, socio-cultural, economic and political) contribute to an overall tougher management environment. Organisations are finding that the ability to adapt to change is vital to their survival (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2004:10; Montuori, 2000:62). Organisations should operate as open systems and encourage continuous interaction with the environment to such an extent that the environment directs organisational changes (Montuori, 2000:64), enabling the organisation to adapt and adjust.

Open systems thinking is closely related to strategy. Steyn and Puth (2000:30) describe strategy as the development of an organisation's proactive capability, or the ability of adapting to environmental changes. Angelopulo and Schoonraad (2006:28) confirm this when they call strategy an instrument that enables

proactive organisational adjustment to environmental changes by means of “establishing goals and objectives, adopting certain courses of action, and allocating its [organisational] resources accordingly” (Angelopulo & Schoonraad, 2006:28). The adaptive role of strategy is further illustrated in strategic management (David, 2001:7) which has been labelled an essential business management process within a developing country such as South Africa (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2004:2).

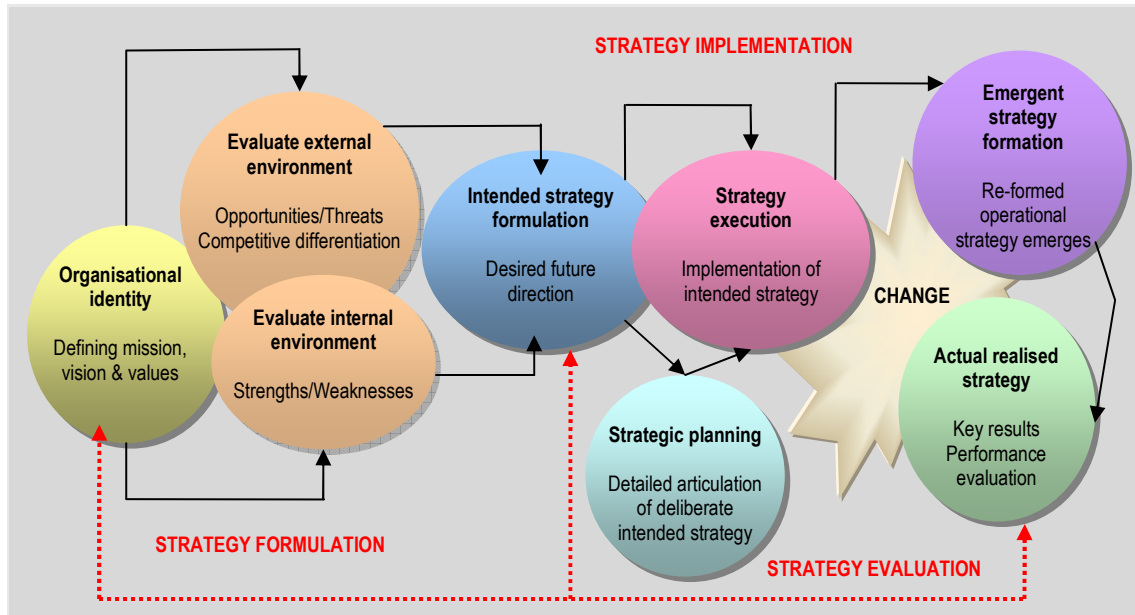
Strategic management should resemble a self-reflective learning process that familiarises the organisation with key strategic environmental changes (David, 2001:18). The process is closely related to organisational “Darwinism” (Montuori, 2000:64) or evolution and embraces the process of interactive dialogue between the organisation and its environment. Various definitions of strategic management focus on the relationship between the organisation and its environment. Higgins (quoted in Steyn & Puth, 2000:32-33) defines strategic management as the coordination of managing both the organisational mission and the relationship of the organisation to its environment. Ehlers and Lazenby (2004:2) highlight the importance of implementing strategies that are aligned with the environment, enabling the creation of stakeholder value and leading to the achievement of long-term organisational objectives.

Likely (2003:19) proposes a strategic management process adapted for a dynamic operating environment as depicted in Figure 3.2. This process is broad enough to be applied to all sectors of the economy, including the private, public and nonprofit sectors. The different stages of the strategic management process – strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation, as suggested by David (2001:5-6) – are incorporated in Figure 3.2 to provide a comprehensive view of the strategic management process. By discussing Likely’s (2003:19) strategic management model, two principles are highlighted: (i) organisational learning continuously ensures alignment between the dynamic environment and the organisation’s strategy and (ii) strategy predicates multifunctional or departmental consequences.

The first stage of the process – strategy formulation – involves defining the organisational vision and mission and finding agreement on standards of organisational behaviour (David, 2001:5). Likely (2003:20) states that the former is continuously evolving and requires constant attention. The evaluation of external threats and opportunities as well as internal strengths and weaknesses forms the second stage. All organisational functions with “external windows” (Likely, 2003:20) have a role to play, allowing for deeper

organisational thinking. The resulting strategy focuses on decisions relating to the long-term competitive advantages of the organisation predicating major multifunctional consequences (David, 2001:6).

Figure 3.2: A dynamic strategic management process



Source: Adapted from Likely (2003:19)

Strategy implementation is referred to as the action stage. To mobilise managers and employees to put formulated strategies into action forms the essence of strategy execution. Every organisational function should answer questions relating to its role in the implementation of organisational strategy (David, 2001:6). Due to the constantly changing operating environment, discrepancies arise between the assumptions on which strategy is based and the changed situation the strategy needs to address. Mintzberg (1994:111) refers to an emergent strategy as the product of a learning process rather than a product of management's conscious intentions. The revised strategy emerges from the "extremities of the organisation inwards" (Likely, 2003:22) ensuring continuous repositioning of the organisation.

Strategy evaluation involves a performance measurement system able to capture results for measurement against stated objectives (Likely, 2003:22). According to Angelopulo and Schoonraad (2006:31) the dynamic model acknowledges a difference between the intended strategy and the actually realised strategy. Strategy evaluation takes place by comparing the results of the actual realised strategy against

the objectives set during the intended strategy formulation. This feedback portion of the model represents organisational learning that should be integrated into future strategic management processes (Likely, 2003:22).

In conclusion, strategic management encourages ongoing alignment between the organisation's changing operating environment and its mission, vision, values and strategic intent. Organisational learning principles ensure the continuous adjustment and adaptation of the organisation based on an open-systems approach. Changes affecting the strategic intent of the organisation have multifunctional consequences.

3.2.2 Marketing management

Organisations are operating at an accelerating pace in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment where environmental pressures influence the activities of the marketing function (Anderson & Vincze, 2004:5). The primary responsibility of the marketing function is towards the organisation's customers and their changing wants and needs, to ensure customer satisfaction (Bennett, 2002:177; Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblanché, 2000:4-5). The definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association (2006) states that "marketing is an organisational function and set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders." The definition highlights the customer focus of marketing management. Anderson and Vincze (2004:6) argue that marketing definitions are shifting from a transaction-based view of microeconomics and production efficiency to a customer-relationship view based on a mutual beneficial exchange process ensuring a long-term relationship between the organisation and its customer.

The marketing function is closest to the organisation's customers and aware of changing customer needs and wants (Anderson & Vincze, 2004:8). The marketing function has an important part to play in the strategic management of the organisation. To illustrate the relationship between marketing function and strategic business management, three marketing roles are pointed out: (i) the marketing function in strategic planning processes, (ii) the marketing strategy and (iii) internal marketing.

Firstly, the marketing function is co-responsible for strategic planning and represents the interests of customers during strategy formulation. Since the marketing function is responsible for the identification of

customer needs and wants and the scanning of the business environment, it is in a good position to advise top management regarding future strategies. Since the income earned by the organisation comes from its customers, the acquisition of inputs from the marketing department plays an important role in the formulation of future organisational strategy (Bennett, 2002:175,183).

Secondly, strategic planning and marketing are closely related processes since marketing management decisions have to be consistent with the overall business strategy of the organisation (Anderson & Vincze, 2004:78). The strategic marketing plan represents the link between the organisation's strategic direction and mission, and its marketing strategies (Paley, quoted in Du Plessis & Breet-van Niekerk, 2006:143), thus ensuring strategic consistency of all marketing activities. Marketing management decisions are made within the framework of an organisation's strategic plan and designed to implement an organisation's strategic intent and strategic objectives. In turn, the organisation's strategy and the marketing strategy provide the context for designing the marketing mix which includes decisions regarding marketing communication (Anderson & Vincze, 2004:8,80).

The last marketing role relates to internal marketing. Employees can be regarded as a valuable internal customer segment. Internal marketing programs communicating the importance of a customer focus should be directed at employees operating at all organisational levels. Equally important is a feedback system that allows for employee communication with management. Successful organisations are those characterised by open communication channels, i.e. channels allowing communication to flow both upward and downward in the organisation (Anderson & Vincze, 2004:26; Du Plessis, Jooste & Strydom, 2001:273).

Considering the relationship between strategic business management and the marketing function, certain alignment ideas are brought to the surface: (i) the marketing function represents customer interests during strategic planning ensuring alignment between the organisation's strategic intent and its customer environment, and (ii) all marketing management decisions that include marketing communication decisions, are formulated to support and implement the overall business strategy of the organisation.

3.2.3 Communication management

Modern managers need to acknowledge the constantly evolving business environment and the need for understanding how these changes affect the organisational image among a variety of stakeholders

(Argenti, 2003:9). The objective of communication management is to optimally manage stakeholder relationships (Du Plessis, 2006:207). The function occupies the ideal position for assisting the organisation in adapting and adjusting to its changing relational environment (Fischer, 1997:55). The communication management function assists management by integrating the relationships and interests of stakeholders in organisational processes, ensuring the long-term success of the organisation (Freeman & McVea, 2005:192).

In defining communication management, authors Steyn and Puth (2000:6) note that recent trends indicate a preference for using the term "corporate communication" as opposed to "public relations". However, the terms corporate communication, communication management and public relations can theoretically be equated since they all describe the overall management of an organisation's communication with its internal and external stakeholders; this has a broader meaning than a mere communication technique (Grunig, 1992:4). PRISA (2005), The Public Relations and Communication Management Institute of Southern Africa defines communication management as "the management, through communication, of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders". The definition highlights two building blocks of communication management: (i) the stakeholder concept and (ii) a stakeholder relationship focus.

Communication management is based on the stakeholder concept. Freeman (1984:vi) defines a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation's purpose". Stakeholders include not only any shareholders but also employees, customers, suppliers and all other groups who can either potentially damage or assist the organisation. Further, the stakeholder concept indicates that each individual stakeholder group plays a vital role in the success of an organisation. Post *et al.* (2002:8) support Freeman's view by stating that within a diverse stakeholder context any individual stakeholder relationship may be of critical importance at a particular point in time, making it necessary to understand the "firm's entire set of stakeholder relationships" (Post *et al.*, 2002:8).

Communication management is based on a stakeholder relationship view. Heath (2001:2-3) asserts that mutually beneficial relationships lie at the heart of communication management by enabling the organisation to attract and retain stakeholders. Freeman and McVea (2005:194) state that understanding stakeholder relationships underlies organisational survival within a turbulent environment. Also, organisational objectives can only be achieved through the support of the organisation's stakeholders.

Ledingham (2003:194-195) states that within a relational perspective the communication function can be viewed as a strategic tool in the creation and maintenance of organisation-stakeholder relationships which contribute to organisational effectiveness (Steyn & Puth, 2000:188). To create mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships, two-way symmetrical communication practices, based on dialogue and a mutual exchange of information between the organisation and its stakeholders, are required (Dozier *et al.*, 1995:39; Grunig, J. & Grunig, L., 1992:289; Grunig & White, 1992:39).

To illustrate the relationship between the communication function and strategic business management, three communication roles are pointed out (Angelopulo & Schoonraad, 2006:34; Grunig, J. & Repper, 1992:120; Moss & Warnaby, 1998:133): (i) the communication function's involvement in the strategy-making process, (ii) the corporate communication strategy and (iii) the communication of strategy.

Identifying, understanding and participating in the strategic management process are the keys to managing the communication function strategically (Likely, 2003:18). Steyn and Puth (2000:20) highlight the importance of research, confirming the strategic role of communication, when they argue that this function should participate in the strategic decision-making processes of the organisation and contribute towards organisational strategy. Communication plays a vital role due to its ability to present management with stakeholder intelligence and reputation research (Likely, 2003:20). This is also described as the interpretive role of communication management (Seitel, 1995:8). Communication is in an ideal position to play the interpretive role due to its insight into the external environment, enabled through environmental scanning and issue tracking abilities. Information gathering and processing are central to making communication strategic and are also referred to as performing the boundary-spanning role of the communication function (Steyn & Puth, 2000:18). Seitel (1992:14) argues that communication has become an indispensable management function and acts as a strategic adviser to top management.

Corporate communication strategy ensures alignment between the organisational intent and all communication activities undertaken. Steyn (2000:11) explains the former as a functional strategy developed within the framework of an organisation's vision, mission and strategies. Corporate communication strategy attempts to link the organisation's vision and mission with broad communication principles and priorities (Moorcroft, 2003:24). It ensures that communication is relevant to the strategic intent "through its focus on communication with strategic stakeholders, aligning communication goals to organisational goals" (Steyn, 2000:12).

Angelopulo (2006:36) states that communication of strategy ensures strategic consistency throughout the organisation and primarily takes place from the top down, i.e. from management to employees. Well organised internal communication can successfully connect employees with the vision, mission and strategic intent of the organisation (Argenti, 2003:127). Equally important is the need for managers to listen to employees, allowing communication of strategy to take place from the bottom upwards (Angelopulo & Schoonraad, 2006:36). There is thus a need for an internal communication system that allows for two-way symmetrical communication or dialogue.

Considering the relationship between strategic business management and communication alignment, two ideas are brought to the surface: (i) the communication function represents stakeholder interests during strategic-decision making processes, ensuring alignment between the organisation's strategic intent and its stakeholder environment; (ii) all communication management activities are formulated to implement the overall strategy of the organisation.

The existence of multiple functions dealing with communication in the organisation, i.e. the marketing and communication functions, enhances the possibility of fragmented and inconsistent messages necessitating integrated communication thought (Duncan, 2002:30-31). The idea of an integrated approach towards corporate and marketing communication has become a central theme (Cornelissen & Lock, 2001:425), with the objective of linking and harmonising separate aspects of an organisation's communication (Angelopulo, 2006:39).

3.2.4 Strategic integration

Integration is perceived as "the facilitation of increased forms of interaction between communication disciplines" (Cornelissen & Lock, 2001:425). If communication is perceived in this way it can be described as a holistic, systemic process for which the whole is normally greater than the sum of the individual parts that produce communication synergies (Shultz, 1996:143). Duncan (2002:31) predicates that integration produces integrity, and this is when the organisation is perceived as a whole rather than a collection of individual and inconsistent parts, resulting in trustworthy and sustainable relationships.

According to Gronstedt (1996:26-27), the consistent management of an organisation's communication developed both in the Marketing and Communication Management disciplines and represents a comprehensive approach to managing an organisation's stakeholder relationships. Next, attention will be paid to the idea of communication integration and its manifestation within the Marketing and Communication management disciplines.

3.2.4.1 Integrated marketing communication

The movement towards an integrated approach to communication has its origins in marketing communication (Angelopulo, 2006:40). The central idea of integrated marketing communication relates to the development and management of customer relationships that ultimately drive brand value. Duncan (2002:8) defines integrated marketing communication as:

“...a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them...”

Semenik and Bamossy (quoted in Barker, 2006:155-156) refer to the characteristics of a successful contemporary integrated marketing communication programme: (i) an outside-in approach to the development of communication, starting with the customer and working backwards towards the brand, (ii) an in-depth knowledge of customers supported by a customer database, (iii) the adoption of a brand contact-point perspective, thereby creating awareness regarding the various customer contact points and ensuring consistent and clear communication and lastly (iv) a centralised coordinated management approach towards customer contact points.

According to Barker (2006:156) integrated marketing communication represents the first approach that aims to address the central purpose of the marketing process, which is to develop and strategically manage customer-brand relationships in an integrated fashion. However, Kitchen and Shultz (2001:95) state that it is insufficient to only integrate communication activities at a brand level, focusing primarily on the integration of communication efforts impacting on the customer. Communication should be integrated on a corporate or business level focusing primarily on the integration of communication efforts impacting on the organisation's stakeholders.

3.2.4.2 Integrated communication

Gronstedt (2000:14) describes integrated communication as a process of building stakeholder relationships, thereby including customers. Integrated communication is effective due to the fact that organisations now have greater control over brand contact points, which ultimately integrates in the mind of the stakeholder and enables the organisation to create relationships. Integrated communication is efficient due to a centralised effort discouraging duplication. Vos and Shoemaker (2001:14) describe integrated communication by referring to the different organisational levels on which the phenomenon operates: at a (i) microlevel, (ii) mesolevel and (iii) a macrolevel.

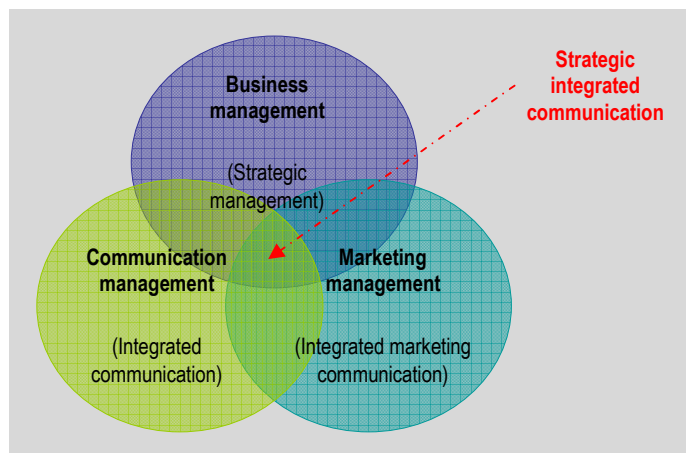
Integrated communication at a microlevel is utilised to enhance harmonisation between the different communication materials issued by the organisation. Integrated marketing communication advocates a holistic perspective in terms of consistency between the different promotional elements found in the promotional mix (Barker, 2006:158) and therefore serves as an example of integration of communication on an operational level. For instance, the tone utilised in organisational publications should be synchronised with the tone utilised in press releases. Such integration on a communication activity or operational level will ensure a consistent and clear image for the organisation (Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14).

Integrated communication at a mesolevel predicates the importance of harmonising the different fields or domains of communication policy in the organisation (Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14). Kitchen and Shultz (2001:95) emphasise an “ongoing, interactive, interdependent, and synergistic” (Kitchen & Shultz, 2001:95) relationship between corporate communication and marketing communication, resulting in a totally integrated approach towards the management of the organisation’s communication. The authors argue for no barriers between these two types of communication and highlight the fact that both contribute towards moving the organisation forward.

Integrated communication at a macrolevel emphasises the importance of the relationship between communication policy and organisational policy (Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14). It was argued in Section 3.2.3 that communication should be allowed to function on a strategic level allowing for participation in strategic processes (Steyn & Puth, 2000:20). Argenti *et al.* (2005:83) refer to the strategic communication imperative, describing the importance of aligning all communication with the organisation’s overall strategy thereby enhancing its strategic positioning.

Vos and Shoemaker (2001:14) recommend that integrated communication should be perceived as communication harmonisation on all levels of the organisation including at a micro, meso and macro level, resulting in a concept labelled as strategic integrated communication. Figure 3.3 illustrates the relationship between the strategic management of the organisation and communication.

Figure 3.3: Relationship between strategic management and communication



Source: Niemann (2005:106)

Strategic integrated communication entails communication, both internal and external, which is aligned, consistent and integrated in such a way as to support the achievement of the organisation's mission and to prevent the development of a fragmented image of the organisation (Massie & Anderson, 2003:223). It requires an integrated multilevel approach where stakeholder communication is coherent and aligned with the corporate strategy (Argenti *et al.*, 2005:87; Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14).

The study identifies strategic integrated communication management as a possible cross-sector learning opportunity. It is important to shortly illustrate and motivate how the proposed communication management theme addresses nonprofit management challenges and contributes to long-term sustainability.

3.3 STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AND THE NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT ARENA

Anheier (2000:7) recognises the intricacy and complexity of managing nonprofit organisations and refers to the “law of nonprofit complexity” (Anheier, 2000:7). The management of these organisations tends to be more complex than the management of business organisations of the same size. Next, core nonprofit management challenges will be identified and grouped under: (i) strategic management, (ii) marketing management and (iii) communication management challenges. It will also be indicated how strategic integrated communication can address these core challenges.

3.3.1 Strategic management

Nonprofit organisations are challenged with an ever-changing and demanding operational environment where they are expected to deliver services of a high quality in order to overcome environmental complexities (Britton, 2005:6; Lettieri, Borga & Savoldelli, 2004:16). An uncertain and interconnected operating environment necessitates the need for nonprofit managers to become strategists (Bryson, 2004:xi). Nonprofit organisations are prone to be inward-looking (Drucker, 1990:113) focusing on the immediate concerns of their own system. Instead, strategies need to be formulated that enable the organisation to adapt and adjust to its environment. Goerke (2003:317) identifies the need for nonprofit organisations to make the “quantum leap” which includes the adoption of strategic management processes in order to promote organisational survival.

Strategic integrated communication is based on an open-systems-theory approach, thus enabling the nonprofit organisation to adapt and adjust to a constantly changing operating environment (Cutlip *et al.* 2002:25). The role of communication in the strategic management processes of the organisation, as explained in Section 3.2.3, directly addresses the nonprofit challenge to adopt strategic thinking processes in order to assist the organisation to become more responsive within a dynamic operating environment (Kuchi, 2006:218).

3.3.2 Marketing management

Nonprofit branding has become a major management challenge due to various factors: (i) with the nonprofit marketplace becoming increasingly crowded and (ii) nonprofit organisations competing for smaller funding budgets. Differentiation is becoming the new nonprofit imperative, where these organisations need to focus on the clarity of their identity, values, messages and brand (Goerke, 2003:317; Hankinson, 2001:346; SustainAbility, 2003:16).

Saxton (2001:25) states that the nonprofit brand should amplify the organisational mission, vision and values. According to Hershey (2005:12) the aim of branding is to establish meaningful relationships with stakeholders and create trust towards the organisation. Brand-building within the nonprofit sector is complex due to the fact that these organisations must communicate the brand to a diverse set of stakeholders (Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, 2006:10). According to Sargeant (2005:140), nonprofit organisations assume that stakeholders don't have access to other communication generated for other stakeholder groups; this causes the challenge of producing communication that is consistent from one stakeholder group to another.

Strategic integrated communication encompasses the formulation of all organisational communication within the framework of the organisational strategy. All formulated communication is directly linked with the organisation's mission addressing the nonprofit management challenge of creating mission-driven brand communication. Further strategic integrated communication is based on the continuous interaction of different forms of communication disciplines in an organisation that produces consistent communication across a broad range of stakeholders. It directly addresses the nonprofit management challenge of creating consistent brand communication from one stakeholder group to the next, resulting in the organisational integrity which is essential for sustainable stakeholder relationships (Niemann, 2005:105).

3.3.3 Communication management

Nonprofit organisations are surrounded by various stakeholders that present interesting challenges and complexities to communication management (Chandler, 2002:92), as confirmed by the statement: "Every organisation is swimming in a sea of publics" (Drucker, 1990:76). The fact that nonprofit stakeholders are

no longer defined as only donors, produces an unstable and dynamic operating environment (Chandler, 2002:93). Phills (2005:5) contends that nonprofit organisations face pressure from a variety of internal and external stakeholders to apply scarce resources to activities in order to achieve the nonprofit mission. Chandler (2002:92) points out that the challenge is to help these “many voices become harmonious” by acknowledging the multiplicity of stakeholders.

Also, the creation and maintenance of stakeholder relationships belong to the core objective of a nonprofit organisation’s communication efforts (Radtke, 1998:17) and represent an additional management challenge. The long-term sustainability of the organisation depends on the ability to create and maintain relationships within a network of stakeholders (Post *et al*, 2000:92). Montuori (2000:64) states that the process of interactive dialogue between the organisation and its environment acts as an antecedent of organisational longevity.

Strategic integrated communication is based on the principle of stakeholderism which includes the organisation’s entire set of stakeholders and directly addresses the nonprofit management challenge of a multiple stakeholder environment. Further strategic integrated communication is based on a stakeholder-relationship view and recognises that organisational objectives can only be achieved through the support of the organisation’s stakeholders (Freeman & McVea, 2005:194). Strategic integrated communication directly addresses the nonprofit need for the creation and maintenance of long-term stakeholder relationships based on a two-way symmetrical communication approach, which is essential for nonprofit sustainability.

To conclude: This section illustrated how the proposed business idea of strategic integrated communication meets the management challenges of the nonprofit sector. Together with this proposed management idea, this study recognises the strategic opportunities offered by new information and technological advances (see Section 2.3.7). The specific highlight will fall on the World Wide Web and its ability to facilitate nonprofit online communication.

The Internet, including the World Wide Web as one of its main applications, will be one of the most prominent drivers of change in nonprofit organisations over the next decade. Saxton (2001:362-363) explains that this is not only due to the possible opportunities presented by this new technology but also due to the rate at which society in general and the commercial world are embracing the new technology.

Technologies are constantly changing and improving on a daily basis, presenting the nonprofit organisation with the challenges of adapting and adjusting on a timely basis and finding ways to best communicate the mission of the organisation (Cravens, 2006:[7]; Johnston, 1999:1).

Finn, Maher and Forster (2006:280) emphasise the fact that nonprofit organisations appear to be disadvantaged in their ability to invest in information and communication technology due to a resource-constrained environment; this influences their ability to adapt and adjust to changes in this environment. However, Saxton (2001:361) argues that success does not reside in larger nonprofit organisation budgets but rather in: (i) having an intimate knowledge and understanding of new technologies, (ii) crafting clear and consistent messages, (iii) an understanding of the target audience and (iv) various alliances with corporations.

According to Pinho and Macedo (2006:171) advances in new information technologies and the adoption of the Internet have received considerable research attention. However, current research focuses on for-profit organisations with less emphasis on the nonprofit sector. The next section contextualises website technology within the South African nonprofit sector and illustrates how strategic integrated communication connects with these new online communication challenges.

The issues to be considered in connection with the nonprofit website are: (i) the nonprofit organisation website as a platform for strategic integrated communication, (ii) the benefits of a website and (iii) challenges associated with a website.

3.4 THE NONPROFIT ORGANISATION WEBSITE AS A PLATFORM FOR STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

The role of the organisational website in the facilitation of relationship-building between the organisation and its stakeholders is emphasised in the current communication management literature (Kang & Norton, 2004; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Ki & Hon, 2006; Naudé *et al.*, 2004). This emphasis is highly relevant to the nonprofit organisation, due to the central role of relationships within a development context (Olsen *et al.*, 2001:365). The nonprofit website presents an opportunity for organisational members to meet within a relational space, and it provides the nonprofit organisation with an additional method to communicate its

messages and raise support for its core issues (Kang & Norton, 2004:279). The impact of website technology on organisation-stakeholder relationships is explored from three perspectives: (i) Strategic management, (ii) Marketing management and (iii) Communication management.

3.4.1 Strategic management

Mullen (2006:24) argues that new media such as the organisational website should be utilised not only to protect the reputation of the organisation but also to promote the organisational mission to stakeholders. Nonprofit organisations should investigate “technological potential for explicit mission-related aims” (Hackler & Saxton, 2007:480). The critical dimensions of achieving the nonprofit organisation’s social mission are: (i) the processes of strategic communication and relationship-building, (ii) the acquisition of funding sources and financial sustainability and (iii) the creation of partnerships and collaborations (Hackler & Saxton, 2007:480); all of these can be aided by utilising new technologies. Thus nonprofit organisations can use website technology to achieve and reinforce the critical dimensions of the organisation’s social mission.

Alternatively, a successful website can be defined as website communication that is developed within the framework of the organisational mission and strategy (Saxton, 2001:362). According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:128) the organisational mission should serve as the foundation for relationship-building efforts, resulting in the creation of trust and credibility among the stakeholder environment. Arguably, the presence of trust and credibility in the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders can lead to outcomes such as financial sustainability and the formation of partnerships, which in turn is central to the nonprofit social mission (Hackler & Saxton, 2007:480).

It is argued that the idea of strategic integrated communication is well suited to these changes, due to its focus on the significance of communication that is formulated and executed within the framework of the organisational mission (Argenti *et al.*, 2005:87; Massie & Anderson, 2003:223; Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14).

For the organisation, the website presents a novel communication channel to communicate with organisational stakeholders. For organisational stakeholders, the website presents a channel through which organisations can be viewed and interpreted (Kent, Taylor & White, 2003:63). According to Peters

(1998:23) the key distinguishing feature of new communication technologies is the characteristic of interactivity, i.e. their capacity to facilitate interaction between the message sender(s) and receiver(s). The development of Internet resources and in particular the World Wide Web has changed the way in which organisations communicate with all communication disciplines affected: (i) Marketing management and (ii) Communication management (Du Plessis, 2004:115-116).

3.4.2 Marketing management

The advent of on-line marketing has condemned the traditional mass communication model, characterised by one-way communication, as irrelevant to a web-based communication environment. Barker *et al.* (2006:291) argue for the reverse flow of messages within a web-based marketing context where messages are initiated by the stakeholder and received by the marketer instead of the other way around. The stakeholder is described as an active participant in the production of messages and the communication process. Channel power shifted due to the fact that stakeholders can choose with which on-line content to interact; from a nonprofit view this requires a focus on the importance of interactivity in motivating website visitors to engage and show interest in on-line content (Barker *et al.*, 2006:303).

Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, 2006:304) identify three different levels of interactivity within an on-line communication environment. The first level relates to the presentation of information and data. At this level website visitors only view and read material, limiting the possibility for interaction. The second level represents the situation where the website visitor actively searches for information, facilitated by the inclusion of hyperlinks on the webpage, enabling navigation from page to page by means of clicking on links (Johnston, 1999:7). The last level enables the website visitor to personally engage with the webpage, e.g. providing feedback to the organisation, thereby enabling the formation of a relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders.

Angelopulo and Barker (2005:107) present a definition of integrated web-based marketing communication which encapsulates all the elements involved in online marketing management. Integrated web-based marketing communication is “generated through electronic media that facilitate flexible, nonlinear processes in the creation or enhancement of positive image, [and] relationships ... between the organisation and its markets in a way that is consistent with the organisation’s strategic intent” (Angelopulo & Barker,

2005:107). To consider online marketing management requires a different communication mindset with implications regarding the level of interactivity found in the on-line environment, resulting in the creation and maintenance of long-term sustainable relationships.

Strategic integrated communication can easily step in to provide the new required communication mindset with its core focus on the creation of dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders by means of employing two-way symmetrical communication processes that support relationship-building procedures (Dozier *et al.*, 1995:39; Grunig, J. & Grunig, L., 1992:289; Grunig & White, 1992:39).

3.4.3 Communication management

On-line innovations have revolutionised the way in which the discipline of Communication Management is practised today and represent a challenge to organisations required to communicate effectively with stakeholders on whom their success or failure depends (Barker *et al.*, 2006:307; Ihator, 2001:16). The World Wide Web has changed the way in which organisations communicate on-line, with a shift away from the mass communication model to a dialogical or interactional communication model (Hurme, 2001:72). Where old forms of communication focused on unidirectional communication processes in which organisations controlled and monopolised communication channels, interactional communication enables the sharing of channel power and establishes relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders (Ihator, 2001:16-17).

Hurme (2001:73) identifies two levels of interactivity. The first level of quasi-interactivity is defined as one-way communication. An example would include a user searching for information on the organisation's website. This type of interaction has the potential for becoming two-way communication, e.g. where the subscription to news releases can lead to further communication. The second level represents two-way, truly interactive communication; this type of communication leads to a deeper understanding between the organisation and its stakeholders. An example may include the situation where the website requires direct feedback from the web user in the form of an on-line feedback form. Related to levels of interactivity Ihator (2001:18) argues that new mediums have the ability and power to either maximise or minimise relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders.

Barker (2004:103) highlights the importance of creating an online public relations strategy as a key component in ensuring both the success of on-line web-based communication and the creation of an organisational image. Barker (2004:104-106) further presents the elements of an on-line public relations model. Two elements are highlighted due to their relevance to the current argument: (i) interaction with the environment and (ii) goals and objectives of the on-line public relations strategy.

Firstly, the model is based on the principle of environmental interaction. It is argued that interaction with target publics can lead to the creation of two-way symmetrical communication of which the outcomes are described as relationships and interdependence between the organisation and its target publics. Secondly, the goals and objectives of an on-line public relations strategy are stated in terms of the desired stakeholder relationships that should be created. The fact that on-line public relations goals and objectives are expressed in terms of relationships emphasises the main purpose of on-line communication which is creating stakeholder relationships based on interactivity processes.

Research conducted by Kang and Norton (2004:282) among the US nonprofit sector found that relational communication functions and interactivity elements on nonprofit websites were lacking. Naudé *et al.*, (2004:90) confirm that this situation is also found within the South African nonprofit sector. Nonprofit websites displayed a lack of interactivity and two-way symmetrical communication principles, and they were often utilised only as an information dissemination tool. Lack of knowledge, time, financial resources and human resources were cited as barriers to the implementation of the nonprofit website as a relationship-building tool. Naudé *et al.*, (2004:90) concluded that the mentioned barriers contribute to a communicatively ineffective website which is potentially unrelated to the organisation's mission.

Again the idea of strategic integrated communication can address these concerns due to: its focus on (i) ensuring the organisation's continuous interaction with the environment, promoting an open-systems perspective and strategic thinking processes (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2004; Montuori, 2000:64); and (ii) creating two-way symmetrical communication processes based on the concept of dialogue, between the organisation and its stakeholders, which leads to a mutual exchange of information (Dozier *et al.*, 1995:39; Grunig, J. & Grunig, L., 1992:289; Grunig & White, 1992:39).

3.5 BENEFITS OF A NONPROFIT WEBSITE

According to Saxton and Game (2001:27), nonprofit leaders should recognise the potential of a new technological tool with the abilities of cutting costs, reaching new audiences, raising additional funds, transforming services and empowering web users and beneficiaries across the world. Nonprofit organisations should thus recognise “e-potential” (Saxton & Game, 2001:27) and understand how the organisation’s activities, including its communication management activities, are affected. Generic benefits associated with the use of the World Wide Web from a nonprofit organisation perspective (Pinho & Macedo, 2006:179; Saxton & Game, 2001:5-6) will now be explored.

3.5.1 Brand-building opportunity

The main functions of branding within nonprofit organisations are firstly to enhance fundraising and secondly to implement the organisation’s mission (Salls, 2005:[1]). Nonprofit organisations are mission-driven entities and should continuously consider new methods of communicating their purpose to the stakeholders they serve and the other audiences they wish to reach (Reiss, 2000:1). Website technology presents the nonprofit organisation with the opportunity to communicate its brand positioning statement which is the marketing expression of the organisational mission (Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, 2006:10).

Mogus and LaCroix (2005:101-102) argue that nonprofit brands consist of both tangible and intangible attributes. The intangible attributes include the brand values which are the values the organisation wishes to be associated with and then brand benefits which are the benefits of supporting the organisational brand and how this engagement affects the attitudes of the target audience. The nonprofit website which is arguably a tangible attribute of the nonprofit brand has a powerful role to play in the implementation of brand values and benefits. The Web is about interacting with target audiences and moving beyond images, taglines and graphics to on-line brand experiences.

The idea of strategic integrated communication is similar in terms of focusing on communication which supports and reflects the organisation’s mission or purpose (Argenti *et al.*, 2005:87; Massie & Anderson, 2003:223; Vos & Shoemaker, 2001:14).

3.5.2 Low-cost communication medium

The nonprofit website provides a cost-effective method in communicating the organisation's mission and vision on a global scale, by reaching a global target audience (Andrews, Jensen, Kneeper & Prunty, 2002:26). A website can reduce the pressure on a nonprofit organisation's staff by means of directly addressing the capacity management issue in these organisations (Saxton & Game, 2001:6). Saxton and Game (2001:6) argue that the cost of individually attending to each enquiry far exceeds the cost of website communication. Website technology provides even the smallest nonprofit organisation with the opportunity to gain international recognition with more or less the same funding as a large nonprofit organisation. Website technology has equalised the playing field and presents any nonprofit organisation with the opportunity to globally communicate organisational messages (Carter, 2000:40; Elliot *et al.*, 1998:300). This particular advantage is illustrated in the South African case outlined in the following two paragraphs.

The bulk ore carrier, *Treasure*, sank off Cape Town on 23 June 2000. The ship was carrying 1344 tons of heavy fuel oil, 56 tons of marine diesel and 64 tons of lube oil. It was estimated that only 250 tons of heavy fuel oil did not spill into the surrounding water, resulting in the largest number of sea birds ever to be affected by an oil spill. The South African nonprofit organisation SANCCOB, the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds which focuses on the conservation and protection of South Africa's sea birds, responded to the crisis. It was estimated that over 10 000 birds had been covered in oil and a further 10 000 were at risk. In order to fund the crisis operation and allow SANCCOB to fulfil its mission, R8 million was required. The crisis seemed overwhelming considering that SANCCOB is a small Cape Town based charity with fewer than 10 employees.

Fortunately SANCCOB had a website: www.sanccob.co.za with temporary secure on-line donation capabilities facilitating international fundraising opportunities. Dollars, yen, Euros and other currencies were donated from private individuals and corporations worldwide. The SANCCOB website contributed to the success of the fundraising campaign by means of allowing individuals worldwide to connect directly with the mission of the organisation (SANCCOB, 2006; Crawford, Davis, Harding, Jackson, Leshoro, Meyer, Randall, Underhill, Upfold, Van Dalsen, Van der Merwe, Whittington, Williams & Wolfaardt, 2000; Ritchie, 2006). The SANCCOB case illustrates that even the smallest nonprofit organisation can utilise website technology to communicate its mission and vision on a global scale. Website communication is cost-

effective due to the fact that website costs are fixed, i.e. each additional audience member visiting the website costs virtually nothing (Saxton & Game, 2001:5).

The idea of strategic integrated communication also supports the concept of cost-effective communication by virtue of the fact that all organisational communication planning is centralised, preventing unnecessary duplication of efforts (Kitchen & Shultz, 2001:95).

3.5.3 On-line recruitment opportunity

Website technology presents an outreach vehicle by which an organisation can present its mission, programs and services to interested individuals (Johnston, 1999:80). The nonprofit website can assist in the recruitment of members, staff and volunteers. Firstly, nonprofit websites can contain password-protected, members-only sections enticing website visitors to apply and register on-line for membership. The interactive nature of the Internet allows for visitors to complete an on-line membership form that can be submitted immediately (Johnston, 1999:80; Ritchie, 2006:6). Secondly, job vacancies can be communicated via the nonprofit website cost-effectively. This allows interested individuals to (i) gain a firm grounding regarding the organisation's mission and its programs and (ii) to submit a Web resumé (Johnston, 1999:81). Lastly, the nonprofit website can assist with the recruitment of volunteers by means of (i) posting descriptions of volunteer opportunities or (ii) providing an on-line form that allows website visitors to offer to volunteer by indicating their specific interests, skills and availability (Li, 2005:135).

The idea of strategic communication is similar in that its stakeholderism approach proposes that organisations need to recognise the diverse set of stakeholders surrounding the organisation and should focus relationship-building efforts at all of these stakeholders (Freeman, 1984:vi; Post *et al.*, 2000:8).

3.5.4 Fundraising opportunity

The Internet as an additional medium for fundraising within the nonprofit sector offers various opportunities (Atlas, 2005; Frenza & Hoffman, 1999:10; Ritchie, 2006:6). To successfully raise funds via the organisation's website it is essential to firstly develop and maintain relationships with potential donors. When relationships are formed there is a higher chance of soliciting a donation from a potential donor (Hart,

2002:354). Research findings (Farouk & Prytz, 2003:5) indicate that South African nonprofit organisations are applying various on-line fundraising techniques, including: (i) on-line transactions in the form of on-line credit card payments, (ii) on-line product purchasing, (iii) sponsored clicking which is where the nonprofit website consists of a link that is sponsored by one or more corporations, (iv) on-line shopping sponsorship where on-line retailers donate a small percentage of profits to various causes and (v) the provision of off-line details in the form of the organisation's banking details.

The idea of strategic integrated communication is also based on a stakeholder-relationship view which postulates that relationships are critical in the creation of organisational wealth and sustainability (Freeman & McVea, 2005:194; Heath, 2001:2-3).

3.5.5 Direct communication

The Internet is a mass communication medium that does not rely on intermediaries and costs a fraction of normal advertising campaigns. Saxton and Game (2001:5) state that the absence of intermediaries on the Internet empowers nonprofit organisations by allowing them the opportunity to communicate from the organisation's perspective, thereby discarding those who often don't share the same perspectives regarding the importance of a cause (Johnston, 1999:76). The idea of strategic integrated communication is also similar with regard to organisationally controlling all messages intended for stakeholders (Massie & Anderson, 2003:223).

3.6 CHALLENGES OF A NONPROFIT WEBSITE

Pinho and Macedo (2006:180) identify several barriers associated with the use of the World Wide Web from a nonprofit perspective. In contrast, Cravens (2005:[1]) identifies only one major barrier that affects the adoption of web technology in the nonprofit sector, viz. organisational climate. Certain nonprofit climates are "unforgiving of innovations that don't work immediately" (Cravens, 2005:[1]) and do not allow for organisational learning opportunities. Thus experimentation within these climates can possibly lead to a perception of failure which, in the nonprofit sector, leads to a perception of wasting limited organisational resources. Next, several other barriers will be presented.

3.6.1 Security issues

When web visitors connect to a webpage, that connection is seldom secure. This situation creates a problem when personal details, e.g. credit/debit card numbers and other personal information, are requested on-line. Nonprofit organisations seeking donations or other personal details via website technology need to consider the issue of on-line security (Farouk & Prytz, 2003:6; Frenza & Hoffman, 1999:11; Ritchie, 2006:4). On-line security includes the provision of “seals”, e.g. Veri Sign, BB Online and Truste, (Ritchie, 2006:8) that reassure website visitors regarding the safety of on-line donation facilities. The on-line encryption of credit card details is expensive but a necessary measure to successfully solicit on-line donations. Also, nonprofit organisations should consider the provision of an on-line privacy policy indicating how solicited personal information will be utilised (Farouk & Prytz, 2003:6; Hart, 2005:11).

3.6.2 High set-up and maintenance costs

Cost plays an important role in the decision to create a website, including the cost of computer hardware and software, network connections, website construction, website maintenance and regular updating of on-line information (Cravens, 2006:[7]; Williams quoted in Tuckman, Chatterjee & Muha, 2004:53). Research findings indicate a positive relationship between the probability of a nonprofit organisation having a website and the financial assets of the organisation. Thus financial assets are important determinants of the probability of a nonprofit organisation having a website (Tuckman *et al.*, 2004:53).

3.6.3 Unfamiliarity with technology

Within the nonprofit sector, the perceived complexity of utilising the Internet has an impact on the adoption of this technology. Among nonprofit organisations there is uncertainty regarding the usefulness of a website in the communication of the organisation. Possible issues leading to these beliefs may include: (i) a lack of computer or network literacy of nonprofit staff and (ii) the reluctance of nonprofit staff and volunteers to support technology (Cravens, 2006:[7]; Tuckman *et al.*, 2004:54).

3.6.4 Users without access

As determined in 2007, South Africa has an estimated population figure of 49 660 502 million of which only a mere 5 100 000 million have Internet access. The fact that the rest of the population, i.e. 44 560 502 million, do not have Internet access thus presents a major barrier (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2000-2007). However, even when the target population for a nonprofit organisation's services does not have Internet access it is still worthwhile to exploit website technology. An on-line presence can attract the attention of international donors and establish the accountability, credibility and transparency of the nonprofit organisation (Cravens, 2005:[1]; Cravens, 2006:[2]).

Although there are some perceived barriers to nonprofit organisation website, Hurme (2001:72) emphasises the importance of understanding the properties and characteristics of this new medium and highlights the necessity for organisations to match these properties to their existing organisational goals.

3.7 SUMMARY

From the discussions it has become evident that some aspects of the proposed management idea for nonprofit attention, namely strategic integrated communication, directly address challenges within the nonprofit management arena. Also it was found that strategic integrated communication can provide the "new mindset" required for managing the nonprofit organisation's communication on-line. In the following, the proposed management idea is replaced with a specific model, i.e. Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, and further possibilities are explored in terms of this model's application value within the nonprofit website arena.

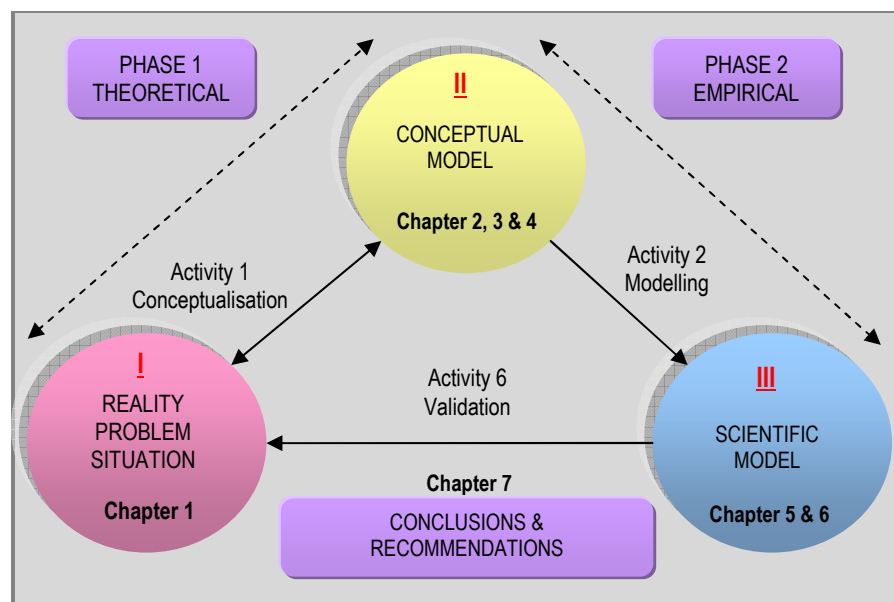
CHAPTER 4

THE APPLICATION OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION TO THE NONPROFIT ORGANISATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the application possibilities of a conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication within a specific context, viz. the nonprofit website environment. Figure 4.1 illustrates this chapter in relation to the systems view of problem-solving activity.

Figure 4.1: Chapter 4 in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

First, Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication will be presented; then the application possibilities of this model to the nonprofit organisation website environment will be explored.

4.2 NIEMANN'S CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

Niemann (2005) developed a South African conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication (refer to Figure 4.2). This model presents the nonprofit sector with possible cross-sector learning opportunities and requires the attention of nonprofit managements.

4.2.1 PRINCIPLES OF THE MODEL

Niemann's (2005) conceptual model rests on two key principles: (i) strategic intent and (ii) organisational learning.

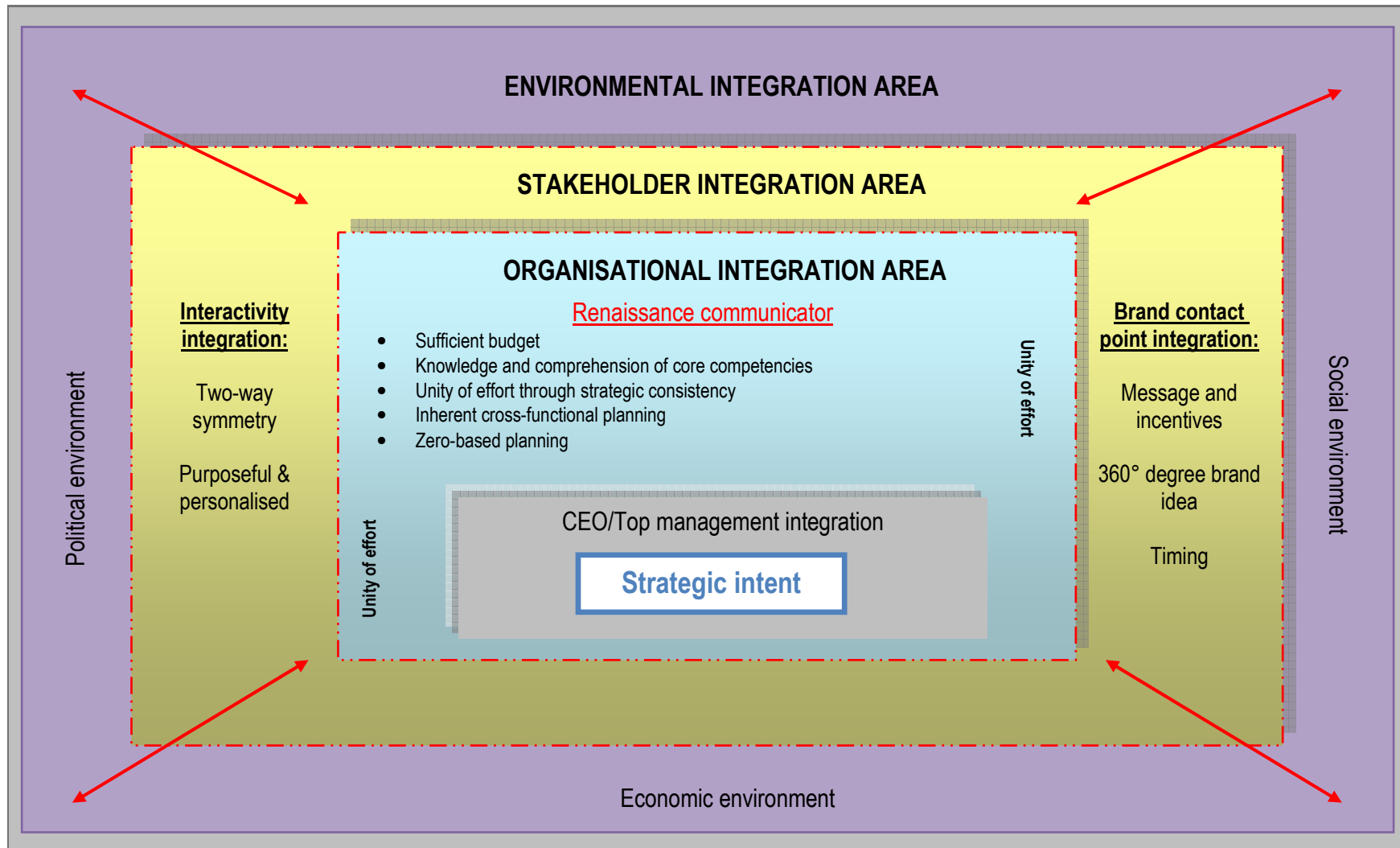
4.2.1.1 Principle 1: Strategic intent

The first principle relates to the fact that strategic integrated communication is driven by the long-term strategic plan of the organisation, in other words, by the strategic intent (Niemann, 2005:247). Internally, by integrating the mission into an organisation's operations, it serves as a call for unity and provides employees with the necessary direction and focus (Duncan, 2002:24). Externally, by integrating the mission into an organisation's relationship-building activities, it serves as a creator of trust, credibility and integrity in the context of stakeholder relationships (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:128). The prominence of mission-driven communication is highlighted in Niemann's (2005) conceptual model.

4.2.1.2 Principle 2: Organisational learning

The second principle represents an outflow of systems theory and points to organisational learning principles, which continually repositions the organisation (Niemann, 2005:247). Montuori (2000:62,64) argues that organisations realise the importance of a continuing and interactive dialogue with the external dynamic environment in order to learn and ultimately survive. Niemann (2005:248) confirms the importance of the organisation being aware of environmental changes taking place. The learning agenda further generates a need for the dissemination of knowledge throughout the organisation, sharing information across functions and thereby empowering employee decision-making at all levels (Montuori, 2000:67).

Figure 4.2: A conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication



Source: Niemann (2005:24)

Before continuing, a graphical explanation of the model in figure 4.2 is also necessary. The dotted lines representing the boundaries between the organisation, its stakeholders and its environment indicate the open-system nature of the model; they symbolise the free flow of information between the various parts of the model. This implied interaction is based on a relationship management, two-way symmetrical communication perspective (Niemann, 2005:246).

Furthermore, several components are highlighted: (i) the arrows representing organisational learning principles, (ii) the strategic intent of the organisation and (iii) the renaissance communicator which represents both marketing management and communication management as the coordination centre for communication, ensuring alignment with organisational objectives. Niemann (2005:246) explains that these components are highlighted to illustrate the essence of the model, namely that the strategic intent of the organisation drives all communication, ensuring unity in communication effort throughout the organisation, based on what is learned from the environment and its stakeholders.

According to the conceptual model, three distinct areas need to be integrated for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, i.e. the environment, the stakeholders and the organisation.

4.2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION AREA

In Niemann's conceptual model the environment refers to the political, social, economic and related environments which are characterised by ongoing change. Organisations operating within dynamic environments need to emphasise organisational learning in order to survive (Montuori, 2000:62). When this integration area is included organisations should operate as open systems (Niemann, 2005:260).

4.2.3 STAKEHOLDER INTEGRATION AREA

Niemann's (2005:255) conceptual model is based on a stakeholder approach, which implies consideration of all the organisation's stakeholders that have an interest in the organisation, not only the customer. Niemann motivates this by pointing out that the value-field approach of Duncan and Moriarty (1997:11-15) forms a fundamental principle of the model. The value-field approach argues that a typical brand exists

within an interconnected field of stakeholder interactions where it is essential to manage all stakeholder relationships, since brand equity is a result of an entire field of relationships (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:12-13). This also highlights the importance of an integrated approach to communication.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:56) state that stakeholders have a choice to either provide support to the organisation or withhold it. Once an individual makes the choice to become a stakeholder, that automatically provides that individual with the right to both understand and influence the organisation. Niemann (2005:256-257) states that the conceptual model recognises the importance of stakeholder involvement through an outside-in approach to communication to facilitate the relationship-building process. The stakeholder integration area of Niemann's (2005:256) conceptual model recognises two levels of integration: (i) interactivity integration and (ii) brand contact point integration.

4.2.3.1 Interactivity integration

The first level of interactivity integration is based on two communication ideas, namely two-way symmetrical communication and purposeful, personalised interaction.

4.2.3.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

Niemann (2005:256) points out that this interactivity is based on a two-way symmetrical relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders, as rooted in the excellence theory of Grunig (1992:289). Two-way symmetrical communication is based on dialogue and the exchange of information, use being made of various research approaches to facilitate understanding between the organisation and its stakeholders.

4.2.3.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:95), interactivity from a customer's point of view is seen in accessibility, responsiveness and accountability. From an organisation's point of view, interactivity translates into the ability to speak and listen and accordingly adapt the organisation's behaviour. However, to be interactive an organisation has to place more emphasis on listening than on sending messages to stakeholders.

Interactive media, i.e. media that offer two-way communication opportunities (Duncan, 2002:138), can be utilised to both send messages and receive and capture messages from stakeholders, to create a long-term purposeful dialogue. Purposeful dialogue can be described as a type of communication that is mutually beneficial for the stakeholder and the company. It results from the willingness of the organisation to learn more about stakeholders (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:97,114).

New computer and communication technology and the commitment of an organisation to listen to stakeholders will enable the collection of stakeholder data and the formulation of purposeful, individualised communication. Databases enable data-driven communication and encompass the identification of stakeholders, learning about stakeholders, and tracking of all stakeholder interactions (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:111,123).

4.2.3.2 Brand contact point integration

The second level on which stakeholder integration takes place is known as brand contact point integration (Niemann, 2005:258). In Niemann's (2005) conceptual model a brand contact point is defined as any situation in which a stakeholder has the opportunity to be exposed to a brand message (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:96). Duncan and Moriarty (1997:97) describe the communication management requirements of brand contact points: (i) identification, (ii) prioritising contact points based on potential impact, (iii) determining which contact points are most suitable for facilitating stakeholder feedback, (iv) determining the cost of both sending and collecting stakeholder data at a contact point and (v) lastly identifying contact points that can carry additional brand information and facilitate purposeful dialogue. Brand contact point integration is further based on three distinct ideas.

4.2.3.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

Niemann (2005:259) explains the importance of engaging stakeholders in a continuous dialogue with the organisation which in turn enables the organisation to learn. This author applies the 360° brand idea of Owrid and Grimes (quoted in Niemann, 2005:259) to the model by stating that the organisation should be:

(i) focused on what needs to be achieved, (ii) be neutral in terms of the ways in which the organisation plans to obtain it and (iii) ensure strategic consistent communication interaction with all stakeholders.

4.2.3.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

The organisation cannot develop effective messages and utilise effective delivery systems unless it understands its stakeholders. According to Niemann (2005:258-259), this forms a basic premise of the conceptual model, and he urges the renaissance communicator to customise messages and delivery systems in order to be stakeholder appropriate.

4.2.3.3 Timing of messages is based on stakeholder preferences

The timing of messages should be based on stakeholder preferences; this forms an additional principle of the conceptual model (Niemann, 2005:259-260). It is argued that the organisation should develop ways to collect more information about stakeholders.

4.2.4 ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRATION AREA

The organisational integration area comprises ideas relating to: (i) CEO/top management integration, (ii) renaissance communicator requirements and (iii) horizontal and vertical communication integration.

4.2.4.1 CEO/top management integration

CEO/top management integration implies the consistent communication of the organisational mission to the lower levels of the organisation. Where leaders and managers communicate in matters of business strategy and thereby motivate employees to align with the strategic intent of the organisation, this is labelled as best practice in corporate communication (Gay, 2005:34-35). Niemann (2005:250) refers to the importance of managers being aware of the role of communication in determining the long-term strategic plan of the organisation. Further, the renaissance communicator is the recommended source to remind the CEO/top management of the importance of communication.

4.2.4.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

Niemann's (2005:250) conceptual model is based on Gayeski and Woodward's (1996:[2]) idea of the renaissance communicator. A strategic approach to communication management is advanced where all communication activity contributes to the achievement of the organisation's goals. Niemann (2005:250-251) explains the importance for the renaissance communicator to understand business issues and be part of the top management of the organisation to contribute to organisational problem-solving processes.

Niemann (2005:251) interprets the principles of Hunter's (1997;1999; quoted by Niemann) integrated communication model by presenting them as the underlying foundations of the renaissance communicator in her own model: (i) constant coordination and cooperation between public relations and marketing, (ii) public relations and marketing are perceived as equally important contributors to organisational success, (iii) marketing communication is moved from the marketing department to the renaissance communicator department where the latter will consist of public relations and marketing communication and lastly (iv) the renaissance communicator is a member of the dominant coalition and hierarchically placed just below the CEO. Five prerequisites for the functioning of the renaissance communicator are as follows.

4.2.4.2.1 Budget

According to Niemann (2005:251-252), the conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication requires sufficient budget to ensure effectiveness. The budget is determined based on the perceived importance of communication in the organisation, i.e. especially the perceptions of top management.

4.2.4.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competences

Niemann (2005:252-253) explains the need for core competences by adapting the ideas of Duncan and Moriarty (1997:192-193). The renaissance communicator needs three levels of core competence. First, there is a need for understanding the organisation's competitive advantage or core competence and for ensuring that communication reflects the latter. The organisation's core competence contains the mission

and therefore it is important for the renaissance communicator to integrate the mission in all stakeholder relationship-building efforts. The second level relates to the need for understanding how the organisation functions to allow for effective internal positioning in the organisation. The last level relates to the need for competence in managing integrated communication and stakeholder relationships.

4.2.4.2.3 Strategic consistency to ensure unity in effort

According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:17,70) strategic consistency refers to the coordination of all messages that contribute to the creation of customer and stakeholder perceptions of the organisation. Management needs to monitor the various brand contact points and to ensure alignment with overall business strategy. Thus by strategically integrating the brand's positioning in all communication efforts the result is a consistent and distinct organisational identity and reputation, i.e. organisational integrity.

4.2.4.2.4 Cross-functional planning

Duncan (2002:90) defines cross-functional planning as planning that involves various departments and functions. Niemann (2005:253-254) explains that an organisation's major departments which affect stakeholders should have a means of working collectively in both the planning and monitoring of brand relationships, resulting in an integrated communication approach (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:61).

4.2.4.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

Zero-based communication planning implies that all communication objectives and strategies should be justified in terms of current conditions and what needs to be done to improve relationships at that moment as opposed to adjusting last year's allocations and programs (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:18). Niemann (2005:254) further points out that zero-based communication planning resembles a learning organisation approach, and suggests the selection of communication tools based on what is learned from the stakeholders and the environment.

4.2.4.3 Horizontal and vertical communication integration

Niemann's (2005:248) organisational integration area is based on horizontal and vertical integration ideas as conceptualised in Gronstedt's (2000:18) three-dimensional integration approach to communication. Horizontal communication integration connects skills, assets and processes by means of facilitating a free flow of communication across departments, business units and regions of organisations. The key to successful horizontal integration is the creation of teamwork and job rotation opportunities (Gronstedt, 2000:117). Vertical communication integration aims to create dialogue among all employee ranks in the organisation. It enables management to keep in touch with front-line workers and therefore the organisation's customers. This is also referred to as "bottom-up communication". But vertical communication integration also enables "top-down communication" where managers create employee understanding regarding the strategic context in which the organisation operates and achieve employee alignment with the organisational strategy (Gronstedt, 2000:17,88).

Finally, Niemann's (2005:243-260) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication focuses on the interaction between the organisation, its stakeholders and the environment, in order to manage strategic integrated communication with the ultimate objective of building strong brand relationships.

4.3 EXPLORING THE APPLICATION POSSIBILITIES OF NIEMANN'S CONCEPTUAL MODEL TO THE NONPROFIT ORGANISATION WEBSITE

Today nonprofit organisations are allocating more resources to their websites as a valuable component of new information and communication technology opportunities (Hackler & Saxton, 2007:476). Tech Encyclopedia (2007) defines a website as a collection of electronic webpages connected with each other and also connected to other websites. In order to be classified as a website, content should be on-line 24 hours each day. Research by Goldstuck and Ambrose (2007:30) evaluating the impact of information and communication technologies on the South African nonprofit sector found that 84 % of nonprofit respondents had a functioning website. Websites were being utilised for three main purposes: for (i) marketing (65 %),

(ii) campaigning (48 %) and (iii) branding (45 %). The South African nonprofit sector recognises the web environment as a relevant communication tool in its organisational strategies.

4.3.1 PRINCIPLES OF THE MODEL

The principles of (i) strategic intent and (ii) organisational learning will now be contextualised within the nonprofit organisation website environment, with an exploration of possible application opportunities.

4.3.1.1 Principle 1: Strategic intent

“Mission is perhaps the defining feature of a nonprofit organisation” (Phills, 2005:20). The nonprofit mission represents the psychological and emotional logic that drives the entire organisation and defines the social value, i.e. spiritual, moral, environmental, intellectual, societal or aesthetic value which the organisation creates (Phills, 2005:22). Powell (2005:22) states that the nonprofit mission clarifies the “business” in which an organisation operates and includes the scope of what the organisation wishes to accomplish, e.g. to eradicate a disease, provide shelter to the homeless, defend human rights or to protect endangered species (Love & Reardon, 2005:164). Mission serves as the basis on which the organisational strategy is formulated. Powell (2005:19-20) defines strategy as a clearly expressed, mission-driven and organisation-specific roadmap that outlines the necessary activities that need to be accomplished in order to achieve the organisational mission.

When applying this argument to a nonprofit website context, various authors emphasise the alignment between the organisational mission and strategy, and website communication. First, according to Hart (2005:9) the website should present itself as a truthful source of information relating to the organisational mission; website communication should reflect the mission. Secondly, nonprofit organisations should perceive a website as a mission-marketing tool and use the website to create a distinctive brand, thus enhancing the unique organisational mission on-line (AlderConsulting, 2005; Powell, 2005:18). Thirdly, according to Wilson (2003:[2]) the ability of a nonprofit website in relaying the mission directly impacts on the effectiveness of the website and the frequency with which the website is recommended to others. After constituents have visited a nonprofit website, they should fully understand the organisational purpose and

how the organisation accomplishes it. Wilson (2003:[2]) argues that the latter condition requires more than a mere on-line posting of the mission statement. And lastly, according to Hackler and Saxton (2007:480) new developments such as website technology should be utilised to support and enhance specific mission-related activities.

Certain aspects of the nonprofit mission should then be articulated and reflected in the website communication. After an individual has visited the nonprofit website certain aspects of the mission should be clearly understood. Anheier (2005:176-178) identifies these aspects for a good nonprofit mission: (i) the organisation's purpose and long-term goals, (ii) the specific needs that the organisation addresses, (iii) the organisation's core values and operating principles and (iv) the organisation's aspirations for the future.

4.3.1.2 Principle 2: Organisational learning

Edwards (2002:331) states that organisational learning is an essential element for organisational effectiveness not only in the private and public sectors of the economy, but also in the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit organisations are faced with an ever-changing and demanding operational environment since they are expected to deliver services of a high quality in order to overcome environmental complexities (Britton, 2005:6; Lettieri *et al.*, 2004:16). Organisations are further realising that a dynamic competitive environment requires learning principles in order to ensure organisational longevity, effectiveness, adaptability, innovation and sustainability (Britton, 2005:5; Montuori, 2000:62). Montuori (2000:66) argues that when organisations undergo adaptive change in response to a dynamic environment organisational learning takes place.

Currently, nonprofit organisations are faced with both learning problems and a learning advantage (Britton, 2005:11-12; Edwards, 2002:333). Firstly, although the nonprofit sector acknowledges learning as an important process, the sector is struggling to incorporate the monitoring and evaluation of information into future planning processes. Secondly, the processes and mechanisms associated with organisational learning are primarily concerned with the creation of interpersonal relationships or connections for the purpose of generating information and knowledge. Among the various values characterising the nonprofit sector the central value of communication, which leads to relationship formation, provides the sector with a

comparative learning advantage. The central nonprofit value of communication assists in the generation of information and knowledge which enable organisational learning.

It is argued that the organisational learning principle forms the foundation for effective nonprofit functioning within a dynamic operating context. Within the context of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, the operating context includes the environmental, stakeholder and organisational integration areas. Niemann's (2005) conceptualisation of the learning environment is similar to the environmental conceptualisation of Steyn and Puth (2000:57-58). Three learning environments can be identified: (i) the macro-environment consisting of factors that cannot be controlled by the organisation, (ii) the task environment consisting of the organisation's various stakeholders and (iii) the internal environment, i.e. the internal workings of the organisation. For the purpose of the present study, organisational learning principles are not considered for their direct application possibilities to the nonprofit website environment. It is accepted that they cannot be observed adequately by just viewing the nonprofit website.

4.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION AREA

"How should they [nonprofit leaders] respond to the increasingly uncertain and interconnected environments in which their organisations operate?" (Bryson, 2004:xi). According to Bryson (2004:xi) the leaders and managers of nonprofit organisations should be effective strategists, thus enabling these entities to achieve their missions. Strategies need to be formulated in order to assist the organisation in adjusting and adapting to a changed environment (Bryson, 2004:xii). Such organisational changes will normally be reflected in the nonprofit organisation's website communication.

As previously discussed in Section 4.3.1.1, the nonprofit mission defines the purpose of the organisation and demarcates the "business" the nonprofit organisation engages in. When applying the idea of environmental integration to the nonprofit website, that nonprofit website communication should reflect their knowledge regarding the political, social or economical issue that is being addressed by the organisational mission. Thus website content should be related to the area of the nonprofit organisation's work. For instance, if the nonprofit organisation works in the field of AIDS, the website should contain information

about the disease, e.g. general information, statistics and useful external links (Ritchie, 2006:26). Hart (2005:9) agrees and recommends that the nonprofit website should be perceived as a rich source of information related to the organisational mission. Also according to Ritchie (2006:26) the quality of the website content is an important factor for generating return visits.

4.3.3 STAKEHOLDER INTEGRATION AREA

The nonprofit organisation is surrounded by a diverse set of stakeholders who provide challenges and complications for the communication management function (Chandler, 2002:92). According to Phills (2005:5) the nonprofit organisation is faced with pressures from various stakeholders to achieve the organisational mission within a specific financial limit. Chandler (2002:92) defines a nonprofit stakeholder as a vocal constituency interested in the activities of the organisation as opposed to only stakeholders who provide financial assistance. Because nonprofit stakeholders are no longer perceived as just donors the nonprofit organisation now operates within a dynamic environment with a multiplicity of stakeholders (Chandler, 2002:92-93; Drucker, 1990:92).

The nonprofit organisation website applies the idea of “multiple stakeholders” when website communication demonstrates awareness of a multiple stakeholder environment surrounding the mission: beneficiaries or clients, the media, the general public, the board of directors, donors, government bodies, corporations, other nonprofit organisations, volunteers and industry bodies.

Additionally, it is important to recognise the interconnected nature of a group of nonprofit stakeholders and to implement a consistent rationale or thematic approach towards the management of these interrelationships. Stated differently, a consistent thematic communication approach to the management of multiple nonprofit stakeholder relationships creates stakeholder perceptions of nonprofit effectiveness (Balsler & McClusky, 2005:310), which in turn is crucial for nonprofit sustainability. The information exchanged among the various stakeholders regarding the nonprofit organisation will appear congruent and consistent, increasing nonprofit predictability and reducing stakeholder uncertainty (Balsler & McClusky, 2005:298,311).

Consistent communication across different stakeholder groups requires website communication in the form of multiple messages directly related to the achievement of the organisational mission, or of stakeholder messages that are strategically driven to help achieve the organisational mission.

Further, the stakeholder integration area operates on two levels: (i) interactivity integration and (ii) brand contact point integration, whose website applicability will be explored next.

4.3.3.1 Interactivity integration

Interactivity integration is based on two ideas: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised interaction.

4.3.3.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

Potts (2005:146) recommends utilising the power and reach of the Internet for the purpose of building stakeholder relationships. Hart (2005:4) contends that the Internet, including website technology, allows the nonprofit organisation to create dialogues, i.e. two-way communication, thus establishing stakeholder relationships. From these, the nonprofit organisations should learn how its stakeholders interact with the organisation's messages (Haji & Neichin, 2005:91).

Hart (2005:2) emphasises the principle of approaching the Internet, firstly, as a relationship-building tool and, secondly, for the purpose of fundraising. Relationship-building activities are crucial for nonprofit fundraising,. Nonprofit organisation websites implementing the latter philosophy can be described as "dynamic, interactive informative websites" (Farouk & Prytz, 2003:14) that offer the visitor the opportunity to both receive information from the organisation and to communicate with the organisation. The interactive, relationship-building approach to website communication stands in sharp contrast to the utilisation of the website only as a publisher of information while ignoring the importance of establishing feedback loops (Haji & Neichin, 2005:91).

The combination of technology, relationship-building and fundraising leads to a concept labelled "ePhilanthropy" (Hart, 2005:2). ePhilanthropy can be described as a set of efficiency-building Internet-based

techniques such as the fostering of dialogue/two-way communication/interactivity, utilised for the purpose of enhancing relationships with constituents interested in the success or failure of the organisation. Clolery (quoted in Greenfield, 2005:285) summarises the concept of ePhilanthropy:

“A charities website has to provide the opportunity for relationship-building. It must provide communication. It must be entertainingly interactive, and it must provide an opportunity to give.”

At this stage it is appropriate to refer to previous South African research relating to the investigation of nonprofit organisation websites and their application of two-way symmetrical communication principles. From the South African nonprofit websites that were analysed, Naudé (2001:275) found that most of the websites displayed a lack of interactive and two-way symmetrical communication principles, and that websites were mainly utilised as information dissemination tools.

Further, the perspective of Hart (2005:2) correlates closely with findings from Naudé (2001:275). She argues that successful fundraising depends on a good relationship between the organisation and the stakeholder. As long as South African nonprofit organisation websites are regarded solely as an information dissemination tool, two-way symmetrical principles will be lacking and the result will be failure to establish potential relationships and ultimately failure to raise funds in support of the mission.

The idea of two-way symmetrical communication can be applied to the nonprofit website by investigating technical criteria or frameworks relating to the processes of web-based dialogue or interactivity. In her study Naudé (2001:114-120) used two frameworks to illustrate the implementation of two-way symmetrical principles to the nonprofit website: (i) dimensions of interactivity as distinguished by Ha and James (1998) and (ii) web-based dialogical principles developed by Kent and Taylor (1998). Both frameworks are utilised for the purpose of this study. In addition, a framework from current communication management literature presented by Ki and Hon (2006) is considered; it focuses on the maintenance of web-based relationships.

- **Dimensions of interactivity**

Ha and James (1998:3-4,6) present the first interactivity dimension as **playfulness**. The authors interpret this dimension as consisting of special curiosity arousal devices which are those devices attracting the attention of the website visitor and encouraging participation. The presence of these devices creates a playful environment and enables the website visitor to engage in self-communication. Application possibilities include, e.g. (i) the basic question and answer format, (ii) on-line games which require skill and competence on the part of the participant, (iii) opinion polls encouraging self-communication and thought (Figure 4.3 serves as an example of an opinion poll on <http://www.sangonet.org.za/portal/>) (SANGONET 2008) or the presence of some other device which causes curiosity on the part of the website visitor, encourages participation and thus leads to interactivity.

Figure 4.3: Opinion polling on the SANGONeT website



Source: SANGONeT (2008)

Choice (Ha & James, 1998:4,6) represents the second dimension of interactivity. Choice relates both to the uninhibited navigation of a website and to minimizing the effort needed to complete a specific task. If presented with choices, specifically choices relating to non-informational alternatives (Ha & James, 1998:6), the website visitor will feel empowered and motivated to spend more time on the website.

Naudé (2001:114) picked on three choices in her study of ten South African nonprofit organisation websites. The first choice relates to the option of on-line membership registration in order to gain access to a password-protected, members-only section of the website (Ritchie, 2006:6). The requirement of member registration restricts the navigation of the website and lowers interactivity levels. The second choice relates to the option of language preference and the third to the choice of either a text or graphic version of the website, thereby enabling individuals with different web browsers to view the site. More choices or options relate to higher possible levels of visitor-website interaction.

The third dimension of interactivity relates to a feeling of **connectedness** which is enabled by hypertext (Ha & James, 1998:4,6-7). Johnston (1999:7) describes the functioning of hypertext as the process of pointing and clicking the mouse on a hypertext link, instructing the computer to (i) go to the address embedded within the link and (ii) to retrieve the document housed within that specific link.

Naudé (2001:114) distinguished between two types of hyperlinks. Firstly, an internal link providing the website visitor with links to information contained within the organisation's website. Internal links are, e.g. (i) links to general information relating to the organisation and its programs or services, (ii) links to graphical information and (iii) links to advertisements. Secondly, an external link is defined as a link that takes the website visitor to a completely new webpage, with no link provided to return back to the original website. External links are, e.g. (i) links to general information and (ii) links to advertisements. Ha and James (1998:6) are of the opinion that a highly interactive website should provide a high level of connected information.

Information collection devices represent the fourth interactivity dimension (Ha & James, 1998:4-5,7). According to Naudé (2001:115) this dimension refers to the need of the nonprofit organisation to collect information about website visitors.

Firstly, overt monitoring devices – information collection attempts of which the website visitor is aware – may include a membership registration requirement or a device displaying the number of website visitors. The nonprofit organisation can also conduct an on-line survey (Ritchie, 2006:28) and attempt to extract useful information regarding its website visitors. Questions might be, for example, whether it is the first time

the visitor served the website, and if so where the visitor had heard about the organisation and where or how the organisation's web address had been obtained. Visitors might also be asked what they thought of the website, and be requested to rate the site before they leave.

Secondly, covert monitoring devices – information attempts of which the website visitor is not aware – may include unobtrusive technological research feedback that can easily be obtained from the nonprofit organisation's web hosting company (Ritchie, 2006:28). Information that can be collected includes e.g. the number of visitors that entered the website, the most often visited webpage, how many times visitors returned to the website or how long website visitors spend on a specific webpage. The presence of covert information collection attempts is not readily detectable on the nonprofit organisation's website and will therefore not be included in the analysis.

The last dimension of interactivity relates to the idea of **reciprocal communication** on the organisation's website (Ha & James, 1998:5,7) or, according to Naudé (2001:115), two-way symmetrical communication. In the latter situation each participant in the communication process has the power to both initiate and receive messages, with the initiator expecting some sort of response or feedback (Ha & James, 1998:5). Cooley (1999:41) states that the devices for establishing dialogue are especially geared towards the creation of relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders. Creating an interactive website environment geared towards relationship-building involves two recommended steps (Cooley, 1999:41-42):

First, the organisational website should be utilised to provide information regarding the organisation's various stakeholder relationships. The first step relates to Hurme's (2001:73) first level of interactivity, i.e. quasi-interactivity as discussed in Section 3.4.3. Quasi-interactivity relates to the use of the organisational website as an information dissemination tool that allows the visitor to search for information and creates the possibility for future dialogue. The first step also relates to the first two levels of interactivity presented by Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, 2006:304), discussed in Section 3.4.2. The first level involves the mere presentation of information, allowing the website visitor to read prepared material, whereas the second level enables the visitor to actively search for information, aided by the inclusion of hyperlinks on the web pages. Then, the first step (Cooley, 1999:41-42) also includes the "response mechanisms" of Ha and James (1998:7), i.e. any mechanism through which the website visitor could

communicate with the website owner, e.g. the provision of organisational contact details such as e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, toll-free numbers or physical address.

Secondly, the website should include devices encouraging dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders, such as chatrooms or forums, to facilitate on-line discussions (Cooley, 1999:42). The second step relates to Hurme's (2001:73) second level of interactivity, i.e. two-way, truly interactive communication as discussed in Section 3.4.3. Two-way, truly interactive communication leads to a deeper understanding between the organisation and its stakeholders, e.g. by the inclusion of a discussion area where website visitors can communicate with each other and with the organisation. The second step also relates to the third level of interactivity as presented by Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, 2006:304), as discussed in Section 3.4.2. This third level allows the website visitor to get personally involved with the webpage, e.g. by the inclusion of an on-line feedback form that allows the website visitor to direct feedback or questions directly to the organisation (Ha & James, 1998:7), thus establishing a relationship.

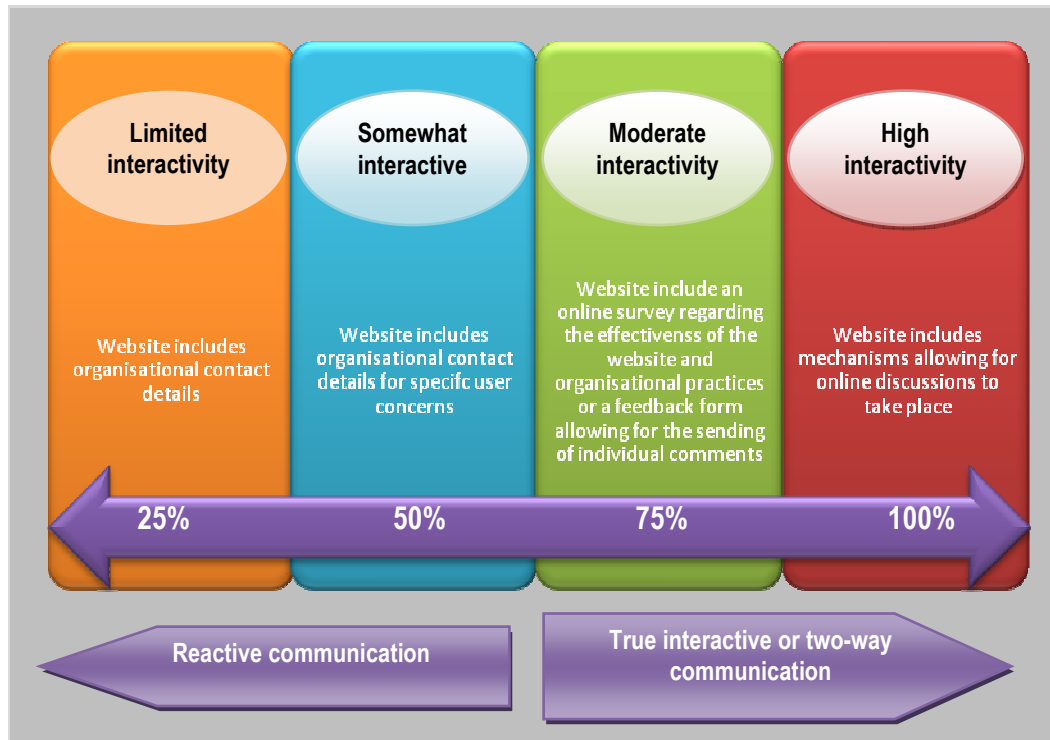
A specific new trend emerging relates to the use of weblogs to create "effective, ethical, two-way relationship building" (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007:229). A weblog is a type of website that is moderated by a designated individual who creates materials him/herself, edits submissions from weblog users, gathers related information from other locations on the web or a combination of all three possibilities (WebDesignInSite, 2008). It serves as a platform for ongoing discussions between the authors and the readers (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007:227), producing a richer understanding between the organisation and its stakeholders.

According to Naudé (2001:115) the dimension of reciprocal communication can be described in terms of a continuum ranging from reactive communication at the one end to true interactive or two-way communication at the other end. Cooley's (1999:41-42) recommended steps can be classified as follows: the first step leans more towards the reactive communication end of the continuum whereas the second step leans more towards the true interactive or two-way communication end of the continuum.

On the basis of this continuum aspect, Naudé (2001:115) suggests the possibility of qualitatively rating an organisation's website by utilising Cooley's (1999:42) rating scale. Naudé (2001:115) adapted the scale to

present the following interactivity continuum, ranging from limited interactivity on the lowest point to high interactivity on the highest point of the scale as illustrated in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Rating the level of website interactivity on an interactivity continuum



Source: Own conceptualisation

Next, Kent and Taylor's (1998) principles for dialogic web-based communication will be discussed. The discussion only deals with the ideas unique to these authors, so as to avoid duplication.

- **Principles of dialogic web-based communication**

A first principle relates to the incorporation of **dialogical feedback loops** on websites. According to Kent and Taylor (1998:326) a dialogical feedback loop allows website visitors to query organisations, but more significant is the organisation's ability to then respond. Websites should provide contact details for a variety of stakeholder groups and concerns. But what is more important, according to Kent and Taylor (1998:327), is the organisation's response to these enquiries. A dialogically effective website should enable and encourage the organisation to respond to stakeholder inquiries or should lead to the enquiry being routed to knowledgeable individuals within the organisation who are able to assist (Kent, 1998/1999:32).

A second principle relates to the **generation of return visits**. A website should contain features motivating visitors to return on a regular basis. One of the most important features relates to updated information (Kent & Taylor, 1998:329). In many cases the website represents the first channel consulted by stakeholders in their search for “up-to-the-minute” (Kent, 1998/1999:31) information. A website that is constantly updated with new information creates perceptions of organisational credibility and responsiveness and creates the condition for dialogue-based relationships (Kent & Taylor, 1998:329). Ritchie (2006:27) highlights the positive impact of updated information on visitor perceptions by recommending that an on-line events calendar be updated by deleting information as soon as the specific date has passed.

A last principle relates to **intuitiveness or ease of use of the interface**. Website visitors should find the site easy to understand and use (Kent, 1998/1999:33; Kent & Taylor, 1998:329-330). Features that could enhance the latter include: (i) a navigation menu that is clear, consistent and well organised, allowing website visitors to always be aware of where they are on the site, (ii) a website architecture that allows for easy visitor access to the most requested organisational information (Irish, 2005:79) and (iii) the conceptualisation of website content as mainly text-based, not graphics-based, due to the argument that a well type-set page gains more attention than a graphical interface.

Next, Ki and Hon’s (2006) criteria for enhancing online relationships will be explored for their unique contribution to how two-way symmetrical communication can be applied to the nonprofit website.

- **Web-based relationship maintenance strategies**

Ki and Hon (2006:32-33) point to **positivity** as a required condition in strategies for website relationship maintenance. Positivity is an attempt from the organisation's side to make website use easier by means of the following devices: (i) clear labelling and operational links on the site, resulting in easy navigation, (ii) the inclusion of a sitemap which provides the visitor with a categorized outline of the website content and (iii) the provision of a search engine enabling the visitor to search for specific content by typing selected keywords. The inclusion of these navigational devices ensures that the website is user-friendly and contributes to the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders.

Openness and disclosure applied to the website further contributes to the maintenance of web-based relationships. According to Ki and Hon (2006:33) the following are considered as indicators of openness: (i) an organisational overview including a description of the organisation's history, how the organisation is organised, how the organisation works, its capabilities and operating environment, (ii) news releases and (iii) annual reports. Organisations using their websites to "self disclose" (Ki & Hon, 2006:36) create desirable relational outcomes such as trust.

Networking represents an additional relationship maintenance strategy. According to Coombs (quoted in Ki & Hon, 2006:37) the on-line environment creates linkages among like-minded stakeholders. The organisational website can be utilised to exhibit an organisation's networking activities by providing information regarding: (i) the different groups or individuals the organisation is working with and (ii) the nature of the organisation's activities relative to each individual or group. This strategy is highly applicable to the nonprofit website and provides the organisation with the opportunity to exhibit its relationships with: (i) a selected organisational ambassador or (ii) corporate partners.

4.3.3.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

Purposeful, personalised interaction is the second idea on which interactivity integration is based. The challenge for organisations is to collect relevant information from website visitors with the intention of generating future messages that are targeted, individualised and personal (Gignac, J. & Gignac, P., 2005:57). It is not possible to directly observe personalised future communication by viewing the current nonprofit organisation website. However, when the website contains devices for collecting visitor information about individual communication preferences, it is safe to deduce that the intention of the organisation is to use this information for the creation of future, personalised communication.

4.3.3.2 Brand contact point integration

The nonprofit sector acknowledges the power the Internet holds in the creation and maintenance of stakeholder relationships. According to Mogus and LaCroix (2005:100-108), taking the nonprofit brand on-line creates an opportunity for the organisation to present its values and brand essence to a global

audience. On-line branding enables the website visitor to experience the brand and form the foundation of visitor perceptions related to credibility. The nonprofit website is described as an environment in which brand relationships come to life resulting in two-way communication processes. Today website audiences are no longer passive receivers of information but rather active and involved individuals contributing to the creation of the organisational brand (Mogus & LaCroix, 2005:105).

In the present study only one brand contact point is explored, viz. the nonprofit organisation website. However, more than one brand contact point or engagement device can exist within a single nonprofit website. Brand contact point integration is based on three ideas.

4.3.3.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

The aim of branding is to establish meaningful relationships with stakeholders and to create trust towards the organisation (Hershey, 2005:12). Central to a branding orientation is the fostering of dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders (Ewing & Napoli, 2003:845). This can be achieved by the inclusion of stakeholder engagement devices which offer website visitors the opportunity to interact with and experience the brand. Haji and Neichin (2005:84) refer to these devices as “action ware” which allows the visitor to accomplish actions supportive of the organisational mission. The inclusion of these devices will ensure that the stakeholder participates in shaping the organisational brand rather than remain a passive receiver (Mogus & LaCroix, 2005:105).

The following is a list of web-based opportunities for interaction. Though not exhaustive, the list outlines the possible ways in which stakeholder engagement or involvement can be achieved:

- i. **On-line donation facility:** Allows a visitor to directly transfer money from an account belonging to them into a nonprofit organisation’s account. According to Farouk and Prytz (2003:5) the most common payment method used in South Africa is on-line credit card payments.
- ii. **Selling of goods or services:** Ritchie (2006:8) confirms that nonprofit organisations can have sections of their websites devoted to the selling of goods and services. The aim is to support the nonprofit organisation’s quest for financial sustainability and the achievement of the mission.

- iii. **On-line fundraising campaign:** An on-line fundraising campaign is implemented for a specific cause at a specific time. Ritchie (2006:11) encourages the use of multimedia in creating a successful on-line experience for the website visitor, e.g. if a nonprofit is raising money for a building, website visitors can click on and drag a “brick” into position.
- iv. **On-line event management:** Most of a nonprofit organisation’s programs or activities can be announced on-line, resulting in the creation of an on-line event. King and Sheridan (2005:210) cite the example of a nonprofit hosting an on-line golfing tournament in which golfers are requested to create a personal profile by outlining the reasons why they felt the organisation had a worthy cause, and to distribute these personalised solicitations within their social networks.
- v. **On-line membership recruitment:** The nonprofit website encourages greater involvement by inviting a visitor to register as a member of the organisation or take any other further steps that result in the organisation capturing the contact details of such members for the purpose of contacting them in the future (Johnston, 1999:80). The interactive nature of web technology aids in this process and contributes to relationship-building efforts.
- vi. **On-line staff recruitment:** Due to the reach and inexpensive nature of Internet technology the nonprofit can use its website to announce available job opportunities. Interested individuals can use the information on the site to gain an overview of the organisation’s mission and programs. Thereafter interested individuals can submit their resumés over the Web (Johnston, 1999:81-82).
- vii. **On-line volunteer recruitment:** A nonprofit organisation can post information regarding current volunteer needs on its website. It can further provide an online form to be completed by the website visitor in an effort to match the individual’s skills and interests to possible volunteer opportunities (Johnston, 1999:82; Li, 2005:135).

4.3.3.2.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

Irish (2005:79) emphasises the importance of a user-centred website design process to achieve content relevance. This notion reverses the publication equation that most nonprofit organisations are used to. Instead of starting with a collection of organisational information for dissemination, nonprofit organisations will then approach their websites from the outside inwards, by first trying to understand what kind of

information stakeholders seek. The nonprofit website should be able to provide the needed information as efficiently as possible (Irish, 2005:77).

Message relevance is reflected in a variety of website indicators: (i) a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page which provides visitors with an easy way of finding the information they are looking for (Irish, 2005:79), (ii) a section containing information how various stakeholders can get involved with the organisation and (iii) testimonials which reflect the brand experiences of individuals who were/are involved with the organisation and which have a content with a high potential for relevance to various stakeholder groups (Mogus & LaCroix, 2005:105).

Irish (2005:79) further suggests that the nonprofit organisation's website be evaluated for answers relating to four questions regarding the content of the site, as listed in Table 4.1. If the answers to these questions are easy to find it can be concluded that the website provides the visitor with relevant content.

Table 4.1: Four questions testing the relevancy of nonprofit website content

CONTENT RELEVANCY	
1.	What kinds of programs does the organisation offer?
2.	Who are the target groups or beneficiaries of this organisation?
3.	What are the contact details of the organisation?
4.	How can I get involved with this organisation?

Source: Irish (2005:79)

In addition to message relevance the nonprofit website needs to provide visitors with choices. In the first place, it should include choices regarding the information they wish to receive from the organisation, e.g. the option of subscribing to an electronic newsletter, or stating preferences in terms of the areas of information an individual is interested in (Potts, 2005:150). By soliciting individual communication preference information the nonprofit organisation is one step closer to building stakeholder relationships.

Secondly, the nonprofit website should provide the visitor with a choice of preferred communication channels, as different vehicles are appropriate for different stakeholders (Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, 2006:12). The key is to recognize the most preferred communication channel and utilise that channel at the right moment in the stakeholder's relationship with the organisation (Love & Reardon, 2005:163).

4.3.3.2.3 Timing of messages is based on stakeholder preferences

According to Potts (2005:159) nonprofit organisations need to ask not only what type of information the visitor prefers but also the frequency with which the visitor wishes to receive that communication. For example, the visitor can be presented with a variety of timing possibilities: (i) a monthly newsletter outlining accomplishments and stories, (ii) action alerts send to stakeholders whenever mobilization is required, (iii) “tell-a-friend-campaign” which contains information about a worthy cause and requests receivers to distribute it within their social networks or (iv) the choice of receiving communication whenever the organisation engages in a viral campaign (Love & Reardon, 2005:170).

4.3.4 ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRATION AREA

The present study does not consider Niemann’s (2005) organisational integration area for its direct application possibilities to the nonprofit website environment. The organisational integration area is characterised by an internal organisational focus which cannot be observed directly from viewing the nonprofit website.

4.4 SUMMARY

The multiple application possibilities of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model to the nonprofit website environment presented in this chapter lead up to the major research question of the present study: Does the given selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites apply Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication?

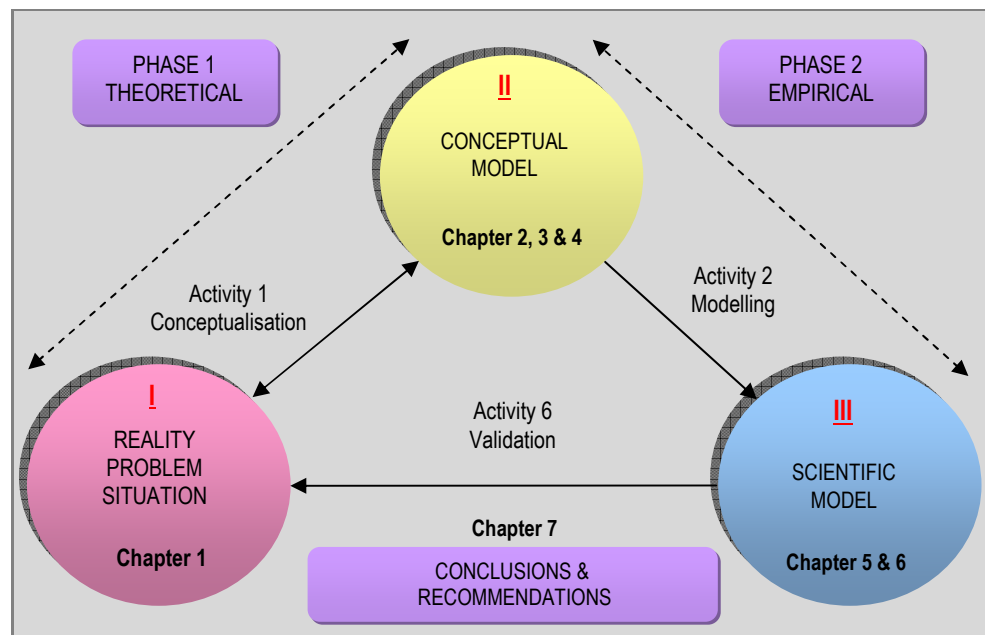
CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the systems view of problem-solving activity (Mitroff *et al.*, 1974:48), this chapter describes the empirical activities of the study. Figure 5.1 contextualises the chapter within the systems view of problem-solving activity.

Figure 5.1: Chapter 5 in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

Chapter 5 presents a description of the research methodology with attention being directed toward all research design decisions. The qualitative research paradigm is explained in terms of its application to the study. The chapter concludes with results pertaining to both the pilot study and the application of criteria relating to ensuring scientific soundness.

5.2 BROAD APPROACH TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

The section outlines the broad research approach taken to address the research problem: (i) a motivation for exploratory research and (ii) a motivation for the qualitative research paradigm.

5.2.1 A motivation for exploratory research

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:79) exploratory research entails exploring a topic or acquiring a basic familiarity with the topic. This type of research is typical under conditions where the research subject is relatively new. When the purpose of a study is to investigate little-understood phenomena it can be classified as an exploratory research approach (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:33). The primary focus of this study is exploration in the sense that: (i) the Internet and its main applications including the World Wide Web, represent new and unexplored communication areas and (ii) there is little empirical evidence regarding the implementation of strategic integrated communication within the context of the South African nonprofit website.

5.2.2 A motivation for the qualitative research paradigm

The ontological, epistemological and theoretical assumptions held by the researcher influence the way in which knowledge is acquired (Du Plooy, 2002:41). On these assumptions, as explained in Chapter 1, a qualitative research approach would be the most appropriate. In essence qualitative research focuses on the “qualitative aspects of communication experiences” (Du Plooy, 2002:29). Within this research paradigm a researcher is interested in discovering what certain phenomena are about, how phenomena appear on the surface, and their other possible levels of meaning (Henning, 2004:3). Thus, based on the researcher’s assumptions, a qualitative research approach is compatible with a communication management study (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:14) such as this one.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2002:14) qualitative research holds great potential for studies relating managed organisational communication. A qualitative research approach, with its focus on attempting to understand the qualities of communication experiences (Du Plooy, 2002:29), links well with communication management issues, one of which relates to the desire of organisations to adopt a stakeholder relationship

management perspective supported by a critical quality: dialogical communication. Dialogue can be described as a listening process, a respectful attitude towards stakeholders, the recognition of diversity, and as behaviour of thinking reflectively and critically about communication encounters (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:12). Niemann's (2005:246) conceptual model rests on strategically-driven communication with the intention of forming stakeholder relationships based on a two-way symmetrical communication approach. Thus a qualitative research approach is compatible with a concept such as strategic integrated communication.

5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research aims to understand certain realities (Flick, Von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004:3) and is informed by the interpretive worldview which exhibits unique characteristics (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:5).

5.3.1 Understanding of the research phenomenon

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:270-271) the primary goal of a qualitative research approach is to describe and understand certain behaviour – as indicated by the term “Verstehen” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270) –, rather than attempting to explain behaviour. Understanding phenomena within a particular context contributes particularly to understanding; this refers to the “thick” description found in qualitative research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:272). According to Henning (2004:6) a thick description describes a phenomenon coherently and provides facts, empirical data and an interpretation of the information within the framework of (i) other empirical information of the same study and (ii) a theoretical demarcation of the parameters of the study. The quality of understanding is especially relevant when the research phenomenon was not previously investigated (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006:49).

The characteristic of understanding applies to the study in that the functionalities of the nonprofit organisation website were considered within the theoretical context of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. Thus understanding was created by assigning meaning to aspects of the nonprofit organisation website from the perspective of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model.

5.3.2 The importance of the natural setting of the research phenomena

Qualitative research is suitable for studying phenomena that are best understood in their natural environment, not in artificial settings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270). Natural environments enable the researcher to achieve two objectives. Firstly, the researcher can observe routine activities and interactions (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:6; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006:114), and the “normal course of events” is emphasised (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:271). Secondly, a natural setting implies the absence of the controls and measures of scientific manipulation of quantitative research (Henning, 2004:3).

The description “natural setting” certainly applies to the present study: nonprofit organisation websites were investigated as they appeared on the World Wide Web, without any attempt to apply control or manipulative measures, thereby achieving a completely unobtrusive approach in gaining empirical evidence. Thus it was possible to apply Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication in the “normal” or “routine” web communication of nonprofit organisations.

5.3.3 Flexibility

Daymon and Holloway (2002:6) emphasise the flexibility of qualitative research due to the researcher’s commitment to the exploration of new directions, even though the research attempt is guided by a specific research agenda. Qualitative research utilises the unexpected and deviant as a valuable source of insight and acts as a mirror “whose reflection makes the unknown perceptible in the known and the known perceptible in the unknown” (Flick *et al.*, 2004:3). Research procedures are therefore adaptable and spontaneous (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:6), accommodating the open nature of qualitative research.

Although predefined category guidelines were constructed for the content analysis of nonprofit organisation websites, these categories were only loosely defined. The categories served as a guide in creating understanding of nonprofit websites within the context of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model and were subjected to new information in the case of unexpected findings.

5.3.4 Holism

Qualitative researchers are interested in a wide variety of interconnected activities in the particular context in which the activities are situated. This leads to the description of multiple dimensions and relationships found in a given context (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:6). Du Plooy (2002:34) further confirms the holistic nature of qualitative research by stating that observations can be analysed thematically and holistically within contexts characterised by interrelationships.

The holistic aspect of qualitative research applies to the present study due to the holistic nature of the main concept being researched, viz. strategic integrated communication. The study utilises Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, which consists of various interrelationships in the form of three proposed integration areas. Thus the nature of the research phenomenon is compatible with a qualitative paradigm characterised as a holistic research strategy (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:272).

5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study follows a case study research design (Yin, 2003:13-14) which is described as "... an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." A case study research design with its focus on the intensity, depth and discovery of information is well suited to an exploratory study such as this one (Du Plooy, 2002:163; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:41).

From the various case study designs (Yin, 2003:40) the multiple-holistic case study design was selected for the purpose of the present study. Each individual case is a unit of analysis. According to Herriott and Firestone (quoted in Yin, 2003:46) the evidence obtained from a multiple case study design is considered to be more convincing in such cases. Perry (1998:792) confirms the latter by emphasising that a multiple case study design facilitates cross-case analysis.

The study utilises two research methods to collect evidence: (i) qualitative web content analysis and (ii) an e-mail questionnaire.

5.4.1 Qualitative web content analysis

New technological advances in the twenty-first century present the researcher with new opportunities and challenges in terms of available content. One of the main applications of the Internet, the World Wide Web, provides researchers with large amounts of content in the form of websites. It contains “novel genres of web content” (Neuendorf, 2002:207) that are currently underexplored, and therefore represents valuable research opportunities. According to Neuendorf (2002:207) these novel forms of web content deserve attention due to the fact that on-line communication will only grow in importance.

According to Stempel and Stewart (2000:541,545) the Internet is changing content analysis. The goal of content analysis is the systematic examination of recorded or fixed communicative material (Mayring, 2004:266). Content analysis is utilised in various types of communication research including the analysis of mass-media content (Du Plooy, 2002:191; Krippendorff, 1980:25; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006:150). Modern content analysis considers not only the formal aspects of messages but also the latent-meaning content of messages (Mayring, 2004:266). Qualitative content analysis is defined by Mayring (2000:2) as:

“...an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification.”

The idea is to preserve the systematic nature of quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science and to transfer and further advance this method to “qualitative-interpretative steps of analysis” (Mayring, 2000:1). In this study qualitative content analysis is applied within the context of the World Wide Web. It was argued that nonprofit organisation websites present a new “genre” (Neuendorf, 2002:207) of communication content on the web and present a valuable research opportunity.

5.4.2 E-mail questionnaire

According to O’ Brien (1997:[1]) questionnaires can be designed to produce either quantitative data or qualitative evidence. When used effectively a questionnaire can produce information related to the specific

components of a system. Meho (2006:1284) indicates that e-mail interviewing in qualitative research is perceived as a valid alternative to other options such as face-to-face or telephonic interviewing.

The e-mail questionnaire has various advantages which motivated the selection of the method for this study: (i) the method respects constraints of time and financial resources due to inexpensive administration and quick turnaround time (O'Brien, 1997:[2]), (ii) the method provides a solution to the problem of geographically dispersed respondents and excludes travelling costs (Meho, 2006:1293), (iii) it is possible to administer questionnaires confidentially when it is necessary to preserve the anonymity of respondents (O'Brien, 1997:[2]), (iv) the method acts as a confirmation tool when other data collection strategies are used in the study (O'Brien, 1997:[3]) and (v) though the method can be applied "quickly, conveniently, and inexpensively" (Meho, 2006:1293) it still produces high-quality evidence for the purpose of qualitative enquiry.

A research design is defined by Krippendorf (1980:49) as a "procedural network of analytical steps through which scientific information is processed". That author emphasises the importance of a research design enabling others to: (i) evaluate the research attempt, (ii) to replicate the process and (iii) to qualify the findings. Next, elements of the research design are discussed.

5.5 SAMPLING DESIGN

A qualitative research approach requires different sampling techniques from those utilised in quantitative approaches (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:157). A quantitative paradigm emphasises representational logic, i.e. that a sample should represent a wider universe (Mason, 2002:123). By contrast, sampling in a qualitative paradigm serves to provide the researcher with the necessary data to answer the core research question of the study (Mason, 2002:121).

Sampling procedures within a qualitative paradigm are purposeful and directly connected to the requirements of the investigation (Daymon & Holloway, 2002:157). Mason (2002:121) explains the purpose of sampling procedures in a qualitative enquiry. Firstly, qualitative research may invoke sampling and analysing a small portion rather than the whole population, for reasons of practicability and resource availability. Here sampling serves a practical function. Secondly, sampling produces the necessary focus

that enables the researcher to understand specific issues, processes and phenomena. Here sampling serves as a strategic function. In the following section attention is paid to related issues of sampling design: (i) defining the universe, (ii) the sampling method and (iii) the sample size.

5.5.1 Defining the universe

Wimmer and Dominick (2006:155) point to the importance of demarcating and specifying the boundaries of the body of content to be considered for content analysis. The latter can be achieved by a precise statement spelling out the parameters of the investigation and an appropriate operational definition of the relevant universe. This study considers the content of South African nonprofit organisation websites that represent the defined universe of the study. In order to provide an operational definition of the relevant universe two aspects are addressed.

First, a South African nonprofit organisation is described as a trust, company or association of individuals which is founded for a public purpose. In these types of entities the organisational income and property is not to be distributed among its members except as a reasonable compensation for services rendered to the organisation (Department of Social Development, 2005). Secondly, a website can be defined as an organisation's presence on the World Wide Web and consists of a collection of webpages. These webpages are connected with each other and also connected to pages on other websites. To qualify as a website the web content should be available on the Internet 24 hours of the day (Tech Encyclopedia, 2007).

According to Mason (2002:122) sampling from a universe implies that certain elements that could have been selected were excluded. The motivation underlying the choices of selection will now be discussed.

5.5.2 Sampling method

Theoretical or purposive sampling is the sampling method selected for the present study. According to Mason (2002:124) this type of sampling involves selecting groups or categories to be studied, based on their relevance to the core research question. The sample is thus designed to capture a relevant range of

contexts or phenomena. For the purpose of this study the 10 finalists for the 2007 NGO Website Awards hosted by SANGONeT served as the sampling selections (SANGONeT, 2007).

SANGONeT is a South African development portal for nonprofit organisations. This organisation hosted the 2007 NGO Website Awards and utilised specific judging criteria in producing the shortlist containing the ten finalists. These broad criteria included: (i) the objective statement of the website, i.e. the ability of the website to communicate its message to intended stakeholders, (ii) marketing, i.e. the ability of the website to provide relevant information and build relationships with stakeholders and (iii) relationship-building, i.e. the extent to which interactive techniques are cultivated with the objective of building stakeholder relationships. The relationship-building theme is key in Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, and thus it can be argued that the previously selected nonprofit organisation websites provide the researcher with relevant contexts or phenomena (Mason, 2002:124) for empirical research.

5.5.3 Sample size

Mason (2002:134) describes the ideal sampling size as sampling until a "theory-saturation point" (Mason, 2002:134) is reached, i.e. the point where the data do not yield any new information regarding the research phenomenon. But according to Mason (2002:136) the key consideration in selecting a qualitative sample size is the ability of the sample to provide the researcher with the right amount of data, and with the right focus so that the core research question of the study can be addressed. Realistically speaking, qualitative samples are generally small due to practical considerations. Based on this view the study focuses on the 10 nonprofit organisation websites that were nominated for the 2007 NGO Website Awards in South Africa (SANGONeT, 2007).

5.6 INSTRUMENTS FOR THE COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE

When applying content analysis to a dynamic communication environment such as the World Wide Web, researchers are required to provide sufficient detail regarding the following data collection and coding issues: (i) the time frame of the study, (ii) the context unit of analysis and (iii) the coding unit of analysis (McMillan, 2000:84-88).

Firstly, regarding the time frame of the study the researcher is required to state *when* a web site was examined. This is necessary due to the fact that website content is constantly changing, so that all the coders involved in a study might not be exposed to the same content to be analysed. In the present case, all evidence was collected between December 2008 and January 2009. Secondly, it is required to demarcate the context unit of analysis; this is defined as the body of material surrounding the coding unit (Budd, Thorp & Donohew, 1967:36). This study considered all pages contained at the nonprofit organisation website. Nonprofit websites were considered as a whole, enabling the researcher to identify key indicators relating to the application of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model.

Lastly, it is essential to define the coding unit of analysis, which is described by Budd *et al.* (1967:33) as the smallest segment of content that is scored in content analysis. Recently the structural features or the functional aspects of websites have become coding units (McMillan, 2000:88). In the present study, the coding units within the nonprofit organisation website were: (i) on an informational level, sentences and (ii) on a functional level, structural features of the nonprofit website.

5.6.1 The development of the coding agenda for websites

McMillan (2000:81) describes the temptation of researching new forms of communication as focusing on the researcher's intention to simply describe the content. The challenge is not just to describe the content but also to localise the content within an existing or emerging communication theory which then serves as an appropriate context. Krippendorff (1980:26) emphasises the importance of stating the context relative to which the data is analysed. Thus "normatively-driven empirical research" (Jankowski, 1999:373) forms the main approach recommended for researching new media technologies.

This study utilises Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication as its theoretical framework for analysing the websites of a selection of South African nonprofit organisations, thus following the recommendations of authors such as Krippendorff (1980:26), McMillan (2000:81) and Jankowski (1999:373). The aspects of a study to be analysed are formulated into categories; these are revised by means of feedback loops or reliability checks (Mayring, 2000:3). Categories are formulated based on theoretical knowledge and provide "content-focused typologising" (Mayring, 2004:269) thus providing guidance for structuring the material under investigation. Since the

categories are based on a theoretical rationale they are established before data collection begins and are “pre-coded” (Du Plooy, 2002:196) categories. For the purpose of this study, categories were established prior to data collection based on Niemann’ (2005) conceptual model.

The development of the categories is the result of a series of considerations covered in Chapter 4: (i) to understand the principles and integration areas of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, (ii) to find the theoretical link between Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model and applied arguments within the nonprofit website context and (iii) to identify specific nonprofit website indicators that reflect the application of the conceptual model. The coding agenda and categories will now be discussed.

The first principle is strategically driven communication with emphasis on the organisational mission as a guide for all organisational communication (Niemann, 2005:247). Applied to the nonprofit website, the aim should be to explain the purpose of the organisation and how the organisation attempts to achieve it (Wilson, 2003:[2]), as was discussed in Section 4.3.1.1. Aspects of the mission should be included in the nonprofit organisation’s website (Anheier, 2005:176-178), as illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Strategic intent applied to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN’S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Principle 1: Strategic intent	Alignment between nonprofit mission and strategy, and website communication	Website communicates aspects of the mission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Long-term goals • Core values • Operating principles • Operating scope or activities • Vision

The second principle is interaction with the dynamic environment, resulting in organisational learning processes (Montuori, 2000:66). The nonprofit sector recognises the importance of learning principles and its related outcomes such as longevity and sustainability (Montuori, 2000:66). The principle cannot be adequately observed by viewing the nonprofit website and will therefore not be transformed into specific nonprofit website indicators (refer to Section 5.6.2).

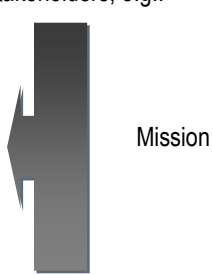
The environmental integration area in Niemann's (2005:260) conceptual model refers to the strategic changes impacting on organisations, signalling the need for adapting to changed conditions. Every nonprofit organisation's mission statement addresses a specific issue contained in the strategic environment, e.g. political, social or economic. Knowledge regarding the issue is reflected in the nonprofit organisation's website content. Information relating to the nonprofit's specific area of work needs to be presented (Hart, 2005:9; Ritchie, 2006:26); this was discussed in Section 4.3.2 and is covered in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: The strategic environment applied to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Environmental integration area	Awareness of strategic environment, i.e. political, social or economic, is reflected in the organisation's communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information related to the political, social or economic issue addressed by the organisational mission

The stakeholder integration area of Niemann's (2005:255) conceptual model is based on the ideas of stakeholderism and integrated communication. Applied to the nonprofit website (refer to Section 4.3.3) communication demonstrates awareness of a multiple stakeholder environment and clearly identifies the organisation's stakeholders. Further stakeholder messages should be consistent across different stakeholder groups (Balsler & McClusky, 2005:310) with all messages demonstrating a clear link to the organisation's mission as illustrated in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Stakeholderism and integrated communication across stakeholders applied to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Stakeholder integration area	Multiple stakeholder environment and an integrated approach to the management of all relationships	<p>Website identifies the organisation's stakeholders, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries or clients Board of directors Staff or management Donors Government Corporations Media General public etc. 

The stakeholder integration area of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model operates on two levels: (i) interactivity integration and (ii) brand contact point integration.

Interactivity integration in turn is based on two communication concepts: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised interaction.

The first concept relates to the idea of two-way symmetrical communication. Applied to the nonprofit website environment websites are approached as a relationship-building tool by applying two-way symmetrical, dialogical and interactivity devices (Hart, 2005:2) as was discussed in Section 4.3.3.1.1.

Suggested frameworks for the application of such devices, as previously explored in Section 4.3.3.1.1, were combined (Ha & James, 1998; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Ki & Hon, 2006) to produce the resulting categories: (i) playfulness, (ii) choice, (iii) connectedness, (iv) networking, (v) reciprocal communication, (vi) generation of return visits and (vii) positivity/intuitiveness or ease of interface. Indicators for each category applied to the nonprofit website environment are presented in Table 5.4.

Purposeful, personalised interaction is the second idea of interactivity integration. It is not possible to directly observe personalised future communication by directly viewing the nonprofit organisation website. However, when the website contains devices for collecting visitor information (Ha & James, 1998:4-5,7) especially related to individual communication preferences, one can assume that the intention of the organisation is to use this information for targeted and individualised communication as was discussed in Section 4.3.3.1.2. (See also Table 5.5.)

Figure 5.5: Purposeful, personalised interaction applied to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Purposeful, personalised interaction	Approach the website with the future intention of creating individualised communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices for collecting visitor information especially related to individual communication preferences

Table 5.4: Two-way symmetrical communication applied to the nonprofit organisation website

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Two-way symmetrical communication	Approach the website as a relationship-building tool applying devices encouraging two-way symmetry, dialogue and interaction	<p>(i) Playfulness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question and answer format • Online games • Opinion poll • Other
		<p>(ii) Choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted or unrestricted navigation • Language preference • Text or graphic version • Other
		<p>(iii) Connectedness:</p> <p><u>Internal hyperlinks to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information relating to organisational programs/activities • Graphics • Advertisements • Other <p><u>External hyperlinks to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information relating to organisational programs/activities • Advertisements • Other
		<p>(iv) Networking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the different groups/individuals the organisation is working with • Information about how the different groups/individuals are involved • Organisational ambassador • Corporate partners <p style="text-align: right;">(Cont...)→</p>

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
<p>Two-way symmetrical communication</p>	<p>Approach the website as a relationship-building tool applying devices encouraging two-way symmetry, dialogue and interaction</p>	<p>(v) Reciprocal communication:</p> <p><u>Step 1:</u> Website reflects information dissemination/openness and disclosure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational contact details • Organisational overview • News releases • Annual reports • Information related to the political, social or economic issue that's addressed by the mission statement • Other <p><u>Step 2:</u> Website indicators for dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussions • Online feedback form • Weblog • Online membership registration • Online survey • Other <p>Responsiveness of dialogical feedback loops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation responds to individual enquiries • Organisation directs enquiries to knowledgeable individuals <p>Continuum of interactivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited (Contact details) • Somewhat (Contact details for specific concerns) • Interactive (Online survey, feedback form) • High (Online discussions)
		<p>(vi) Generation of return visits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated events calendar • Date on which website was last updated, is provided • Information on the website is up to date • Other
		<p>(vi) Positivity/intuitiveness or ease of interface:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling and operational links • Sitemap • Search engine • Navigation menu • Architecture • Text-based vs. graphic based

Brand contact point integration is based on three ideas: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) the message and delivery system should be stakeholder-appropriate, and (iii) the timing of messages should be based on stakeholder preferences.

Engaging the organisation’s stakeholders in dialogue enables the organisation to learn about stakeholders (Niemann’s, 2005:259). Applied to the nonprofit website this translates into the need for including engagement devices or “action ware” (Haji & Neichin, 2005:84), as previously explored in Section 4.3.3.2.1 and now considered in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea applied to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN’S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Continuing dialogue to ensure 360° brand idea	Branding facilitates dialogue and learning by means of engagement devices	Engagement devices, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donation facility • Selling of goods or services • Fundraising campaign • Event management features • Membership recruitment or registration • Community building tools • Staff recruitment features • Volunteer recruitment features • Other

To make its messages and message delivery systems stakeholder-appropriate, the organisation needs a solid understanding of its stakeholders (Niemann, 2005:258-259). Applying this to the nonprofit website one finds that the degree of content relevancy (Irish, 2005:79) and the respect for individual communication preferences (Potts, 2005:150) reflect the organisation’s intent to ensure appropriate communication as previously discussed in Section 4.3.3.2.2. Table 5.7 presents the nonprofit website indicators that relate to content relevancy and individual communication preferences.

The timing of messages should be based on stakeholder preferences (Niemann, 2005:259-260). Applying this principle to the nonprofit website one finds that visitors should be presented with choices relating to the timing of messages (Potts, 2005:159) as previously discussed in Section 4.3.3.2.3. See also Table 5.8.)

Table 5.7: Message and delivery system stakeholder-appropriate: application of requirement to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Message and delivery system stakeholder appropriate	Offer visitors relevant content and respect individual communication preferences	Relevant content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page • "How stakeholders get involved" information • Information on organisational programmes • Organisational contact details • Target group or beneficiaries • Testimonials • Other Individual communication preferences choices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscribe / unsubscribe to e-newsletter • Areas of interest / preferred information • Preferred communication channel • Other

Table 5.8: Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences applied to the nonprofit website

NIEMANN'S (2005) MODEL	THE NONPROFIT WEBSITE CONTEXT	INDICATORS ON NONPROFIT WEBSITE
Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences	Offer visitors choices in terms of the timing of organisational communication	Choices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of newsletter • Action alerts • Viral marketing / "tell-a-friend-campaign" • Other

For the purpose of this study Niemann's (2005) organisational integration area will not be translated into nonprofit website indicators. The organisational integration area is characterised by an internal communication focus which cannot be directly observed from viewing the nonprofit website. However, it is important to measure this area, due to its potential to provide information relating to the internal management aspects of the organisation's communication which can corroborate or confirm web-based communication manifestations. An e-mail questionnaire was developed to include the measurement of Niemann's (2005) organisational integration area.

5.6.2 The development of the e-mail questionnaire

Certain aspects of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model cannot be measured adequately by just observing the nonprofit website. The purpose of the e-mail questionnaire was to collect data about: (i) the principle of strategic intent, (ii) the principle of organisational learning and (iii) the organisational integration area of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model, and it was intended for the most senior communication staff member of each organisation.

First, the principle of strategic intent encourages mission-driven organisational communication (AlderConsulting, 2005; Hackler & Saxton, 2007:480; Hart, 2005:9; Powell, 2005:18; Wilson, 2003:[2]) as previously discussed in Section 4.3.1.1. Then the principle of organisational learning enables the organisation to adapt and adjust to a changing operating environment (Britton, 2005:5; Montuori, 2000:62) as previously discussed in Section 4.3.1.2. The questions relating to these principles are presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Questions relating to strategic intent and organisational learning

PRINCIPLE 1: STRATEGIC INTENT
How is the strategic intent (mission, strategy, goals and objectives) of your organisation linked to the planning and execution of your organisation's communication (i.e. internal and external)? If this is not the case, please explain.
PRINCIPLE 2: ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING
How are organisational learning principles linked to the planning and execution of your organisation's communication (i.e. internal and external)? If this is not the case, please explain. <i>E.g.</i> does your organisation collect information about stakeholders and then use it in the planning and execution of the organisation's communication?

The organisational integration area of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model could produce valuable corroborating evidence regarding the internal communication management contexts of the nonprofit organisations, as discussed in Section 4.3.4. Table 5.10 on the following page offers related questions.

Table 5.10: Questions relating to the organisational integration area

ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRATION AREA
CEO/Top management integration
How does your organisation's top management engage in communication efforts to ensure that all employees understand the organisational mission? If this is not the case, please explain.
What role does your organisation's top management assign to the communication function when formulating organisational strategies?
Renaissance communicator requirements
Do you function as part of the top management of your organisation, i.e. together with the CEO and other functional managers?
Do you control and manage the organisation's total communication (communication <u>and</u> marketing) solution?
If you integrate communication and marketing, how do you ensure alignment between communication, marketing and organisational objectives (tactical and/or strategic levels)?
To what degree are the contents (messages) currently on your organisation's external website based on the strategic integration of your organisational mission statement, communication and marketing efforts?
- Budget
Do you have a budget to fully integrate communication and marketing efforts?
- Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies
Which term/concept is more familiar: integrated marketing communication (IMC) or integrated communication (IC)?
How would you differentiate between integrated communication (IC) vs. integrated marketing communication (IMC)?
- Strategic consistency to ensure unity in effort
How is the strategic intent (mission, strategy, goals and objectives) of your organisation linked to the planning and execution of your organisation's communication (i.e. internal and external)? If this is not the case, please explain.
- Cross-functional planning
What mechanisms does the organisation have in place to encourage different departments/functions to engage in joint communication and planning sessions?
- Zero-based communication and marketing planning
Do you plan for fully integrated communication and marketing efforts annually (i.e. not on previous years' plans)?
Horizontal and vertical communication planning
What mechanisms does the organisation have in place to encourage different departments/functions to engage in joint communication and planning sessions?
What mechanisms are in place to encourage dialogue between all employee ranks in the organisation?

5.7 CASE STUDY REALISATION

Upon initially visiting each of the listed websites it was found that two of the 10 sites were not functional; one of these denied access and the other claimed that the current project ended and that the organisation was busy with other projects.

The following process for approaching the 10 website finalists was followed. First the websites of the relevant organisations were viewed with the purpose of obtaining a contact number. Secondly, the individual within the organisation responsible for the management of the website was identified by phoning each organisation. The researcher then requested to speak to the identified individual. The conversation focused on introducing the researcher and the nature of the study. Thereafter the personal e-mail address of the individual was obtained with the purpose to e-mail a formal letter requesting participation and outlining the background of the research study (the letter appears as Annexure A). The researcher further engaged in follow-up telephonic and e-mail communication to provide/obtain additional information if necessary and to confirm participation.

Only four organisations indicated a desire to participate in the research project. Some of the organisations claimed that a shortage of both staff and time prevented them to participate. Also the effort and time required to obtain permission for participation from the organisation's top management held back the process and prevented some organisations to take part.

5.8 EVIDENCE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

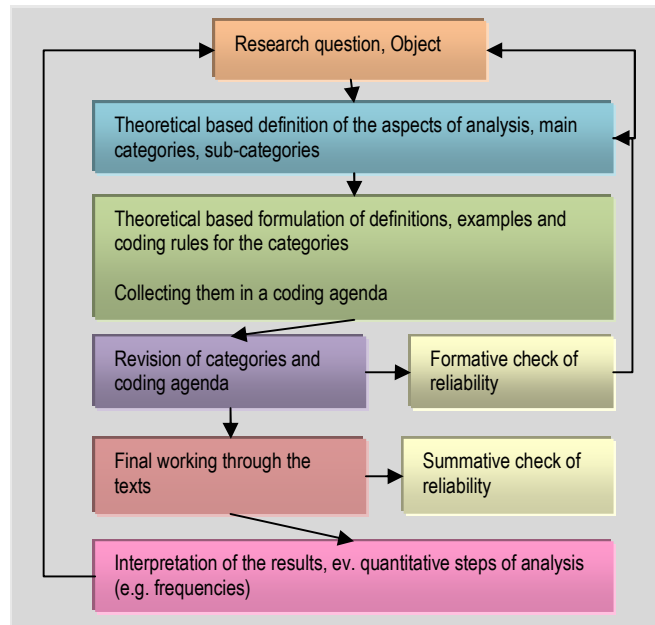
In qualitative studies the processes of data collection and data analysis go hand in hand to contribute towards a coherent interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:154). Further Berelson (1971:122) points to the interpretation of data as part of the analysis strategy as opposed to a quantitative research approach where data are analysed first and then interpreted. The researcher selected: (i) a deductive category application technique (Mayring, 2000:[3]) for data obtained from the coding agenda and (ii) global analysis for data obtained from the e-mail questionnaire (Henning, 2004:109).

5.8.1 The deductive category application technique

Deductive category application (Mayring, 2000:[4]) is a procedural technique aiming to filter out aspects of the material based on prior formulated theoretical categories. Material is assessed according to specific criteria derived from a theoretical view (Mayring, 2004:269). The technique involves "a methodological controlled assignment of the category to a passage of text" (Mayring, 2000:3) and is illustrated in Figure

5.2. The overall aim is to restructure material into a model of communication that enables the researcher to make inferences about the communication intentions of the communicator (Mayring, 2000:2).

Figure 5.2: The process of deductive category application



Source: Mayring (2000:[4])

The process of deductive category application (Mayring, 2000:[5]) was used as follows:

- i. Firstly, the research question was considered within the context of deductive category application, viz. "Does a selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites apply Niemann's (2005) conceptual model?". Inherently the research question stipulates application of principles which are coherent with the nature of the deductive category application technique.
- ii. Secondly, theoretical definitions regarding the aspects of analysis, main categories and sub-categories were presented. The second step was applied to the study in the sense that Chapters 2-4 aimed at theoretically framing the research phenomenon.
- iii. The third step involved the formulation of the coding agenda and categories which are based on considerations unique to this study: (i) identify a principle from Niemann's (2005) conceptual model, (ii) contextualise that principle within a nonprofit website environment and (iii) present nonprofit website indicators that reflect the application of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model.
- iv. The fourth step required the revision of the previously formulated categories and the coding agenda as a whole during a formative reliability check which was conducted during the pilot study (in Section 5.9).

- v. After a final investigation of the text, a summative reliability check was conducted; this contributed to the trustworthiness of the study (see Section 5.10.3.1).
- vi. The last step involved the interpretation of the results. Not only passages of text but also the functional elements of nonprofit websites were assigned to previously formulated categories and subcategories to form interpretations. Interpretations were formed based on the principles of qualitative analysis by Berelson (1971:116-128).

5.8.2 Principles of qualitative analysis

Berelson (1971:116-128) presents arguments to illustrate the differences between quantitative and qualitative content analysis. These principles were applied to the study.

5.8.2.1 Quasi-quantitative analysis

According to Berelson (1971:116-119) a qualitative content analysis can also be described as quasi-quantitative as the analysis still contains quantification in a rough format. Indications of frequency take the form of specific quantitative terms such as “repeatedly”, “rarely”, “usually”, “often” and “emphasises” rather than precise numerical measurements. Instead of stating that 73 % of the content fits into a category one can say that the category is strongly emphasised. The idea of a “quasi-quantitative” approach was applied to the study in the sense that no attempt was made to present precise numerical measurements of categories. The aim was to examine nonprofit websites for the extent of their application of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.

5.8.2.2 Presence or absence of content

Qualitative content analysis employs a special form of quantification where quantities are limited to either one or zero. Berelson (1971:119) states that magnitudes higher than one are considered irrelevant for the interpretation of the content. A single mention or presence of content is sufficient for making the necessary inferences. The “presence or absence” principle was applied to the study in the sense that nonprofit websites were evaluated in terms of either the presence or the absence of indicators relevant to Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.

5.8.2.3 Content as a reflection of deeper phenomena

Qualitative content analysis makes inferences relating to the intentions of a communicator and uses the content as a “springboard” (Berelson, 1971:122) towards them, whereas a quantitative analysis focuses on the description of the content itself. Krippendorff (1980:26-27) emphasises the importance of delineating the context of interpretation or otherwise defining the boundaries beyond which the analysis does not apply. Sources of contextual knowledge include relevant theories and models and represent the justification for inferences made. Relevant theories and models enable the researcher to consider data within a suitable context and view data as indicative of certain phenomena (Krippendorff, 1980:172).

In this study the content and functional features of nonprofit websites were considered as indicative of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model formed the relevant context for interpretation and represented the “logical bridge” (Krippendorff, 1980:172) for making inferences about the communicative intentions of nonprofit organisations.

5.8.2.4 Less formalised categorisation

To facilitate precise numerical quantification in a quantitative content analysis approach the systematic pre-construction of formalised categories is an important condition. In a qualitative content analysis less formalised categories are required. Berelson (1971:125) declares that a qualitative analysis allows for the elaboration of alternatives, which implies a less precise and systematic approach to data interpretation. This fact should not be perceived as a limitation but rather as an advantage where the absence of a rigid system of formal categories can lead to more subtle and individualised interpretations.

The study categorised nonprofit website content and features into pre-defined categories formulated based on the normative model of the study, i.e. Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. These categories served only as a guideline and were not intended to restrict the researcher in terms of analysis and interpretation.

5.8.3 Global analysis

According to Henning (2004:109) the objective of a global analysis stands in sharp contrast to the objective of content analysis. The latter can be described as “disassembling” and “re-assembling” the data with the purpose of focusing on coding and categories. In contrast, global analysis aims to produce arguments and discussions thick with theoretical thought. Henning (2004:109) describes global analysis as a network type of thinking where the researcher aims to identify major themes and recognise relevant links and connections, with the purpose of forming interpretations.

The global analysis approach was utilised to both analyse and interpret data obtained from the e-mail questionnaire. The present researcher focused on intensively reading through the text (Henning, 2004:109) in order to: (i) identify themes, (ii) interpret these themes against the theoretical background of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication and (iii) attempt to acknowledge other relevant thematic linkages resulting in the formation of discussions and arguments. The researcher’s aim was not to test or develop new categories of data but to simply identify themes which could be usefully interpreted against the background of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model.

5.8.4 Evidence analysis and interpretation: A holistic perspective

Table 5.11 illustrates the two main objectives of the study both theoretical and empirical, in relation to various sources of evidence applicable to the study. The multiple sources of evidence were utilised to obtain a holistic perspective of the research problem.

5.9 PILOT STUDY

Due to the exploratory nature of the research project, an extensive pilot study was conducted with specific attention to: (i) the improvement of data collection instruments and (ii) experimentation relating to the presentation of research findings. Various changes were implemented due to findings that resulted from the pilot study.

Table 5.11: Evidence analysis and interpretation from a holistic perspective

THEORETICAL OBJECTIVE:					
To explore the application possibilities of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication to the South African nonprofit website environment.					
SOURCES OF EVIDENCE:	THEORY	CODING AGENDA	TABLE NUMBER	E-MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE	QUESTION NUMBER
	Chapters 2-4				
EMPIRICAL OBJECTIVE:					
To explore whether a selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites apply Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.					
SOURCES OF EVIDENCE:	THEORY	CODING AGENDA	TABLE NUMBER	E-MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE	QUESTION NUMBER
Principle 1: Strategic intent	Section 4.3.1.1	Yes	1	Yes	1
Principle 2: Organisational learning	Section 4.3.1.2	No		Yes	2
Environmental integration area	Section 4.3.2	Yes	2	No	
Stakeholder integration area	Section 4.3.3	Yes	3 & 4	No	
<u>Organisational integration area:</u>					
CEO/Top management integration	Section 4.2.4.1	No		Yes	3 & 4
Renaissance communicator requirements	Section 4.2.4.2	No		Yes	6.1, 6.3, 7 & 10
• Budget	Section 4.2.4.2.1	No		Yes	6.2
• Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies	Section 4.2.4.2.2	No		Yes	5.1 & 5.2
• Strategic consistency to ensure unity in effort	Section 4.2.4.2.3	No		Yes	3
• Cross-functional planning	Section 4.2.4.2.4	No		Yes	8
• Zero-based communication and marketing planning	Section 4.2.4.2.5	No		Yes	6.2
Horizontal and vertical communication integration	Section 4.2.4.3	No		Yes	8 & 9

5.9.1 Pilot case profile and findings

A South African based nonprofit organisation primarily focusing on the issue of unemployment was utilised as the pilot study. The organisation's purpose is to "contribute meaningfully to the transformation of our communities by empowering the disempowered". The organisation achieves its purpose by providing

relevant training and skills development and support services including a crèche, feeding schemes, clothing store, counselling and medical support services.

Results from the pilot study revealed that the organisation's website displayed various indicators linked to Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integration. Yet, the data obtained about the internal communication context of the organisation indicated a lack of knowledge regarding integration ideas supporting the idea of strategic integrated communication. Though the website displayed relevant features, it was concluded that the site was not applying Niemann's (2005) conceptual model purposefully since certain fundamental communication integration ideas were lacking within the internal communication management context of the organisation.

A possible reason lies in the fact that the pilot case did not form part of the intended sample, i.e. the 10 finalists for the 2007 NGO Website Awards hosted by SANGONeT. The websites contained in the intended sample meet criteria which are closely related to the ideas of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model as discussed in Section 5.5.2. Since this particular organisation's website does not form part of the intended sample the relevancy of the research context (Mason, 2002:124) was compromised.

5.9.2 Improvement of data collection instruments

With regard to the coding agenda various changes were implemented as a result of the pilot study. These changes were mainly due to: (i) duplication of categories, (ii) too narrowly defined categories and (iii) the need for additional indicators that were added to some categories. (See Annexure B for the final coding agenda.) In the e-mail questionnaire only one aspect was changed. It seemed that "organisational learning" as a theoretical academic term was not familiar to the respondent. A practical example has been included illustrating how organisational learning principles apply to the planning, management and execution of the organisation's communication. (See Annexure C for the final e-mail questionnaire.)

5.9.3 Experimentation with presentation of research findings

During the pilot study various ways were considered of presenting the research findings. Initially the findings from the coding agenda and the e-mail questionnaire were presented in separate sections with a

final section integrating the data from both sources. However, it was decided to present the findings in an integrated manner from the start, so as to avoid unnecessary replication (refer back to Table 5.11). Further, in order to preserve the anonymity of participating nonprofit organisations, it was decided to edit all graphical images of nonprofit websites contained in Chapter 6 to ensure that the organisation's name was in no way visible or identifiable.

5.10 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Since the research approach qualifies as a qualitative paradigm it is important to consider the measures of reliability and validity that are unique to this research paradigm. They are listed in Table 5.12. These measures of objectivity are different from those of the quantitative research approach.

Table 5.12: Quantitative and qualitative notions of objectivity

QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
Internal validity	Credibility
External validity	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Confirmability

Source: Babbie & Mouton (2001:276)

Babbie and Mouton (2001:276) point to the qualitative notions of objectivity, i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as the foundation of neutral findings and research decisions that characterises trustworthy qualitative research. These criteria of trustworthiness, as applied in this study, will now be presented in detail.

5.10.1 Credibility

Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) describe credibility as the compatibility between constructed realities and the meanings attributed to these realities. By checking for credibility a researcher attempts to demonstrate that a "true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny" (Shenton, 2004:63) is being presented. In this regard the researcher can employ various procedures to promote confidence in the accurate recording of the phenomenon under examination (Shenton, 2004:64).

Strategies from Shenton (2004:64-69) ensured that the research phenomenon was correctly identified and described (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:201). Firstly, well established research procedures were employed that had been successfully applied in a previous comparable doctoral study, viz. Naudé's (2001) study titled: "Interactive public relations: The World Wide Web and South African NGO's". Secondly, site triangulation was utilised by allowing for the participation of several nonprofit websites and reducing the effect of particular local factors pertaining to an organisation. Where similar results develop at different nonprofit websites, credibility thus increases. Thirdly, frequent debriefing sessions were held between the researcher and a doctoral candidate and full-time academic. Fourthly, the researcher allowed for project feedback from peers and academics at various presentations made at academic conferences attended through the duration of the study.

5.10.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study can be generalised or applied to other contexts (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277) which is described as problematic in the qualitative research approach (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:202). In qualitative studies the responsibility of proving transferability of results to another context rests on those who wish to transfer the results and apply it in the receiving context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277). However, Shenton (2004:70) identifies the importance of the researcher's responsibility to clearly convey the boundaries of the study in order to partially address the challenge of transference.

Recommendations from both Marshall and Rossman (2006:201-202) and Shenton (2004:69-71) were implemented to ensure that the study's findings might be useful to other researchers with a similar research question. The theoretical framework, i.e. Niemann's (2005) conceptual model, was clearly identified as the model guiding all research procedures. Further, detailed information was provided to describe both the context of the study and the research phenomenon, allowing for comparisons in the case of transference.

5.10.3 Dependability

To meet the concerns of replication, the researcher employed strategies from Marshall and Rossman (2006:203-204). Firstly, thorough notes were kept of all design decisions and the motivations behind them,

allowing others to investigate procedures. Secondly, collected data were kept in a well-organised and retrievable format, enabling them to be made available should another researcher challenge the results or want to re-analyse the data. An additional concern is that of inter-coder reliability.

Website technology represents a major challenge for achieving inter-coder reliability. McMillan (2000:93) points to the changing nature of web content and describes the primary challenge as a task of ensuring that different coders cross-code identical data. That author provides examples of problematic situations, e.g., websites that are being evaluated at different points in time may introduce errors, or data that were coded by the first coder could change or be removed from the website before the second coder investigates the site. The present researcher dealt with this challenge by printing out all the relevant webpages pertaining to each case and ensuring that these copies were kept safe for future reference.

Inter-coder reliability refers to the extent to which a study's independent coders reach the same conclusions after evaluating the characteristics of a message (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002:587). For the purpose of the study two coders were used, i.e. the present researcher and a second independent coder. Both these coders have specialised knowledge relating to the management of communication, the second coder holding a doctoral degree in Marketing Management.

The study utilised Holsti's (1969) reliability formula as explained by Wimmer and Dominick (2006:167) to determine the reliability of the coding procedures:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

M represents the total number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree. **N₁** and **N₂** represent the total number of coding decisions of the first and second coder respectively. The formula was applied to the study during the final phase of data collection and coding with the aim to establish the reliability of the sample. The formula was applied to one of the case studies representing the sample and produced a reliability level of 96,2 % for the 79 coding decisions. The high level of reliability illustrates the researcher's objectivity in the coding procedures.

It is important for a study to provide evidence so “that if it was to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or a similar) context, its findings would be similar” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278). Marshall and Rossman (1995:145) state that replication of qualitative studies are problematic due to the fact that the social world is constantly being constructed. In this regard Babbie and Mouton (2001:278) state that no reliability can be achieved without validity, i.e. if strategies are employed for improving credibility and transferability there ought to be no need to prove dependability separately. To address the issue of dependability more directly Shenton (2004:71) points to the importance of reporting on the processes employed within a study, thus enabling another researcher to at least repeat the work if not necessarily achieving the same results.

5.10.4 Confirmability

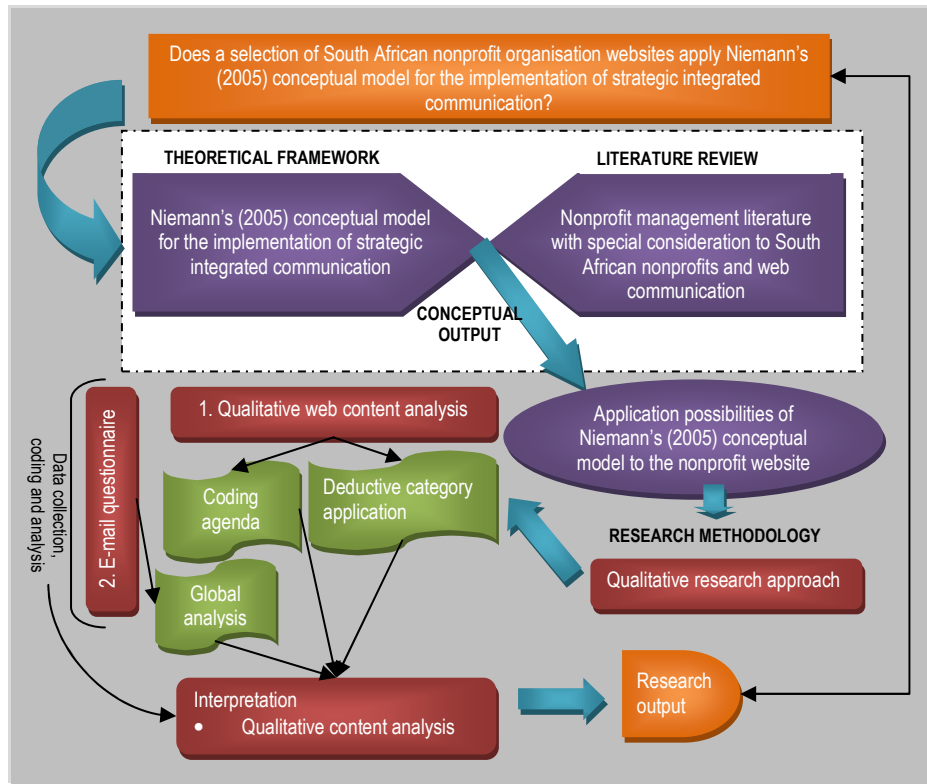
Confirmability refers to the “degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278) directing attention to the concept of objectivity and the natural subjectivity of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:145). The researcher needs to take steps to ensure as far as possible that the findings are rooted in data pertaining to the source as opposed to the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004:72).

To ensure objectivity the present researcher followed the suggestions of Shenton (2004:72-73). Firstly, an in-depth description of the research methodology was presented to enable others to scrutinise the integrity of the research results. Secondly, the researcher utilised a diagram to present a theoretical audit trail illustrating how concepts inherent in the research question lead to the work that followed. Figure 5.3 should be understood in terms of the total duration of the research project.

5.11 LIMITATIONS

Various limitations are identified and explanations are presented of the strategies the researcher employed in order to overcome these challenges: (i) sample size, (ii) e-mail questionnaire and (iii) intercultural communication challenges.

Figure 5.3: The theoretical audit trail for this study



Source: Own conceptualisation

5.11.1 Sample size

The first limitation relates to the issue of sample size. Since two of the websites in the original sample were not functioning (as previously pointed out in Section 5.7) the researcher was left with only eight possible organisations. By means of continuous follow-up communication via telephone conversations and e-mail the researcher was able to hold the interest of only four organisations, but representing 50 % of the total available and functioning sample.

5.11.2 E-mail questionnaire

Answers received to questions from the e-mail questionnaire required further clarification since many of the answers did not furnish the relevant evidence looked for. This limitation was overcome by engaging in follow-up conversations with designated respondents via telephone and e-mail, with the purpose of: (i)

explaining questions in the case of where the respondent did not clearly understand the matter, (ii) clarifying answers where the researcher re-stated a concept to make sure it was correctly understood and (iii) probing for more detailed examples and explanations. In this way it was ensured that the evidence delivered related themes for analysis and interpretation.

5.11.3 Intercultural communication challenges

The researcher was faced with intercultural communication challenges. In Case Study 3 the respondent stated her preference for completing the e-mail questionnaire telephonically since time-constraints were a factor. It was difficult to communicate effectively with the respondent since she spoke with a heavy accent leaving the present researcher with uncertainties. This limitation was overcome by: (i) engaging in several follow-up conversations in which uncertain answers were confirmed and (ii) by using the organisation's annual report which was posted on the website and had been written by the respondent herself, presenting the researcher with additional management context.

5.12 SUMMARY

Qualitative research aims to create understanding of a research phenomenon. This chapter illustrated how the qualitative research paradigm applies to the research problem of the study. The chapter also provided justification for the presentation of research findings in the following chapters.

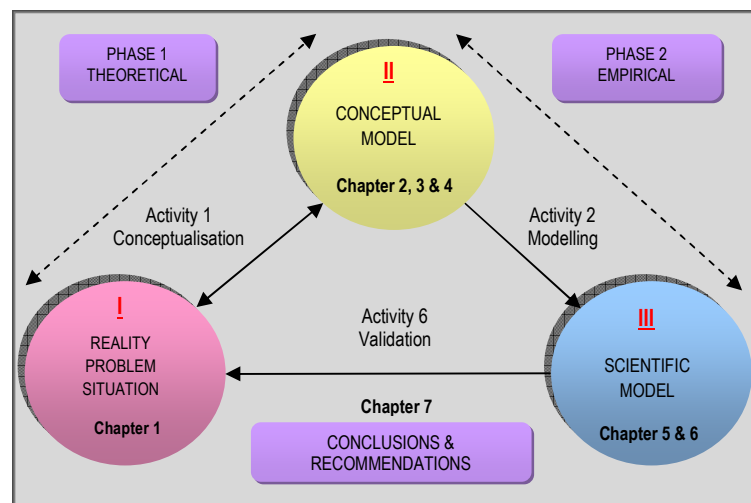
CHAPTER 6

EVIDENCE AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 presents the evidence and interpretations of the study. Its findings may contribute towards the validation and scientific value of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model as illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Chapter 6 in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

Results are presented on two levels: (i) per case study and (ii) a cross-case analysis report. The results on both levels are presented along the dimensions of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. Chapter 6 serves as a prologue to the conclusions and recommendations contained in Chapter 7.

6.2 CASE STUDY 1: RESULTS

6.2.1 Organisational background

This organisation was founded in 1929 with the dual purpose of creating awareness about eye health and the prevention of blindness. Today in its 78th year of operation, the organisation consists of a head

office in Pretoria, nine provincial offices, 95 member organisations and 19 schools for blind and partially sighted learners striving to meet the needs of all blind and partially sighted individuals in South Africa.

According to the organisation's website their vision is: "A network of organisations which collaborate towards securing the full participation and inclusion of blind and partially sighted people in all aspects of a diverse South African society." The organisation focuses on four business areas in its quest to achieve this vision. The skills development area strives to reduce the high unemployment rate among visually impaired individuals by providing training. The Bureau section consists of mobile eye care units operating in previously disadvantaged and rural communities. The access/marketing area focuses on promoting access to all the information, products and services related to the issue of blindness. The organisation also supports and represents 19 schools for blind and partially sighted learners.

According to the organisation's website one of its central commitments is: "Co-operating with and exchanging information, advice and assistance with organisations and agencies in South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world concerned with the improvement of the quality of life of blind and partially sighted people." This organisation is also currently the largest nonprofit organisation in South Africa.

6.2.2 Principle 1: Strategic intent

The website conveyed various elements of the organisation's strategic intent including its mission or purpose and vision statement. The site also communicated the different programs and activities the organisation is involved with and how these operate in practice. The nonprofit website should present itself as a relevant mission-related source of information (Hart, cf. 2005; Wilson, cf. 2003).

These results are endorsed by the organisation's approach to and execution of strategic planning as pointed out by the most senior staff member responsible for the organisation's communication. The organisation acknowledges communication management that is planned and executed within the framework of the strategic intent (Argenti *et al.*, cf. 2005; Duncan, cf. 2002; Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Massie & Anderson, cf. 2003). The communication plan is aligned with the divisional strategy, the organisational strategy and key strategic objectives formulated on a National Executive Committee level. These conditions could explain the presence of strategic intent elements on the website. On the other hand the site did not articulate long-terms objectives or core values.

The website reflected the mission statement: “To meet the needs of all blind and partially sighted people in South Africa” to a great extent by means of including special on-line features targeted specifically at the organisation’s beneficiaries. However, variations could also be found between elements of the organisation’s strategic intent and website communication: (i) despite the fact that the organisation articulates its vision of creating a network of collaborating organisations around the issue of blindness, the website and its available features are not aligned with such a vision and do not include the required dialogical features and (ii) despite the organisation’s mission-related commitment to co-operate with and exchange information, advice and assistance with all organisations involved in the field of blindness, the website and its current lack of dialogical features do not support the implementation of such activities. The website should be utilised to enhance mission-related activities which would translate into the strategic use of new information and communication technologies for explicit mission-related aims (Hackler and Saxton, cf. 2007; Mullen, cf. 2006).

6.2.3 Principle 2: Organisational learning

Three scenarios could be identified, illustrating a degree of strategic thinking (Anheier, cf. 2005; Brønn & Brønn, cf. 2002; Bryson, cf. 2004; Montuori, cf. 2000). Examples of direct application scenarios are presented first. One of the organisation’s strategic goals is the collection and dissemination of information related to the field of blindness. The organisation strives to create a “Knowledge warehouse” that can be accessed by all relevant stakeholders. Further, in consultation with relevant divisions, information about the organisation’s projects is collected internally. According to the most senior communication staff member collected information is then used in the planning and execution of communication materials including their magazine, newsletters and biennial report which are distributed internally and externally. Further, an indirect example could be identified where divisions in the organisation conduct their own research within affected disabled communities. This information is presented to top management who then decide which annual projects to implement. The communication function then collaborates with each division to determine their communication and marketing needs.

Due to the fact that this organisation is also focused on networking and collaboration activities within the field of blindness, the idea of a comparative learning advantage comes to life within this case as indicated by Edwards (cf. 2002). This organisation already enjoys an intricate network of stakeholder relationships built around the issue (refer to Figure 6.2) that could be utilised to generate information for organisational learning purposes.

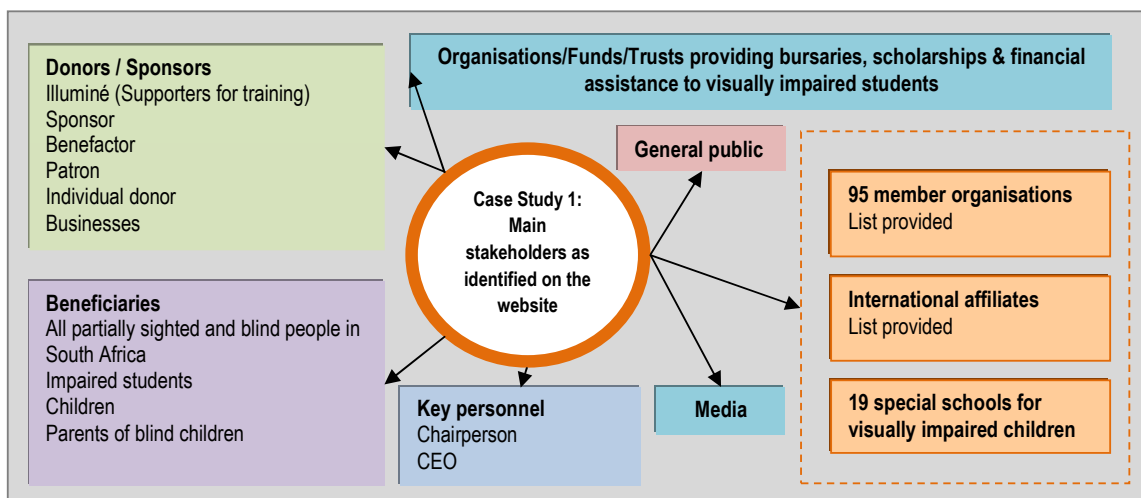
6.2.4 Environmental integration area

This organisation strives to meet the needs of all partially sighted and blind people in South Africa. The website provides extensive information related to eye health and surrounding themes within the field of blindness. Informative material are grouped under headings such as: “Eye diseases”, “Tips to reduce eye strain”, “How to create a Power-Point presentation for people with low vision” and “Parents of blind children”. The website contains information relevant to the social issue addressed by the mission statement (Hart, cf. 2005; Ritchie, cf. 2006). According to the organisation’s website, one of its central commitments is described as: “Gathering, distributing and managing information on matters concerning blindness...” This organisation is committed to successful integration with the social issue that is addressed by its mission, to such an extent that one of their strategic goals is to create a “knowledge warehouse” which is meant to act as a national information storehouse accessible by all relevant stakeholders.

6.2.5 Stakeholder integration area

The organisation’s website is a testimony to the intricate network of stakeholders grouped around the organisation and its field of business, nationally and internationally. The website expressed awareness of an inclusive multiple stakeholder environment (Chandler, cf. 2002; Drucker, cf. 1990; Freeman, cf. 1984; Phills, cf. 2005; Post *et al.*, cf. 2000) as illustrated in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: A stakeholder map for Case Study 1 website



With regard to adopting an integrated communication management approach across a wide range of stakeholders (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Balser & McClusky, cf. 2005), the organisation would rather utilise internal communication media to communicate with employees. As for the rest, Table 6.1 presents the stakeholder groups with which the organisation communicates via the external website and also indicates the consistency of these messages with the organisation's mission.

Table 6.1: Stakeholder messages in relation to the organisational mission in Case Study 1 website

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	MESSAGE	MISSION-RELATED	
		Yes ✓	No
Donors/Sponsors	Information related to the needs of the visually impaired and how donors can make a difference. "How to get involved" information and the presentation of various options.	Yes ✓	No
Beneficiaries	Information related to how the organisation can assist in meeting the needs of the visually impaired.	Yes ✓	No
Media	Presentation of press releases containing information related to the organisation's activities and programmes.	Yes ✓	No
General public	General organisational information and other useful information, e.g. "How to create a Power-Point presentation for people with low vision".	Yes ✓	No

6.2.5.1 Interactivity integration

The two dimensions of interactivity integration are discussed next, namely: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised interactivity.

6.2.5.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

- **Playfulness**

The website contained two elements of playfulness: (i) a question-and-answer format assessing whether an individual qualifies for low vision treatment and (ii) the opportunity to have an on-line eye test. The presence of these elements could lead to higher levels of interactivity (Ha & James, cf. 1998). The on-line eye test is a clever device to encourage curiosity and participation but could not be counted as an interactivity device since the feature was available but not in a working condition. Further the website contained no on-line games or opinion polls.

- **Choice**

The website allowed the visitor to browse freely, not restricting navigation in any way. On the other hand, the website did not offer choices related to language preference or an option for either a text or a graphic version of the site. Another choice that would have made notable sense within the context of the organisation was absent: the choice of larger or smaller text size. According to the organisation its website is fairly accessible to screen readers which enable blind people to browse. However, individuals who do not use such software might find the option of text size useful. Ha and James (cf. 1998) and Irish (cf. 2005) emphasise that designing websites from the perspective of the user encourages interactivity.

- **Connectedness**

A high level of connectedness was experienced when browsing the site. The website contained internal hyperlinks leading to information about the organisation, its programs and activities and blindness as its field of focus. The site displayed one example of clicking on an internal hyperlink in order to enlarge an image of the human eye. Internal links to advertisements could also be identified, e.g. a link to more information related to the promotion of a mobility rally. Further, the site contained various active e-mail links. When clicking on these the visitor's e-mail software is automatically accessed and the selected e-mail address inserted as the receiver of the message. This type of link was classified as an internal hyperlink due to the fact that these e-mail addresses belong to personnel within the organisation. The potential of e-mail communication in the formation and maintenance of organisation-stakeholder relationships is acknowledged by various authors, such as Cravens (cf.2006), Johnston (cf.1999) and Olsen *et al.* (cf.2001).

By way of external hyperlinks the website contained a special page labelled "Useful links", with relevant links to external websites. In some cases – as on the "Member organisations" page of the site –, links to relevant external websites were presented together with active e-mail links. As these e-mail addresses do not belong to personnel within the organisation they were classified as external hyperlinks. Further, the website contained a link transferring the visitor to an external website facilitating secure on-line donations. The presence of such a link demonstrates the organisation's awareness of on-line security (Farouk & Prytz, cf. 2003; Frenza & Hoffman, cf. 1999; Ritchie, cf. 2006) and the positive/negative impact it could have on levels of interactivity and on-line fundraising potential (Hart, cf. 2005). No further example of an external link leading to an advertisement could be identified.

The high level of connectedness offered by the website is in line with the vision of the organisation, viz. the creation of a network of organisations that are all related to the field of blindness. It can be argued that a high level of connected information (Ha & James, cf. 1998) is a requirement for enhancing a “network”-vision.

- **Networking**

In agreement with its “network” vision, the website could also be utilised to exhibit the organisation’s relationships with various stakeholders (Coombes, quoted in Ki & Hon, cf. 2006). The organisation’s website used this feature to a great extent. For example, the site contained a link “Member organisations”, which provided a list of 95 member organisations, eight international affiliates and 19 special schools for the visually impaired in South Africa. Information on how the different groups are involved with the organisation was provided on various pages contained on the site. Another networking feature could also be identified: the option of e-mailing the site to a friend (refer to Figure 6.3). By offering this option to website visitors, the organisation is indirectly revealing its relationship with these individuals within their own personal relationship network.

Figure 6.3: Networking tool on Case Study 1 website

The screenshot shows a web form with the following elements:

- Navigation menu: home, about us, services, news, faq, don
- Form fields:
 - Your Name:
 - Your Email:
 - Friend's Name:
 - Friend's Email:
- Buttons:
 - +add new friends/s
 - Email It! (dark blue)
 - Reset (dark blue)
- Text:
 - Have more friends
 - Website Address
 - If you have a message for your friend, enter it here:
- Security Code:
 - Please type what you see below into the box below.
 - Grid containing the code: DCAJU
- Message box: A large text area with a vertical scrollbar, indicated by an orange arrow.

Conversely the website was not used for exhibiting relationships with either organisational ambassadors or corporate partners. According to the organisation's website 90 % of its operating budget is provided by a combination of individual donors and corporates. It is therefore unexpected that the website does not display the organisation's relationships with its corporate partners or, alternatively, a specific stakeholder group that directly impacts on the ability of the organisation to achieve its mission.

- **Reciprocal communication**

With regard to this first step in creating web-based reciprocal communication, the organisation utilised its website capacity to disseminate information relating to: (i) the organisation's contact details, (ii) an organisational overview, (iii) news releases, (iv) an annual report, (v) blind and partially sighted issues, (vi) other short news articles posted under the link "News", and (vii) a privacy policy related to the use of the website. The site contained all the information-related elements which are needed for the creation of a future dialogical, interactive website environment according to authors such as Cooley (cf. 1999), Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006) and Hurme (cf. 2001).

However, true two-way dialogical devices were not displayed on the website, which stands in direct contrast to modern ideas about online communication. Barker *et al.* (cf. 2006), Hurme (cf. 2001) and Ihator (cf. 2001) all point out that one-way communication is not effectual in an interactive web-based arena. Organisations should focus on creating a transactional environment which enables relationship-building. In the context of this case study, the high usage of the site as an information dissemination tool and its low usage as a dialogical tool correlate with the internally assigned role of the communication function which is described by the most senior communication staff member as mainly reactive. The most important responsibilities of the function focus on information dissemination via reporting and publishing activities.

In accordance with Naudé's (cf. 2001) interactivity continuum the site was qualitatively classified as *somewhat interactive*, as it included organisational contact details for specific user concerns. This rating is more positioned towards the reactive end of the continuum. According to its own website, one of the main commitments of this organisation is to co-operate and exchange information, advice and assistance with all organisations concerned with the quality of life of the blind and partially sighted, which would place it more towards the two-way symmetrical end of the continuum. Although it is one of the organisation's main communication priorities the website is not strategically utilised to support it.

The arguments of Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) and Mullen (cf. 2006) are highly relevant: Information and communication technologies can be used to enhance an organisation's mission-related commitments.

The organisation was found to be extremely responsive to the present researcher's enquiry. Upon obtaining the contact details of the organisation from their website and contacting them, the researcher was directly connected with the relevant staff members of the communication function. Also upon receiving the documentation related to the research project, communication staff members responded promptly via e-mail and completed all requested tasks. In this case the organisation's website provided contact details that enabled the researcher to interact with the organisation's communication staff members (Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998).

- **Generation of return visits**

The ability of the organisation's website to generate return visits was uncertain due to the absence of an updated events calendar and a date on which the site was last updated. It also appeared that there was other information that was not up-to-date either. The only element that could be identified as a motivator for return visits was the "New product news" section on the catalogue web page. When web pages are not frequently updated with new information the organisation risks lower interactivity levels, according to authors such as Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ritchie (cf. 2006).

- **Positivity and intuitiveness or ease of use**

While navigating through the site the researcher found it difficult to use and understand due to the following conditions: (i) the labelling of links was in some instances incorrect, e.g. the link labelled "Click here for a list of special schools for the blind" led the visitor to the "Useful links" page, (ii) some of the internal hyperlinks were not working, e.g. the "Click here for vocational training application form", (iii) the absence of a search engine on the site increased the difficulty of finding specific information, (iv) the navigation menu seemed disorganised, not always showing the visitor where he/she was on the site and (v) the architecture of the site did not allow easy access to the most important organisational information. Another factor contributing to the difficulty of navigating through the site was that some of the links were not recognisable and appeared as normal text.

The described conditions can lower interactivity levels as user-friendliness is an important requirement for continued interaction, as suggested by Irish (cf. 2005), Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ki and Hon (cf. 2006). On the other hand the website did contain a site map and was mainly text-based rather than graphics-based.

6.2.5.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

The website contained instances where the organisation requested personal information from visitors with the intention to create future personalised and targeted communication. Examples include where the website invited visitors to join “Illuminé”, which is a special group supporting the skills development area of the organisation’s programmes. Personal information was requested due to the organisation’s intent to send each new supporter a special certificate of recognition. On another occasion the website presented the visitor with a choice of: (i) subscribing to the organisation’s magazine and (ii) indicating in which format the visitor preferred to receive the magazine, e.g. full-colour ink print, Braille, audio (on tape), electronic (HTML) or DAISY format. The website also offered the choice of subscribing to an on-line newsletter and again requested personal information.

The presence of these devices reflects the organisation’s desire to learn more about its stakeholders in order to create future purposeful dialogue with them, as suggested by authors such as Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997), Gignac, J. and Gignac, P. (cf. 2005), Ha and James (cf. 1998), Naudé (cf. 2001) and Ritchie (cf. 2006).

6.2.5.2 Brand contact point integration

Brand contact point integration is the second dimension of Niemann’s (2005) stakeholder integration area and is based on three ideas. Results related to the following are presented: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) message and delivery systems that are stakeholder-appropriate and (iii) timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences.

6.2.5.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

The website presented multiple opportunities for the visitor to interact with the organisational brand. Examples include an on-line donation facility and the on-line retailing of goods in the form of assistive

devices for the blind and partially sighted. These goods were presented in a catalogue format together with the necessary contact details enabling the placement of an order. The website further carried an on-line fundraising campaign. The campaign focused specifically on raising funds for baby Danielle's therapy as illustrated in Figure 6.4.

Additionally the site contained event management features allowing the visitor to download an entry form and register for the Braille writing competition. A membership recruitment feature was also present aimed at recruiting supporters for their Illuminé group which is a group of special supporters focusing on training and skills development for the visually impaired. Other engagement devices unique to this organisation's website were: (i) a second-hand store creating an on-line environment where interested buyers and sellers of assistive devices could meet to close a sale, (ii) an "If you want to add a link, please send an e-mail to ..." feature found on the "Useful links" page enabling the visitor to become an active contributor, (iii) an on-line employment recruitment element where visually impaired individuals can post their CVs on the organisation's site and (iv) on-line invitations to apply for bursaries, scholarships and financial assistance.

Figure 6.4: An on-line fundraising campaign on Case Study 1 website



These engagement devices represent areas on the website where information can flow in both directions and encourage interaction and involvement. These are important prerequisites for the creation and maintenance of on-line relationships (Ewing & Napoli, cf. 2003; Hershey, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005). It is interesting to note that the other engagement devices identified on this organisation's website are unique to their purpose of serving the partially sighted and blind community of South Africa. This finding confirms the perspectives of various authors (AlderConsulting, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006) who highlight the importance of utilising the web environment to promote the distinct mission of the organisation.

6.2.5.4.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

The website contained all of the elements that make content relevant. The site included: (i) a "frequently asked questions" (FAQ) page where questions like "How does a blind person count money?" are addressed, (ii) information on how stakeholders can get involved, (iii) information on organisational programmes, (iv) organisational contact details, (v) information related to blind and partially sighted people in South Africa, (vi) testimonials and (vii) other features such as "How to create a Power-Point presentation for people with low vision" and the on-line posting of conference papers focused on inclusive education for disabled students. The presence of these elements confirms a user-based web environment (Irish, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005), which is important for establishing interactivity.

With regard to recognising individual communication preferences the website offered two choices: (i) the choice of subscribing to an electronic newsletter and (ii) the choice of subscribing to the organisation's magazine. Aside from choices related to subscriptions, no choices related to areas of interest or preferred channels of communication could be identified. These findings stand in sharp contrast with the recommendations of authors such as Love and Reardon (cf. 2005), Potts (cf. 2005) and Quelch and Laidler-Kylander (cf. 2006) who suggest that the recognition of individual communication preferences is a key to relationship-building.

6.2.5.5.3 Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences

The site contained no options for selecting preferences relating to the timing of messages. According to Love and Reardon (cf. 2005) the absence of such options contradicts the idea of relationship-building.

6.2.6 Organisational integration area

6.2.6.1 CEO/Top management integration

Senior management makes use of staff meetings to communicate the organisational mission to all employees and to explain how different divisional projects fit into this mission, which reflects best practice according to a collection of authors (Angelopulo, cf. 2006; Argenti, cf. 2003; Gay, cf. 2005; Niemann, cf. 2005). This finding also supports the fact that the website relays most of the elements related to the organisation's strategic intent. Yet, the inconsistencies that were identified in Section 6.2.2 raise questions about the effectiveness of top management integration with lower levels of the organisation.

Regarding the integration of the communication function with the organisation's strategic management processes it became apparent from the evidence that the communication function mainly operates on a technical, reactive basis. The main responsibilities of this function according to the most senior communication staff member are: to communicate strategies to all relevant role players, to report on divisional projects and especially to publish successful projects to donors/sponsors. These results confirm the absence of a strategic communication management role within the organisation (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001).

Apparently the communication function finds the idea of research both difficult and challenging due to the fact that the organisation operates on a national scale which complicates the task. According to Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000) it is the research activity that especially equips the communication function to operate strategically. While it was argued in Section 6.2.2 that the communication function operates within the framework of the organisation's strategic intent, here the function was not operating strategically in the sense of directly contributing to the strategic management of the organisation.

6.2.6.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

The most senior communication staff member indicated that she functioned as part of the senior management of the organisation (Niemann, cf. 2005). The senior management team consists of the National Executive Director, a preferred nonprofit label for Chief Executive Officer, and the divisional programme directors. Although the communication function enjoys direct access to the National Executive Director the function still operates on a reactive, technical level.

The most senior communication staff member controls the organisation's total communication solution including public relations and marketing. The organisation does not have separate functions for public relations and marketing but rather combines these into one function labelled as communication management, reflecting ideas about a total integrated management approach towards the organisation's communication activities (Kitchen & Shultz, cf. 2001; Niemann, cf. 2005; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001). According to the most senior communication staff member, public relations and marketing are interrelated and the one cannot function without the other. The role of public relations activities is to establish a relationship with an individual or group, and once this relationship is established the organisation uses direct marketing appeals to further communicate with these individuals or groups.

Thus public relations and marketing communication activities in Case Study 1 are aligned. Further the internal communication environment exhibits strengths in terms of CEO/top management integration mainly due to the nature of the strategic planning process as explained in Section 6.2.2, but also exhibits weakness in terms of the communication management function's integration with the organisation's strategic management processes. A possibility exists that current website content is not a result of the purposeful internal management of strategic integrated communication ideas.

6.2.6.2.1 Budget

The communication function does not receive a budget to fully integrate communication and marketing activities. As stated by the most senior communication staff member, not all stakeholders are keen on spending donor funds on communication or marketing since these funds could rather have been invested in one of the organisation's beneficiaries. The communication function relies on finding appropriate corporate sponsors when planning to implement communication programmes. Niemann (cf. 2005) states the necessity of a budget for the implementation of her conceptual model. Here the absence of an allocated budget stands in contrast with the "network" vision of the organisation, which arguably requires funding the function responsible for such relationship-building activities.

6.2.6.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies

The respondent indicated integrated marketing communication (IMC) as the more familiar term. When asked to differentiate between the concepts of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and integrated communication (IC) the following ideas came to light. Integrated communication (IC) is

described as focusing on disseminating information with the aim of creating relationships first. Because the organisation's appeals are often received with indifference, communication on a face-to-face basis, in the form of awareness and sensitisation talks aimed at the general public, forms a key initial step. Once interest is triggered the organisation uses integrated marketing communication (IMC) techniques to further market the organisation and its beneficiaries: (i) direct mail appeals, (ii) direct media such as television and radio, (iii) electronic news letters and (iv) the organisation's magazine.

Thus the organisation perceives integrated communication (IC) as focused on relationship formation which mirrors the nature of strategic integrated communication (Freeman & McVea, cf. 2005; Niemann, cf. 2005) and integrated marketing communication (IMC) as focused on promoting the organisational brand and its beneficiaries, i.e. blind and partially sighted people in South Africa.

6.2.6.2.3 Strategic consistency to ensure unity of effort

Within the context of the organisation's strategic planning process all activities are planned and executed within the strategic framework as set out by top management. (See also Section 6.2.2 under strategic intent and Section 6.2.6.1 under CEO/top management integration for additional interpretations.)

6.2.6.2.4 Cross-functional planning

Various examples illustrate the organisation's efforts to encourage different divisions to communicate with each other. According to the most senior communication staff member examples include: (i) senior management meetings implicating the involvement of managers from various departments and focusing on planning activities, (ii) general staff meetings implicating the involvement of all staff members from the various divisions with the aim to create an inclusive discussion related to the current processes in the organisation, (iii) project management meetings where staff from different divisions are involved in a project, (iv) e-mail communication which is identified as the largest communication medium in the organisation and (v) an overall strategic meeting involving all staff members with the purpose of informing personnel about the strategic intentions of each division in the organisation.

These findings support the ideas of various authors (Cornelissen & Lock, cf. 2001; Duncan, cf. 2002; Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001) who all encourage the interaction of the different functions within the organisational context affecting stakeholder relationships.

6.2.6.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

Regarding communication and marketing planning the function relies on a basic communication plan for every year. As stated by the most senior communication staff member the communication plan is slightly modified each year to improve on certain elements. But because the organisation is strongly rooted in tradition, with its 80th birthday celebration taking place next year, and because strong expectation already exists with respect to organisational communication, the communication function is cautious when it comes to making drastic changes to the basic communication plan. This contrasts sharply with the idea that all communication activities should be justifiable within the context of the organisation's current operating conditions (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Niemann, cf. 2005).

6.2.6.3 Horizontal/vertical communication integration

For interpretations related to horizontal communication integration, refer to the previously discussed Section 6.2.6.2.4 under cross-functional planning. The organisation employs various vertical communication integration ideas: (i) an open-door policy which encourages employees to freely ask questions and (ii) divisional strategic planning sessions where each division contextualises its work within the framework of the organisation's strategic intent. The presence of these devices confirms the recommendations of Gronstedt (cf. 2000) and Niemann (cf. 2005), suggesting their value in creating internal organisational dialogue.

6.2.7 Summary

This organisation applies the concept of **strategic intent**, as shown by the presence of: (i) strategic elements on the website, (ii) a formal strategic planning process and (iii) various unique mission-related engagement devices found on the site. When considering the "network" vision of the organisation the absence of truly interactive dialogical devices became apparent. The organisation implements **learning principles** across its operating context, including the macro, task and micro environments.

The website also applies the concept of Niemann's (2005) **environmental integration area** by exhibiting relevant information related to the social issue that's addressed by the mission statement.

In terms of the **stakeholder integration area** the site utilises both the ideas of: (i) stakeholderism and (ii) consistent communication across stakeholders. The site also implements the idea of two-way symmetrical communication to some degree, as indicated by the presence of various indicators related to the frameworks of Ha and James (cf. 1998), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ki and Hon (cf. 2006). However, the website did not display any true two-way interactive devices facilitating dialogue. The site made use of the idea of purposeful, personalised communication due to the inclusion of “asking” devices requesting personal information. In terms of brand contact point integration it seemed that the site used unique engagement devices in order to create a 360° brand idea. Website content was highly relevant, but choices with regard to preferred channels and timing of communication were absent.

The **organisational integration area** provides insight into the internal communication management aspects of the organisation. The integration of top management with lower levels of the organisation is questionable. The findings suggest that the communication function does not integrate with the strategic management processes of the organisation, indicating a major shortcoming for the effective functioning of the renaissance communicator. Internal strengths in terms of the renaissance communicator include: (i) the most senior communication’s staff member’s functioning as part of top management and (ii) the central management approach in terms of the organisation’s total communication solution. Some requirements for the functioning of the renaissance communicator were absent including: (i) budget, (ii) knowledge of integrated communication, (iii) strategic consistency and (iv) zero-based planning. The requirements that were met include cross-functional planning.

6.3 CASE STUDY 2: RESULTS

6.3.1 Organisational background

This organisation was established in 1980 to coordinate activities relating to heart health issues in South Africa. During 2006 the organisation joined forces with a like-minded entity resulting in the formation of a group that aids in the fight specifically against heart disease and stroke in South Africa. Today the organisation has offices in various provinces of South Africa, including the Western Cape, Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Free State. According to the organisation’s website it is: “A community-based organisation established to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke in the population of South Africa by providing education and supporting research”.

This organisation implements its mission by focusing on three key areas: (i) health promotion to encourage the prevention of heart disease, (ii) support for people and their families affected by a cardiovascular episode, and (iii) fundraising to ensure continuous operations, since the organisation functions without any government funding. One of the most important mission-related activities of the organisation is to present the vast amount of scientific knowledge related to the issues of heart disease and stroke to the general public in an understandable manner. This is achieved through material contained in communication media such as brochures, the organisation's website, an award-winning magazine and media articles.

6.3.2 Principle 1: Strategic intent

The website displayed information related to the organisation's: (i) purpose, (ii) operating scope and activities, and (iii) operating principles. According to the most senior communication staff member the organisational mission is "contained in all that the [organisation] is involved in", which is also continued on the external website. The ideas of using a nonprofit organisation's website as a valuable source of mission-related information are echoed by authors such as Hart (cf. 2005) and Wilson (cf. 2003).

These findings are also supported by the fact that the organisation's website explicitly enhances mission-related activities such as providing education and research, by means of using the website to distribute quality information related to the issues of heart disease and stroke. According to Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) and Mullen (cf. 2006) the nonprofit website should be perceived as a tool which supports the implementation of mission-related activities. In contrast, some elements of the mission were not articulated through the website, that is, information related to the: organisation's long-term goals, core values and vision were not present.

6.3.3 Principle 2: Organisational learning

According to the most senior communication staff member the organisation primarily focuses on external research collecting information from employees who conduct research related to heart disease and stroke. The information is then utilised in the planning and execution of specific communication campaigns. The organisation doesn't really integrate other external or internal data when formulating communication plans. This points to a lack of strategic thinking (Anheier, cf. 2005; Brønn & Brønn, cf. 2002; Bryson, cf. 2004; Montuori, cf. 2000) applied to the management of the organisation's communication. According to Niemann (cf. 2005) it is important for organisations to be

aware of all the changes that are taking place in their operating environment. Currently the organisation is not fully utilising its learning opportunities and runs the risk of overlooking changes that could affect the organisation's mission.

According to the organisation's website the group operates without any government funding relying on "business's social responsibility and individuals' generosity for donations and bequests". Therefore learning principles, specifically applied within the stakeholder relational environment, are of great importance to the longevity of this organisation. Post *et al.* (cf. 2000) argue for the importance of understanding the organisation's entire set of stakeholders since relationships with them determine the organisation's sustainability. Apparently, although the organisation depends on stakeholder relationships for survival, no "external windows" (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000) exist to foster a deeper understanding about these entities.

6.3.4 Environmental integration area

The organisation's website contained extensive information regarding the social issue that is addressed by the mission, i.e. heart disease and stroke in the South African population. General information, statistics and external links related to heart disease and stroke were presented. Ideas about using a nonprofit website to communicate mission-related information are advanced by authors such as Hart (cf. 2005) and Ritchie (cf. 2006).

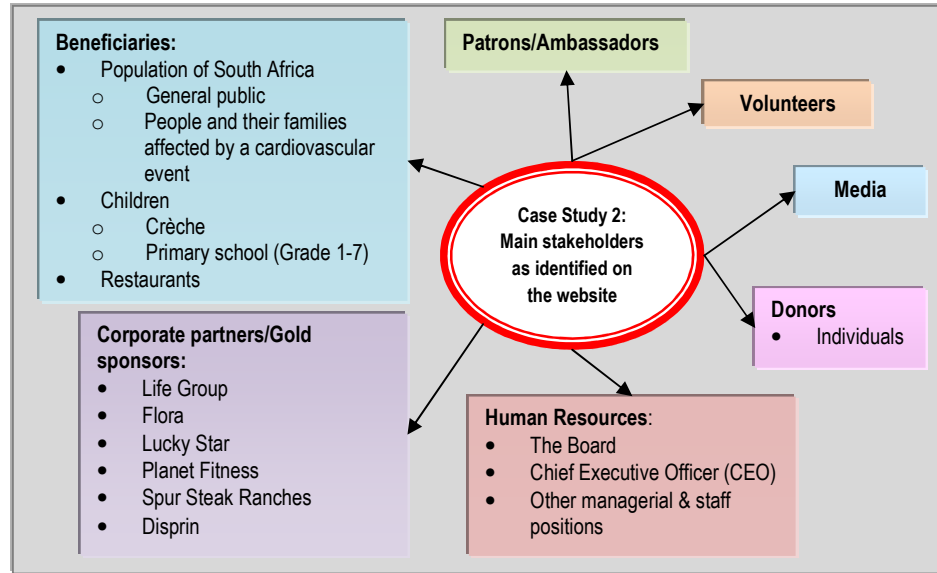
One of the organisation's primary mission-related functions is to communicate the vast amount of scientific knowledge related to heart disease and stroke in a comprehensible manner to the South African population. Because this function forms an integral part of the organisation's purpose and reason for existence (Love & Reardon, cf. 2005; Phills, cf. 2005; Powell, cf. 2005) a thorough understanding of the social issue is required. According to Ritchie (cf. 2006) nonprofit websites should display quality information which forms a determining condition for further aspects such as the generation of return visits.

6.3.5 Stakeholder integration area

The website demonstrated an awareness of a multiple stakeholder environment. Figure 6.5 illustrates the main stakeholder groups as deduced from the website. The site demonstrated recognition of not

only the organisation’s donors but also other relevant stakeholder groups, as is recommended by Chandler (cf. 2002), Drucker (cf. 1990), Freeman (cf. 1984), Phills (cf. 2005) and Post *et al.* (cf. 2000).

Figure 6.5: A stakeholder map for Case Study 2 website



As far as an integrated communication management approach to the organisation’s stakeholders is concerned, the organisation would rather utilise other internal media to communicate with human resources. As for the rest, Table 6.2 presents: (i) the different stakeholder groups that received direct communicative attention via the website, (ii) the nature of the messages directed at them and (iii) the relation of the messages to the organisational mission.

Table 6.2: Stakeholder messages in relation to the organisational mission in Case Study 2 website

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	MESSAGE	MISSION-RELATED	
		Yes	No
Beneficiaries	Information related to heart disease and stroke.	Yes ✓	No
Corporate partners/Gold sponsors	Information on how to become a Gold Sponsor and identification of current Gold Sponsors.	Yes ✓	No
Volunteers	Information related to volunteer opportunities and how to become a volunteer.	Yes ✓	No
Media	Various media releases contained in the “Press Office” hyperlink.	Yes ✓	No
Donors	A “Get Involved” page containing information on how individuals can contribute, e.g. donations and bequests.	Yes ✓	No

The above suggests that the organisation is applying an integrated communication approach to multiple stakeholder communication via the organisation’s website. According to Balsler and McClusky

(cf. 2005) and Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) a consistent communication approach across multiple stakeholders is crucial for the creation of positive stakeholder perceptions regarding the organisation's effectiveness.

6.3.5.1 Interactivity integration

Results related to the dimensions of interactivity integration are presented next: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised communication.

6.3.5.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

- **Playfulness**

The organisation's website contained elements of playfulness: (i) a question-and-answer format and (ii) other indicators, including the sending of electronic postcards and the provision of "cool links" leading to fun activities for children. The presence of these elements on the website encourages curiosity and sets the stage for continuous interactivity (Ha & James, cf. 1998). Elements of playfulness are certainly necessary to create interactivity between the organisation and one of its main beneficiary groups, which is children.

- **Choice**

The website required no membership registration in order to navigate through the site. In this sense the site rated high with regard to choice, due to the unrestricted navigation making it easier for website visitors to interact with the content. The presence of this noninformational alternative creates a user-friendly website environment which promotes higher involvement levels (Ha & James, cf. 1998; Irish, cf. 2005).

On the other hand this dimension was limited due to the absence of choices with regard to language preference and either a text-or graphic version of the site. Since the organisation is serving the South African population it remains an important consideration to offer web content in different languages. However, in this case the choice of either a text or a graphics version of the site is not essential since the website leans to text rather than graphics.

- **Connectedness**

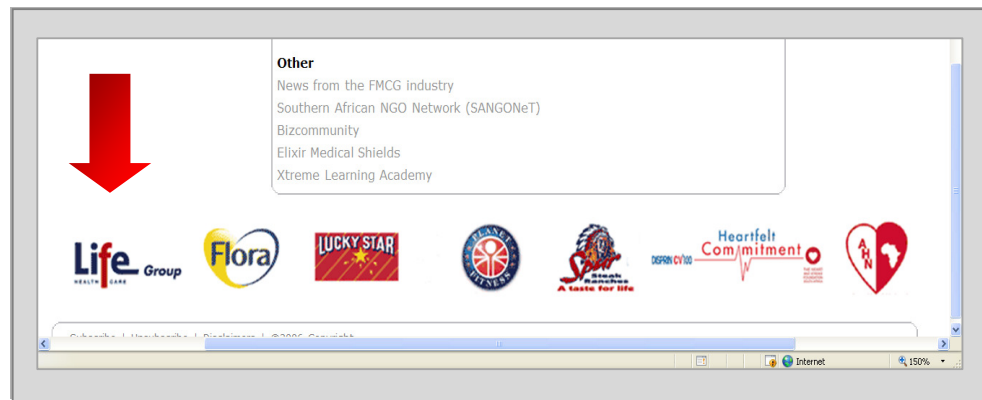
The website offered a high level of connectedness, with its various internal and external hyperlinks. Internal hyperlinks led to general information about the organisation's programmes and activities. These links also led to educational information related to heart disease and stroke, e.g. "Having a heart condition", "Eat well", "Dietician's corner" and "Change your lifestyle". Usually these pages also contained related external hyperlinks. The site even had a specific page labelled "Useful links" exclusively showing external links of related websites. Since one of the organisation's main mission-related functions is to present information related to heart disease and stroke to the South African population in an understandable manner, internal and external hyperlinks leading to such information play a greater role in the case of this organisation's web-communication and mission sustainability.

Internal links to advertisements and graphics were also present as well as external links to advertisements. An additional external hyperlink was identified, namely a link leading to an external secure on-line donation facility. Today on-line security (Farouk & Prytz, cf. 2003; Frenza & Hoffman, cf. 1999; Ritchie, cf. 2006) is an issue that affects the donor's decision to contribute electronically. The inclusion of such a link increases the potential for continued interaction, relationship-building and financial contribution (Ha & James, cf. 1998; Hart, cf. 2005). Further additional internal links were also marked in the form of active e-mail links allowing the visitor to relate in a dynamic way with one of the staff members within the organisation (Cravens, cf. 2006; Johnston, cf. 1999; Olsen *et al.*, cf. 2001).

- **Networking**

The website was utilised to exhibit the organisation's networking activities by : (i) providing information about the different groups the organisation is working with, (ii) providing information related to the nature of these groups' involvement, (iii) identifying the organisational ambassadors and (iv) identifying its relationships with corporate partners. The organisation strategically placed the logos of its corporate partners/gold sponsors at the bottom of each web page, as illustrated in Figure 6.6 on the following page. The presence of networking elements on the organisation's website signals an organisational awareness of utilising an arena such as the web to further enhance a stakeholder-relationship perspective which forms a critical implicit dimension of the nonprofit mission (Coombs quoted in Ki & Hon, cf. 2006; Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007, Radtke, cf. 1998).

Figure 6.6: Networking activities on Case Study 2 website



- **Reciprocal communication**

The website displayed various elements of information dissemination: (i) the organisational contact details, (ii) information facilitating an organisational overview, (iii) news releases and (iv) information related to heart disease and stroke. The site was also utilised to post images of recent advertising campaigns and communicated information related to the terms of use of the website. The presence of these informational indicators forms the first essential step in the creation of an interactive website (Cooley, cf. 1999; Ellsworth & Ellsworth quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006; Hurme, cf. 2001).

The high level of information dissemination could have been expected, considering the nature of the organisation's mission, which is to present information related to heart disease and stroke for educational purposes. The organisation is indeed using its website to enhance these critical mission-related activities, as suggested by authors Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007). Notably the site did not contain annual reports.

The website contained no true, two-way symmetrical communication devices which is disappointing since the organisation is dependent on its stakeholder environment, specifically on individuals from the general public and on business corporations. Although the organisation depends heavily on these stakeholder relationships for survival, no attempt is made on the website to facilitate interactive dialogue with them. This finding stands in sharp contrast with the advice of various authors (Cooley, cf. 1999; Ellsworth and Ellsworth quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006, Hart, cf. 2005; Hurme, cf. 2001; Potts, cf. 2005) who suggest that the inclusion of dialogical devices creates a website which is geared towards relationship-building and favourable fundraising conditions.

Utilising Naudé's (cf. 2001) interactivity continuum the site was qualitatively rated as *somewhat interactive* containing organisational contact details for specific user concerns. This rating lies more towards the reactive end of the continuum as opposed to the true interactive or two-way communication end. This result correlates positively with the mission-related activities of the organisation which involve the provision of education and research related to heart health issues; according to Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) this translates into the strategic use of web-based technology. Still within a fundraising context, on-line relationship techniques form the basis for future fundraising attempts (Hart, cf. 2005).

The present researcher found the organisation to be extremely responsive. With the details obtained from their website they were contacted telephonically, and they directed the researcher to the most senior communication/marketing staff member. She was not available, and the researcher left a message whereupon that staff member followed up the message and initiated contact with the researcher on the same day. The contact details obtained from the website certainly enabled effective interaction between the researcher and staff members of the organisation (Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998).

- **Generation of return visits**

The website appeared to display a low level of motivation for return visits. Information about forthcoming events was outdated. Many examples of event dates were already past. There was no indication when the website had been last updated. Some of the information on the site was outdated. An example includes a specific web page dedicated to a golf day that was hosted in the year 2007 and a quick reminder of the golfing days remaining for the rest of the year. Such conditions contribute to a lower rate of return visits (Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998). Yet, in this case return visits could also be motivated by the richness and quality of information offered on the site as suggested by Ritchie (cf. 2006).

- **Positivity and intuitiveness or ease of use**

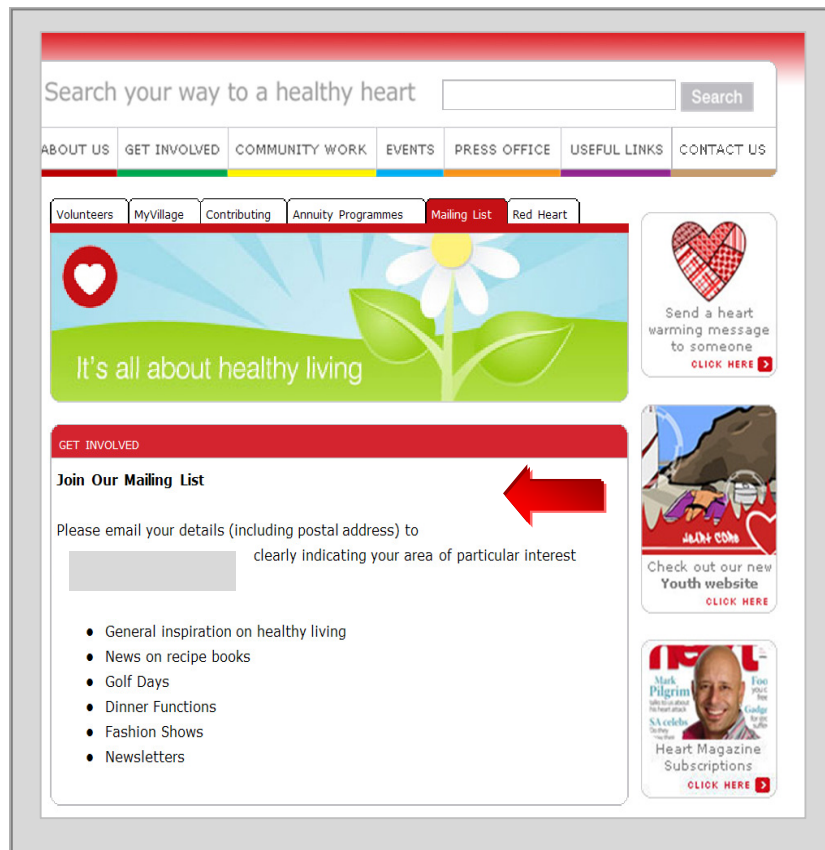
The website was easy to use: (i) the labelling and operational links were clear, (ii) there was a search engine, (iii) the navigation menu was well organised allowing the visitor to always be aware of where he/she was while browsing the site, (iv) the website architecture allowed easy access to the most important information and (v) the content was mainly text, not graphics. By contrast, a sitemap was absent.

Since this organisation’s website is characterised by information richness it is argued that elements of positivity and ease of use could play a determining role in a visitor’s choice to further interact with the web content. The website contained adequate features for enhancing positivity and ease of use as suggested by Irish (cf. 2005), Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ki and Hon (cf. 2006).

6.3.5.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

There were various points on the website where the organisation asked information about visitors with the intention to individualise the communication material that the organisation wishes to send to them in future. Examples include a “Join our mailing list” page where the organisation asks for the contact details of visitors and the type of information they wished to receive from the organisation (see to Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: Purposeful, personalised interaction tools on Case Study 2 website



On another page the choice of subscribing to topical articles was offered, together with the organisation's request for personal information such as: full name, company name, position, telephone/fax number and postal address. The last example included a page that exhibited different newsletters visitors could subscribe to. Again visitors were requested to indicate their preference which newsletter they wished to receive, and to provide specified personal information.

These examples exhibit a willingness of the organisation to learn more about website visitors in order to create individualised communication material as suggested by various authors: Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997), Gignac, J. and Gignac, P. (cf. 2005), Ha and James (cf. 1998), Naudé (cf. 2001) and Ritchie (cf. 2006). Also the presence of these "asking devices" supports the mission of the organisation – which is providing education and research regarding heart health issues – by ensuring that visitors receive material that is relevant to their interests; this contributes towards relationship formation.

6.3.5.2 Brand contact point integration

Brand contact point integration is based on three distinct ideas: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) message and delivery system are stakeholder-appropriate, and (iii) timing of messages is based on stakeholder preferences. Results relating to these ideas are presented next.

6.3.5.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

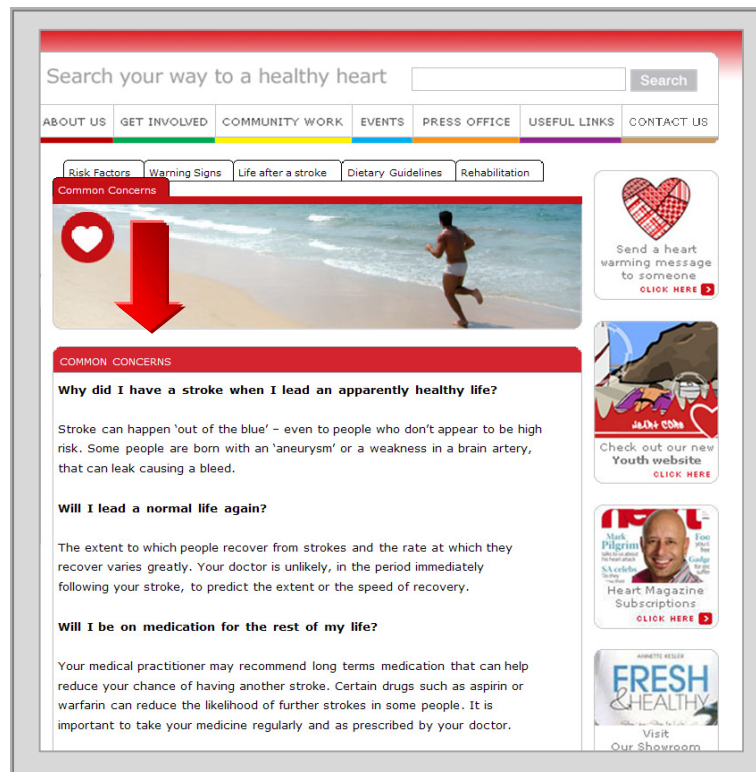
The website presented multiple opportunities for the visitor to interact, to gain experience and to contribute to the organisational brand; this encourages relationship-building (Ewing & Napoli, cf. 2003; Hershey, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005). Examples include an external link to a secure on-line donation facility and the on-line retailing of goods related to heart health, e.g. books, DVD's, badges and pins. The site also displayed a volunteer recruitment component in which information regarding volunteer work was provided, together with an on-line enrolment form that could be completed and sent back to the organisation. The site also contained a feature recruiting supporters for a "My Village" card, by providing information together with an on-line form that could be completed and sent back to the relevant parties. Event management features were also found where information regarding upcoming events was posted together with the details of contact persons, enabling the visitor to respond to event information. Since the event dates had already passed, this feature could not be classified as an engagement device.

The identified engagement devices are closely related to the central mission-related activities of the organisation. Since the organisation focuses on education and research the on-line retailing of goods related to heart health become prominent, and since the organisation is community-based, recruitment devices for volunteers and supporters become evident. This finding supports the idea of utilising the web-based communication arena to enhance the unique mission and purpose of the organisation (AlderConsulting, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006).

6.3.5.2.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

The website displayed a high level of relevant content due to the presence of: (i) “frequently asked questions”, or “common concerns” pages contained in some of the informational articles (see Figure 6.8), (ii) information on how stakeholders can get involved, (iii) information on organisational programmes, (iv) contact details and (v) information related to the organisation’s beneficiaries. A further element that contributed to the high level of content relevance was the nature and quality of the information related to heart disease and stroke. The presence of all these aspects reveals the intention of the organisation to create a user-based web environment (Irish, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005). Notably, the site included no testimonials.

Figure 6.8: Relevant content on Case Study 2 website



The site offered various options for subscription, including: e-newsletters, topical articles via the organisation's Intranet and an award-winning magazine. The website also provided the visitor with an opportunity to indicate which areas he/she is interested in; this supports the ideas of Potts (cf. 2005) which focus on the recognition of individual communication preferences as a means to create relationships.

In contrast, the site did not offer visitors choices regarding a preferred communication channel, which according to Love and Reardon (cf. 2005) and Quelch and Laidler-Kylander (cf. 2006) could be used to the organisation's advantage at a specific point in time. Despite the absence of the latter choice the organisation rated well in terms of both content relevancy and individual communication preferences. This finding could have been expected to some degree due to the fact that the organisation's mission is to provide education and research related to heart disease and stroke which again reflects the strategic utilisation of the site (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007).

6.3.5.2.3 Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences

No example of choices related to the preferred timing of messages was found. This result contradicts the idea of valuing individual communication preferences for the purpose of fostering relationship-building processes (Potts, cf. 2005).

6.3.6 Organisational integration area

6.3.6.1 CEO/top management integration

Top management communicates the mission and purpose to the rest of the employees via: e-mail, staff meetings, newsletters and the organisation's Intranet. This ensures the successful integration of the mission in all of the organisation's actions which are labelled as best practice by a collection of different authors (Angelopulo, cf. 2006; Argenti, cf. 2003; Gay, cf. 2005; Niemann, cf. 2005). This finding supports a former statement by the most senior communication staff member indicating that the mission forms part of everything the organisation is involved in and is therefore also carried over to their web-based communication arena. And as discussed previously in Section 6.3.2 the website effectively relays the organisation's mission.

Although the mission is integrated with communication activities, the integration of the communication function into top management's activities is questionable. According to the respondent: "The Communications Department has an integral role in all of the organisation's strategies and decisions" where this role is explained as devising specific communication campaigns. This finding sheds light on previous results which indicate that no research is conducted in the organisation's external environment (refer to Section 6.3.2), which according to Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000) prevents the communication function strategically. The absence of a strategic communication function becomes evident (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001).

Further the respondent is also responsible for approving all communication material to ensure a same "look and feel" which according to Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001) classifies as communication management practiced on a microlevel by focusing attention on the harmonisation of different communication materials. The latter finding further illustrates the lack of effective integration of communication with the strategic management processes of the organisation.

6.3.6.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

The most senior communication staff member of the organisation indicated that she functioned as part of top management (Niemann, cf. 2005). This implies that although direct access to members of top management exists the communication function does not operate strategically in the sense of contributing directly to strategy formulation processes, as previously discussed in Section 6.3.6.1.

The concept of managing the organisation's total communication solution had not been adopted. Upon probing, the respondent indicated certain marketing and branding activities that were operating separately from the communications and public relations function, implying that integration between marketing and communication activities was absent. This result contradicts the recommendations of authors such as: Cornelissen and Lock (cf. 2001), Duncan (cf. 2002), Kitchen and Shultz (cf. 2001) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001) who all emphasise the importance of aligning the different communication aspects of the organisation in order to produce effects such as integrity.

When the internal communication management context indicates weaknesses with respect to strategic communication integration ideas that involve the mission, communication and marketing functions, there is a high probability that the messages contained on the organisation's website are not a result of

those ideas. The respondent emphasised the fact that the mission is reinforced by the organisation's website. Yet the internal integration of: (i) the communication management function with the organisational strategic management process and (ii) the marketing and communication functions, is in both cases doubtful.

6.3.6.2.1 Budget

The organisation's website states: "... to continue our work, with no government funding, we raise every cent we spend". The respondent noted that the communication and public relations function receives no formal budget. When communication campaigns are planned, sponsorships are invited to ensure funding for that specific initiative. The respondent also indicated elsewhere on the questionnaire that the organisation "... have Gold Sponsors who aid in spreading the message and creating awareness through their marketing/communication plans."

The absence of a formally allocated budget for the management of strategic integrated communication contradicts the ideas of Niemann (cf. 2005). Since this organisation explicitly stated its dependence on stakeholders for its continuing operations, it is worrying that no financial resources are allocated to this critical implicit dimension of the nonprofit mission: relationships, partnerships and collaborations (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Radtke, cf. 1998).

6.3.6.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies

The respondent indicated familiarity with the idea of integrated marketing communication (IMC), rather than integrated communication (IC). When asked to differentiate, the most senior communication staff member stated that integrated marketing communication (IMC) is equivalent to multi-channel marketing where the aim is to utilise as many channels as possible and that integrated communication (IC) can be classified as one specific dialogue.

These perceptions do not correlate with the theoretical definitions of these ideas (Duncan, cf. 2002; Niemann, cf. 2005; Massie & Anderson, cf. 2003, Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001), possibly indicating a knowledge gap about managing strategic integrated communication.

6.3.6.2.3 Strategic consistency ensures unity of effort

In the case of this organisation, the mission is central to all the organisation is involved in. Additional interpretations are given in Section 6.3.2 on strategic intent and Section 6.3.6.1 on CEO/top management integration.

6.3.6.2.4 Cross-functional planning

The respondent indicated various mechanisms the organisation utilises to encourage different functions to engage in joint communication and planning sessions: (i) weekly marketing/communication meetings and (ii) the organisation's Intranet. This finding contradicts the previous result of Section 6.3.6.2, indicating a lack of effective integration between communication and marketing activities. Although marketing and communication engage in weekly staff meetings, integration might not be the focus of these meetings.

6.3.6.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

When planning for marketing and communication this organisation uses an annual plan that it works from. For a particular year the annual marketing/communication plan is evaluated in terms of its successes and failures. Based on these findings the organisation decides whether new strategies are needed. This result stands in sharp contrast with the idea of zero-based planning which emphasises communication planning based on current environmental conditions (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Niemann, cf. 2005). According to Drucker (cf. 1990) nonprofit organisations tend to be more inward-looking by focusing on the needs of their own organisation, rather than outward-looking by focusing on stakeholder needs and surrounding conditions.

6.3.6.3 Horizontal/vertical communication integration

Interpretations related to horizontal communication integration are given in Section 6.3.6.2.4 which discusses cross-functional planning. Concerning vertical communication integration, the respondent identified the two most common mechanisms that encourage dialogue between all employees: (i) weekly staff meetings and (ii) written reports. The presence of these devices reflects the organisation's intent to create dialogue among employees off all ranks (Gronstedt, cf. 2000; Niemann, cf. 2005).

6.3.7 Summary

The evidence of this case suggests that the organisation is applying the idea of **strategic intent**. This is supported by: (i) the presence of strategic intent elements on the site, (ii) the perspective of the most senior communication staff member who showed her awareness of a direct relationship between the mission and organisational activities, (iii) the fact that the website enhances the organisation's key mission-related activity and (iv) the presence of unique engagement devices which also support the implementation of the mission. However, the results suggest that in terms of **learning principles** the organisation is only focused on the internal organisational context, i.e. its micro-environment.

The organisation appears to apply the **environmental integration area**, for its website contains a large amount of information related to the social issue that is addressed by the mission.

The **stakeholder integration area** suggests that: (i) the website demonstrates the concept of stakeholderism and (ii) applies a consistent communication approach. The website is utilising various two-way symmetrical communication devices to encourage higher levels of interactivity. The site did not contain any true interactive communication devices and was rated as *somewhat interactive*. The website did contain devices requesting personal information with the intention to create purposeful future dialogue, which echoes the application of purposeful, personalised interaction. With regard to brand contact point integration, unique engagement devices could be identified which support the organisational mission. The site demonstrates a high level of relevant information. However, the site did not offer choices with regard to preferred timing or channels of communication.

The **organisational integration area** provided insight into internal communication aspects. As far as CEO/top management integration is concerned, management attempts to align employees with the mission. The integration of the communication function with the strategic management is absent, with communication functioning on a reactive basis. Ideas related to the renaissance communicator are absent. Although the most senior communication staff member functions as part of top management, critical alignment ideas are lacking: (i) between communication and marketing activities and (ii) communication with strategic management. Some renaissance requirements were absent: (i) budget, (ii) knowledge of integrated communication management and (iii) zero-based planning. Strategic consistency and cross-functional planning were the renaissance requirements that were met.

6.4 CASE STUDY 3: RESULTS

6.4.1 Organisational background

As far as the HIV/AIDS epidemic is concerned, South Africa is one of the countries with the highest infection rates. A direct consequence of the disease is the increase of orphans. According to UNAIDS projections for 2010 indicate that 1 700 000 South African children could be AIDS orphans. This nonprofit organisation was established in 2002 with the purpose of providing such orphans and other orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) with basic needs for survival such as food, schooling and general care by means of connecting and working with relevant community-based organisations. These organisations, operating at a grass-roots level, then act as the enabling linkage between the nonprofit organisation and its beneficiaries.

This organisation believes in a community-based approach in caring for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs). Its operations spread over seven rural communities in four different provinces of the country and are facilitated by six local community-based organisations. The nonprofit organisation empowers these community-based establishments by providing funding. Its programme consists of: (i) aftercare centres or drop-in centres where orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) receive food, assistance with homework, education in life skills, education in hygiene and health issues as well as moral and emotional support, (ii) network support teams consisting of, among others, the extended family, teachers, neighbours and social workers, ensuring that orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) stay within the community and (iii) the reintegration of these children into their immediate communities.

The organisation specifically invites individuals from South Africa's and France's general public to sponsor a child in need by only contributing R210 per month. This is done via the organisation's website, which according to the most senior communication employee is the most important marketing tool the organisation has.

6.4.2 Principle 1: Strategic intent

The website content revealed all the elements of the organisation's strategic intent: (i) the organisational mission or purpose, (ii) information pointing to a specific long-term objective, (iii) information indicating the organisation's core values and beliefs, (iii) operating principles referring to

the tangible aspects of their procedures, (iv) a summary of the organisation's activities and programmes in the various rural areas and (v) a vision statement referring to the organisation's future aspiration, which is "to raise a generation of saved children". These results reflect the views of authors such as Hart (cf. 2005) and Wilson (cf. 2003) and suggest that the organisational website should be presented as a rich source of information related to the organisation's work.

According to the most senior communication staff member, in this case the project manager, there is a direct relationship between the organisation's strategy and its communication management. Since this nonprofit is very small, with the project manager as the only individual employed full-time, the relationship between strategy and communication is cultivated by means of: (i) the project manager's attendance at two annual meetings of the Council of the organisation, where strategic issues are discussed, and (ii) continuous e-mail and telephonic communication between members of the Council and the project manager. All communication/marketing activities are conducted within the framework of the strategic intent as suggested by Argenti *et al.* (cf. 2005), Duncan (cf. 2002), Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Massie and Anderson (cf. 2003).

Further, the nature of the website correlates positively with the key mission-related activity of the organisation, i.e. the raising of funds that will enable community-based organisations to care for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs), by means of including special features such as an on-line fundraising facility and an on-line sponsorship application form on the website. According to authors such as Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) and Mullen (cf. 2006) this result reflects best practice in the sense of utilising the website environment to enhance and support mission-related activities.

6.4.3 Principle 2: Organisational learning

The project manager provided examples indicating how strategic thinking (Anheier, cf. 2005; Brønn & Brønn, cf. 2002; Bryson, cf. 2004; Montuori, cf. 2000) applies to communication management practices. On an organisational level, information about ground-level operations is collected and used in the formulation of electronic newsletters, annual reports and website communication. On a stakeholder level, the organisation monitors the media environment to measure the extent of marketing exposure through a number of media, viz. the press, state publications, radio, television and other organisations' websites. This information is important for reporting to the organisation's Council and members via the annual report. Also on stakeholder level, once the project manager becomes aware of an interested donor, immediate research is conducted to better understand the donor's interests and

communicate these findings to members of Council. On a macro-environmental level, the project manager continuously explores the environment for any factors that could possibly affect the organisation.

Since this organisation is largely dependent on its donor stakeholder group for continuous operation, it is comforting to observe the organisation's willingness to monitor the stakeholder environment. Within a dynamic environment where nonprofits are competing for funding, an open-systems orientation can lead to outcomes such as: effectiveness, longevity, innovation and sustainability (Britton, cf. 2005; Montuori, cf. 2000). In this case the project manager physically "feeds off" the environment to initiate appropriate communication activities, which signals the application of learning principles.

6.4.4 Environmental integration area

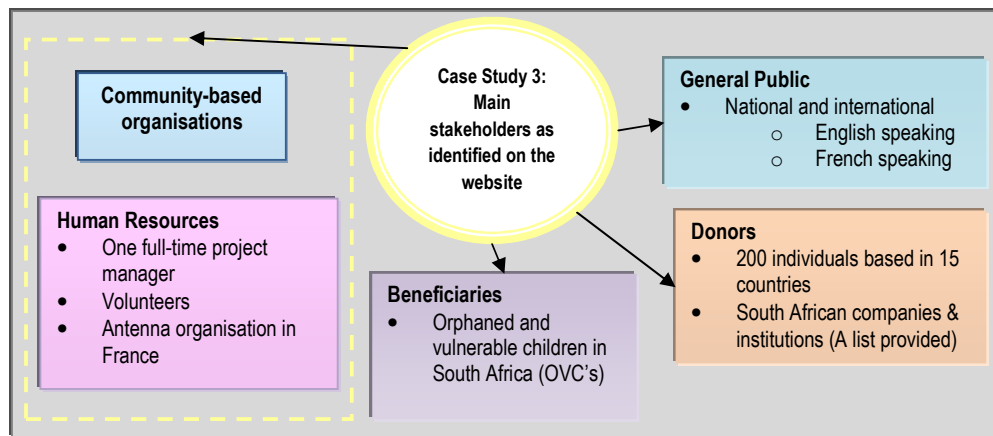
The website contained information related to the social issue that is addressed by the organisational mission statement (Hart, cf. 2005; Ritchie, cf. 2006), which is the AIDS orphan crisis in South Africa. Information could be found on one webpage titled "The Aids orphan crisis" and presenting general information and statistics on the issue. It became apparent that this organisation is not primarily using its site to distribute extensive information on the social issue of AIDS orphans in South Africa. This could have been expected since activities such as "creating awareness" or "distributing information" are not part of its mission-related activities and are therefore not carried over on the website.

Still Ritchie (cf. 2006) recommends that nonprofit websites should present as much information as possible, i.e. including general information, statistics and useful external links related to the organisation's area of work increasing both the quality of the web content and its ability to generate return visits.

6.4.5 Stakeholder integration area

The website demonstrated an awareness of a multiple stakeholder environment (Chandler, cf. 2002; Drucker, cf. 1990; Freeman, cf. 1984; Phills, cf. 2005; Post *et al.*, cf. 2000). Figure 6.9 on the following page illustrates the organisation's main stakeholder groups.

Figure 6.9: A stakeholder map for Case Study 3 website



Understandably, the organisation would not utilise its website to communicate with: (i) the community-based organisations since these establishments are based in rural areas where Internet access is possibly limited, (ii) its beneficiaries, since the organisation does not directly deal with them but via multiple volunteers operating the community-based organisations, and (iii) its personnel, since the organisation has only one full-time employee. As for the other requirements for an integrated communication approach, Table 6.3 indicates: (i) the two stakeholder groups that received direct communicative attention via the website, (ii) the nature of these messages and (iii) the relation of the messages to the organisation's mission.

Table 6.3: Stakeholder messages in relation to the organisational mission in Case Study 3 website

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	MESSAGE	MISSION-RELATED	
		Yes ✓	No
General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating information related to the organisation's purpose and how this purpose is achieved. A description of the AIDS orphan problem in South Africa. 	Yes ✓	No
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An invitation to become the sponsor of a child. Information indicating the difference a sponsor can make in the life of an AIDS orphan. 	Yes ✓	No

The results indicate an integrated communication management approach across these two stakeholder groups, which reflects the ideas of various authors such as Balser and McClusky (cf. 2005) and Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) who all suggest the importance of consistent communication within a diverse and interconnected stakeholder environment.

6.4.5.1 Interactivity integration

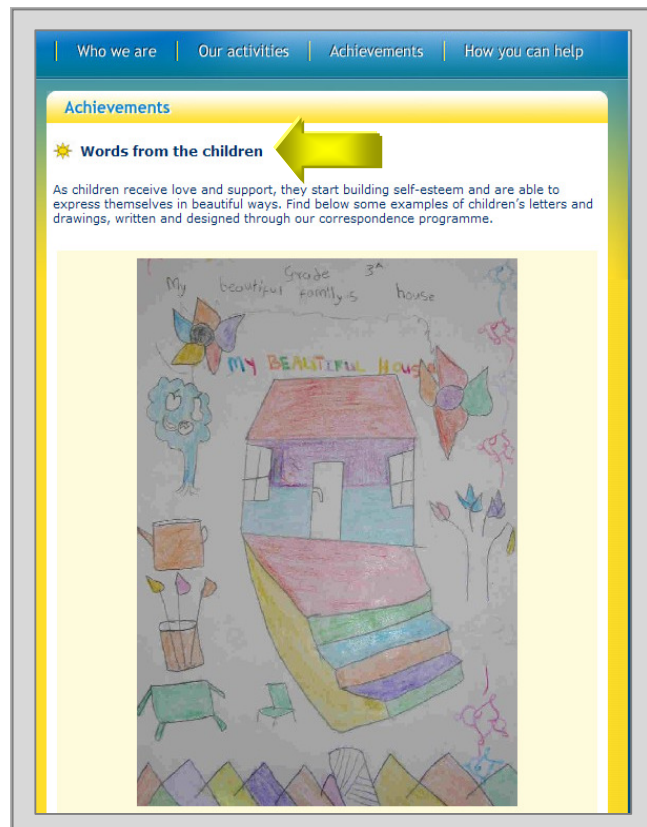
Next to be discussed are results related to the ideas of interactivity integration: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised interactivity.

6.4.5.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

- **Playfulness**

The site demonstrated elements of playfulness, encouraging both curiosity and interactivity (Ha & James, cf. 1998). On the homepage of the website a few questions were posted which relate to AIDS orphans and provoke self-communication and thought on the part of the visitor, e.g., “Can you imagine being 7 and not eating for four days?” On another page an interactive map of South Africa was found which allows the visitor to point and click on a specific province in order to be transferred to information explaining the organisation’s activities in that specific area. The website was also utilised to exhibit letters written by orphaned and vulnerable children, illustrating how well these children are affected by the organisation’s programme (refer to Figure 6.10). The site did not have on-line games or an opinion poll.

Figure 6.10: Playfulness on Case Study 3 website



- **Choice**

The website offered non-informational choices: (i) the site allowed for unrestricted navigation, (ii) the first page offered the visitor a choice in terms of either an English or a French version of web content and (iii) the site offered links to printable versions of each individual web page. The presence of these choices reflects the intention of the organisation to create a user-based website environment which encourages ease of use and interactivity (Ha & James, cf. 1998; Irish, cf. 2005). No choice between text and graphics versions was offered. The absence of this choice could possibly hinder interactivity in situations where visitors have a slow Internet connection since the site uses multiple graphical illustrations to communicate its message.

- **Connectedness**

A moderate level of connectedness was experienced. The website contained multiple internal links leading the visitor to information about the organisation's programs and activities. Adding to the feeling of internal connectedness was the interactive map of South Africa which encouraged the visitor to click on a specific province and be transferred to a page presenting information about the organisation's activities in that specific area (refer to Figure 6.11 on the following page). The site also had links leading to graphical information, e.g. "Click here to see the 521 dreams at the top of Africa!", "The proof" and "Words from the children", all transferring the visitor to graphical illustrations. Other examples of internal links: (i) found on the first page of the site where the visitor is required to click on a preferred language link, i.e. either English or French and (ii) an active e-mail link belonging to the main contact person of the organisation, who is the project manager. The website contained no internal links to advertisements.

External hyperlinks included: (i) links to partners who support and fund the organisation's work; these could be classified as advertisements since the presence of these links on the site provide exposure to these partners, (ii) a link to "Greater Good SA" which serves as a secure on-line donation facility (Farouk & Prytz, cf. 2003; Frenza & Hoffman, cf. 1999; Ritchie, cf. 2006), (iii) an external link to "MySchool Card" and (iv) an external link to "JD Consulting" who are the current sponsors of the organisation's website. The site displayed no external links to general information relating to the organisation's programmes or activities. Overall, the presence of internal and external hyperlinks reinforces the feeling of connectivity which according to Ha and James (cf. 1998) forms an important prerequisite for continuous interactivity.

Figure 6.11: Connectedness tool on Case Study 3 website



- **Networking**

The networking technique according to Coombs (quoted in Ki & Hon, cf. 2006) is an on-line technique that encourages continuous interaction and relationship-building between the organisation and its stakeholders. This organisation took advantage of its website to identify the different South African organisations, institutions and community-based establishments that are directly involved with its programmes and activities. Regarding the community-based organisations and their involvement, the site communicated detailed information pertaining to grass-roots level activities. The website did not identify an organisational ambassador.

- **Reciprocal communication**

Multiple indicators of information dissemination could be identified on the website: (i) contact details together with the organisation's banking details, (ii) an organisational overview, facilitated by pages titled "Our beginnings", "Our structure" and "Activities", (iii) an annual and financial report, (iv) general information and statistics related to the AIDS orphan crisis in South Africa and (v) other elements such as a "Latest news" column repeated on all web pages and (vi) charitable information relating to the

organisation's NPO (Non-Profit Organisation) and PBO (Public Benefit Organisation) status. These findings reflect the views of Cooley (cf. 1999), Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006) and Hurme (cf. 2001) who suggest the importance of information dissemination as the first step in the fabrication of an interactive website.

As far as truly interactive two-way communication is concerned, only one example could be found, viz. an on-line sponsor application form. This form allows the visitor to apply for sponsor status and at the same time allows the organisation to gain a better understanding of the applicant by requesting personal information and other relevant information, e.g. (i) the stakeholder's desire to become a pen pal for one of the children and (ii) requesting information about the hobbies and interests of the applicant. The presence of this device mirrors the views of various authors: (i) Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) who suggest that the website arena be utilised to enhance the implicit relationship dimension of any nonprofit mission, (ii) Hart (cf. 2005) and Potts (cf. 2005) who indicate the importance of approaching the website context as a relationship-building tool which would then create a favourable fundraising environment and (iii) Cooley (cf. 1999), Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006) and Hurme (cf. 2001) who point to the inclusion of two-way communication devices as the second step in creating an interactive website environment.

By utilising Naudé's (cf. 2001) qualitative interactivity continuum, the website was rated on a *moderate interactivity* level; it includes a sponsor application form which is classified as a feedback form allowing the organisation to gain a deeper understanding of their sponsors. The finding leans more towards the true interactive or two-way symmetrical end of the continuum. This finding correlates well with the main mission-related activity of the organisation, which is to raise continuous funding with the purpose of empowering community-based organisations. The organisation follows best practice which according to Hart (cf. 2005) and Potts (cf. 2005) translates into approaching the on-line environment first as a relationship-building tool; it will then produce a favourable fundraising environment.

The researcher directly contacted the project manager via contact details provided on the website. The project manager was extremely responsive and further communicated with the researcher via telephone and e-mail (Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998).

- **Generation of return visits**

The website displayed some of the elements for generating return visits. The site contained a “Latest news” section displaying information related to the organisation’s newest activities. In general, the information on the website was up-to-date. However, some of the statistics quoted on the site related to figures of AIDS orphans in South Africa that were recorded in the year 2005 and can thus be labelled as outdated. The site did not contain an events calendar, nor a date of latest revision. In order to generate return visits websites should contain continually updated information to provoke interest on the part of the visitor and encourage interactivity levels as suggested by Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ritchie (cf. 2006).

- **Positivity and intuitiveness or ease of use**

The website was extremely easy to navigate due to: (i) effective labelling and operational links, (ii) a well organised navigation menu always allowing the visitor to be aware of his/her location on the site, (iii) website architecture allowing easy access to the most important information and (iv) a browse button allowing the visitor to attach a photograph of him/herself specifically within the sponsor application form. The presence of these facilities contributes to a user-friendly website environment which favours high levels of interactivity (Irish, cf. 2005; Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998; Ki & Hon, cf. 2006). Elements that were missing included a sitemap and a search engine. Further, the website displayed an equal distribution of text and graphics which does not meet the requirement of a mainly text-based website.

6.4.5.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

Two features were found on the organisation’s website where an attempt was made to collect information about visitors, with the intention to create future personalised communication (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Gignac, J. & Gignac, P., cf. 2005; Ha & James, cf. 1998; Naudé, cf. 2001; Ritchie, cf. 2006). The first feature relates to the sponsor application form where the organisation attempts to collect information with the stated intention to contact the interested sponsor shortly with all the relevant information pertaining to the sponsorship programme. In the second feature, the organisation requests visitors to subscribe to its monthly newsletter. Information solicited consists of the first name, surname, country and e-mail of the visitor.

6.4.5.2 Brand contact point integration

The discussion now moves on to results pertaining to the three ideas related to brand contact point integration: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) message and delivery system are stakeholder appropriate and (iii) timing of messages.

6.4.5.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

The website contained three engagement devices, i.e. points on the site where the visitor can engage in some action that would contribute to the achievement of the organisation's mission and to the formation of a brand experience (Haji & Neichin, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005). One of these devices was an on-line donation facility. At that point, information was communicated as follows: (i) how individuals could get involved by making a donation and (ii) an external link to "Greater Good SA" through which a donation could be pledged. Another engagement device was the presence of information on how the organisation benefits from the "MySchool Card" and an external link enabling the visitor to apply for such a card. Further, the on-line sponsor application form also allows the visitor to engage in activity that affects the ability of the organisation to achieve its mission.

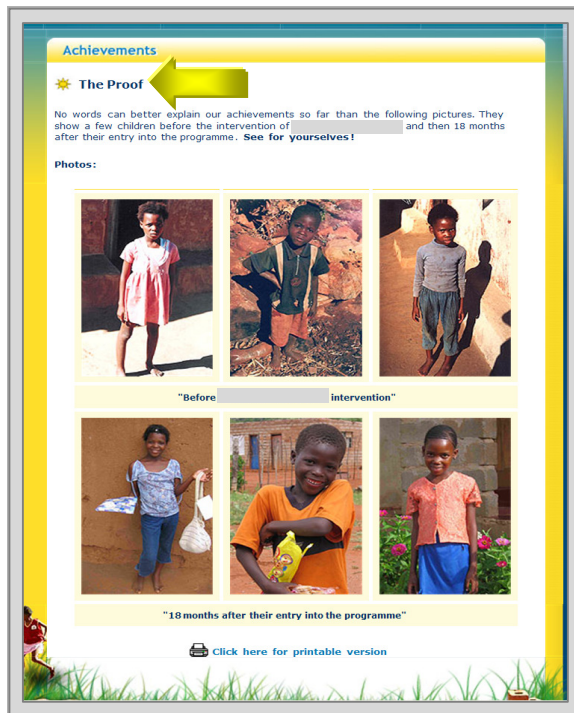
Notably, these engagement devices are all related to the key mission-related activity of the organisation, which is fundraising. Since the organisation is primarily focused on raising funds for community-based organisations, devices such as the on-line fundraising facility, the "MySchool Card" option and the sponsor application form become prominent. This concept reflects the thoughts of AlderConsulting (cf. 2005), Mogus and LaCroix (cf. 2005) and Quelch and Laidler-Kylander (cf. 2006) who suggest that the website arena should be utilised to promote the unique mission of the organisation.

6.4.5.2.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

With regard to relevant content, the website articulated most of the required elements: (i) information on how individuals could get involved in the organisation's work, (ii) information on the organisation's activities and programmes in specific geographical areas, (iii) contact details, (iv) a description of the beneficiaries and the social issue surrounding them and (v) graphical testimonials (refer to Figure 6.12 on the next page). Relevant content forms an important prerequisite in the creation of a user-based website arena which encourages interactivity as suggested by Irish (cf. 2005) and Mogus and LaCroix (cf. 2005).

As far as individual communication preferences are concerned, the website contained the option for subscribing to the organisation's monthly electronic newsletter. The website did not display choices referring to the visitor's preferred areas of interest or a preferred channel of communication; this rules out individual communication preferences, which form a necessary condition for sustaining relationship-building efforts (Love & Reardon, cf. 2005; Potts, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006).

Figure 6.12: Relevant content on Case Study 3 website



6.4.5.2.3 Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences

The website presented no choices regarding the preferred timing of messages; this contrasts with the recommendations of Potts (cf. 2005) and possibly impedes on-line relationship-building efforts.

6.4.6 Organisational integration area

6.4.6.1 CEO/top management integration

The unique situation of this organisation was already discussed in Section 6.4.2: it is an organisation with only one full-time employed individual: the project manager. The Council of the organisation

ensures that the project manager understands the strategic direction by requesting attendance at two annual strategic meetings, and by continuously communicating via telephone and e-mail. This internal condition reflects best management practice according to Angelopulo (cf. 2006), Argenti (cf. 2003), Gay (cf. 2005) and Niemann (cf. 2005) in that it ensures internal alignment of employees with the organisational strategy by means of top-down communication.

The communication function's role in strategic formulation processes is somewhat reactive: (i) the project manager follows instructions and recommendations received from Council in connection with all communication and marketing decisions; and (ii) the project manager is responsible for reporting to the organisation's funders. The latter responsibilities indicate a lack of effective integration of the communication management function with the organisation's strategic management processes (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001).

Yet, according to the project manager there are situations where new stakeholder information affects the direction of the initial overall strategy. When the project manager becomes aware of a new interested funder, this information is immediately communicated to the Council, and the Council then advises the project manager. This scenario is closely related to Mintzberg's (cf. 1994) idea of an emergent strategy that recognises the dynamic environment and continuously repositions the organisation in relation to environmental changes. The latter scenario suggests that the communication function operates on a strategic level by assisting the organisation to take advantage of strategic opportunities in the external environment; this is as recommended by Likely (cf. 2003), Seitel (cf. 1992), Seitel (cf. 1995) and Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000).

6.4.6.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

The project manager functions as part of the top management of the organisation (Niemann, cf. 2005), which is in this case rather known as the Council. As the project manager is the only full-time employee, the organisation's structure resembles more of a network-type organisation with the project manager operating alongside Council. This structural position enables a direct and regular line of communication between the project manager and members of Council.

The respondent did not indicate responsibility for controlling and managing the organisation's total communication solution. Instead the project manager stated that this task primarily rests on the

shoulders of Council who are responsible for all communication and marketing decisions. Although the management of all communication activities is not centralised within the communication function itself, they are centrally managed on the top management or “Council” level. This condition still meets the concept of aligning the different communication aspects of the organisation as advocated by: Cornelissen and Lock (cf. 2001), Duncan (cf. 2002), Kitchen and Shultz (cf. 2001) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001).

This Case Study exhibits strengths in terms of integrated communication ideas: (i) integration of all communication and marketing decisions and (ii) integration of top management with the rest of the organisation. Yet, the strategic functioning of communication is questionable. Although the project manager noted instances where donor information was used in the formation of the organisation’s future strategy (see Section 6.4.6.1) the key role of the project manager in the organisation’s strategic management consists in following instructions related to communication and marketing actions and reporting to funders. Since the internal communication management context also exhibits weaknesses in terms of required integration ideas, website content is probably not a result of the purposeful management of these ideas.

6.4.6.2.1 Budget

In this organisation’s case the project manager works closely with the finances, always being aware of current financial conditions. According to the respondent small amounts are sometimes available for marketing and communication activities. However, the organisation prefers not to pay for any marketing or communication activities and would rather seek a sponsor that would freely assist the organisation. This result stands in contrast with the view of Niemann (cf. 2005) who suggests that sufficient budget is required for the implementation of a concept such as strategic integrated communication.

This orientation towards the communication budget is also observable from the organisation’s website which indicates that the site is sponsored and empowered by a company called “JD Consulting”. Although the organisation claims dependence on their stakeholder environment for continuous mission realisation, no financial resources are allocated to relationship-building activities (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Radtke, cf. 1998).

6.4.6.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies

The respondent indicated familiarity with the term integrated communication (IC) and defined it as a means of reaching people in different ways and ensuring that the message is appropriate. The most cost-effective medium that the organisation focuses on is e-mail communication. E-mail is utilised for its networking capabilities enabling individuals to forward information to their friends and families; this allows the organisation to penetrate relevant social networks. The idea that e-mail communication enables the organisation and individuals to relate in a dynamic way is advocated by a number of authors such as Cravens (cf. 2006), Johnston (cf. 1999) and Olsen *et al.* (cf. 2001). On the other hand, integrated marketing communication (IMC) mainly resembles reporting about the organisation's beneficiaries. Knowledge of and competence in the management of integrated communication is a key requirement for the implementation of such concepts within the organisation's communication management context (Niemann, cf. 2005); in this case they are absent.

6.4.6.2.3 Strategic consistency to ensure unity of effort

In this case a direct relationship between the organisation's strategic intent and communication function is recognised. For further interpretations refer to Section 6.4.2 on strategic intent and Section 6.4.6.1 on CEO/top management integration.

6.4.6.2.4 Cross-functional planning

The organisational structure is somewhat "flat" with no added layers of management positions, resulting in the project manager functioning directly alongside members of Council. The organisation also has an international antenna based in France responsible for collecting donations from French donors. The primary communication media linking these sections of the organisation together include communication via e-mail and telephone. The situation indicates communication across the different parts of the organisation, producing horizontal communication alignment ideas as suggested by: Cornelissen and Lock (cf. 2001), Duncan (cf. 2002), Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001).

6.4.6.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

According to the project manager, communication planning is not based on a fixed model but rather adjusts continuously as changes occur in the operating environment. Thus planning is not conducted

annually but rather consistently throughout the year, which reflects the ideas of Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Niemann (cf. 2005) who suggests that current communication activities should be justified and motivated by current environmental conditions.

6.4.6.3 Horizontal/vertical communication integration

For horizontal communication integration refer to Section 6.4.6.2.4 under cross-functional planning. With respect to vertical communication integration the project manager identified examples of mechanisms encouraging dialogue (Gronstedt, cf. 2000; Niemann, cf. 2005) between organisational members: (i) monthly and annual operating reports received from each community-based organisation, (ii) field visits by the project manager to each community-based organisation, (iii) a two-day workshop enabling care-givers to share grass-roots level experiences and formulate future growth strategies, (iv) monthly newsletters, (v) the minutes of meetings and (vi) interaction via media such as e-mail communication and telephone.

6.4.7 Summary

Case Study 3 implements the idea of **strategic intent** by: (i) the presence of strategic intent elements within the organisation's website communication, (ii) the behaviour of the project manager ensuring a direct connection between the strategic intent and the organisation's communication, (iii) the website's demonstrated capacity to support the key mission-related activity of the organisation which is fundraising, and (iv) the presence of unique engagement devices further enhancing the mission. Further, the organisation applies **learning principles** to the management of communication across the different operating environments including the macro, task and micro-environment.

The concept of the **environmental integration area** became evident due to the fact that the website contained information relevant to the social issue that is addressed by the organisation's mission statement, viz. the AIDS orphan crisis in South Africa.

With respect to the **stakeholder integration area**, the website applied: (i) stakeholderism and (ii) a consistent communication approach. Further it was found that the site displayed various elements suggesting the application of two-way symmetrical ideas based on the frameworks of Ha and James (cf. 1998), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ki and Hon (cf. 2006). A sponsor application form served as a true, two-way communication device encouraging dialogue between the organisation and the visitor.

The website also contained devices requesting personal information with the intention to create future personalised communication. Then, with regard to brand contact point integration, the site contained unique engagement devices and relevant content but failed to recognise individual channel and timing preferences.

Results related to the **organisational integration area** provide insight into the internal workings of the organisation's communication management function. Top management's integration with the rest of the organisation was demonstrated by relevant communication devices reflecting the Council's attempts to ensure that all parts of the organisation are aligned with the strategic direction. However, the integration of the communication function with the strategic management of the organisation is questionable. Further, regarding the concept of the renaissance communicator, the organisation had favourable internal conditions: (i) the fact that the project manager operates alongside Council and (ii) the centralised management of all communication activities. With respect to the requirements for the effective functioning of the renaissance communicator, the organisation demonstrated knowledge of the following ideas: (i) strategic consistency to ensure unity of effort, (ii) cross-functional planning and (iii) zero-based communication and marketing planning. Requirements related to: (i) budget and (ii) knowledge regarding the management of integrated communication were absent.

6.5 CASE STUDY 4: RESULTS

6.5.1 Organisational background

The organisation's vision is a fair, participatory and sustainable tourism environment in South Africa. According to the organisation's website its mission is to "... facilitate the integration of Fair Trade in Tourism principles and criteria into South African tourism so that the industry is more sustainable". The organisation achieves this through raising awareness, conducting research, advocacy activities, capacity building and by means of a Fair Trade certification programme.

The unique certification programme offers South African tourism establishments: (i) accommodation providers (e.g. hotels and guest houses), (ii) tourism activities (e.g. adventure tours and whale watching), (iii) established tourism attractions (e.g. museums and places of interest) and (iv) tour operators, the opportunity to obtain endorsement signifying commitment to Fair Trade criteria. Criteria include: (i) fair wages and working conditions, fair operations, purchasing and distribution benefits, (ii) ethical business practice and (iii) respect for human rights, culture and the environment.

When choosing to support a certified tourism establishment, tourists are assured that their support benefits local communities and economies, that the business conducts ethical operations and is operated in a socially and environmentally responsible way. Conversely, tourism establishments also receive benefits in return for certification, such as being promoted on the nonprofit organisation's website and media work.

6.5.2 Principle 1: Strategic intent

Most of the elements of the organisation's strategic intent could be found: information related to the organisation's purpose, values or beliefs, operating principles, activities and vision was provided. Website communication reflected the main elements of the organisation's mission, reinforcing ideas of Hart (cf. 2005) and Wilson (cf. 2003) who both suggest that nonprofits should utilise their website environments to relay information related to their purpose and how they should attempt to achieve that purpose. The only element that could not be identified was long-term goals.

The organisation has a formal strategic marketing plan directly linking the strategic intent with all communication activities. The strategic marketing plan identifies key mission-related activities and ensures that all communication attempts are planned and executed within that framework. This finding mirrors the views of various authors (Argenti *et al.*, cf. 2005; Duncan, cf. 2002; Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Massie & Anderson, cf. 2003) who suggest the value of conducting all communication activities within the framework of the organisation's strategic intent.

According to the most senior staff member responsible for communication, the organisation's website is primarily utilised to implement a specific key mission-related activity, which is raising awareness of both Fair Trade Principles and the benefits of certification. The website is described as "... a formidable resource on sustainable tourism and links to information for its various target audiences". The site also supports other mission-related activities: (i) advocacy activities, by presenting the organisation's relational network, (ii) capacity-building, by transferring relevant information regarding training opportunities to the on-line environment, and (iii) the Fair Trade certification programme, by providing necessary information such as how to apply and the cost of application. These results reflect the ideas of Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) and Mullen (cf. 2006) who argue for the strategic utilisation of information and communication technologies such as the web-based communication arena.

6.5.3 Principle 2: Organisational learning

The most senior communication staff member presented various website features that demonstrate the role of learning principles in the management of the organisation's communication. Thus, for instance, the organisation: (i) directs attention to competitors and other similar organisations and their electronic communication strategies, with the aim to improve its own web-based communication, (ii) studies related industry events and relevant stakeholders' activities for the purpose of communicating this information in the news section of the organisation's website, (iii) collects information regarding clients and other stakeholders with the intention of using this information in news releases sent to the media and tour operators, (iv) conducts regular surveys related to industry brand awareness and client satisfaction surveys and (v) the organisation also uses a "Monitoring and Evaluation" system which contains information related to the quantity of advertisements, editorials (broadcast and radio), print media and website traffic. Also, since the organisation engages in extensive research, enquiry into the economic aspect of tourism forms an additional example that signifies learning principles.

The above website features indicate a strategic focus as suggested by: Anheier (cf. 2005), Brønn and Brønn (cf. 2002), Bryson (cf. 2004) and Montuori (cf. 2000).

6.5.4 Environmental integration area

The site contained information related to the economic issue addressed by the mission statement. This is in agreement with recommendations by Hart (cf. 2005) and Ritchie (cf. 2006). Web content included: (i) web pages entitled, e.g., "What is Fair Trade?", "Fair Trade in South Africa", "Introduction to Fair Trade in Tourism" and "Hot Issues", (ii) content indicating relevant South African and global resources related to responsible tourism and (iii) a large number of useful external hyperlinks. The website also displayed a unique page titled "Fair Trade in Tourism Archives" which contained research information pertaining to the main issues of tourism activities. This archive is presented as the knowledge base of the organisation and as a useful research resource on Fair Trade in tourism.

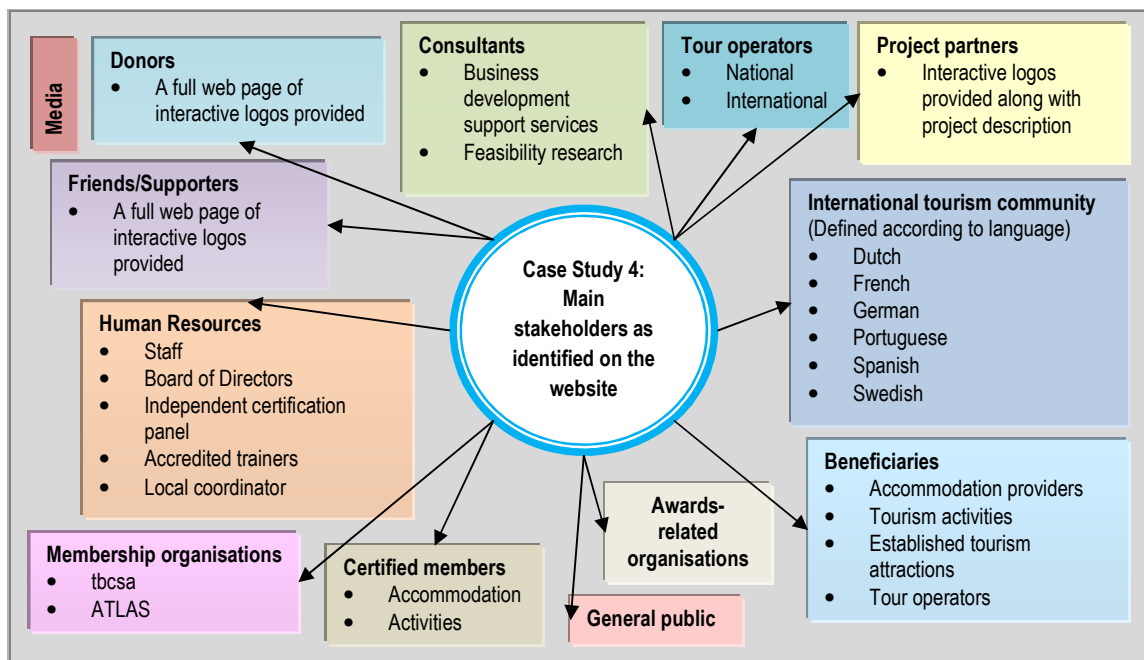
The fact that the organisation's website turned out to be a formidable resource of information on Fair Trade principles in South Africa, could be explained by the nature of the organisation's key mission-related activities which include conducting research and creating awareness. When the organisation's mission (Love & Reardon, cf. 2005; Phills, cf. 2005; Powell, cf. 2005) specifies activities such as

research and awareness it is only best practice to use an environment such as a website, in order to support the implementation of those activities (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Mullen, cf. 2006).

6.5.5 Stakeholder integration area

The organisation's website illustrated recognition of a diverse stakeholder environment. This is in line with suggestions by Chandler (cf. 2002), Drucker (cf. 1990), Freeman (cf. 1984), Phills (cf. 2005) and Post *et al.* (cf. 2000). The main stakeholder groups are illustrated in Figure 6.13.

Figure 6.13: A stakeholder map for Case Study 4 website



The website informed about various stakeholders: donors, friends/supporters, membership organisations, certified members, awards-related organisations and project partners. However, direct communicative attention or messages were directed at the beneficiaries, the international tourism community, consultants, the media and the general public. Other means of communication would be utilised to communicate with employees. Table 6.4 on the next page includes: (i) the stakeholder groups having web-based messages directed at them, (ii) the nature of these messages and (iii) how these messages relate to the mission.

Table 6.4: Stakeholder messages in relation to the organisational mission in Case Study 4 website

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	MESSAGE	MISSION-RELATED	
		Yes ✓	No
Beneficiaries	Information related to the unique certification programme offered by the organisation, i.e. including topics such as “How it works”, the benefits of certification, “What it costs”.	Yes ✓	No
International tourism community	Specially designed web pages in different languages, explaining the organisation’s purpose and how its unique certification programme benefits it.	Yes ✓	No
Consultants	Website contains requests for proposals relevant to the organisation’s activities and projects. Information relating to the required tasks and deadlines is provided.	Yes ✓	No
Media	A specially designed page containing a list of media releases reporting on industry events and the organisation’s stakeholders’ activities.	Yes ✓	No
General public	Information related to certified accommodation and activities in South Africa.	Yes ✓	No

The analysis serves as an indication of a consistent communication approach across different stakeholder groups. The organisation’s web-based communication follows best practice as prescribed by Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Balser and McClusky (cf. 2005) who point out the importance of a consistent communication approach across an interconnected diverse stakeholder environment.

6.5.5.1 Interactivity integration

Once again, results pertaining to the ideas of interactivity integration are considered: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised communication.

6.5.5.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

- **Playfulness**

One example of playfulness was found on the website which was an interactive “Google Map”. The unique interactive map shows certified establishments and activities in South Africa with the blue flags representing certified places to stay and the red flags indicating certified activities to enjoy. The visitor can click on these flags to obtain information relevant information as in Figure 6.14 on the following page.

Figure 6.14: Playfulness tool on Case Study 4 website



The interactive “Google Map” can be labelled as a curiosity arousal device that encourages the visitor to get involved and to participate in the activity of learning more about certified establishments and activities. The presence of this feature can possibly lead to higher levels of interaction as suggested by Ha and James (cf. 1998).

- **Choice**

The website allowed for free navigation and required no formal registration in order to browse. The site also had a choice in terms of language preference by offering selected web content in the following languages: English, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. Other non-informational choices could also be identified: (i) an interactive “Google Map” offering the visitor choices in terms of a map view, satellite view, a combination of both, scroll options and zoom options, (ii) choices related to an interactive events calendar in terms of a weekly, monthly or agenda view of upcoming events, as well as printing options relating to font size, orientation, showing events that were declined and a black-and-white printing option and (iii) the option to view selected webpages in PDF format. Since one of the main functions of the website is to distribute research results and create

awareness, the inclusion of non-informational preferences produces an easy-to-use website environment which promotes higher levels of interactivity (Ha & James, cf. 1998; Irish, cf. 2005).

By contrast, a choice between text and graphics versions of the site was missing. This could be problematic because the site contained a large number of images. Some users may find it difficult to download the site, which affects interactivity levels negatively.

- **Connectedness**

A high level of connectedness was experienced while navigating the site, due to the vast quantity of internal hyperlinks transporting the visitor through its content. First, the site contained multiple links to general information related to the organisation's programmes and activities. There were internal links to webpages dedicated to displaying only graphical information. As far as internal links to advertisements are concerned, the website displayed: (i) information about the certified tourism establishments for promotional intentions and (ii) links to information about training opportunities.

A unique feature of the site was its use of organisational logos as internal hyperlinks connecting the visitor with information related to a specific stakeholder (refer to Figure 6.15). Other internal hyperlinks included active e-mail links encouraging direct communication with organisational members and the inclusion of an interactive "Google Map" allowing the visitor to click on a specific geographical area and be transferred to information pertaining to certified tourism establishments or activities in that specific area.

Throughout the site external hyperlinks related to the organisation's area of work were identified. These hyperlinks included active e-mail links to members operating separately from the organisation, active "Website" links transferring the visitor directly to a stakeholder's external website, and external links to documents contained outside the parameters of the website. Although the site contained a page dedicated to "Fair Trade Links", it was noted that the website integrated external hyperlinks extensively throughout the web content. Further external links to advertisements could also be identified in the form of active organisational logo's belonging to certified tourism establishments and activities found in South Africa. According to the organisation's website, one of the benefits of being a certified member includes free publicity and promotion on the organisation's website.

Figure 6.15: Connectedness tool on Case Study 4 website



Internal and external hyperlinks contribute to the feeling of connectedness and encourage higher levels of interactivity (Ha & James, cf. 1998). One of the organisation's aims is creating awareness about Fair Trade principles, and the inclusion of hyperlinks transporting the visitor to relevant information supports such a aim. Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) and Mullen (cf. 2006) emphasise the importance of utilising website technology for the implementation of mission-related activities.

- **Networking**

Applying networking within the website arena is highly evident in this particular organisation's case. The site contained a large amount of information on the different groups the organisation is working with and on exactly how these groups are involved. The website utilised the active logos of its particular stakeholders to exhibit the organisation's relationships network. Figure 6.16 on the following page is a graphical example of the organisation's networking activities.

Figure 6.16: Networking tool on Case Study 4 website



In this case, relationships with supporters, not only corporate partners, were exhibited and defined as donors and friends, including, among others, corporations. These supporters were identified on two separate web pages by means of active organisational logos. These findings fall in with the view of Coombs (quoted in Ki & Hon, cf. 2006) that a website should be used to depict the organisation's relational network. Since one of the organisation's main mission-related activities is advocacy which involves relational outcomes, the presence of both connectedness and networking elements shows such a relational activity, which according to Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) confirms the strategic use of the web-based communication environment. The only element that was absent from the site was an organisational ambassador.

- **Reciprocal communication**

The website could be described as a rich resource of information relating to the organisation and its areas of work, containing: (i) contact details, (ii) an organisational overview, (iii) news releases in PDF format, (iv) an annual report and (v) a vast amount of information related to Fair Trade principles and the South African tourism industry. Other examples were also noticed, e.g. news articles, a news archive, research archives, booklets, handbooks and manuals, all distributed via the organisation's site. Also, this organisation's extensive use of its website to "self-disclose" was noted (Ki & Hon, cf. 2006); it included information relating to: (i) the identification and description of staff members, (ii) a Section 51 manual, (iii) a charitable status webpage and (iv) a privacy policy. These findings agree with the views of various authors (Cooley, cf. 1999; Ellsworth & Ellsworth quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006; Hurme, cf. 2001) who indicate the importance of information dissemination as a first step in the creation of an interactive web-based communication environment.

Conversely, the site had only one truly two-way communication device encouraging dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholder: an on-line feedback form. The form provides an opportunity for the visitor to direct an individual enquiry to the organisation. According to Ha and James (cf. 1998) this process encourages the visitor to get personally involved and to form a relationship with the organisation, which according to various authors forms the second phase of creating an interactive website arena (Cooley, cf. 1999; Ellsworth & Ellsworth quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006; Hurme, cf. 2001).

According to Naudé's (cf. 2001) interactivity continuum, the site was classified under the *moderate interactivity* section, since the website includes a feedback form that allows visitors to send individual comments. Although this classification leans more towards the true interactive or two-way symmetrical end of the continuum it is clear from the previous findings that the website contains more information dissemination elements than dialogical devices. This could have been expected due to the nature of the organisation's primary mission-related activity, i.e. creating awareness about: (i) Fair Trade principles and (ii) the benefits of the certification programme, which is achieved by means of distributing relevant information.

The researcher experienced the organisation as responsive. Relevant contact details were obtained from the organisation's website and the organisation was contacted; the receptionist was able to direct the researcher to the most senior communication staff member. Thereafter continuous communication

was maintained until all necessary tasks were completed. The information provided on the website enabled a dialogical relationship between the researcher and the respondent staff member, in line with the ideas of Kent (cf. 1998/1999) and Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) about the ability of web-based communication facilitating dialogical relationships.

- **Generation of return visits**

The website had various features supporting the generation of return visits: (i) a comprehensive events calendar outlining all related industry events for all the 12 months of the year and allowing the visitor to move freely between the different months, (ii) information appeared to be up-to-date with no case of obsolete content, (iii) a news section indicating the date on which the section was last updated; this date continuously changed and created perceptions of a constant day-to-day updating and (iv) in this case the quality of the information on the site could also motivate return visits. The presence of these indicators creates favourable conditions for the generation of return visits to the site supporting the maintenance of web-based relationships (Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998; Ritchie, cf. 2006). The element that could not be identified was the date on which the website itself was last updated.

- **Positivity and intuitiveness or ease of use**

The website rated high in terms of positivity and ease of use. The site was easy to use due to the following: (i) labelling and operational links were clear, (ii) a search engine was included for the entire site as well as a separate search engine for the news archive, (iii) a clear navigation menu always allowed the visitor to be aware of his/her position on the site and (iv) the web architecture allowed easy access to the most important information. Other features included: (i) for the calendar, a print preview option, (ii) a free calculation worksheet to assist the visitor with the calculation of costs of the certification programme and (iii) a "Get Adobe Reader" link allowing visitors without this software to obtain Adobe Reader which would enable them to access the PDF documents contained throughout the site and specifically on the media centre page.

These indicators support a user-friendly web-based environment which forms an important prerequisite for continuous interactivity according to Irish (cf. 2005), Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ki and Hon (cf. 2006). Since the site is presented as a rich source of information related to the issue of Fair Trade, user-friendly features could predicate interactivity levels.

The last issue considered was the question of a text-based vs. a graphics-based site. The site contained pages which displayed only graphics and logos, e.g. logos of organisations related to (i) “Where to Stay” and (ii) “What to do”. Visitors with slower browsers may find it more difficult to use the site than visitors with faster options where this may negatively affect interactivity levels.

6.5.5.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

The website contained two instances where the organisation attempted to collect personal information from the visitor with the intention to personalise future communication processes (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Gignac, J. & Gignac, P., cf. 2005; Ha & James, cf. 1998; Naudé, cf. 2001; Ritchie, cf. 2006). First the website presented the visitor with the option of subscribing to a monthly electronic newsletter. Once the option was selected the site requested the visitor’s name, e-mail address and country. The second is the on-line feedback form where the organisation asks personal questions. These questions would yield information empowering the organisation in creating purposeful, personalised communication.

6.5.5.2 Brand contact point integration

Findings related to brand contact point integration are next: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) message and delivery system are stakeholder-appropriate, and (iii) timing of messages are based on stakeholder preferences.

6.5.5.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

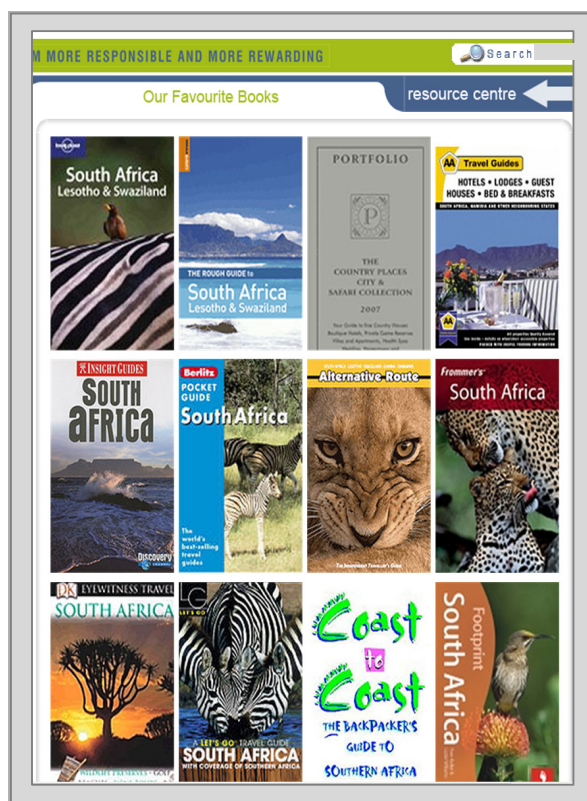
The site offered opportunities for the visitor to become involved with the organisational brand, thus encouraging favourable conditions for relationship-building (Ewing & Napoli, cf. 2003; Hershey, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005). Examples include: (i) the on-line selling of services where information related to the organisation’s training courses are presented along with appropriate contact details and (ii) staff recruitment features, where the organisation utilises its news section to advertise vacancies and provide contact details. Other brand interaction opportunities were also identified: (i) the website articulates requests for proposals aimed at business consultants, (ii) an on-line application feature for the organisation’s certification programme and (iii) and the previously identified feedback form which allows the visitor to directly communicate with the organisation.

The identified engagement devices are closely related to the nature of the organisation's work including advocacy, capacity-building and the facilitation of a unique certification programme. This finding reflects the views of various authors (AlderConsulting, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006) who suggest that the website arena should be perceived as a communication environment that can be used to further enhance the organisational mission.

6.5.5.2.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

The site demonstrated all the elements for ensuring relevancy: (i) a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page, (ii) information on how the main beneficiary groups can get involved, (iii) comprehensive information related to the organisation's certification programme, training activities and projects, (iv) contact details, (v) a clear description of the beneficiaries and (vi) testimonials of certified tourism entities. The website exhibited other unique aspects: (i) a comprehensive events calendar outlining all industry-related events for an entire year and (ii) a "resource centre" identifying, among other things, international and national responsible tourism resources and the organisation's recommended book collection (see Figure 6.17).

Figure 6.17: Message is stakeholder-appropriate on Case Study 4 website



These indicators mirror the ideas of Irish (cf. 2005) and Mogus and LaCroix (cf. 2005) regarding relevant web content and interactivity. Also the quality and richness of the information on the site can be classified as an additional element that contributes directly to message relevancy and interactivity (Ritchie, cf. 2006). Since the activities of conducting research and raising awareness are two mission-related activities, message relevancy could affect the ability of the organisation to achieve its purpose.

The website acknowledged individual communication preferences (Potts, cf. 2005) to some extent. The site contained features presenting the visitor with the choice to either subscribe or unsubscribe to the monthly newsletter. Contained in the on-line feedback form, the organisation also requested the visitor to indicate the type of information that he/she requires from the organisation. However, in contrast with the recommendations of Love and Reardon (cf. 2005) and Quelch and Laidler-Kylander (cf. 2006), the site did not acknowledge preferred communication channels.

6.5.5.2.3 Timing of messages is based on stakeholder preferences

The site did not contain any features covering the preferred timing of messages. Visitors were not requested to select options with regard to the preferred timing of messages to be received from the organisation (Potts, cf. 2005).

6.5.6 Organisational integration area

6.5.6.1 CEO/top management integration

The most senior communication staff member presented scenarios illustrating top management's efforts to ensure that all members of staff understand the organisational mission: (i) in-house presentations explaining the organisation's goals, (ii) performance management scorecards evaluated once a year with line managers, (iii) staff meetings resembling strategic sessions and weekly status meetings, (iv) the company's share-drive which contains information on almost every operational aspect and to which employees freely enjoy access and (v) bi-annual meetings where line managers discuss performance, strategies and issues with staff. These scenarios indicate top management's efforts to ensure that all employees are aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation as suggested by Angelopulo (cf. 2006), Argenti (cf. 2003), Gay (cf. 2005) and Niemann (cf. 2005). This finding supports the presence of strategic elements on the organisation's website as previously discussed in Section 6.5.2.

The integration of the communication function with the formulation of the business plan of the organisation is questionable. According to the most senior communication staff member the role of communication in strategic decision-making is: (i) to achieve a critical mass of clients and (ii) to increase industry brand awareness. The communication function is also expected to cultivate the marketing and communication benefits received by certified members. The communication function operates on an implementation level, with no direct input to the formulation of the organisation's high level goals as explicated in the business plan.

These findings contradict previous results about the communication function's positive application of learning principles as discussed in Section 6.5.3. According to Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000) research enables the strategic role of communication. Although the communication function engages in research activities and integrates this information with communication planning and execution decisions, there are no indications that this information is used in the formulation of the organisation's business plan and high-level goals, in contrast to the recommendations of: Likely (cf. 2003), Seitel (cf. 1992), Seitel (cf. 1995), Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001).

6.5.6.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

The most senior communication staff member operates as part of top management, together with other relevant functional managers (Niemann, cf. 2005). Although direct access to top management is enjoyed, it was previously pointed out in Section 6.5.6.1 that the communication function does not directly contribute to the formulation of high level goals as contained in the overall business plan.

The most senior communication staff member indicated responsibility for the management of the organisation's total communication solution. In this case there is only one position contained within the organisational structure relating to the management of all communication activities which is labelled as the position of marketing manager. This result supports the ideas of Cornelissen and Lock (cf. 2001), Duncan (cf. 2002), Kitchen and Shultz (cf. 2001) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001) who suggest that different organisational communication activities should be aligned and integrated.

The internal integrated management of all communication activities is found to be positive. The integration between the communication function and strategic management is also positive in terms of CEO/top management integration but questionable in terms of the strategic role of communication. Since some of the internal integration concepts are questionable it is assumed that website content could not be a result of the purposeful integration of those areas.

6.5.6.2.1 Budget

The function receives a formally allocated budget for fully integrating communication and marketing efforts, as recommended by Niemann (cf. 2005). The estimated total marketing budget for 2009-2010 accumulates to R400 000 with R45 000 especially for the maintenance and upgrading of the organisation's website for the next 12 months. These funds are obtained from the organisation's core donor funding in the form of a lump sum on an annual basis.

6.5.6.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies

The respondent indicated that integrated marketing communication (IMC) was the more familiar term compared to integrated communication (IC). The respondent defined integrated marketing communication (IMC) as: "Communication [that] supports and facilitates marketing activities" or, alternatively, communicating messages relating to marketing objectives. On the other hand, integrated communication (IC) was defined as the integration of other forms of communication in the workplace not pertaining to communication and which are integrated within a marketing framework. The fact that the respondent demonstrated a clear "separate" view of marketing activities and other organisational communication aspects contradicts previous statements related to the staff member's responsibility for the management of the organisation's total communication solution (refer to Section 6.5.6.2 under renaissance communicator). This finding suggests a lack of awareness regarding integrated communication (Duncan, cf. 2002; Niemann, cf. 2005; Massie & Anderson, cf. 2003, Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001), which in turn forms an important prerequisite for the effective functioning of the renaissance communicator.

6.5.6.2.3 Strategic consistency ensures unity of effort

The organisation ensures alignment between the strategic intent and all communication activities. For further interpretations refer to Section 6.5.2 on strategic intent and Section 6.5.6.1 on CEO/top management integration.

6.5.6.2.4 Cross-functional planning

The most senior communication staff member provided various scenarios which indicate mechanisms that allow the different functions of the organisation to engage in joint communication and planning

sessions (Cornelissen & Lock, cf. 2001; Duncan, cf. 2002; Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001). The most important mechanism is the monthly management committee meeting attended by senior management including the executive director, executive assistant, marketing manager, project manager and the certification manager. These meetings specifically focus on the implementation of the organisation's business plan. Other mechanisms includes: (i) status meetings, (ii) contact memos, (iii) presentations, (iv) team building and (v) bi-annual board meetings.

6.5.6.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

The marketing plan is fixed for a period of five years, i.e. currently from 2008-2013. Small changes could be added in terms of financial aspects and an added project or two; apart from that the marketing plan basically retains its form for the five-year cycle. This result contradicts the recommendations of Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Niemann (cf. 2005) who suggest that all planned communication activities should be justifiable by current environmental conditions.

6.5.6.3 Horizontal/vertical communication integration

For interpretations relating to horizontal communication integration ideas, refer to cross-functional planning in Section 6.5.6.2.4. With regard to vertical communication integration, the organisation has mechanisms in place to ensure that employees of all ranks communicate with each other (Gronstedt, cf. 2000; Niemann, cf. 2005), e.g. a monthly meeting with the line manager, management meetings, status meetings, regular team-building activities, contact memos, e-mail communication and requests for staff presentations if certain topics are not well understood.

6.5.7 Summary

The website demonstrated a direct relationship with the **strategic intent**: (i) website communications display strategic intent elements, (ii) the presence of a strategic marketing plan encouraging alignment between high-level goals and communication, (iii) the website enhances key mission-related activities and (iv) the presence of unique engagement devices further supports the implementation of the mission. With regard to **learning principles**, the organisation collects information specifically from the task and macro-environment for use in communication planning and execution.

The website is a rich source of information related to the economic issue that is being addressed by the mission statement, viz. the idea of applying Fair Trade principles to the South African tourism industry. This demonstrates the application of Niemann's (2005) **environmental integration area**.

As far as the **stakeholder integration area** is concerned, the site applies the ideas of: (i) stakeholderism and (ii) a consistent communication approach across stakeholders. Regarding interactivity integration, the site demonstrated various indicators (Ha & James, cf. 1998; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998; Ki & Hon, cf. 2006) suggesting the application of two-way symmetrical communication ideas. The site contained a true two-way communication device which could be described as a feedback form allowing the visitor to interact with the organisation. Further, the site demonstrated instances where the organisation desired personal information from the visitor with the intention to create personalised and targeted future communication. With regard to brand contact point integration, the website utilised unique mission-related engagement devices and relevant content but did not include options allowing for the selection of a preferred channel or timing of communication.

The findings about the **organisational integration area** showed that top management engages in communication efforts to ensure that all employees understand the strategic direction of the organisation. However, the integration of the communication function with strategic processes is questionable. Still, the internal communication environment exhibits strengths in terms of ideas related to the renaissance communicator: (i) the most senior communication staff member functions as part of top management and (ii) communication management is centralised in one position in the organisational structure: the marketing manager position. With regard to requirements for the effective functioning of the renaissance communicator, the organisation demonstrated awareness of: (i) budget, (ii) strategic consistency ensuring unity of effort and (iii) cross-functional planning. The requirements that were not met included: (i) knowledge and competence in the management of integrated communication and (ii) zero-based communication and marketing planning.

6.6 COMPARING CASES AND FORMING INTERPRETATIONS

6.6.1 Introduction

In the following section the various cases will be compared to reveal similarities and differences. The usefulness of comparative arguments is highlighted by Mason (2002:175) who suggests that comparison could produce significant explanations especially in qualitative research, which is sensitive

to the context of each case resulting in various meaningful points of comparison. The cases will be compared along the dimensions of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. The results of these comparisons will indicate whether the present selection of South African nonprofit organisation websites implement this model.

6.6.2 Principle 1: Strategic intent

Three perspectives are used to describe the connection between strategic intent and communication management: (i) website elements indicating strategic intent, (ii) the most senior communication staff member's rendition of the principle and (iii) website capacity to support mission implementation.

6.6.2.1 Website elements indicating strategic intent

Across all cases it was found that strategic intent elements were articulated on the different websites to a large extent. On comparison, three elements were shared by all the websites: (i) the mission/purpose, (ii) operating scope and activities and (iii) operating principles. This finding mirrors the recommendations of Hart (cf. 2005) and Wilson (cf. 2003) who point out the importance of utilising a website to articulate the organisational mission and how the organisation achieves that purpose, resulting in a site which presents itself as a valuable mission-related source of information.

6.6.2.2 Senior communication staff member

Across all cases the most senior communication staff member acknowledged the connection between strategic intent and communication. However, the four cases differed in how the internal communication environment enables and supports that connection: (i) Case Study 1 utilises a formal strategic planning process, (ii) Case Study 2 follows an informal process where the mission is integrated in all organisational activities, (iii) Case Study 3 employs ongoing communication between the project manager responsible for communication/marketing and the Council responsible for setting strategies and (iv) Case Study 4 uses a formal strategic marketing plan.

These facts regarding the internal communication management of all four cases could explain the manifestation of strategic intent elements on each website. The argument of Duncan (cf. 2002) and Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) which asks for the integration of the organisational mission with both

internal operations and external relationship-building activities, could explain the equivalence between internal communication management environments and external website communication manifestations.

6.6.2.3 Website capacity to support mission implementation

After comparing cases it was found that in each case the website supported and enhanced the organisation’s mission or purpose. It was only in Case Study 1 that some inconsistencies were identified, as illustrated in Table 6.5. However, overall these organisations utilise their web-based communication environments to contribute to the achievement of definitive mission-related aims reflecting the ideas of Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) and Mullen (cf. 2006).

Table 6.5: Website capacity to support mission implementation compared across cases

	CASE STUDY 1	CASE STUDY 2	CASE STUDY 3	CASE STUDY 4
MISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To meet the needs of all blind and partially sighted people in South Africa” • “To create a network of organisations which collaborate towards securing the full participation and inclusion of blind and partially sighted people in all aspects of a diverse South African society” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A community-based organisation established to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke in the population of South Africa by providing education and supporting research” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nonprofit organisation established for the purpose of providing South African AIDS orphans and other orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC’s) with basic needs for survival by means of empowering and funding community-based organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To facilitate the integration of Fair Trade principles and criteria into South African tourism...” by means of raising awareness, conducting research, advocacy activities, capacity building and by facilitating a Fair Trade certification programme.
WEBSITE CAPACITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of special features aimed at the unique needs of the beneficiaries, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Services ❖ Second-hand store ❖ Online catalogue ❖ Online employment ❖ Bursaries & grants • Website failed to provide the dialogical features required for network and collaboration related activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of a high degree of information dissemination activities related specifically to heart disease and stroke, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Articles ❖ Research ❖ Images of recent add campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of a high degree of fundraising techniques, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Online donation facility ❖ Testimonials / proof ❖ Detailed information on activities in different provinces ❖ Online sponsor application form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is mainly utilised for supporting specific mission-related activities, i.e. distributing research and raising awareness. Presence of e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Research archive ❖ Booklets ❖ Vast amount of general information related to economic issue • Website supported mission-related activity of advocacy by means of employing extensive connectedness and networking ideas.

6.6.3 Principle 2: Organisational learning

A comparison of all cases along the dimension of organisational learning indicated that each senior communication staff member of every organisation provided scenarios indicating how learning principles apply to the planning and execution of the organisation’s communication. Each case varied with respect to the extent of application as well as the environmental area of application: macro, task or micro environment, as suggested by Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000). Table 6.6 contains further information.

Table 6.6: Organisational learning compared across cases

	CASE STUDY 1	CASE STUDY 2	CASE STUDY 3	CASE STUDY 4
MACRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field of blindness → for “Knowledge Warehouse”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indirect scenario. ← 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factors that could affect organisation → for communication with Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair Trade principles and the South African tourism industry → for “research” archive on website
TASK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affected disabled communities → for suitable projects and marketing/communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No scenarios. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media environment for exposure → for annual report presented to Council. Interested donors → for informing Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitor’s electronic communication strategies → for improving on own communication Industry events and stakeholder’s activities → for “news” section of website. Clients and other stakeholders → for news releases. Industry brand awareness and client satisfaction surveys → for marketing plan Media environment → for marketing plan
MICRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational projects → for internal and external communication materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research about stroke and heart disease from employees → for specific communication campaigns. ← 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about “grass-root” level operations → for internal and external communication materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No scenarios.

According to Edwards (cf. 2002) the nonprofit sector has a comparative learning advantage: the fundamental value of communication which is essential for stakeholder relationships and for generating information. The sector is also characterised by a multiple stakeholder environment (Chandler, cf. 2002; Drucker, cf. 1990). Table 6.6 illustrated to what extent the different cases apply learning principles specifically within the task environment, which is composed of the organisation's multiple stakeholder groups. Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 did not provide sufficient scenarios representing the utilisation of the organisation's entire set of stakeholders for the purposes of learning. It was only Case Study 4 that illustrated the application of the comparative learning advantage.

However, since every organisation could provide at least one applicable scenario it is clear that a certain degree of "outer-directedness" or strategic thinking is applied. This finding reflects the ideas of Anheier (cf. 2005), Brønn and Brønn (cf. 2002), Bryson (cf. 2004) and Montuori (cf. 2000) who suggest that organisations should continuously interact with the environment in order to adjust and adapt to changes ensuring the long-term sustainability.

6.6.4 Environmental integration area

After comparing cases it became evident that Case Studies 2 and 4 contained extensive information, respectively, about the social and economical issues that are addressed by their mission statements. This finding mirrors the recommendations of Ritchie (cf. 2006) and Hart (cf. 2005) who suggest that the nonprofit website should serve as a rich source of information related to the issue that is being addressed by the organisation's mission.

By contrast, Case Studies 1 and 3 did not display extensive issue-related information. This finding should not be interpreted without consideration of the mission-specific contexts of these cases. Since the nonprofit mission is labelled as the defining logic that drives the organisation's operations (Love & Reardon, cf. 2005; Phills, cf. 2005; Powell, cf. 2005) it can be argued that when the nonprofit mission does not include functions such as: education, awareness raising or research dissemination, the website would not be employed for such purposes (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Mullen, cf. 2006). Therefore it would not be appropriate to state that Case Studies 1 and 3 are not engaging in environmental integration. The cases might well be effective environmental integration cases, but that might not be reflected to such a great extent on their websites.

6.6.5 Stakeholder integration area

Across all four cases it was found that each website demonstrated awareness of a multiple stakeholder environment. The idea of an inclusive approach towards stakeholder recognition reflects the ideas of various authors: Chandler (cf. 2002), Drucker (cf. 1990), Freeman (cf. 1984), Phills (cf. 2005) and Post *et al.* (cf. 2000).

From the multiple stakeholders that could be identified from analysing the websites of the organisations, it was found that direct communicative attention or messages were directed at some of these groups. It was further found that in each case all directed communication was related to the organisational mission, thus ensuring a consistent and integrated communication management approach across these groups. This finding reflects the thoughts of Balser and McClusky (cf. 2005) and Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) who advocate that a consistent thematic communication approach across an interconnected field of stakeholders will produce effects such as integrity.

6.6.5.1 Interactivity integration

Here, results related to the ideas of interactivity integration: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised interaction are considered.

6.6.5.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

- **Playfulness**

A comparison of cases revealed that none of them contained on-line games or opinion polls. The only indicator that was shared among three of the cases was the basic question-and-answer format. Additionally, other unique devices could be identified, e.g. (i) online postcards, (ii) “cool links” to fun activities, (iii) interactive Google maps and (iv) visual letters from AIDS orphans. The presence of these elements on the nonprofit websites indicates that these organisations desire to create interest and participation on the part of the website visitor enhancing the opportunity for higher interactivity levels as suggested by Ha and James (cf. 1998).

- **Choice**

After comparing websites it became apparent that unrestricted navigation was applied in each case resulting in the minimisation of effort required to browse through the sites. It was Case Studies 3 and 4 that stood out in terms of the variety of non-informational choices presented on their websites related to: (i) language preferences, (ii) interactive Google maps, (iii) interactive events calendars, (iv) a PDF version of web pages and (v) an option of a printable version of web pages. The presence of these choices mirrors the recommendations Ha and James (cf. 1998) and Irish (cf. 2005) when they suggest that websites should be designed from the perspective of the user including a variety of non-informational choices making it easier for the user to interact with the website.

- **Connectedness**

Across all the cases, internal hyperlinks to: (i) general information related to the organisations' programs and activities, (ii) graphical information and (iii) advertisements, were found. Active e-mail links, described as links that automatically open the user's e-mail software and insert the e-mail address belonging to a specific recipient within the organisation, were also identified, in agreement with the ideas of Cravens (cf. 2006), Johnston (cf. 1999) and Olsen *et al.* (cf. 2001) who suggest that e-mail communication has the potential to enable the user and the organisation to relate in a dynamic way, contributing to relationship-building. Further, Case 3 and Case 4 both contained an interactive map allowing the visitor to click on specific locations and be transferred to relevant information within the parameters of the website, reflecting the idea of creating a website characterised by a high level of connected information as suggested by Ha and James (cf. 1998).

After comparing the cases with regard to external hyperlinks it was found that three out of four cases contained external links to: (i) general information related to the organisations' programs, activities and issues that are addressed by the mission statement and (ii) advertisements. Only in Case Study 4 could the researcher identify the use of e-mail links to recipients outside the parameters of the website. Further, Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 contained a link to an external secure online donation facility. This finding supports views about online security (Farouk & Prytz, cf. 2003; Frenza & Hoffman, cf. 1999; Ritchie, cf. 2006) and indicates the nonprofit organisations' awareness of the possible effect of on-line security on interactivity levels. Addressing the issue of on-line security contributes to relationship-building, which according to Hart (cf. 2005) is an essential element for encouraging future interactivity and ultimately fundraising potential.

The results indicate the nonprofit sector's unique approach to the creation of a connected website environment. The presence of various internal and external hyperlinks enables these high levels of connected information, which according to Ha and James (cf. 1998) are essential for creating an interactive website.

- **Networking**

After comparing the cases it became evident that the idea of utilising the website arena for the purpose of networking activities was being implemented to a great extent. In each case the following could be identified: (i) the different groups the organisation is involved with and (ii) the nature of the involvement of these different groups with the organisation. Further, three of the four cases utilised their website for exhibiting relationships with corporate partners. The presence of these elements mirrors the ideas of Coombs (quoted in Ki & Hon, cf. 2006) who suggest that the nonprofit website should be perceived as a means to exhibit relationships with like-minded stakeholders. This is reinforced by previous findings about the application of stakeholderism as previously discussed in Section 6.6.5.

It was only in Case Study 1 that no corporate partners could be identified even though according to the organisation's website 90 % of their funding is sponsored by individual as well as corporate donors. It was only Case Study 2 which revealed an organisational ambassador. Yet, other unique approaches to the idea of networking were found in, respectively, Case Studies 1 and 4. Case Study 1 contained a feature presenting the user with an option to e-mail the organisation's website address to a friend, thereby encouraging users to reveal their direct involvement and interest in the organisation within their personal relational network. However, it was Case Study 4 which stood out in terms of its effective use of visual logos to exhibit the organisation's connections with stakeholders.

Collectively these findings are not surprising since the concept of stakeholder relationships is central to the long-term sustainability of any nonprofit organisation (Radtke, cf. 1998; Post *et al.*, cf. 2000). According to Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) it would then only make sense to use the website arena for the achievement of critical implicit dimensions related to the nonprofit mission, which is the creation of relationships, partnerships and collaborations.

- **Reciprocal communication**

After comparing the cases it became noticeable that nonprofit websites displayed a variety of information dissemination elements: (i) contact details, (ii) information allowing for an organisational overview and (iii) information related to the issue that's addressed by the mission. Three out of four cases covered news releases and annual reports. Also in each case additional instances of information dissemination could be identified, e.g.: (i) news sections, (ii) advertising campaigns, (iii) booklets and (iv) privacy policies. This mirrors the ideas of Cooley (cf. 1999), Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006) and Hurme (cf. 2001) according to whom information dissemination forms the first step in the process of creating future dialogue and ultimately an interactive website.

By contrast, the comparison of the cases also revealed the absence of dialogical devices on nonprofit websites: Case Studies 1 and 2 display no such elements. Only Case Studies 3 and 4 displayed one example each: (i) a sponsor application form and (ii) a feedback form. These findings are troublesome considering the perspectives of: (i) Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) who indicate relationship-building as a critical implicit dimension contained within the nonprofit mission and stress the importance of strategically employing the organisational website to support the realisation of that dimension; (ii) Hart (cf. 2005) and Potts (cf. 2005) who suggest that nonprofits should approach their websites as a relationship-building tool first to create a favourable online fundraising environment; and (iii) Cooley (cf. 1999), Ellsworth and Ellsworth (quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006) and Hurme (cf. 2001) who highlight the importance of creating two-way, truly interactive communication which forms the second phase in the creation of an interactive website.

At this point it is necessary to contextualise previous arguments (refer to Section 6.6.2) about a website's capacity to support mission implementation within the context of results related to reciprocal communication. The evidence suggests that each case respectively utilised its website to implement explicit mission-related aims such as education, research and raising awareness. Although information dissemination plays an important part in the achievement of these mission-related aims, nonprofit organisations still need to focus on relationship-building efforts since these forms an implicit dimension of the nonprofit mission (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Radtke, 1998). Thus the inclusion of dialogical devices on the nonprofit website is needed even when information dissemination forms a key part of that mission.

Based on Naudé's (cf. 2001) idea of rating website interactivity by means of a qualitative continuum, it was found that Case Studies 1 and 2 rated as *somewhat interactive*, i.e. websites containing contact details for specific user concerns and leaning more towards the reactive end of the continuum. In contrast, Case Studies 3 and 4 were rated on a *moderate interactivity* level, which is described as a website containing an on-line survey regarding the effectiveness of the site, or a feedback form allowing the user to send individual comments to members of the organisation, thus leaning more towards the interactive end of the continuum. Yet, from a collective perspective half of the cases rated more towards the reactive end, highlighting the absence of dialogical devices. This finding is in line with: (i) Kang and Norton (cf. 2004) who indicate the lack of relational communication function on US nonprofit sector organisation websites, and (ii) Naudé (cf. 2001) who indicates how South African nonprofit websites are perceived as information dissemination tools rather than relationship-building tools.

As far as responsiveness is concerned, the researcher utilised the contact details (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) on each website to initiate contact with the most senior communication staff member in that case. In all cases the organisation directed the researcher's enquiry to the relevant staff member. After initial contact was established the relevant staff members of each case responded swiftly by completing the requested tasks: (i) to confirm permission for participation in the study and (ii) to complete an e-mail questionnaire. These findings support the ideas of Kent (cf. 1998/1999) and Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) who suggest that websites ought to contain contact details for various stakeholder matters and, more importantly, should then be able to respond to individual enquiries. When a website contains contact details that enable the establishment of contact between the organisation and the user, that website is classified as a dialogically effective tool.

- **Generation of return visits**

After comparing cases it was found that Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 did not display any of the required elements needed for the generation of return visits. Only two additional examples could be identified: (i) a "new" product section and (ii) the richness and quality of information related to the issue that's addressed by the mission. It was only Case Study 4 that demonstrated the application of all the prescribed elements. These findings contrast with the recommendations of Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ritchie (cf. 2006) who indicate that regularly updated website content serves as a prerequisite for the creation and maintenance of dialogue-based relationships.

- **Positivity and intuitiveness or ease of use**

By comparing cases it became evident that Case Studies 2, 3 and 4 were displaying the required features for a user-friendly website, with Case Studies 3 and 4 even displaying additional examples. Some of the elements that were absent from the respective cases included: (i) a sitemap, (ii) a search engine and (iii) mainly text rather than graphics-based content. This finding echoes the suggestions of various authors (Irish, cf. 2005; Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998; Ki & Hon, cf. 2006) about the importance of user-friendliness in the creation of an interactive site. In contrast, it was only Case Study 1 that did not display any of the specified attributes.

6.6.5.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

A comparison shows that in each case at least two devices requesting personal information from the visitor with the intention of creating future, personalised communication could be identified. The option of subscribing to an electronic newsletter was present on each website, together with requests for personal information such as: (i) name, (ii) e-mail address and (iii) areas of interest. The findings are in line with the thoughts of various authors (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Gignac, J. & Gignac, P., cf. 2005; Ha & James, cf. 1998; Naudé, cf. 2001; Ritchie, cf. 2006) who indicate the importance of collecting information from visitors for the purpose of future, targeted individualised communication. Another meaningful interpretation lies in the fact that across all cases organisations are collecting e-mail addresses, which according to Cravens (cf. 2006), Hershey (cf. 2005) and Olsen *et al.* (cf. 2001) forms an essential part of the relationship-building processes of any nonprofit organisation.

6.6.5.2 Brand contact point integration

Findings related to brand contact point integrated are next: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) message and delivery system are stakeholder-appropriate and (iii) timing of messages is based on stakeholder preferences.

6.6.5.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

In each case multiple engagement devices could be identified, the common device being the on-line donation feature identified in Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 but not in Case Study 4, since that organisation does not require donations from individual donors. Further, each case displayed other engagement devices unique to its organisational mission or purpose, as shown in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Engagement devices supporting unique mission implementation for each case

	MISSION	EXAMPLES OF ENGAGEMENT DEVICES
<p>CASE STUDY 1</p>	<p>"To meet the needs of all blind and partially sighted people in South Africa"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Online retailing</u>: Selling assistive devices for the blind and partially sighted. → <u>Online student recruitment</u> – Allowing blind and partially sighted students to apply for training. → <u>Online second-hand store</u> – Interested buyers and sellers of assistive devices meet. → <u>Online employment recruitment</u> – Allows blind and visually impaired job seekers to post their CV's online. → <u>Online application for bursaries</u> – Provides all the information and links to enable blind and partially sighted students to apply.
<p>CASE STUDY 2</p>	<p>"A community-based organisation established to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke in the population of South Africa by providing education and supporting research"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Online retailing</u>: Selling books, DVD's, badges, information brochures, handbooks and pins all related to heart health issues. → <u>Online volunteer recruitment</u> – Enables user to complete an application form and e-mail it back to the organisation. → <u>Online supporter recruitment</u> – Enables user to complete an application form for a "My Village" card and to e-mail back it back to the relevant organisation.
<p>CASE STUDY 3</p>	<p>A nonprofit organisation established for the purpose of providing South African AIDS orphans and vulnerable children with basic needs for survival by means of empowering and funding community-based organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Online donation</u>: Enables the user to pledge a donation through "Greater Good SA". → <u>Online supporter recruitment</u>: Enables the user to apply for a "My School Card" by providing the necessary links.
<p>CASE STUDY 4</p>	<p>"To facilitate the integration of Fair Trade principles and criteria into South African tourism..." by means of raising awareness, conducting research, advocacy activities, capacity building and by facilitating a Fair Trade certification programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Online selling</u>: Promoting the organisation's training services and enables interested users to contact relevant staff members. → <u>Online requests for proposals</u>: Aimed at business consultants and enables them to submit proposals. → <u>Online programme application</u>: Provides necessary links enabling user to apply online for certification programme.

The presence of engagement devices on the website of each case indicates the willingness of these organisations to create dialogue and interaction, enabling the user to experience the brand and develop a relationship with the brand (Ewing & Napoli, cf. 2003; Hershey, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005). This finding also reflects the idea of utilising the website environment to promote the organisation's distinctive brand values to a global audience, thus creating a unique on-line brand presence. This indicates the implementation of the organisational mission as suggested by AlderConsulting (cf. 2005), Mogus and LaCroix (cf. 2005), Quelch and Laidler-Kylander (cf. 2006), Reiss (cf. 2000) and Salls (cf. 2005).

6.6.5.2.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder-appropriate

Each case had multiple indicators related to content relevancy. The indicators that appeared on each website were: (i) information on how stakeholders can get involved, (ii) information on the organisation's programmes and activities, (iii) contact details and (iv) information about the beneficiaries and the issue affecting them, reflecting the thoughts of Irish (cf. 2005) and Mogus and LaCroix (cf. 2005) suggesting the importance of a user-based website environment. Additional features could also be identified in Case Studies 1, 2 and 4. One additional feature stood out and was shared by both Case Studies 2 and 4, namely the quality and richness of web content as an element contributing to relevancy and ultimately return visits (Ritchie, cf. 2006). This finding could have been anticipated due to the inclusion of research activities in the mission statements of these organisations.

What all the cases had in common in terms of choice was the option of subscribing or unsubscribing to an electronic newsletter/s. It was only in Case Studies 2 and 4 that users were requested to indicate a preferred area of interest. Again this could have been expected since research forms part of the mission statements of these two organisations. The presence of these options aligns with the recommendations of Potts (cf. 2005) who points out the importance of respecting individual communication preferences as a requirement of relationship-building.

By contrast, no case included the option of a preferred communication channel, which is different from the opinions of Love and Reardon (cf. 2005) and Quelch and Laidler-Kylander (cf. 2006) who propose that the recognition of a user's preferred communication channel could be used to the organisation's advantage at a specific point in time in relationship-building processes.

6.6.5.2.3 Timing of messages is based on stakeholder preferences

The absence of choices related to the timing of messages became evident. In none of the cases could a point on the website be identified where the user is requested to select options indicating individual preference when he/she wishes to receive communication from the organisation. Again the absence of options related to individual communication preferences can hinder relationship-building as suggested by Potts (cf. 2005).

6.6.6 Organisational integration area

6.6.6.1 CEO/top management integration

Across all cases the most senior communication staff member was able to provide examples of internal communication mechanisms empowering management to communicate the organisation's mission to employees. One example appeared across all cases: staff meetings. These findings support the views of Angelopulo (cf. 2006), Argenti (cf. 2003), Gay (cf. 2005) and Niemann (cf. 2005) who point out the importance of ensuring that all employees are aligned and connected with the mission. These facts confirm previous findings in Section 6.6.2 which indicates a connection between external website communication and the strategic intent of each case.

None of the cases allowed for the participation of the communication function in strategy formulation processes. It was only in Case Study 3 that a secondary example could be identified where informational inputs from the communication function affected the direction of the strategy. However, overall in all cases the main focus rested on: publishing, harmonising different communication materials and ensuring that communication support the implementation of the organisational mission. These findings stand in sharp contrast with the viewpoints of various authors (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001) who indicate the need for communication management to directly contribute to the strategic management of the organisation.

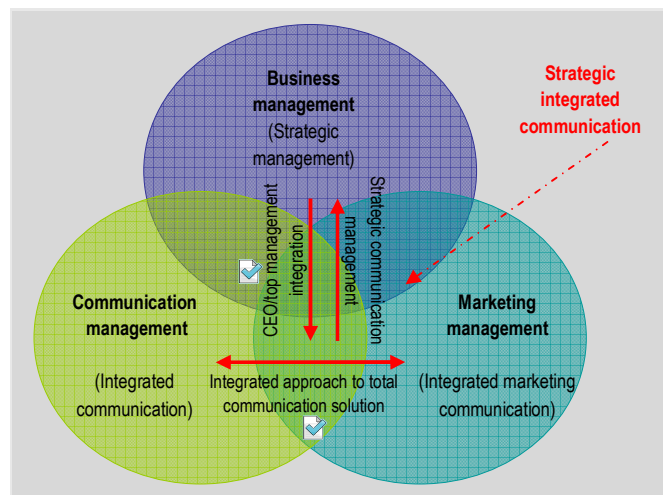
Although it was indicated in Section 6.6.3 that in all cases a certain degree of research (Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000) is applied to the planning and execution of communication activities, it seems that this gathered intelligence is not utilised as informational input in the strategic management processes of all the cases.

6.6.6.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

The most senior communication staff member of each case indicated that he/she operates as part of top management (Niemann, cf. 2005). In terms of renaissance communicator requirements Case Studies 1 and 4 demonstrated centralised management of all organisational communication reflecting the views of: Cornelissen and Lock (cf. 2001), Duncan (cf. 2002), Kitchen and Shultz (cf. 2001) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001) who encourage the internal alignment of the different communication aspects of an organisation that includes both communication/public relations and marketing communication activities. Case Study 3 also had elements suggesting centralised communication management where this responsibility lies with the “Council” or top management of the organisation. Case Study 2 displayed weaknesses since certain branding aspects operate separately from the communication function.

Case Studies 1, 3 and 4 exhibited strength in terms of a total integrated approach to the management of all organisational communication. These cases also demonstrated CEO/top management integration ensuring that all employees understand the mission. Yet, in none of these cases could any integration of the communication management function with strategic management be identified (refer to Section 6.6.6.1). Figure 6.18 provides a visual synopsis of the argument with the ticks indicating which integration requirements (Niemann, cf. 2005) are applied for the functioning of the renaissance communicator. When a case exhibits weaknesses in terms of internal communication integration ideas there is a high probability that current website content is a result of those ideas.

Figure 6.18: The application of the renaissance communicator



Source: Adapted from Niemann (2005)

6.6.6.2.1 Budget

In Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 the communication function receives no formal budget and is responsible for finding relevant corporate sponsors for desired communication initiatives. This finding stands in sharp contrast with the fact that sufficient budget is required for the implementation of strategic integrated communication (Niemann, cf. 2005). Since relationship-building forms a critical implicit dimension of the nonprofit organisation's mission (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Radtke, cf. 1998) it is troublesome to find that in these cases no financial resources are allocated to this dimension. This happened only in Case Study 4 where a formal budget is rewarded to the communication function on an annual basis: R400 000 for 2009-2010 with R45 000 specifically for the maintenance and upgrading of the external website.

6.6.6.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies

It became clear that the idea of integrated marketing communication (IMC) was the most familiar term for each senior communication staff member of Case Studies 1, 2 and 4 with only Case Study 3 selecting integrated communication (IC) as the more familiar term. The most senior communication staff member of each case was able to provide definitions indicating the differences between the two ideas. The relevant themes that emerged from the definitions related to integrated marketing communication (IMC) included: (i) promoting the organisation and its beneficiaries, (ii) multi-channel marketing and (iii) communication that supports marketing activities. Only two relevant themes emerged from the definitions related to integrated communication (IC): (i) relationship-building and (ii) communication via multiple channels ensuring that the message is appropriate (Gronstedt, cf. 2000; Niemann, cf. 2005).

These findings indicate that integrated marketing communication (IMC) is the idea which is perhaps best understood. In contrast, Niemann (cf. 2005) suggests the importance of having knowledge of and competency in managing integrated communication (IC) as a prerequisite for the functioning of the renaissance communicator.

6.6.6.2.3 Strategic consistency ensures unity of effort

For interpretations refer to Section 6.6.2 regarding the connection between strategic intent and communication management and to Section 6.6.6.1 regarding the integration of top management with the rest of the organisation.

6.6.6.2.4 Cross-functional planning

The most senior communication staff member of each case was able to present various examples of internal communication mechanisms which allowed for the different departments/functions of the organisation engaging in joint communication and planning sessions. This finding reflects the ideas of: Cornelissen and Lock (cf. 2001), Duncan (cf. 2002), Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001) who stipulate ongoing interaction between all departments/functions affecting stakeholder relationships.

6.6.6.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

Case Studies 1, 2 and 4 made use of a basic communication or marketing plan with minor changes that are introduced on an annual basis. It was only Case Study 3 that indicated the need for continuously adjusting and reformulating communication depending on current environmental changes resembling more of, according to Mintzberg (cf. 1994), an “emergent strategy” which signifies an open-systems approach. According to Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) communication efforts should be justified in terms of current conditions as opposed to the mere adjustment of a basic communication plan.

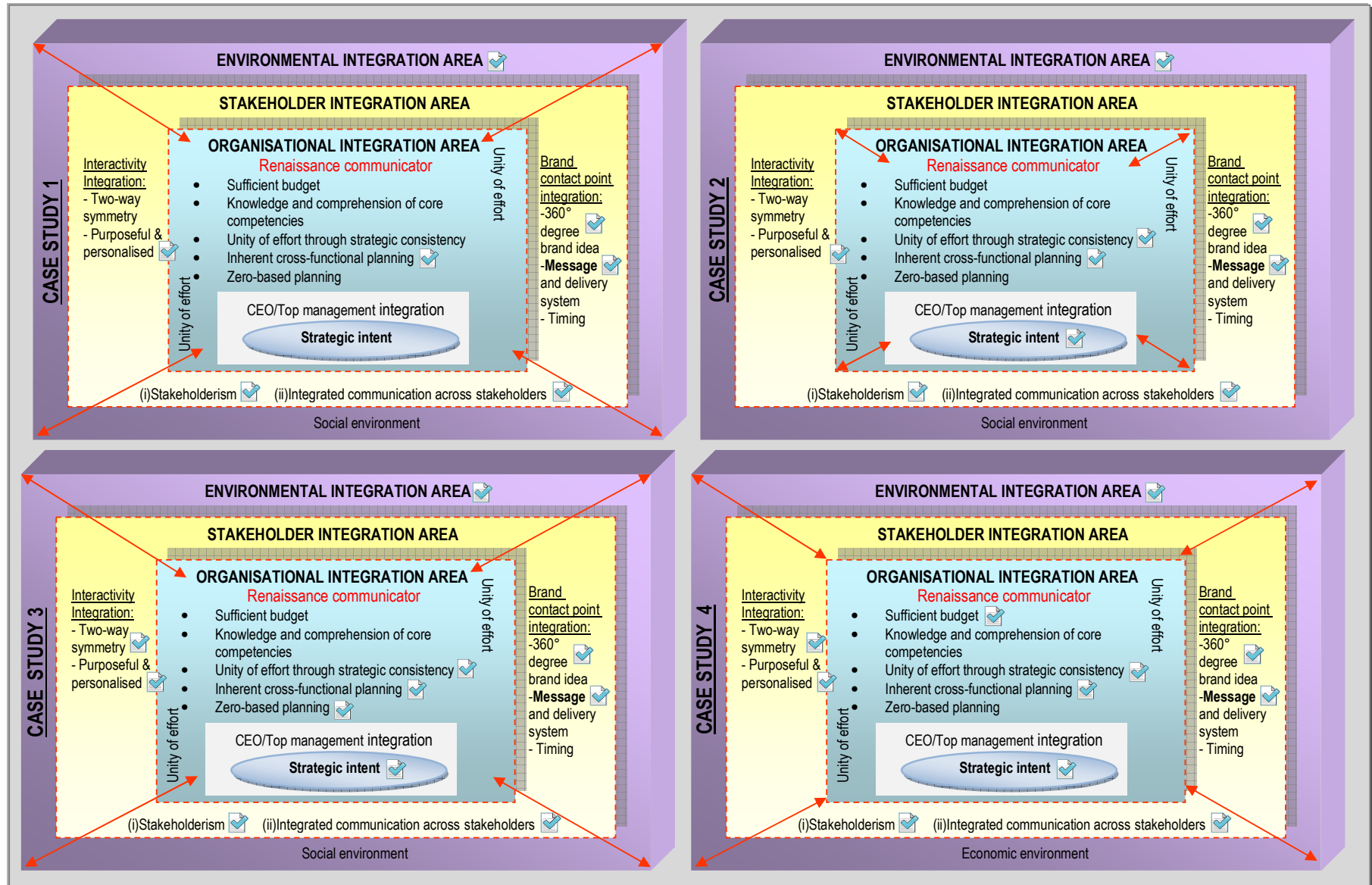
6.6.6.3 Horizontal/vertical communication integration

For interpretations related to the horizontal integration of communication refer to cross-functional planning in Section 6.6.6.2.4. As far as vertical communication integration goes, the most senior communication staff member of each case was able to provide examples of internal communication devices encouraging dialogue between all levels of employees in the organisation. This finding reflects the ideas of Gronstedt (cf. 2000) who highlights the importance of dialogue amongst different employee ranks enabling: (i) employees to provide management with relevant feedback and (ii) management to communicate towards the strategic intent of the organisation, ensuring that all employees are aligned with the mission.

6.7 SUMMARY

The chapter presented the findings on two levels: (i) per case study and (ii) a cross-case analysis. Overall Case Studies 3 and 4 are the cases that implement the most elements of Niemann’s (2005) conceptual model as indicated in the visual synopsis of all cases in Figure 6.19.

Figure 6.19: The application of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model to selected South African nonprofit websites: A visual synopsis



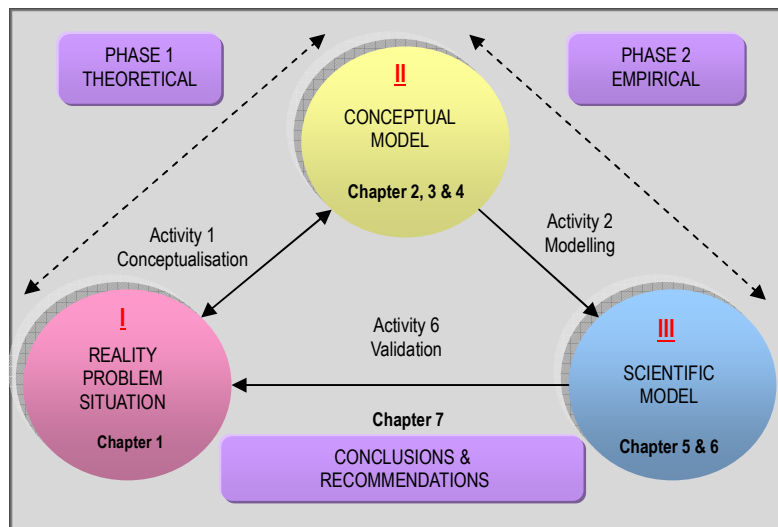
Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents both conclusions and recommendations resulting from the comparison of the four case studies in the research project. Figure 7.1 demonstrates the nature of the chapter in relation to the systems view of problem-solving activity. The purpose of this chapter is to indicate to what extent the results and findings address the problem situation as originally identified in Chapter 1.

Figure 7.1: Chapter 7 in relation to the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) systems view of problem-solving activity



Source: Adapted from Mitroff *et al.* (1974:48)

First, conclusions are presented with reference to the two main objectives of the study as identified in Chapter 1. First there is the theoretical objective, which is to explore whether Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication finds application in the nonprofit website arena. And, secondly, there is the empirical objective which is to determine whether a selection of South African nonprofit websites implement the ideas of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model. Based on the conclusions, relevant areas of recommendation are identified and elaborated on. Also the limitations and suggestions for future research are addressed.

7.2 THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS

Due to South Africa's changes in political environment around 1994 the nonprofit sector was freed from global isolation, restrictions and a lack of relational networks (Department of Social Development, cf. 2000). The changed political environment led to a new global context containing a variety of strategic environments affecting the activities of the nonprofit sector. Two of the most prominent environmental changes relate to: (i) the need for an increased focus on nonprofit management paradigms or otherwise nonprofit professionalisation (SustainAbility, cf. 2003) and (ii) new information and communication technologies including the Internet (Elliott, *et al.*, cf. 1998; Johnson, cf. 1999; SustainAbility, cf. 2003). The growth of the Internet could be labelled as the most prominent change within the nonprofit organisation's Communication Management environment.

The fact that the nonprofit sector is functioning within an increasingly uncertain environment may lead to these organisations considering new management ideas and models from other sectors of the economy, e.g. the private sector. There is a growing trend to transfer and apply management tools and techniques from the for-profit sector to the nonprofit sector of the economy (Myers & Sacks, cf. 2003). Today nonprofit leaders are more interested in the ideas of business than before (Phills, cf. 2005).

The study identifies strategic integrated communication for nonprofit management attention, which is an idea from the private sector which is well suited to the challenges found in the nonprofit management arena. Table 7.1 illustrates the most prominent nonprofit management challenges, seen from a strategic, marketing and communication management perspective and matched with specific traits of strategic integrated communication.

Table 7.1: Nonprofit management challenges and strategic integrated communication

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES	STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
<p>Strategic management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations are functioning within dynamic operating environments signalling the need for nonprofit managers to become strategists (Britton, cf. 2005; Bryson, cf. 2004; Drucker, cf. 1990; Goerke, cf. 2003; Lettieri, <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2004). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that the communication management function directly participates in the strategic management processes of the organisation enables the organisation to adapt and adjust to changes (Kuchi, cf. 2006; Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000).

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES	STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
<p>Marketing management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations are required to focus on branding that exemplifies their unique missions within interconnected, multiple stakeholder environments (Goerke, cf. 2003; Hankinson, cf. 2001; Hershey, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006; Sargeant, cf. 2005; Saxton, cf. 2002; SustainAbility, cf. 2003). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that all communication activities are planned and executed within the framework of the organisational strategy enables mission-driven communication (Argenti <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2005; Duncan, cf. 2002; Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Massie & Anderson, cf. 2003; Moorcroft, cf. 2003; Steyn, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001). The fact that all different aspects of communication are aligned ensures a consistent communication approach across a multiple interconnected stakeholder environment (Cornelissen & Lock, cf. 2001; Duncan, cf. 2002; Kitchen & Shultz, cf. 2001; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001).
<p>Communication management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations are expected to function within a multiple stakeholder environment and focus on the creation of long-term sustainable relationships (Chandler, cf. 2002; Drucker, cf. 1990; Phills, cf. 2005; Post <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2000; Radtke, cf. 1998). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that strategic integrated communication is based on stakeholderism allows the organisation to focus on all stakeholder groups as opposed to only one group (Freeman, cf. 1984; Post <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2000). The fact that strategic integrated communication is based on a stakeholder relationship-view, supported by two-way symmetrical communication processes, ensures the formation of long-term relationships (Freeman & McVea, cf. 2005; Heath, cf. 2001; Ledingham, cf. 2003; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Dozier <i>et al.</i>, cf. 1995; Grunig, J. & Grunig, L., cf. 1992; Grunig & White, cf. 1992).

Further the management idea of strategic integrated communication directly addresses the new challenges that are associated with novel information and communication technologies with specific reference to the management of website communication. Table 7.2 illustrates nonprofit website communication challenges from a strategic, marketing and communication management perspective and demonstrates how strategic integrated communication addresses these challenges.

Table 7.2: Nonprofit website communication management challenges and strategic integrated communication

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES	STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
<p>Strategic management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations are functioning within dynamic operating environments signalling the need for nonprofit managers to become strategists (Britton, cf. 2005; Bryson, cf. 2004; Drucker, cf. 1990; Goerke, cf. 2003; Lettieri, <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2004). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that the communication management function directly participates in the strategic management processes of the organisation enables the organisation to adapt and adjust to changes (Kuchi, cf. 2006; Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000).

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES	STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
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<p>Communication management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations are expected to function within a multiple stakeholder environment and focus on the creation of long-term sustainable relationships (Chandler, cf. 2002; Drucker, cf. 1990; Phills, cf. 2005; Post <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2000; Radtke, cf. 1998). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that strategic integrated communication is based on stakeholderism allows the organisation to focus on all stakeholder groups as opposed to only one group (Freeman, cf. 1984; Post <i>et al.</i>, cf. 2000). The fact that strategic integrated communication is based on a stakeholder relationship-view, supported by two-way symmetrical communication processes, ensures the formation of long-term relationships (Freeman & McVea, cf. 2005; Heath, cf. 2001; Ledingham, cf. 2003; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Dozier <i>et al.</i>, cf. 1995; Grunig, J. & Grunig, L., cf. 1992; Grunig & White, cf. 1992).

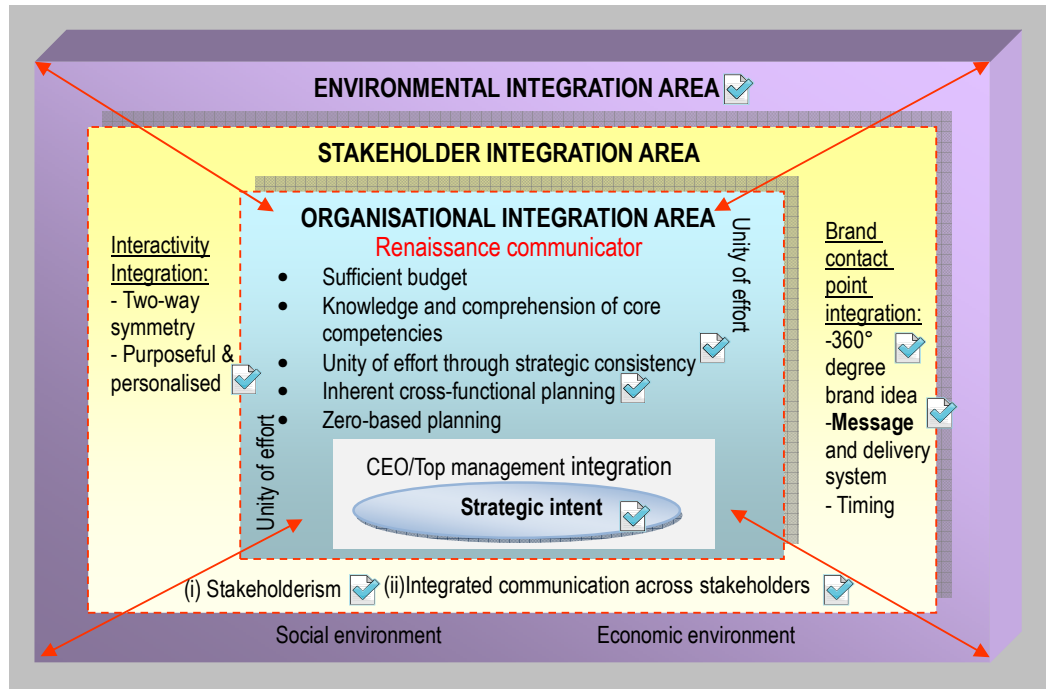
Further the study identifies a specific normative model which is Niemann's (cf. 2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication. The model exhibited various application possibilities within the framework of the nonprofit website as presented in Chapter 4

7.3 CONCLUSIONS: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Figure 7.2 provides a visual synopsis of the final conclusions pertaining to the core research question of the study: Does a given selection of South African nonprofit websites apply Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication? The ticks represent the various aspects of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model that are present, respectively, within the website arena and the organisation's internal communication management context.

From an external perspective, nonprofit websites display many of the elements of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model. However, evidence about the internal communication management aspects of the same organisations indicates that essential elements of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model are absent: (i) CEO/top management integration and (ii) the renaissance communicator.

Figure 7.2: Conclusions: A holistic perspective



7.4 EMPIRICAL CONCLUSIONS

Empirical conclusions are presented along the various dimensions of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model. The latter ensures a holistic perspective on the implementation of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model within a nonprofit web-based communication environment.

7.4.1 Principle 1: Strategic intent

Firstly, nonprofit websites display elements of strategic intent which reflect the organisation's awareness of the direct relationship between the mission and communication activities. This validates the suggestions of Hart (cf. 2005) and Wilson (cf. 2003). Secondly, these organisations use varying methods to enable and support the direct connection between the organisation's mission and communication management, including: (i) a formal strategic planning process, (ii) an informal understanding of the importance of integrating the mission in everything the organisation does, (iii) interpersonal communication and (iv) a formal strategic marketing plan. The presence of these methods validate the recommendations of Duncan (cf. 2002) and Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) suggesting the need for integrating the organisational mission with all the organisation's relationship-

building efforts. Lastly, nonprofit organisations are using their website communication arenas to implement and support specific mission-related aims which point to the strategic utilisation of their web-based communication environments (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Mullen, cf. 2006).

7.4.2 Principle 2: Organisational learning

Firstly nonprofit organisations apply learning principles to the management of communication both to different degrees and in different environmental areas such as the macro, task and micro environment as supplied by Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000). Secondly, nonprofit organisations are not fully utilising the relational aspects of their operating environments for the purpose of generating information and facilitating organisational learning processes (Edwards, cf. 2002).

7.4.3 Environmental integration area

Nonprofit websites apply the idea of environmental integration by including information about the specific social or economic issues that's addressed by the organisational mission. These practices validate the recommendations of Hart (cf. 2005) and Ritchie (cf. 2006) pointing to the value of using the nonprofit website as a valuable source of mission-related information.

The nature of the nonprofit organisation's mission plays a determining role in the extent of mission-related information that's presented on its website. Based on the idea of Hackler and Saxton (cf. 2007) regarding the strategic utilisation of a nonprofit website, it is argued that when the mission (Love & Reardon, cf. 2005; Phills, cf. 2005; Powell, cf. 2005) contains activities such as "raising awareness" or "research", which leans more towards information dissemination it would only make sense to use the website arena extensively in order to enhance such mission-related activities.

7.4.4 Stakeholder integration area

Nonprofit organisations apply the idea of stakeholderism to their websites by identifying the organisation's multiple stakeholders as proposed by: Chandler (cf. 2002), Drucker, (cf. 1990), Freeman (cf. 1983), Phills (cf. 2005) and Post *et al.* (cf. 2000). Further nonprofit organisations also apply the idea of a consistent communication approach across a diverse set of stakeholders as suggested by Balsler and McClusky (cf. 2005) and Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997).

7.4.4.1 Interactivity integration

Conclusions related to the two dimensions of Niemann's (cf. 2005) stakeholder integration area are presented next: (i) two-way symmetrical communication and (ii) purposeful, personalised interaction.

7.4.4.1.1 Two-way symmetrical communication

Nonprofit websites implement the principle of two-way symmetrical communication by including elements of **playfulness** as advised by Ha and James (cf. 1998). Also the presence of numerous non-informational **choices** on the websites contribute to a user-friendly environment which according to Ha and James (cf. 1998) and Irish (cf. 2005) support high levels of interaction. nonprofit websites further implement the idea of two-way symmetry by exhibiting internal and external hyperlinks. The inclusion of these elements contributes to a feeling of that **connectedness** which is required to create an interactional website environment, as suggested by Ha and James (cf. 1998). Also, the presence of **networking** elements on nonprofit sites reflects self-disclosure and openness, which according to Ki and Hon (cf. 2006) are required for the maintenance of on-line relationships.

Then, in terms of **reciprocal communication** elements, nonprofit websites are: (i) on the one hand, implementing ideas of symmetry by including information dissemination aspects (Cooley, cf. 1999; Ellsworth & Ellsworth quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006; Hurme, cf. 2001) and responsive dialogical feedback loops (Kent, cf. 1998/1999; Kent & Taylor, cf. 1998) but (ii) on the other hand, not implementing ideas of symmetry due to the absence of true, two-way symmetrical devices (Cooley, cf. 1999; Ellsworth & Ellsworth quoted in Barker *et al.*, cf. 2006; Hurme, cf. 2001). The absence of elements encouraging the **generation of return visits** also contradicts the idea of an interactional website as suggested by Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ritchie (cf. 2006).

Lastly nonprofit websites are applying two-way symmetrical principles due to the presence of elements encouraging **positivity and intuitiveness or ease of use**. This conclusion validates the opinions of Irish (cf. 2005), Kent (cf. 1998/1999), Kent and Taylor (cf. 1998) and Ki and Hon (cf. 2006) all suggesting the importance of an easy to use website arena in the creation of an interactional on-line environment.

7.4.4.1.2 Purposeful, personalised interaction

Nonprofit websites apply the idea of purposeful, personalised interaction by means of including on-line information collection devices (Ha & James, cf. 1998) which request personal information from visitors, with the intention to create future targeted and individualised communication. This conclusion appears to validate the views of various authors (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Gignac, J. & Gignac, P., cf. 2005; Ha & James, cf. 1998; Naudé, cf. 2001; Ritchie, cf. 2006) who suggest that personalised communication in the creation of sustained interactivity between the organisation and its stakeholders results in the formation of long-term relationships.

7.4.4.2 Brand contact point integration

Conclusions related to the three ideas of brand contact point integration can be listed as follows: (i) continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea, (ii) message and delivery system are stakeholder appropriate and (iii) timing of messages are based on stakeholder preferences.

7.4.4.2.1 Continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea

Nonprofit websites apply the idea of continuing dialogue to ensure a 360° brand idea by including on-line engagement devices which both encourage interactivity and enable the website visitor to experience and develop a relationship with the brand. Nonprofit websites display both general and largely unique engagement devices, with the former allowing the website visitor to engage in activity that contributes to the achievement of the organisational mission (Haji & Neichin, cf. 2005). These conclusions confirm the importance of engagement devices in the creation of an interactional website arena (Ewing & Napoli, cf. 2003; Hershey, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005) and also point to the value of ensuring that engagement devices promote, enhance and support the implementation of the organisation's unique mission (AlderConsulting, cf. 2005; Mogus & LaCroix, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006; Reiss, cf. 2000; Salls, cf. 2005).

7.4.4.2.2 Message and delivery systems are stakeholder appropriate

Nonprofit websites apply this idea by means of including information that contributes to the overall relevancy of the web content; this according to Irish (cf. 2005) and Mogus and LaCroix (cf. 2005) leads

to a user-friendly website environment promoting both interaction and relationship-building. Nonprofit websites also apply the idea that the message and delivery system becomes stakeholder-appropriate by the inclusion of choices largely related to subscribing or unsubscribing, either to electronic newsletters or electronic magazines. These choices reflect the organisation's willingness to respect the visitor's personal communication preferences — which is necessary for the creation of long-term sustainable relationships as suggested by Potts (cf. 2005).

By contrast, nonprofit websites do not apply this idea, as shown by the absence of choices related to the website visitor's preferred channel of communication. This conclusion contradicts the views of authors (Love & Reardon, cf. 2005; Quelch & Laidler-Kylander, cf. 2006) suggesting that the knowledge of a preferred channel of communication could be utilised to the advantage of the organisation at a specific point in time in their relationship with stakeholders.

7.4.4.2.3 Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences

Nonprofit websites do not apply this idea, as shown by the absence of choices or options that allow the visitor to select a preferred communication channel. This finding stands in sharp contrast with the views of Potts (cf. 2005) who suggests that the recognition of personal communication preferences plays an important role in the nonprofit organisation's on-line relationship-building processes.

7.4.5 Organisational integration area

7.4.5.1 CEO/top management integration

Nonprofit organisations apply the idea of CEO/top management integration by means of exhibiting internal communication mechanisms which allow top management to communicate the mission to the rest of the organisation's employees, the most important mechanism being the staff meeting. This conclusion shows alignment with current best practice in communication management, as suggested by Angelopulo (cf. 2006), Argenti (cf. 2003) and Gay (cf. 2005). This conclusion supports conclusions made in Section 7.4.1 pertaining to the positive relationship between the organisational mission and communication activities.

By contrast, the integration between communication management and strategic management aspects of nonprofit organisations is lacking. Nonprofit organisations are not allowing the communication

management function to participate in the organisation's strategic management processes. The communication management function operates on a reactive basis and is responsible for tasks of a technical nature such as: (i) publishing or (ii) harmonising the organisation's communication materials. This conclusion is not aligned with the recommendations of authors (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001) who all describe the need for a strategic communication function. It was also indicated in Section 7.4.4 that nonprofit organisations apply learning principles to the management of their communication, which signals conditions that allow the communication management function to contribute environmental intelligence to the strategic management processes of the organisation (Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000). Yet, this intelligence is not used to empower the communication management function to contribute on a strategic level.

7.4.5.2 Renaissance communicator requirements

Nonprofit organisations apply the idea of the renaissance communicator by allowing the most senior communication staff member of the organisation to function as part of top management (Niemann, 2005). Although this internal requirement is met and the communication function enjoys direct access to top management, it was concluded in Section 7.4.5.1 that nonprofit organisations are not allowing the communication function to contribute environmental intelligence on a strategic level.

Nonprofit organisations also apply the idea of the renaissance communicator by ensuring a total integrated approach in the management of their organisations' total communication solution, by centralising all communication management decisions at one point within the organisational structure. This finding is in agreement with the recommendations of various authors (Cornelissen & Lock, cf. 2001; Duncan, cf. 2002; Kitchen & Shultz, cf. 2001; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001), who suggest the need for connecting, aligning and harmonising the different aspects of the organisation's communication, including all communication/public relations and marketing communication activities.

Yet, it also has to be concluded that nonprofit organisations do not fully apply the idea of the renaissance communicator, because of the absence of a certain internal communication integration idea. Although nonprofit organisations facilitate "top-down" communication and adopt a totally integrated approach to the overall management of their organisations' communication solution, they are not allowing the communication function to be integrate into strategic management processes (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001).

7.4.5.2.1 Budget

Nonprofit organisations do not apply the idea of the renaissance communicator with respect to a budget, as shown by the absence of formally allocated financial resources towards the management of the organisation's total integrated communication solution. This conclusion stands in sharp contrast with the fact that sufficient budget is required for the implementation of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for strategic integrated communication.

7.4.5.2.2 Knowledge and comprehension of core competencies

Nonprofit organisations do not apply the idea of the renaissance communicator, as shown by the demonstrated lack of knowledge and comprehension of strategic integrated communication. Nonprofit organisations are more familiar with the term "integrated marketing communication" (IMC) than with "integrated communication" (IC). This conclusion reflects negatively on the nature of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model, which emphasises the need for the renaissance communicator to have knowledge of and competence in managing integrated communication.

7.4.5.2.3 Strategic consistency to ensure unity of effort

Nonprofit organisations apply the idea of the renaissance communicator, since all organisational communication is aligned with the strategic intent and mission of the organisation (Niemann, 2005). Conclusions made in Section 7.4.1 under strategic intent and Section 7.4.5.1 under CEO/top management integration support the idea of communication activities within the framework of the organisation's strategic intent and mission. This conclusion validates the suggestions of various authors such as Argenti *et al.* (cf. 2005), Massie and Anderson (cf. 2003) and Vos and Shoemaker (cf. 2001).

7.4.5.2.4 Cross-functional planning

Nonprofit organisations apply the idea of the renaissance communicator by demonstrating internal communication mechanisms which encourage the different functions or departments affecting the organisation's stakeholder relationships, to engage in joint communication and planning sessions. This conclusion validates the viewpoints of various authors (Cornelissen & Lock, cf. 2001; Duncan, cf. 2002; Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001) who point to the role of horizontal

communication integration ideas in the process of producing a consistent and integrated approach to the management of the organisation's communication activities.

7.4.5.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

Nonprofit organisations do not apply the idea of the renaissance communicator as far as a zero-based approach to the planning of communication and marketing is concerned. This conclusion contradicts the opinions of authors such as Duncan and Moriarty (cf. 1997) and Mintzberg (cf. 1994) who suggest that all communication intentions should be justifiable by current environmental conditions.

7.3.5.3 Horizontal/vertical communication integration

For conclusions related to horizontal communication integration refer to previous Section 7.4.2.4 under cross-functional planning. Further nonprofit organisations apply the idea of the renaissance communicator in the sense of demonstrating mechanisms which allow all employee ranks of the organisation to interact and communicate with each other, as suggested by Gronstedt (cf. 2000). Also refer to Section 7.4.1 for both: (i) a supporting conclusion regarding the effective integration of top management with the rest of the organisation and (ii) a contradicting conclusion about the lack of integration between the communication function and the strategic management processes of the organisation.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Next to be presented are recommendations pertaining to: (i) strategic integrated communication, (ii) elements of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model and (iii) further research.

7.5.1 Strategic integrated communication

South African nonprofit organisations need to perceive the application of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication to their website environments, as a communication management opportunity producing outcomes such as mission-driven communication and long-term sustainable relationships. The application of such a model contributes directly to the nonprofit organisation's "prosperity" (Phills, cf. 2005), by cultivating relationships with stakeholders on

whom the nonprofit organisation depends for its survival. Nonprofit websites already demonstrate potential due to the presence of various elements related to Niemann's (2005) conceptual model. However, future challenges will revolve around the purposeful management of nonprofit websites according to the ideas of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model.

7.5.2 Elements of Niemann's conceptual model

The following recommendations indicate how nonprofit organisations can improve on their implementation of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model to their website environments.

7.5.2.1 Individual communication preferences

Nonprofit websites should include information collection devices that request personal information from visitors, with the intention to create future, targeted and individualised communication with them (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997; Gignac, J. & Gignac, P., cf. 2005; Ha & James, cf. 1998; Naudé, cf. 2001; Ritchie, cf. 2006). More specifically, nonprofit organisation websites should allow visitors to indicate: (i) preferred areas of interests, (ii) preferred channels of communication and (iii) preferred timing of communication.

7.5.2.2 Strategic communication management

Nonprofit organisations should allow the communication function to contribute to the strategic management processes of the organisation (Likely, cf. 2003; Seitel, cf. 1992; Seitel, cf. 1995; Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000; Vos & Shoemaker, cf. 2001). This recommendation represents an aspect under which huge improvements could be achieved. Information collected from the organisation's environment should be utilised as inputs in strategy formulation processes (Steyn & Puth, cf. 2000). Currently nonprofit organisations are applying the idea of learning principles to the planning and execution of communication activities; however, it is recommended that the gathered intelligence be used as strategic inputs.

7.5.2.3 Budget

Since the formation of relationships lies at the heart of the nonprofit organisation's mission (Hackler & Saxton, cf. 2007; Radtke, cf. 1998) it is essential to allocate adequate financial resources to the

communication management function responsible for maintaining and cultivating this dimension. Since the nonprofit organisation depends on its relational stakeholder network for long-term sustainability it is essential to invest in relationship-building activities by providing financial resources to the function primarily responsible for these activities, i.e. the communication management.

7.5.2.4 Knowledge of and competence in managing integrated communication

Nonprofit organisations need to be sensitised to the exact nature of integrated communication and the value it could contribute within a nonprofit communication management context. This could be achieved by introducing a training programme that focuses on the defining aspects of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model and a practical perspective on how the conceptual model could be applied. Nonprofit managers should be aware of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model and its relation to unique nonprofit management challenges.

7.5.2.5 Zero-based communication and marketing planning

Nonprofit organisations should annually formulate communication plans that are justifiable by current environmental conditions (Duncan & Moriarty, cf. 1997) avoiding the risk of irrelevant communication activities. Nonprofit managers should be sensitised regarding the philosophy of open systems theory and its ability to produce outcomes such as long-term survival and sustainability.

7.5.3 Further research

Recommendations regarding future research involve: (i) empirical recommendations for the purpose of replicating the study and (ii) research areas worthy of further investigation.

7.5.3.1 Empirical recommendations

First, if the study is to be replicated, personal individual interviews with key personnel are recommended; this could include the most senior communication staff members from each of the following major organisational management areas: (i) strategic management, (ii) marketing management and (iii) communication/public relations management. Evidence obtained could provide different perspectives related to the internal communication management aspects of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model as opposed to only one viewpoint.

Secondly, a focus group scenario could be created involving the perspectives of key personnel (strategic management, marketing management and communication/public relations management) related to the implementation of strategic integrated communication. Allowing personnel to discuss and debate internal communication management issues pertaining to Niemann's (2005) conceptual model could produce a clearer picture regarding the interaction between these functions.

Thirdly, future studies could not only include a larger number of cases but could also focus on selecting cases that represent the mission-diversity of the South African nonprofit sector.

7.5.3.2 Research areas

First, further research could be undertaken to test the validity of the study's major conceptual output, i.e. the nonprofit website indicators for Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication as summarised in Chapter 5. The findings from such an enquiry may contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding strategic integrated communication, with a specific focus on the concept's application within the South Africa nonprofit organisation website environment.

A second research area could involve how different types of nonprofit mission statements affect the way in which Niemann's (2005) conceptual model finds application within the website arena. A specific type of nonprofit mission could amplify certain elements of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model more than others. Research focusing on the nonprofit organisation's type of mission and the resulting manifestation of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model on the nonprofit website could produce worthwhile insight into the communication management aspects of these organisations.

A third research area pertains to the nature of the nonprofit organisation's communication management approach, i.e. either proactive or reactive, and the influence of such an approach on the manifestation of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model in the nonprofit organisation website. Results from such an enquiry could indicate how internal communication aspects of the nonprofit organisation affect external website communication.

Lastly, research could focus on the development of a conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication, specifically designed with the South African nonprofit sector in mind. Results from such a study could contribute to the expressed need for appropriate management paradigms in this sector.

7.6 UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

Two unique contributions can be named. First, the study represents an attempt to empirically test Niemann's (2005) conceptual model within a specific management context; this contributes to the scientific value of the model. Secondly, the study transformed Niemann's (2005) conceptual model into nonprofit website indicators which rank as a unique conceptual output in terms of measurement.

7.7 LIMITATIONS

A first limitation relates to the fact that Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication is possibly only well-known within the South African academic arena of Communication Management.

Secondly, since no former research has been conducted regarding the application of Niemann's (2005) conceptual model to the nonprofit website arena, no pre-established and tested nonprofit website indicators for Niemann's (2005) conceptual model exist. The present researcher's conceptual output in this regard is unique and could be contested by other researchers.

The third limitation relates to the transferability of the study. Since the nature of the study qualifies as exploratory the small sample size (five cases including the pilot study) could produce limitations in terms of generalising the findings to the larger population of interest.

7.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

South Africa's democratic political regime opened up a "global" operating environment which affects all sectors of the economy including the nonprofit sector. Now models of sustainability are more important than ever before, and with an increased need for appropriate management models in this sector. New information and communication technologies, such as the Internet and one of its main applications, the World Wide Web, further emphasise the need for communication management paradigms.

Strategic integrated communication sits well with ideas of nonprofit sustainability by addressing issues like mission-driven communication and relationship-building. More specifically, Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication has the potential to address these sustainability issues within a web-based communication environment, which in turn represents a most important opportunity affecting nonprofit communication management practices.

October 2008



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and Management Science
**Department of Marketing and Communication
Management**

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN MCOM (COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT) DEGREE RESEARCH

Department Marketing and Communication Management

An exploratory qualitative study on the application of strategic integrated communication (IC) in the South African NPO sector website arena

The South African non-profit sector is recognising the value of website technology. A recent South African study (Goldstuck & Ambrose, 2007), measuring the impact of information and communication technology on the non-profit sector, revealed that 84% of respondents had a functioning website. Websites were being utilised for purposes such as marketing (65%), campaigning (48%) and branding (45%). The website environment is acknowledged as an important communication context within the non-profit sector.

Currently the South African non-profit sector is challenged with a variety of strategic issues including new information and communication technologies and a higher degree of required professionalism. The strategic environment of non-profit organisations highlights the urgent need for management paradigms in the sector. Today, non-profit organisations are more receptive to the ideas of business than in the past. The transfer of management tools and techniques from the for-profit sector to the non-profit sector has been identified as a growing trend.

Strategic integrated communication is a current communication management theme found in the for-profit management arena, which potentially holds great value for the non-profit sector. More specifically the sector's attention is directed at the application of strategic integrated communication principles on organisation websites.

Your organisation is invited to participate in this study. All the finer details of the project are presented in the annexure which is a synopsis of the study. Please feel free to contact me should you need any further information.

Kind Regards

Ms. C. Schutte

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ANNEXURE

RESEARCH QUESTION

Does a selection of South African non-profit organisation websites apply Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the research is conducted within a pure qualitative research paradigm.

Research design

Qualitative content analysis is applied to non-profit organisation websites where the researcher will evaluate each website with a theoretical framework of analysis derived from Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.

Sampling technique

The ten non-profit organisations that were nominated for the 2007 Web Awards, hosted by SANGONeT (A South African development portal for non-profit organisations) are invited. The first 5 granting permission to participate in the study will be included in the sample. Thus purposeful, theoretical sampling.

Sources of evidence and data-analysis

Data collection entails two phases. First most senior marketing/communication staff member of each non-profit organisation will be requested to complete a short e-mail questionnaire. Secondly, the researcher will analyse the websites of the non-profit organisations based on the framework of analysis derived from Niemann's (2005) conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED FROM PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Firstly the researcher needs formal permission from the organisations to conduct the research. After formal permission has been obtained the researcher will contact the most senior communication/marketing staff member in the organisation. The researcher will require this staff member to provide his/her consent to complete a short e-mail questionnaire and confirm permission to analyse the website of the organisation.

ANONYMITY OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

The researcher respects the need for anonymity and provides organisations with preferences/options pertaining to this issue. The choice of the organisation will be respected.

PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The results will be published in the form of a master's degree dissertation and will also be made available to interested organisations at the end of the research project. Further articles will also be published within the scientific community related to communication management and non-profit studies. Since there is a lack of current research on the communication management issues of South African non-profit organisations, a study such as this one can be of great value.

TIMEFRAME

The data collection phases should be completed by January 2009.

ANNEXURE A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF EXTERNAL WEBSITES

Table 1: Principle 1 - Strategic intent

PRINCIPLE 1: STRATEGIC INTENT			
Indicators:	Absent	Present	Context
Purpose / Mission			
Long-term goals			
Core values			
Operating principles			
Operating scope or activities			
Vision			

Table 2: Environmental integration area

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION AREA			
Indicators: Political environment	Absent	Present	Categories of issues
Information related to the political issues that's addressed by the organisational mission statement			
Indicators: Economic environment	Absent	Present	Categories of issues
Information related to the economic issues that's addressed by the organisational mission statement			
Indicators: Social environment	Absent	Present	Categories of issues
Information related to the social issues that's addressed by the organisational mission statement			

Table 3: Stakeholder integration area – Interactivity integration

STAKEHOLDER INTEGRATION AREA: INTERACTIVITY INTEGRATION			
Indicators: Stakeholderism	Absent	Present	Context
Identification of the organisation's stakeholders			Stakeholder map (Steyn & Puth, 2000)
Stakeholder messages consistent with mission			
Indicators: Two-way symmetrical communication			
1. Playfulness	Absent	Present	Context
Question and answer format			
Online games			
Opinion poll			
Other			
2. Choice	Absent	Present	Context
Restricted or unrestricted navigation			
Language preference			
Text-or graphic version			
Other			
3. Connectedness			
Internal hyperlinks:	Absent	Present	Context
General information relating to organisational programs/activities			
Graphics			
Advertisements			
Other			
External hyperlinks:	Absent	Present	Context
General information relating to organisational programs/activities			
Advertisements			
Other			
4. Networking	Absent	Present	Context
Information about the different groups/individuals the organisation is working with			
Information about how the different groups/individuals are involved			
Organisational ambassador			
Corporate partners			

5. Reciprocal communication			
Information dissemination:	Absent	Present	Context
Organisational contact details			
Organisational overview			
News releases			
Annual reports			
Information related to the political, social or economic issue that's addressed by the mission statement			
Other			
Dialogue:	Absent	Present	Context
Online discussions			
Online feedback form			
Weblog			
Online membership registration			
Online survey			
Other			
Responsiveness:	Absent	Present	Context
Organisation responds to individual enquiries			
Organisation directs enquiries to knowledgeable individuals			
6. Generation of return visits	Absent	Present	Context
Updated events calendar			
Date when website was last updated			
Information on the website is up to date			
Other			
7. Positivity and intuitiveness or ease of interface	Absent	Present	Context
Labeling and operation links			
Sitemap			
Search engine			
Navigation menu			
Architecture			
Text- based vs. graphic based			
Other			
Indicators: Purposeful, personalised interaction	Absent	Present	Context
Asking devices requesting information related to individual communication preferences			

Table 4: Stakeholder integration area – Brand contact point integration

STAKEHOLDER INTEGRATION AREA: BRAND CONTACT POINT INTEGRATION			
Indicators: Dialogue to ensure 360° brand idea	Absent	Present	Context
Donation facility			
Selling of goods or services			
Fundraising campaign			
Event management features			
Membership recruitment or registration			
Community building tools			
Staff recruitment features			
Volunteer recruitment features			
Other			
Indicators: Message and delivery system stakeholder appropriate			
1. Relevant content	Absent	Present	Description
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page			
“How stakeholders can get involved” information			
Information on organisational programmes			
Organisational contact details			
Target group or beneficiaries			
Testimonials			
Other			
2. Individual communication preferences	Absent	Present	Description
Subscribe / unsubscribe to e-newsletter			
Areas of interest / preferred information			
Preferred communication channel			
Other			
Indicators: Timing of messages based on stakeholder preferences	Absent	Present	Context
Frequency of newsletter			
Action alerts			
Viral marketing / “tell-a-friend-campaign”			
Other			

ANNEXURE B

CODING AGENDA



Dear Respondent

You have already completed the informed consent form, thereby agreeing to the conditions pertaining to this research project. Please answer the following questions by only using the space that's provided below.

1. How is the strategic intent (mission, strategy, goals and objectives) of your organisation linked to the planning and execution of your organisation's communication (i.e. internal and external)? If this is not the case, please explain.

2. How is organisational learning principles linked to the planning and execution of your organisation's communication (i.e. internal and external)? If this is not the case, please explain.
E.g. does your organisation collect information about stakeholders and then use it in the planning and execution of the organisation's communication?

3. How does your organisation's top management engage in communication efforts to ensure that all employees understand the organisational mission? If this is not the case, please explain.

4. What role does your organisation's top management assign to the communication function when formulating organisational strategies?

- 5.1 Which term/concept is more familiar? Please choose one of the following:

- Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)
- Integrated Communication (IC)

- 5.2 How would you differentiate between integrated communication (IC) vs. integrated marketing communication (IMC)?

6. Please tick the statements that apply to your role and position in your organisation:

- 6.1 I function as part of the top management of my organisation, i.e. together with the CEO and other functional managers.
- 6.2 I have (had) a budget to fully integrate communication and marketing efforts.
- 6.3 I control and manage the organisation's total communication (communication and marketing) solution. (If not ticked, go directly to Question 8. If ticked, please note Question 7.)
- 6.4 I plan for fully integrated communication and marketing efforts annually (i.e. not on previous years' plans).

7. If you integrate communication and marketing, how do you ensure alignment between communication, marketing and organisational objectives (tactical and/or strategic levels)?

8. What mechanisms does the organisation have in place to encourage different departments/functions to engage in joint communication and planning sessions?

9. What mechanisms are in place to encourage dialogue between all employee ranks in the organisation?

10. Explain to which degree the contents (messages) currently on your organisation's external website are based on the strategic integration of your organisational mission statement, communication and marketing efforts.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION

Please save this document as the "MCom Research 2008" Word document attachment and return to the following e-mail address: chantalle@mweb.co.za

ANNEXURE C

E-MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

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